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Careful analysis of the rise and fall of certain verbal endings in Old and Middle Welsh has begun to provide a much-needed tool for dating texts in medieval Welsh literature. Such work has primarily been carried forward by Simon Rodway, who has comprehensively analysed the verbal morphology in the datable poetry of the Poets of the Princes (belonging to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) as well as in surviving thirteenth-century prose manuscripts; the result is a list of datable morphological developments spanning the period 1100–1300 and beyond (Rodway 2013). This is a significant advance in our understanding, lending precision, for the first time, to some of the many claims in earlier scholarship that this or that morphological feature of medieval Welsh can be considered comparatively ‘early’. Of particular interest is that century and a half preceding the earliest surviving manuscripts written fully in the vernacular, namely 1100–1250. In many respects, this period can be considered transitional between ‘Old’ and ‘Middle’ Welsh, but it is usually difficult to ascertain whether linguistic features traditionally associated with Old Welsh were not also present in this crucial transition period. Marged Haycock (LPBT 21) has rightly commented that ‘It has long been something of an embarrassment that we lack a set of agreed and dependable linguistic dating criteria for pre-c. 1100 Welsh verse (as well as for the *non*-panegyric poetry during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries)’ [her emphasis]. Aside from the small number of changes in verbal morphology highlighted in Rodway’s work, one might as well say the same about *all* poetry in the pre-c. 1250 period. The existence of the datable poetry of the Gogynfeirdd creates a false sense of security that the period 1100–1250 is a known entity so far as Welsh verse is concerned, yet, as Haycock implies, it can hardly be the case that the only poetry composed in this period belonged to one of the small number of circumscribed (mostly panegyric) genres represented by the formal poetry ascribed to named court poets in the manuscripts. It must be the case that a significant proportion of the so-called ‘*Hengerdd*’ belongs to this period too, even though the diverse genres represented in the *Hengerdd* were not typically attributed to named poets (aside from legendary figures of the heroic age), unlike praise poetry from the twelfth century onwards. Although the term *Hengerdd* is normally reserved for poetry that *might* have been composed before 1100, it would be safer to say that the *Hengerdd* corpus is comprised of ‘anonymous or pseudonymous Welsh poetry mainly preserved in manuscripts up to c. 1400’. In our current state of knowledge, one would probably struggle to distinguish linguistically between an anonymous poem composed in 1200 and another composed two hundred years earlier.

This article is a foray into using another corpus of poetry as evidence for the dating of developments in verbal morphology. The corpus in question is medieval Welsh prophetic poetry, which formed a regular component of the poetic repertoire by no later than the tenth century, when *Armes Prydein Vawr* was probably composed (see Thomas 2022: 17–19 for a concise summary of views about the latter poem’s date and context). Although prophetic poems can rarely be dated as precisely as the court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they sometimes refer to identifiable political and military events that can thus be used as *termini post quos* for the composition of the poems. Prophetic poetry has yet to be investigated thoroughly from a linguistic point of view, but it provides valuable additional evidence for the period 1100–1300 which can be set alongside the evidence of the poetry overtly ascribed to the Poets of the Princes.¹ This is all the more useful because the discourse of prophetic poetry is marked by certain features that distinguish it from panegyric: most obviously, in its very frequent use of verbal forms denoting future time.²

In Middle Welsh, as in Modern Welsh, the grammatical category that is conventionally termed the ‘present tense’ can have both present-time reference and future-time reference.³ However, in Old and early Middle Welsh, one encounters a small group of present-tense verbal endings that seem to refer to future time more regularly than present time (Evans 1964: 118–21; for the derivation of these endings, see Schrijver 2011: 57–60): these are the 3. sg. ind. endings *-(h)awd*, *-(h)id* and *-(h)yd* (which are inherited present absolute endings), 3. pl. ind. *-(h)awnt* (which may have arisen by analogy with the third singular *-(h)awd*: Schumacher 1995: 64), and the impersonal ind. *-(h)awr*. Graham Isaac (1996: 368–71; 2004) has argued that these *-h-* endings are genetically distinct from inherited present-tense endings, and that they formed a distinct ‘future tense’ with exclusively future-time reference; however, it is probably safer to interpret them as regular reflexes of the inherited present-tense, albeit that they often seem to have future-time reference in the contexts in which they survive (such as in prophetic poetry) (cf. Schumacher 2011: 159–60, referring back to Schumacher 1995; and Rodway 2013: 61–4). The chronological distribution of these endings has been investigated by Rodway (2013: 60–1 and 107–8; 2021: 36–7), who has suggested that impersonal *-(h)awr* fell out of general poetic use by the second half of the thirteenth century, and the third-person singular absolute endings by the second half of the fourteenth century, though the

¹ Relevant linguistic data from the Book of Taliesin prophecies is assembled in PBT 14–16, though more could certainly be said about those poems from a linguistic perspective.

² Elizabeth Schoales (2004/5) has stressed the connections between prophetic poetry and the panegyric poetry of the court poets, but it is nevertheless clear that an identifiable set of discourse markers serves to distinguish prophetic poetry from other types of poetry.

³ My discussion of tense is informed by Comrie 1985: esp. chap. 1. For a descriptive account of the relationship between tense and the modern Welsh verbal inflectional system, see Jones 2010: chap. 5.

latter lingered on even into the fifteenth century in certain prophetic and gnomic contexts.⁴ The last point is a significant warning about the impact that recognised literary discourses could have on the retention of otherwise archaic and moribund linguistic features, a point to which we shall return below.

The ending investigated here has scarcely been mentioned in discussions of futurity in Middle Welsh, probably because it occurs overwhelmingly in prophetic poetry rather than in the corpora that are more commonly investigated, such as the poetry in the Book of Aneirin or the court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵ It has long been recognised that there is a 3. pl. pres. ind. ending *-yn(t)* in Old and early Middle Welsh, which is homophonous with the usual 3. pl. ending of the imperfect indicative but which belongs to a present-tense inflection (cf. Morris-Jones 1913: 323; Evans 1964: 120; the derivation is discussed in Schumacher 1995: 65; Isaac 1996: 369; Schrijver 2011: 58 and 60). There are several clear examples in Old Welsh among the Juvenius glosses, written around 900: *limnint* ‘they shave’, glossing Latin 3. pl. pres. ind. *tondent*; *nertheint* ‘they strengthen, fortify’, glossing Latin 3. pl. pres. ind. *armant*; and *scamnehgint* ‘they make/become light(er)’, glossing Latin 3. pl. pres. ind. *leuant* (Falileyev 2000: 103, 119 and 141; 2016: 15). These examples have present-time reference, but it will be seen below that a significant proportion of instances of the ending in early Welsh poetry is found in prophetic poetry and has future-time reference. As with 3. sg. pres. ind. *-(h)awd*, it may be that 3. pl. pres. ind. *-yn(t)* survived longer in prophetic discourse than in ordinary speech or even in other literary forms precisely because, as it began to disappear as a means to convey present time, it came to be perceived as an affected way to convey future time. Also like *-(h)awd* and the other endings listed above, it may be seen in the examples cited below that *-yn(t)* is occasionally preceded by either *-h-* or the provection resulting from *-h-*; the possible reason for this is briefly considered in the conclusion. For this reason, the ending will henceforth be written as *-(h)yn(t)*.

I begin by outlining the corpus of medieval Welsh prophetic poetry before discussing the occurrence of 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in that corpus. This discussion suggests that, even in prophetic discourse, the ending *-(h)yn(t)* fell out of use after the early decades of the thirteenth century. I next turn briefly to the prophetic poetry in the mid-fifteenth-century manuscript Peniarth 50 for the sake of comparison, noting that *-ant(t)* is overwhelmingly dominant in that context despite a small number of instances of *-(h)yn(t)* in poems that are possibly early. The final section then compares these results with the sparse attestation of *-(h)yn(t)* in the remainder of the *Hengerdd* corpus.

⁴ For instance, the ending *-id* is preserved in a maxim that was incorporated into the probably fifteenth-century *Englynion y Misoedd*; cf. EWGNP XII.7e.

⁵ Ironically, Isaac (1996: 369) mentions it in order to argue for a ‘clear cut functional opposition’ between present-tense *-ynt*, *-ant* and ‘future’-tense *-(h)awnt*.

Although some examples are discussed in detail below, for the most part I have relied on the judgements of previous editors and translators to distinguish between present-tense *-yn(t)* and imperfect-tense *-yn(t)*; doubtless there is room for differences of opinion, though in many cases the much more regular imperfect ending is the safest interpretation. Some cases are entirely ambiguous, quite possibly deliberately so, and some of these are highlighted below. For these reasons, the list of verbs with 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in medieval Welsh poetry in the article's appendix can only be provisional.

The Corpus of Medieval Welsh Prophetic Poetry to c. 1300

The Welsh prophetic poetry composed prior to c. 1300 is rarely discussed as a coherent body of material.⁶ It consists of several distinct strands. In terms of rate of attestation in medieval manuscripts, the Myrddin poems are a particularly prominent aspect of the corpus, forming a closely interrelated group (for surveys, see Bollard 2019; Jarman 1991). They are composed in the voice of the sixth-century wildman Myrddin and mix political prophecy with allusions to Myrddin's personal circumstances following the legendary battle of Arfderydd.⁷ There are seven poems that together comprise what is considered to be the 'early' group of Myrddin poems, and these often travel together in medieval Welsh manuscripts. Here are the extant manuscripts up to c. 1450 in approximate order of age, along with the poems that they contain:⁸

- Peniarth 1 (Black Book of Carmarthen, s. xiii^{med}): *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin, Y Bedwenni, Yr Afallennau, Yr Oianau* (ed. in LIDC poems 1, 15, 16, 17).
- Peniarth 3, part ii (s. xiii/xiv): *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer, Yr Afallennau, Yr Oianau* (ed. in Williams 1927–9).
- NLW 6680B (Hendregadredd Manuscript, s. xiii/xiv; this poem in the stratum III hand **a**, s. xiv^{2/4} [Huws 2000: 209]): *Yr Oianau* (ed. in H 73–4).

⁶ There is no adequate and recent survey of early Welsh prophecy. The best general survey of Welsh prophecy is Lynch 2007: esp. pp. 17–30; cf. Evans 1997; Kay 2006/7; Jones 2013; and, from a historical perspective, Williams 1974. Griffiths 1937 remains useful but sorely needs updating. The late medieval period is somewhat better served in recent scholarship: see especially Johnston 2014: chap. 12, 'Proffwydoliaeth a Phropaganda'. For the relationship between Wales and late medieval prose prophecies concerning English politics, see Fulton 2005 and 2008; cf. Fulton 2013.

⁷ Earlier scholarship tended to separate these two strands artificially, but see Bollard 1990. The original association of the name 'Myrddin' with *Y Bedwenni*, *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau* has been disputed (Padel 2006), but that does not affect the present study.

⁸ Manuscript dates follow Huws 2022. All manuscripts are in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth unless otherwise stated. Note that a version of the *Oianau* also seems to have appeared in the lost manuscript Hengwrt 33, probably written in the early fourteenth century, where it was found alongside other prophetic poems: *Anrheg Urien*, a poem by Adda Fras, and possibly *Dygogan Awen* (Guy 2016: 79–80 and 97–8).

- Peniarth 20 (c. 1330; this poem added in several Anglicana hands of s. xiv^{med}): *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* (unedited).
- Peniarth 4–5 (White Book of Rhydderch, s. xiv^{med}): *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd* (ed. in Phillimore 1886: 151–4).
- Oxford, Jesus College, 111 (Red Book of Hergest, 1382 × c. 1405): *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer, Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd* (printed in R 1–5 [cols. 577–85]; ed. and trans. in Jenkins 1990: 33–119).
- Peniarth 50 (Y Cwta Cyfarwydd, c. 1445): *Yr Afallennau, Yr Oianau, Peirian Faban, Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd, Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* (for the Welsh prophetic material in this manuscript, see Jenkins 1990: 225–512; cf. Jones 2013: 246–7; only *Peirian Faban* has been edited separately: Jarman 1950–2).
- Peniarth 26 (c. 1456): *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin, Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd, Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* (unedited).

Despite the relatively early and frequent attestation of these poems in medieval manuscripts, they have hitherto received little scholarly attention and have never been the subjects of critical editions that take full account of their manuscript traditions, which include many early modern copies too.⁹ The creation of such critical editions, accompanied by modern Welsh paraphrases and English translations, is thus one of the key goals of the ongoing AHRC-funded project ‘An Edition of the Welsh Merlin Poetry’, led by Cardiff University.¹⁰ It was the present writer’s work on the early Myrddin poems as part of this project that gave rise to the article at hand.

Another major corpus of medieval Welsh prophetic poetry is found in Peniarth 2, the Book of Taliesin (s. xiv¹). Among the prophetic poems in this manuscript are the famous tenth-century poem *Armes Prydein Vawr* (AP; English edition: Williams 1972), the latter’s manuscript neighbour *Armes Dydd Brawd*, concerning the Last Judgement (CC poem 20; for the poem’s later development, see Callander 2015), and ten other prophetic poems that have been edited by Marged Haycock (PBT). There are also poems in the voice of the ‘legendary’ Taliesin that contain substantial prophetic elements: chiefly *Prif Gyuarth Geluyd*, *Golychaf i Gulwyd* and *Kadeir Teyrnnon* (LPBT poems 1, 8 and 9 respectively). The first of these three poems is also found at the end of a comparable sequence of prophetic poems in the Red Book of Hergest, which were attributed to Taliesin by Sir John Prise in

⁹ A partial exception is Jarman 1967, an edition of *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin*, though no account is taken there of manuscripts of the poem other than the Black Book of Carmarthen (aside from a brief list of the other manuscripts on p. 1).

¹⁰ Details at <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FW000717%2F1> (accessed 17 July 2022). Other project members are based in the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth, and in Swansea University.

the sixteenth century (R 17–20 [cols. 1049.7–1055.14]). Haycock has suggested that the full sequence of seven prophetic poems in the Red Book may once have appeared in the lost first quire of the Book of Taliesin (LPBT 51–3). These Red Book prophecies have received little attention, but they were edited and translated (aside from *Prif Gyuarth Geluyd*) in Manon Jenkins’s unpublished PhD thesis (Jenkins 1990: 120–223).

Outside these major manuscript collections, there are several other prophetic poems pertaining to the pre-1300 period. One of these is the ‘Mynydd Carn’ prophecy, preserved in the Hendregadredd manuscript where it is attributed to Meilyr Brydydd, which concerns the battle of Mynydd Carn in 1081 (H 7; CBT I poem 5). Nerys Ann Jones has argued that this may actually be an elegy for Caradog ap Gruffudd, composed shortly after his death in the battle using aspects of prophetic discourse (Jones 1999; she translates the poem on p. 74). Another medieval prophetic poem, traditionally attributed to Meugan, is preserved in an early seventeenth-century copy by John Jones of Gellilyfdy where it is accompanied by the Book of Taliesin prophecy *Rydyrchafwy Duw ar Blwyff Brython*, and in another copy by John Davies of Mallwyd of similar date; Jones explains that he had copied the pair of prophetic poems from a copy by George Owen Harry (c. 1553–c. 1614), who had himself copied them *o ddolen o femrwn* (‘from a sheet of parchment’) (Haycock 2021). David Stephenson (2021) has recently argued, persuasively though not entirely conclusively, that the Meugan poem was composed in the political circumstances of August/September 1212, and he has tentatively attributed it to Einion ap Gwalchmai, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth’s court poet and minister.

A considerable amount of work remains to be done on the dating of medieval Welsh prophetic poetry. Individual cases are mentioned below, but at this point it may be useful to set out some general considerations. One way in which the prophetic corpus is distinct from the court poetry is that it is almost never attributed to named poets in the manuscripts; where attributions occur, they are generally to the legendary poetic personas of Myrddin or Taliesin. This was a significant aspect of the prophetic mode, since the anonymity or pseudonymity of these poems contributed significantly to their perceived prophetic power and authority. For the same reason, prophetic poems were much more likely to be re-composed or expanded than other types of poem (like panegyric), which can render the question of date more difficult to conceptualise; some extant ‘poems’ might have resulted from several iterations of poetic engagement. The extent of this process probably varied between poems. For example, it may have been a significant aspect of the evolution of *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*: in these cases, an iterative verse structure, combined with a cryptic and allusive style, produced poetry that was especially amenable to augmentation by successive poets, and this may help to explain why the number of stanzas in these poems (and occasionally their ordering) varies between manuscripts. For this reason, individual verses of *Yr*

Afallennau and *Yr Oianau* are treated separately below for the purposes of dating. Lastly, with regard to the political (and thus dateable) content of the prophetic poems, two further points are worth highlighting. Firstly, not all prophetic poems contain allusions to contemporary political circumstances, meaning that such poems are no more capable of being dated on grounds of content than other items of *Hengerdd*. Secondly, poems were not necessarily composed immediately after the events to which they allude; poets may have had ulterior reasons for reminding their audiences of certain events in the past. In some cases, then, an allusion to identifiable political circumstances provides a *terminus post quem* rather than a firm date of composition.

3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in Medieval Prophetic Poetry

In the discussion below, no distinction is made between the endings *-(h)yn* and *-(h)ynt*. There is evidence for the loss of /t/ from unstressed syllables with /nt/ as early as the ninth century, and it is well-known that poets freely rhymed third-person plural verbs in *-n* throughout the period whenever the occasion demanded (Rodway 2013: 58–60). On the other hand, compound verbs in *-fod* are ignored. Although these verbs form a 3. pl. pres. ind. in *-yn(t)* (e.g. *gorynt* in PBT poem 6.6; *henyn* in PBT poem 7.83), this ending is equivalent to the 3. pl. pres. ind. form *ynt* of the verb *bod*, the derivation and use of which are separate from the *-(h)yn(t)* found elsewhere (cf. Schrijver 2011: 68–70). Throughout the discussion, comparison is made with verbs in *-an(t)*, which was the regular 3. pl. pres. ind. ending in medieval Welsh, as it remains today.

The greatest concentration of 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs ending in *-(h)yn(t)* may be found in the earliest dated poem in the prophetic corpus: *Armes Prydein Vawr*. Analysis of verbal formations in this poem is aided considerably by Callander and Thomas’s recent discussion of time in the poem, which includes a full, parsed list of the poem’s verbs (Callander and Thomas 2021). According to them, there are about 28 verbs with 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in the poem versus 23 with *-an(t)*.¹¹ I include in the former figure *terdyn* (AP I. 45), which could possibly be imperfect, as well as *dybydyn* (AP I. 13) from *dyfod*; although *dybydyn* and similar forms of *dyfod* are formed with the root *bydd* of the habitual tenses of the verb *bod*, and conjugate accordingly (Evans 1964: 136, n. 4), the 3. pl. pres. ind. form of the latter would regularly be formed in *-an(t)* (cf. *dybydant* in PBT poems 6.5, 7.3 and 7.15 and LPBT poem 5.190). Presumably the present-/future-tense form *dybydyn* was produced by analogy with other verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* (it is also found in LPBT poem 13.20, as mentioned below).

¹¹ I exclude the verbal noun *dichlyn* in line 92 *yn eu dichlyn*, which they accidentally gloss as 3. pl. pres./fut. I say ‘about 28 verbs’ because of the possibility that the poet used verbs in *-yn(t)* to create deliberate temporal ambiguity, since they could be interpreted as belonging to either the present-tense or imperfect-tense paradigm (see Callander and Thomas 2021: 5 and 7).

One gets the impression that, in *Armes Prydein Vawr*, the 3. pl. endings *-yn(t)* and *-an(t)* were chosen according to the needs of the rhyme, rather than according to the stem class of verbs or any difference in meaning between the two. Of the 51 verbs implicated in the statistics just mentioned, only three are not in rhyming position: *wydynt* and *treiglynt* in line 30, and *gofynnant* in line 133. Moreover, the same verbs are used with both endings: thus *discynnyn* (l. 16) and *discynnant* (l. 73); *gŷynyn* (l. 19), *cŷynnyn* (l. 47) and *cŷynant* (l. 69); *dychynnullyn* (l. 21) and *dychynnullant* (l. 72; cf. *gynnullant* l. 128); *wydynt* (l. 30) and *ŷdant* (l. 84). The poet does not appear to have perceived any difference in time reference between the two endings. In the majority of cases, Bromwich translated verbs in both *-(h)yn(t)* and *-an(t)* as if they have future-time reference, as one might expect in a prophetic context (Bromwich's translation in Williams 1972). Instead, the choice of ending may have been determined by literary factors. Callander and Thomas (2021: 5 and 7) suggest that the poet used *-(h)yn(t)* deliberately to create temporal ambiguity, since the ending could also be interpreted as belonging to the imperfect paradigm. It was probably the temporal ambiguity of *-(h)yn(t)* that led eventually to the generalisation of *-an(t)* as the regular 3. pl. ending in the present-tense paradigm (Schumacher 1995: 65). But, while present-tense *-(h)yn(t)* was a living part of the language, its ambiguities could be an effective tool in the hands of a good poet.

At the other end of the chronological scale, it is clear that *-(h)yn(t)* was becoming less natural even in prophetic poetry in the twelfth century, and had fallen out of use altogether by the second half of the thirteenth century. This accords with, and indeed substantiates, Simon Rodway's account, based on twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry (Rodway 2013: 57–8). He observes that the court poetry contains 92 instances of *-an(t)* and only two possible instances of present-tense *-yn(t)*, both from the twelfth century: one in a poem by Gwalchmai ap Meilyr (*dechrymynt* in CBT I poem 11.5), and another, somewhat more doubtful instance in a poem by Cynddelw (*keffynt* in CBT IV poem 6.205). He concludes that 'there is no evidence that the ending *-ynt* survived into the thirteenth century in poetry or in prose, and it may already have disappeared by the twelfth, if the two examples above [from the court poetry] are accepted as imperfects. Even if they are present forms, there can be no doubt that *-ant* had been generalised by the twelfth century' (Rodway 2013: 58). In broad terms, I would support this conclusion, though there is further evidence from the prophetic poetry that, in prophetic discourse at least, *-(h)yn(t)* continued to be used occasionally into the early thirteenth century.

The generalisation of *-an(t)* is clear in the prophetic corpus. One finds poems that sustain end-rhymes in *-ant* using 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs, like *Gwawt Lud y Mawr* (PBT poem 7) and *Moch Daw Byd* (R 18 [cols. 1050.25–1051.3]), but nothing to compare with *Armes Prydein Vawr*'s use of *-(h)yn(t)* in the same fashion. The reference in *Moch Daw Byd* to a *mab Henri* (R 18 [col. 1050.32]),

along with the use of the word *tórneimant* (R 18 [col. 1050.26]), borrowed from Anglo-Norman French *turneiement* (or from the latter's Middle English derivative, attested from the thirteenth century), suggest a date for that poem no earlier than the twelfth century (Griffiths 1937: 132; Jenkins 1990: 149). Similarly, *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd*, which contains four verbs in *-an(t)* and none in *-(h)yn(t)*,¹² cannot have been composed earlier than 1163, since it seems to allude to Henry II's attack on Deheubarth in that year; indeed Gerald of Wales appears to paraphrase lines 22–3 of this poem, or one very like it, in his *Itinerarium Kambriae*, I.6, written in 1191, as part of a prophecy which he attributes to Merlin Silvester concerning Henry II crossing Rhyd Pencarn (Phillimore 1886: 117–18; Roberts 1995: 143; Gerald's reference is in Dimock 1868: 61–3; Thorpe 1978: 121–2).¹³ In the Meugan poem, dated by Stephenson to 1212, there are two or maybe three verbs in *-an(t)*, but none in *-(h)yn(t)*.¹⁴ In *Crist Iesu* (R 18–19 [cols. 1051.31–1053.15]), a prophetic elegy for Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) that shares thematic and verbal parallels with elegies for the same prince by Bleddyn Fardd and Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, there are again two verbs in *-an(t)* and none in *-(h)yn(t)*.¹⁵ A number of other prophetic poems lacking such specific dating criteria likewise contain a scattering of 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs in *-an(t)* but none in *-(h)yn(t)*.¹⁶

Verses of the *Afallennau* and *Oianau* contribute to the same picture. In both the Black Book and Peniarth 3 versions of the *Afallennau*, one finds only verbs in *-an(t)*, and none in *-(h)yn(t)*.¹⁷ The only closely dateable stanza in the Black Book version of the *Afallennau* is the first stanza, which has no counterpart in Peniarth 3. It has been convincingly argued by Jarman (1954; LIDC xxx–xxxi) that this refers to the battle of Machafwy in 1198, and that the stanza may have been composed between 1198 and 1201 (and in any case before the Black Book itself was written sometime in the

¹² *bydant* (Phillimore 1886: 152, ll. 41 and 43 = R 5 [col. 584.31–2], *pallant* (Phillimore 1886: 152, l. 48 = R 5 [col. 584.36]) and *cudyant* (Phillimore 1886: 153, l. 73 = R 5 [col. 585.11]).

¹³ Jenkins (1990: 108) oddly seems to think that, in this case, the prophecy preceded the event, and that therefore 'an element of genuine prophecy, or at least coincidence, may have been involved'. Bollard (2019: 40–1), on the other hand, supposes that the prophecy may originally have concerned a Welsh ruler and was subsequently 'modified' by Gerald of Wales to fit the incident in 1163. However, the verse's prediction is that Rhyd Pencarn will be approached by a certain *brych kadarn*, and, as Brynley Roberts has pointed out, an early Latin commentary on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini*, in a manuscript written in Wales, specifically states that *Brithcadain* (*sic*; *recte Britht cadarn*, where *tht* = /θ/) is a cipher for Henry II (Roberts 1995: 143; for the commentary, see Hammer 1949: 116; cf. Henley 2018: 122–4).

¹⁴ *rean* and *ruyvan* in line 41, and possibly *uynant* in line 64 (Haycock 2021: 33 and 39–40).

¹⁵ *galwant* (R 19 [col. 1052.39]) and *goludant* (R 19 [col. 1053.9]). The poem is briefly discussed in Johnston 2014: 348.

¹⁶ LIDC poem 1 (= *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin*, ll. 6, 7, 9, 14, 24, 34); PBT poems 6 (ll. 5, 7, 9, 12) and 9 (l. 3); LPBT poem 1 (ll. 38 and 48); *Mor yw Gwael Gweled* (R 19 [col. 1053.17–42], at col. 1053.31).

¹⁷ *deuant* (LIDC poem 16.23) = *deuuant* (Williams 1927–9: 123, l. 51); *deuant* and *ant* (LIDC poem 16.25 = Williams 1927–9: 123, l. 53); *dyuant* (Williams 1927–9: 121, l. 3); *deuuant* (Williams 1927–9: 121, l. 8); *disgynant* (Williams 1927–9: 121, l. 9); *deuant* and *ant* (Williams 1927–9: 122, l. 10); *atwaenant* (Williams 1927–9: 122, l. 30); *wnant* (Williams 1927–9: 122, l. 43); *vydant* (Williams 1927–9: 123, l. 46); *kaffant* (Williams 1927–9: 124, l. 82; cf. *kaffaud* LIDC poem 16.87).

middle decades of the thirteenth century). Unfortunately, this stanza does not contain any third-person plural verbs. More helpful are the stanzas of the *Oianau*, where one finds a mixed picture. In the Black Book *Oianau* stanzas (LIDC poem 17), there is at least one example of *-(h)yn(t)* as well as several of *-an(t)*. The former is *dottint* in line 113 (*dottynt* in Peniarth 3, Williams 1927–9: 127, l. 206; *dotynt* in the Hendregadredd manuscript, H 74). This appears in a stanza referring to *nortmin* ('Northmen' or 'Normans', l. 116) and *gorescin pridein y uiron yswein* ('the conquering of Britain by the grandsons/descendants of Swein', l. 118). One should probably identify *yswein* with Swein Forkbeard, the Danish king who briefly conquered England in 1013–14, and we should perhaps understand *uiron yswein* as a poetic circumlocution for the Danes.¹⁸ The stanza may therefore be invoking a disastrous future where the Danes overrun Britain, using terms that would not have been possible before, at the earliest, the time of Swein's actual grandsons, who flourished in the years following Cnut's death in 1035. The Peniarth 3 version of this stanza also contains one verb in *-ant* (*lywyant*, Williams 1927–9: 127, l. 215), but in the Black Book the equivalent verb is *luniont* (l. 121; likewise *lunyont* in H 74), which renders the future-time reference with a present subjunctive ending. Otherwise, there are three verbs in *-ant* in the *Oianau*: one in an undatable context (*parchant*, LIDC poem 17.184), and two in a stanza that has been argued to allude to events of the 1170s or 1180s (*doant*, LIDC poem 17.38 = *deuant*, Williams 1927–9: 125, l. 135; *wnant*, LIDC poem 17.39 = Williams 1927–9: 125, l. 136; for the dating of the stanza, see LIDC xxxii–xxxiii). Most significant, however, are two further instances of verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* that are found only in the Peniarth 3 version of the text in a stanza clearly referring to events of 1211/12 (for the dating, see LIDC xxix–xxx). It is worth examining these lines a little more closely, since they represent the latest datable use of the 3. pl. pres. ind. ending *-(h)yn(t)*, though they have hitherto been unrecognised as such. The last four lines of the stanza appear as follows in Peniarth 3 (Williams 1927–9: 126, ll. 164–7; my translation):

pan sorro deinioel vap dunawt deinwyn
atuyd freing ar fo ford ny geissyn

¹⁸ In the Peniarth 3 version of the stanza, the name is *Ywein* (Williams 1927–9: 127, l. 212), presumably intended as a reference to the generic prophetic deliverer Owain, but *Yswein* is surely the *lectio difficilior*. The reading is *Yswein* in H 74 too, though there it is *Prydyn* that is conquered rather than *Pridein*. Swein Forkbeard is the only person called Swein who appears in *Brut y Tywysogyon*, which mentions him twice under the name *Yswein*, e.g. Jones 1973: 18–19, s.aa. [995] and [1013]. Note that, in the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogyon*, his name is misspelt *Ywein* three times (Jones 1941: 13–14), just like, seemingly, in the Peniarth 3 version of the stanza under discussion.

yn aber dulas gwalas¹⁹ gwelyn
kochwed yn enkil yn eu kylchyn

‘When Deiniol son of white-toothed Dunod becomes angry,
the French will be in flight a way that they will not seek,
in Aber Dulas they will see Welshmen,
bloodied, retreating around them.’

Interestingly, the lines appear to have been reworked in the version of the same stanza found in both the Black Book and the Hendregadredd manuscript, seemingly so as to remove the verbs in *-yn*. For instance, it is notable how Peniarth 3’s plural *freing* has become singular *frangc*, even though the plural pronoun is maintained in the last line. Here is the text from the Black Book (LIDC poem 17.69–72; cf. H 73; my translation):

Ban sorro deinoel mab dunaud deinwin
Advit frangc ar ffo fort ny ofin
In aber dulas gvanas guehin
Cochuet in ev kyl[ch]wet²⁰ yn ev kilchin

‘When Deiniol son of white-toothed Dunod becomes angry,
a Frenchman will be in flight a way that he will not ask,
in Aber Dulas support will be destroyed,
bloody conflict encircling them, surrounding them.’

Further work on the *Oianau* as part of the Cardiff Merlin project will help to confirm the relationships between the extant versions of this stanza. But considering that the Peniarth 3 version provides the only clear evidence for the use of 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* in the thirteenth century, it seems probable that this version of the stanza should be given textual priority against the version shared by the Black Book and the Hendregadredd manuscript. If so, the Peniarth 3 version must have existed before the other version was copied into the Black Book around the middle of the

¹⁹ David Callander makes the interesting suggestion to me that *gwalas* could be a rendering of the English word for ‘Welsh’ < Old English *wēalas*. Alternatively, one could emend the manuscript’s *gwalas* to *gwales* ‘refuge, retreat, shelter’, which would make sense in context.

²⁰ For the emendation see LIDC 98, n. 72; *cylchwet* is the reading in the Hendregadredd manuscript (H 73).

thirteenth century, indicating that the Peniarth 3 version was probably composed not long after the events of 1211/12 to which it refers.

The dateable prophetic poetry can thus help to refine our understanding of the disappearance of the 3. pl. pres. ind. verbal ending *-(h)yn(t)*. The tenth-century *Armes Prydein Vawr* is the only poem in which the ending is truly in free variation with *-an(t)*. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the ending was not in general use even in prophetic contexts, though two examples are found in one prophetic verse dated as late as 1212 or shortly thereafter. It is within this context that one can turn to examples of 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in prophetic poems that are more challenging to date. The only 3. pl. pres. ind. verb in *Dygogan Awen* in the Book of Taliesin is *dygobryssyn*, with *-yn* (PBT poem 4.1), but this appears in the first four lines, which have been quoted directly from *Armes Prydein Vawr*. More interestingly, the only 3. pl. pres. ind. verb in *Glaswawt Taliessin*, another Book of Taliesin prophecy, is *dyfynhyn*, also with *-yn* (PBT poem 2.25). Although the date of this poem remains uncertain, it appears to concern the battle of Brunanburh in 937, to which it contains several clear allusions, and so the verb in *-yn* may reflect a relatively early, perhaps tenth-century, date (for recent discussion, see PBT 42–3; Haycock 2011). Among the other Book of Taliesin prophecies, one finds only 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs in *-an(t)* with the exception of the second stanza of *Yn wir dymbi Romani kar*, which has three verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* in quick succession.²¹ None of these three verbs is in rhyming position, though the first of the three, *keissynt* (produced by emendation), would rhyme with line-internal *dibyn* and with *teruyn* in the previous line if it is understood without the final *-t*. The other 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs in the poem, in other stanzas, end in *-ant* or *-awnt*.²² This indicates that the second stanza, and perhaps the poem as a whole, is unlikely to postdate the early thirteenth century.

The only other examples of 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in the corpus of prophetic poetry described above appear in the Myrddin poems *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* and *Peirian Faban*. Discounting *henynt* (< *hanfod*), *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* has six 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs, of which four end in *-ant* and two in *-ynt*.²³ This agrees with the picture emerging from the process of editing this poem, which has suggested a date of composition around the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is worth noting that the two verbs in *-ynt*, neither of which is in rhyming position, were not generally altered during the transmission of the poem; all the medieval copies of

²¹ PBT poem 8, ll. 20 (*keissynt*, emended by Haycock from manuscript *keissut*) and 22 (*cwydynt* and *torrynt*).

²² PBT poem 8, ll. 7 (*gollychant*), 33 (*llithrant*) and 39 (*gorllechant*); and ll. 38 (*pebyllyawnt*), 55 (*nuchawnt*), 61 (*bydawnt*) and 62 (*medhawnt*).

²³ In Peniarth 3 and the Red Book, these are as follows: *torrant* (R 2 [col. 579.24]), *dywedynt* (R 2 [col. 579.24]), *wnant* (Williams 1927–9: 114, l. 13 = R 2 [col. 579.34]), *borthant* (Williams 1927–9: 115, l. 40), *torrynt* (Williams 1927–9: 118, l. 149 = R 4 [col. 582.5]), *gwledychant* (Williams 1927–9: 118, l. 161 = R 4 [col. 582.14–15]).

Cyfoesi Myrddin retain the ending in both verbs.²⁴ Lastly, in *Peirian Faban* there are only two 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs, both of them, interestingly, in *-ynt*.²⁵ Considering that the earliest manuscript to preserve this poem is the mid-fifteenth-century Peniarth 50, the verbal forms in *-ynt* provide valuable evidence that the poem is unlikely to postdate the early thirteenth century. A reference to the *freinc* ('French') in the poem suggests that it probably postdates the Norman conquest of England in 1066, so it is likely that the twelfth century is the approximate period for the poem's composition.²⁶

3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in Peniarth 50

Peniarth 50 was mentioned above as one of the mid-fifteenth-century manuscripts that preserves the majority of the early Myrddin poems; indeed, it seems to be the only independent witness to *Peirian Faban*. The manuscript's contents are miscellaneous, but the dominant component is prophetic poetry (see Huws 2022: I, 358–9). Some of the prophecies are anonymous, while others are attributed to legendary poets like Myrddin and Taliesin or late medieval poets like Y Bergam (fl. s. xiv¹) and Rhys Fardd (Y Bardd Bach o Ystum Llwynarth, fl. s. xv^{2/4}; his poetry in Peniarth 50 is edited in Evans 1964). Much of the content is probably late medieval, though the presence of early Myrddin poems like the *Oianau* and *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* shows that the manuscript also contains material that originated centuries beforehand.

Much of the prophetic poetry in Peniarth 50 (aside from the early Myrddin material) was edited and translated in Manon Jenkins's PhD thesis (Jenkins 1990). Jenkins's edition thus provides a convenient means by which to test the validity of the discussion above concerning 3. pl. pres. ind. verbal endings in the prophetic poetry surviving in earlier manuscripts. As one would expect on the basis of the earlier material, it is abundantly clear that *-an(t)* is the standard 3. pl. pres. ind. ending in this corpus of mainly late medieval prophecies. There is, however, a small group of verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* that requires discussion, since they raise the possibility that the 3. pl. pres. ind. ending *-(h)yn(t)* lingered on in prophetic discourse into the fifteenth century (as did the 3. sg. pres. ind. ending *-(h)awd*: Rodway 2013: 107–8), despite the many twelfth- and thirteenth-century prophetic poems with 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs ending only in *-an(t)*.

²⁴ The first is found as *dywedyn* (Peniarth 20), *dywedynt* (Red Book of Hergest), *dywettynt* (Peniarth 50), and *diweddynt* (Peniarth 26); the second is invariably spelled *torrynt* in Peniarth 3, the Red Book of Hergest, Peniarth 50 and Peniarth 26.

²⁵ Jarman 1950–2: 104–5, ll. 4 (*esgorynt*) and 25 (*odefynt*).

²⁶ The *freinc* are mentioned at l. 4 and are one of the subjects of the verb *esgorynt* (Jarman 1950–2: 104).

The first example is poem 19b (ed. and trans. Jenkins 1990: 268), the second line of which has the verb *odefynt* in what is clearly a context referring to future time (cf. Jenkins 1990: 268, where it is translated somewhat awkwardly as ‘they would not endure’, implying an imperfect-tense form with modal meaning). However, this short ‘poem’ of six lines is actually a *mélange* of lines from earlier poems. As Jenkins observes, lines 3–4 are taken from the *Oianau* (LIDC poem 17.58–9 = Williams 1927–9: 126, ll. 153–4 = H 73.15–16). What she does not notice, though, is that lines 1–2, including the verb *odefynt*, are taken from *Peirian Faban* (Jarman 1950–2: 105, ll. 24–5). This poem therefore does not constitute independent evidence for the present-tense ending *-(h)yn(t)*.

Three other instances appear in poems that may genuinely be early, or contain early elements. One is the substantial poem *Coronawg Fabon*, which runs to 60 lines (ed. and trans. Jenkins 1990: 285–96). Jenkins (1990: 285) notes that the poem is similar in form to *Peirian Faban*, and it may be significant that it occurs in the manuscript among the early Myrddin poems. The contents of pages 25–52 are as follows: *Afallennau*, *Oianau*, *Peirian Faban*, *Gwasgargerdd Myrddin*, *Coronawg Fabon*, *Cyfoesi Myrddin*. The verb in *-(h)yn(t)* appears in line 26 of *Coronawg Fabon* (text and translation from Jenkins 1990: 287 and 289, ll. 25–6):

Neut kyfnaót diuaót diuaed ellmyn:

Yr hynn y dylyyn o ddialaeth

‘A period of (?)annihilation [and] destruction [for the] foreigners:

that which they deserve [in the way of] revenge.’

The two lines immediately following these evoke the prophetic deliverer Cynan, and strikingly this is achieved with two 3. sg. pres. sub. verbs in *-wy*: *kyuarthóy* and *bretychóy*. According to Rodway’s analysis of the court poetry, the present subjunctive ending *-(h)wy* had fallen out of use by the second half of the thirteenth century, replaced by *-(h)o* (Rodway 2013: 81–3). Later in the poem, one also finds a 2. sg. pres. ind. verb in *-ydd*, confirmed by rhyme: *gymwyllydd* (: *eluydd*). The interpretation of this as a second-person verb is supported by the appearance of the second-person verb *elwi* (not in rhyming position) in the following line (ll. 44–5). Again, according to Rodway’s analysis, the version of the 2. sg. pres. ind. ending lacking its final dental fricative had become the accepted form even in court poetry by the second half of the thirteenth century (Rodway 2013: 47–9). All of this suggests that *Coronawg Fabon* should be dated no later than the first half of the thirteenth century, and thus that its verb *dylyyn* should be understood in that context; it is not

evidence that present-tense *-(h)yn(t)* remained in use in the fifteenth century. The matter will await further investigation of the poem.

Two other examples from a context that might be early are found in a poem on page 23 of the manuscript (ed. and trans. Jenkins 1990: 281–2), at the ends of lines 7 and 9. Part of this poem is now illegible due to gall-staining, but Jenkins has supplied the illegible words from Peniarth 311, which contains copies of the texts in Peniarth 50 by John Jones of Gellilyfdy in Jones’s distinctive orthography (text and translation from Jenkins 1990: 281, ll. 7–9; material supplied from Peniarth 311 in square brackets):

[Klywitor gwyr Gwyned yn decreu dyhed, yn gomed a <ȝ>eçynt],
Klywitor gwyr Freink yn [ffraut gyçwyn y’r tir],
Klywitor byd gwir, gweiddi [a glywynt]

‘The men of Gwynedd shall be heard provoking war, rejecting (?)those who flee,
The men of France shall be heard eagerly making for land,
It shall be heard [that] it is true, they would hear shouting’

The angular brackets in the first line mark Jenkins’s emendation of manuscript *ar eçynt*, which she interprets as a present-tense verb *ȝeçynt*. Two lines later, however, she interprets the attested *glywynt* as an imperfect-tense verb seemingly with habitual meaning, but in conjunction with *klywitor* and *byd* it seems better to interpret the latter too as a present-tense verb with future-time reference. There is no reason to doubt that John Jones has copied the lines faithfully. It can be seen that these three lines, in common with every line except the last of this thirteen-line poem, begin with the impersonal pres. ind. form *klywitor*; according to Rodway’s analysis of the court poetry, the ending *-itor* was no longer used by the second half of the thirteenth century (Rodway 2013: 107–8). There is nothing obvious in the content of the poem to suggest that it need be dated any later than this. However, preceding the present poem on the same page of Peniarth 50 is another poem consisting of 29 lines that each begin with the same verb again, spelled *Clewittor*. This poem refers to animal symbols in a manner that is more reminiscent of late medieval prophecy. Perhaps, therefore, the verb *klywitor* was taken out of one or more old texts by late medieval poets in order to provide a suitably archaic sounding structural device for these poems (note that the verb *klywytor* appears in *Peirian Faban*: Jarman 1950–2: 105, l. 44; cf. Rodway 2021: 80). Perhaps the verbs *ȝeçynt* and *glywynt* were adopted in the same way (note that *techyn* appears in AP l. 96). Alternatively, the poem with <ȝ>eçynt, *glywynt* and the lines beginning *klywitor* may be genuinely early and may have

been the direct model for the later poem with the animal symbols and the lines beginning *Clewittor*. Again, further investigation of the poems is required.

The final possible example of present-tense *-(h)yn(t)* in Peniarth 50 is the verb *gyfeuryn* (a late spelling for *gyfeiryn*), found among the many verses beginning *Orddod fron gorfod* (this verse, apparently missing its beginning, ed. and trans. Jenkins 1990: 370–1). The context is disjointed and difficult to interpret, but it seems unnatural to understand an imperfect verb here. Jenkins’s edition and translation is as follows (Jenkins 1990: 370, ll. 6–9):

Góynedd eu róyddet, Kymry vn gyntet eu llu a’e lluchet,
Gónn pan gychwyn, enbyt vyddet,
A gór golaes, góraól ar vaes, vreisc gyfeuryn,
Hil Llewelyn, llywyaódr edlym, edlit os myn

‘How swift the men of Gwynedd, just as fast the Welsh host as their lightning,
I know when it starts, let it be terrible,
And a quiet man, valiant on the battle-field, strongly shall they approach,
Of Llewelyn’s line, acute leader, sorrow if he will’

The context provides little basis for further comment, but, considering the examples discussed above, it seems unlikely that this isolated instance attests to a living tradition of using the present-tense ending *-(h)yn(t)* in late medieval prophetic poetry.

The examples discussed above suggest that the few instances of 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* among the prophetic poems in Peniarth 50 can be explained either as features of genuinely early poems or as instances of archaic-looking verbal forms that were repeated from earlier poems for effect. There is nothing to contradict the implication of the earlier prophetic poetry that present-tense *-(h)yn(t)* fell out of regular use even in prophetic discourse after the early thirteenth century.

3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in other *Hengerdd*

Outside the corpus of prophetic poetry, there is relatively little certain evidence for the 3. pl. pres. ind. ending *-(h)yn(t)* in the *Hengerdd*, where the vast majority of 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs end in *-an(t)*. However, it is difficult to gauge the exact number of surviving present-tense *-(h)yn(t)* verbs, because, outside of prophetic contexts where future meaning is clearly implied, there is greater scope for

ambiguity about whether *-(h)yn(t)* should be interpreted as the present-tense ending or the imperfect-tense ending. Some ambiguous cases are discussed below.²⁷

To a certain extent, genre can account for the paucity of relevant examples elsewhere in the *Hengerdd*. For example, the elegiac tone of the poems in the Book of Aneirin readily accounts for the prevalence of imperfect verbal forms there by comparison with present-tense forms. According to Graham Isaac's analysis, there are only three, or possibly four, 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs in the Book of Aneirin, all of them with *-ant* (Isaac 1996: 297). If for Williams, though, queried whether three verbs in *-ynt* should be interpreted as present-tense rather than imperfect (CA 94 [note to l. 85 on *trauodynt*] and 106 [note to l. 123 on *kyrchynt* and *kynnullynt*]). But translators have invariably favoured treating the verbs in both lines as imperfect forms, and this does seem most natural in context (e.g. Jackson 1969: 119 and 121; Jarman 1988: 8 and 10; Koch 1997: 61 and 67; Clancy 1998: 49–50).

Elsewhere the preference for *-an(t)* is more obvious. In the 'Legendary' Poems of Taliesin edited by Marged Haycock, there are many examples of *-an(t)* but only one probable example of *-(h)yn(t)*: *dybydyn* in *Kanu y Cwrwf* (LPBT poem 13.20; see note on p. 366).²⁸ *Edmyg Dinbych*, also found in the Book of Taliesin, has three verbs in *-an(t)* and none in *-(h)yn(t)*.²⁹ Similarly, in the religious poetry edited by Haycock from the Book of Taliesin and the Red Book of Hergest, there are numerous examples of *-an(t)* and none of *-(h)yn(t)*, including in the prophetic *Armes Dydd Brawd*, which has six verbs in *-ant*.³⁰ Among the 'saga' englynion edited by Jenny Rowland, there are many verbs in *-an(t)* but only two in *-(h)yn(t)* (EWSP 369, where 'Llym' 8b should be read for 'Llym' 5b): *diuryssint* in *Llym Awel* (EWSP 454, l. 8b = LIDC poem 30.23 [repeated again at 40.30] = EWGNP l.8b) and *llwybryn* in *Gwahodd Llywarch i Lanfawr* (EWSP 415, l. 9c).³¹ The former, appearing in a stanza copied twice in the Black Book, is the only Black Book example of the ending apart from the instance in the *Oianau*, discussed above. Among the gnomic and nature poems edited by Jacobs, along with the related series of poems entitled *Englynion Duad* and edited by Rowland, there is only a single

²⁷ For the Book of Aneirin and the so-called 'saga' englynion, I have generally relied on the analyses in Isaac 1996 and EWSP respectively. Otherwise, I have searched through the following: LIDC; PT; LPBT; CC; Gruffydd 1999; Russell 2017; EWGNP; Rowland 1981; *Marwnad Cynddylan* in EWSP 174–9; Gruffydd 1978.

²⁸ For verbs in *-an(t)*, see LPBT poems 1 (ll. 38 and 48), 2 (l. 13), 4 (l. 178), 5 (l. 190), 6 (l. 48), 14 (ll. 1 and 4), 15 (l. 44), 16 (l. 23), 18 (ll. 36, 39, 44, 46, 55), 21 (l. 17) and 23 (l. 14).

²⁹ Russell 2017: 27–8, ll. 21 (*wnant*), 36 (*erllyssan*) and 61 (*derllyssant*). The third instance, *derllyssant*, appears in the one stanza of the poem that is also found in the Black Book of Carmarthen, which reads *darwant* instead (= LIDC poem 13.4).

³⁰ Verbs in *-an(t)* are as follows. Book of Taliesin: CC poems 11 (l. 31), 20 (= *Armes Dydd Brawd*, ll. 81, 82, 83, 86, 90, 92) and 24 (ll. 74, 84, 89, 92, 94); Red Book of Hergest: CC poem 33 (ll. 92 and 111).

³¹ Rowland also tentatively suggested emending *dybryssit* in *Englynion Cadwallon* (EWSP 447, l. 18b = Gruffydd 1978: 38) to *dybryssint* (EWSP 615–16), on the basis that the absolute ending *-it* should not have been used with a compound verb in *dy-*. For the same reason, Jacobs suggested emending *dyffustit* in *Gossymdeith Llefoet Wynebclawr* to *dyffustin* (Jacobs 2004: 8 and 22, n. to l. 49; the suggestion is lacking in EWGNP 63). However, there is good evidence to show that absolute endings could be used with compound verbs by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Rodway 2013: 110–11), so the emendations are not justified.

example of 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* apart from the instance in *Llym Awel* mentioned above: this is *otynt* in *Gossymdeith Llefoet Wynebclawr*, line 106: *otynt tonnawr gawr ennwir* (EWGNP IX.106). This line is paraphrased by Jacobs, in the present tense, as ‘Y mae’r tonnau’n syrthio â sŵn enbyd’ (Jacobs 2004: 17).³² Jacobs suggested a date in the twelfth century or earlier for this stanza on account of its *hapax legomenon*, *dychwynir* (l. 114), and its use of the adverb *moch* (l. 115) (cf. Jacobs 2004: 5–8).

The sparse attestation of *-(h)yn(t)* in these collections of early poetry reminds one of the near total absence of the ending from the work of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poets. Only in some of the Book of Taliesin poems that are generally recognised to be ‘early’ can one find other possible examples of the ending. Due to the panegyric or elegaic nature of these poems, it is usually difficult to decide whether instances of *-(h)yn(t)* should be treated as present-tense forms or imperfect-tense forms. In *Echrys Ynys*, for example, which has been dated fairly convincingly to the early eleventh century (Charles-Edwards 2013: 665–8), the only relevant verbal form is *digonyn* (Gruffydd 1999: 44, l. 24, where it is wrongly printed as *ddigonyn*). Ifor Williams understood the verbal ending of *na digonyn* as an imperfect of possibility, translating it ‘that they could do not’ (Williams 1972: 178), whereas Geraint Gruffydd understood it as 3 pl. pres. ind. *-yn(t)* with future-time reference, rendering it ‘that ... they will do nothing’ (Gruffydd 1999: 45). Either reading seems entirely possible in this instance, perhaps deliberately.

Other ambiguous instances may be identified among the twelve so-called ‘historical’ poems of Taliesin edited by Ifor Williams. Individual poems in the group each have only a scattering of 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs, but it is notable that *-(h)yn(t)* is found alongside *-an(t)*: only *-an(t)* is found in poems III (l. 9, *gwydant*), IV (l. 12, *wedant*), IX (l. 22, *kanan*) and XII (ll. 1, *rychanant*, 2, *ry chwynant*, and 47, *rigwystlant*), whereas poems VI, VII and XI have no verbs in *-an(t)* and some verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* that could possibly be understood as present-tense forms rather than imperfect-tense forms.

In poem VI (*Gweith Argoet Llwyfein*), Ifor Williams glossed *cefffynt* as ‘3 pl. pres. or fut. indic.’ in line 6, *ny chefffynt eiryos hyt yr vn dyd* (PT 72). But it is equally possible to understand this as an imperfect form, perhaps indicating possibility; thus, ‘they could not obtain a delay even for a single day’. Further on in the same poem, the verb *dodynt* is found twice, the second instance being a reply to the first (PT VI.7–10; I have supplied punctuation):

Atorelwis Flamdwyn vawr trebystawt:

‘A dodynt yg gwystlon, a ynt parawt?’

³² Jacobs glosses *otynt* as 3. pl. pres. ind. in his glossary (EWGNP 123), though overlooks it in his discussion of verbal forms in the book’s introduction (EWGNP xxxv and xlii).

Ys attebwys Owein dwyrein fossawt:
'Nyt dodynt, nyt ydynt, nyt ynt parawt'

Joseph Clancy translated these lines as follows (Clancy 1998: 85):

Fflamddwyn shouted, big at boasting:
'Have my hostages come? Are they ready?'
Answered Owain, bane of the East:
'They've not come, are not here, are not ready'

Clancy has understood *dodynt* as the 3. pl. perf. ind. form of the verb *dyfod*, a conjugation formed by adding present-tense forms of the verb *bod* (like 3. pl. *ynt*) to the preterite stem (G 413; Evans 1964: 134 and 136, n. 3). Alternatively, as John Morris-Jones preferred, one could understand the verb as *dodi*, and translate as either 'would they give hostages' (Morris-Jones 1918: 158), taking *-ynt* as imperfect with modal meaning, or, better, as 'Do they give (my) hostages?', taking *-ynt* as 3. pl. pres. ind. (for the ambiguity of *yg gwystlon*, see Sims-Williams 2015: 293). There seems little reason to choose between the perfect-tense *dyfod* interpretation and the present-tense *dodi* interpretation.

Similar ambiguity is found in poem VII, lines 3–4. The verb *gnissynt* appears in both of these lines, and Ifor Williams understood it as a present-tense form in both instances (PT 80). The first four lines are as follows:

Ardwyre reget ryssed rieu.
neu ti rygosteis kyn bwyf teu.
gnissynt kat lafnawr a chat vereu.
Gnissynt wyr ydan kylchwyawr.

Joseph Clancy follows Williams's interpretation of these verbs and translates as follows (Clancy 1998: 85):

Rise, Rheged, well-furnished with lords:
I have cherished you, though I be not yours.
They moan facing sword-blades and spears;
Men moan underneath round shields.

But again, there is little that precludes interpreting these verbs as imperfect-tense forms, perhaps with a habitual or iterative sense: ‘they would moan’, etc.

Somewhat more promising are the two examples that Ifor Williams identifies in Poem XI, lines 7 and 9 (PT 120–1). These occur in a series of lines in praise of Gwallawg, which seem to oscillate between the past and present tenses. The two verbs in *-yn* (the first restored by Williams through emendation) occur immediately after the verb *torhyt*, which has the 3. sg. pres. ind. absolute ending *-hyt*. For context, here are lines 5–10 (showing Williams’s emendations in square brackets):

Ef differth aduwyn llan lleennawc.
torhyt [lu] vn hwch ardwyawc.
Hir dychyferuydein [> dychyferuydyn] o brydein [> brydyn] gofein.
o berth Ma[na]w ac eiddin.
Ny chymeryn kyuerbyn.
kyweith kyweithyd clytwyn.

Here, again, is Clancy’s translation, which accepts the emendations shown above and also implies the emendation of *gofein* in the third line to *gofyn* (Clancy 1998: 91):

He defended splendid Llan Lleenawg,
Conquers Unhwch’s war-band, protector.
They meet the demand from Prydyn,
From Perth Manaw and Eiddyn.
They brook no opposition,
Clydwyn’s company’s companions.

Following these lines, most of the verbs are preterite as the poem becomes a list of Gwallawg’s battles. But the juxtaposition of the two verbs in *-yn* and the verb in *-hyt*, sandwiched between preterite verbs, leads one to suspect that, as in the case of *Armes Prydein Vawr*, the poet here is deliberately playing with the temporal ambiguity of the ending *-yn* in order to emphasise the omnipresence of Gwallawg and his warband.

Conclusion

A fairly coherent picture emerges from the discussion above. The Juvenicus glosses reveal that *-(h)yn(t)* was used as a regular 3. pl. pres. ind. ending in the tenth century, and this is confirmed by *Armes Prydein Vawr*, which additionally shows that poets made productive use of the ending in prophetic contexts in the same period. By the twelfth century, however, the ending had all but fallen out of regular use, as suggested by Rodway's analysis of the court poetry. The one context in which the ending remained in use for a slightly longer period was prophetic poetry, in which sporadic examples may be found up to the early thirteenth century. Thereafter, the ending fell out of use even in prophetic contexts.

It is likely that one reason for 3. pl. pres. ind. verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* being used in prophetic poetry in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, when the ending had fallen out of regular use in other contexts, was that they lent the poems an air of archaism. It was for exactly the same reason that the old absolute ending *-(h)awd* continued to be used in some prophetic and gnomic poems as late as the fifteenth century, even though it had otherwise fallen out of use, even in strict-metre panegyric poetry, by the second half of the fourteenth century at the latest. As a result of the sparse attestation of the ending outside prophetic poetry, the majority of surviving examples of *-(h)yn(t)*, apart from those in the Juvenicus glosses, appear to refer to future time, since that was the standard reference time for prophetic poems. Given this situation, it is appropriate to ask whether the ending's apparent connotation of futurity is simply an accident of its survival in mainly prophetic contexts, or whether, conversely, it was adopted in prophetic discourse precisely because it had *already* developed a specific connotation of futurity. On the one hand, the roughly equal distribution of verbs in *-(h)yn(t)* and verbs in *-an(t)* in *Armes Prydein Vawr* suggests that neither of these formally present-tense endings had any stronger association with futurity than the other in the tenth century. On the other hand, it may be relevant that a minority of the *-(h)yn(t)* verbs discussed in this article and listed in the appendix below have an *-h-* preceding the ending, like the other verbal endings that often have future-time reference: these are *kilhyn*, *creinhyn*, *kyueruydhyn*, *ffohyn*³³ and *telhyn* in *Armes Prydein Vawr* (AP ll. 65, 63, 17, 66 and 22), *dyfynhyn* in *Glaswawt Taliessin* (PBT poem 2.25), and, showing the relevant provection, *dottint/dottynt* in the Oianau stanza composed sometime after c. 1035 (LIDC poem 17.113 = Williams 1927–9: 127, l. 206).

Stefan Schumacher has argued, probably rightly, that the *-h-* that often precedes the 3. sg. pres. ind. absolute endings ultimately arose by analogy with the subjunctive, which had an inherited *-h-* (Schumacher 1995). He suggested that it was initially the 3. sg. imperative ending *-(h)id* (and possibly *-(h)awd*)³⁴ that was influenced by subjunctive forms in their jussive meaning, and that this in

³³ Another possibility for this particular *-h-* is that it is marking the vowel hiatus.

³⁴ The reviewer points out to me that Ifor Williams identified a possible instance of imperative *-awd* in *Canu Llywarch Hen* (namely, *llwyprawd*: CLIH 154).

turn influenced the homophonous absolute present indicative ending *-id*, and then by extension *-yd* and *-awd* too. His main reason for positing the 3. sg. imperative ending as an intermediary between the present subjunctive and present indicative was to explain why the *-h-* was intruded into only select third-person singular and plural forms, and not the remainder of the present-tense paradigm (Schumacher 1995: 58–9). These examples of *-hyn(t)* should be considered in relation to the same problem; here is another rare third-person present-tense ending that came to be used mainly with future time reference, and it was similarly supplied sporadically with a preceding *-h-*. In

Schumacher’s model, one would need to explain the *-h-* of *-hyn(t)* as having arisen by analogy with the 3. sg. absolute ending *-(h)y d*, which shares the same vowel quality, just as he posits for the *-h-* in impersonal *-hawr* and 3. pl. *-hawnt*, under the influence of *-hawd* (Schumacher 1995: 62–4). This is certainly possible, but it should not cause us to overlook that the common denominator between these forms, in context, is that they usually have future-time reference. Thus, in addition to the potential influence of the imperative endings *-id* and possibly *-awd* on the homophonous present-tense absolute endings, it may be that the *h*-forms of the present-tense endings arose under the direct influence of the present subjunctive, because the subjunctive *-h-* had been analysed as a marker of futurity (cf. Lewis and Pedersen 1937: 280). If so, it implies that those present-tense endings into which *-h-* was sporadically inserted, including *-yn(t)*, had already developed a specific association with future-time reference in speakers’ minds. In turn, this may explain why these verbal forms were favoured in prophetic poems, and perhaps why they lingered a little longer in prophetic contexts than in other contexts. The present-tense ending *-(h)yn(t)* may therefore have already developed an association with futurity by the time that *Armes Prydein Vawr* was composed around the second quarter of the tenth century, if we can rely on the evidence of the poem’s *h*-forms.³⁵

Appendix: an alphabetised list of verbs with 3. pl. pres. ind. *-(h)yn(t)* in medieval Welsh poetry

Mutated forms are alphabetised according to their radical initials, but the manuscript spellings are retained. Interpretation of verbs in *Armes Prydein Vawr* generally follows Callander and Thomas 2021. The ambiguous instances in the Book of Aneirin, as posited by Ifor Williams, are not included, whereas the possible examples in *Echrys Ynys* and the ‘historical’ Taliesin poems are included. I have also included the two possible examples from twelfth-century court poetry discussed by Rodway. Of

³⁵ This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/W000717/1]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising. I would like to thank David Callander, Dylan Foster Evans and Simon Rodway for commenting helpfully on earlier drafts of this article, as well as the anonymous reviewer for sharpening the article’s terminological precision.

the possible instances in Peniarth 50, discussed above, only the example in *Coronawg Fabon* is included, since that is the only one which, on present evidence, can probably be considered a genuine example from an early text.

Verb	Reference
adrodynt	AP I. 97
ceffynt(?)	PT VI.6
keffynt	CBT IV poem 6.205
geffyn	AP I. 103
keissynt(?) (MS keissut)	Yn wir dymbi Romani kar (PBT poem 8.20)
geissyn	Oianau (Williams 1927–9: 126, l. 165)
genyn	AP I. 90
kilhyn	AP I. 65
creinhyn	AP I. 63
cwydynt	Yn wir dymbi Romani kar (PBT poem 8.22)
cóynnyn	AP I. 47
góynnyn	AP I. 19
kyferuydyn	AP I. 54
kyueruydhyn	AP I. 17
chymeryn	PT XI.9
kymodynt	AP I. 50
dechrymynt	CBT I poem 11.5
digonyn	Echrys Ynys (Gruffydd 1999: 44 [l. 24])
discynnyn	AP I. 16
dodynt(?)	PT VI.8
dodynt(?)	PT VI.10
dottint = dottynt	Oianau (LIDC poem 17.113 = Williams 1927–9: 127, l. 206)
dullyn	AP I. 61
dychyferuydyn(?) (MS dychyferuydein)	PT XI.7
dychynnullyn	AP I. 21
dybydyn	AP I. 13
dybydyn	Kanu y Cwrwŷ (LPBT poem 13.20)

diuryssint = diwrissint	Llym awel (LIDC poem 30.23 = 40.30)
dyfynhyn	Glaswawt Taliessin (PBT poem 2.25)
dygobryssyn	AP I. 1
dygobryssyn	Dygogan Awen (PBT poem 4.1)
dyllyn	Coronawg Fabon (Jenkins 1990: 287, l. 26)
dyorfyn	AP I. 12
dywedynt	Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer (R 2 [col. 579.24])
esgorynt	Peirian Faban (Jarman 1950–2: 104, l. 4)
ffohyn	AP I. 66
gnissynt(?)	PT VII.3
gnissynt(?)	PT VII.4
odefynt	Peirian Faban (Jarman 1950–2: 105, l. 25)
gwelyn	Oianau (Williams 1927–9: 126, l. 166)
wydynt	AP I. 30
lleferynt	AP I. 49
llithryn	AP I. 68
llwybryn	Gwahodd Llywarch i Lanfawr (EWSP 415 [l. 9c])
otynt	Gossymdeith Llefoet Wynebclawr (EWGNP IX.106)
syrthyn	AP I. 60
techyn	AP I. 96
telhyn	AP I. 22
terdyn(?)	AP I. 45
torrynt	Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer (Williams 1927–9: 118, l. 149 = R 4 [col. 582.5])
torrynt	Yn wir dymbi Romani kar (PBT poem 8.22)
treiglynt	AP I. 30
ymorchymynynt	AP I. 51
ymprofyn	AP I. 56
ymwrthuynnyn	AP I. 20

Bibliographical Abbreviations

AP = Williams 1955

CA = Williams 1961

CBT I = Williams, Lynch and Gruffydd 1994

CBT IV = Jones and Parry Owen 1995

CC = Haycock 1994

CLIH = Williams 1935

EWGNP = Jacobs 2012

EWSP = Rowland 1990

G = Lloyd-Jones 1931–63

H = Morris-Jones and Parry-Williams 1933

LPBT = Haycock 2015

LIDC = Jarman 1982

PBT = Haycock 2013

PT = Williams 1968

R = Evans 1911

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