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HPHI7016 Past Peoples, Present Societies
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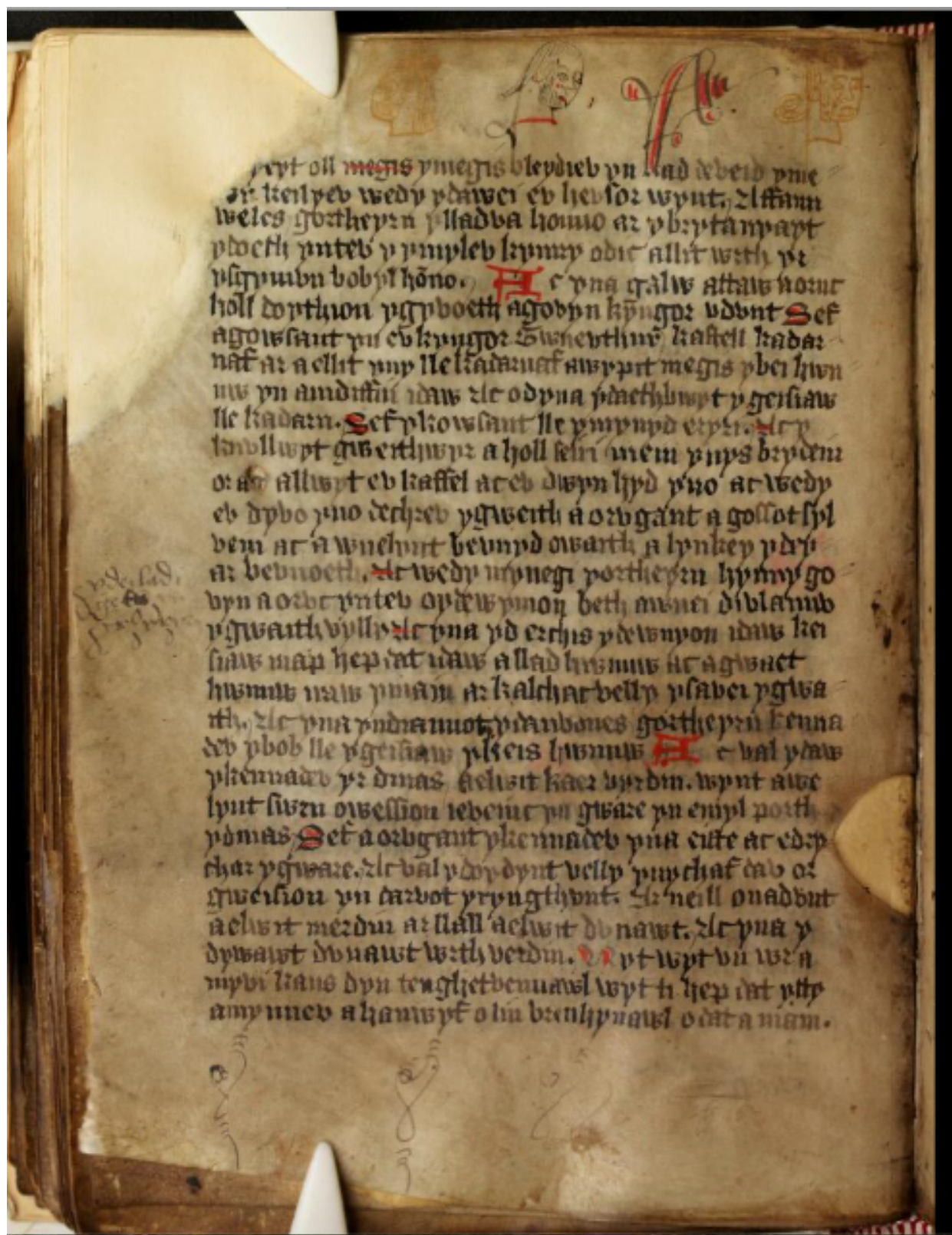
TRANSCRIPTION EXERCISE

For my transcription exercise I chose to transcribe a passage in Peniarth MS 23C. This is the section of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannia* in which Merlin is brought before Vortigern and explains the existence of dragons under Dinas Emrys. The pages are folios 59v. through 61v (pages 124–128 on the website of the National Library of Wales). To transcribe this passage, I first wrote down by hand everything that I could recognize. If there were words or letters that I could not make out, I drew a line in their place. Some letters that looked very different from the way they appear in modern writing I figured out as I went along, and as I did so, I went back and filled these in. Sometimes I left the work and came back and was able to see things that I could not before. Then I went line by line and made sure that the letters were accurately transcribed as much as I knew, and I worked particularly on deciphering the words and letters I had left blank before. I was able to figure out some of these by the context, and I looked up others in *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* to make sure that I had the right idea. There are some words that I do not know, and for these I went through the alphabet to make sure that I could think of no other letters to go in their place. Finally, I typed up my transcription, keeping the same format as in the manuscript.

Where there is damage to the manuscript and letters are missing I have the empty space marked with brackets with an underscore for every letter or space that I think might have been there. The writer drew faint single or double diagonal lines at the end of some lines to mark most of the times that a section of the last word is being carried onto the next line, and I have used a long dash to mark this. Finally, on a couple of the pages the writer added a few missing letters or words with a caret after writing, and for these I have used the caret followed by the added letters in superscription.

According to the National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 23C was written by one scribe, mostly likely in the north of Wales at the end of the fifteenth century.¹ This places its creation around the time when Henry VII took the English throne, an act that was seen by many Welshmen as a fulfillment of the promised future British ruler over all of Britain. Such a time was one in which interest in the past British kings of Britain would have been great among the Welsh, and thus it is hardly surprising that yet another copy of *Brut y Brenhinedd* was commissioned at this time.

¹ 'Peniarth MS 23C', The National Library of Wales <<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/history-of-the-kings#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-792%2C0%2C4679%2C3989>> [accessed 9 January, 2023]

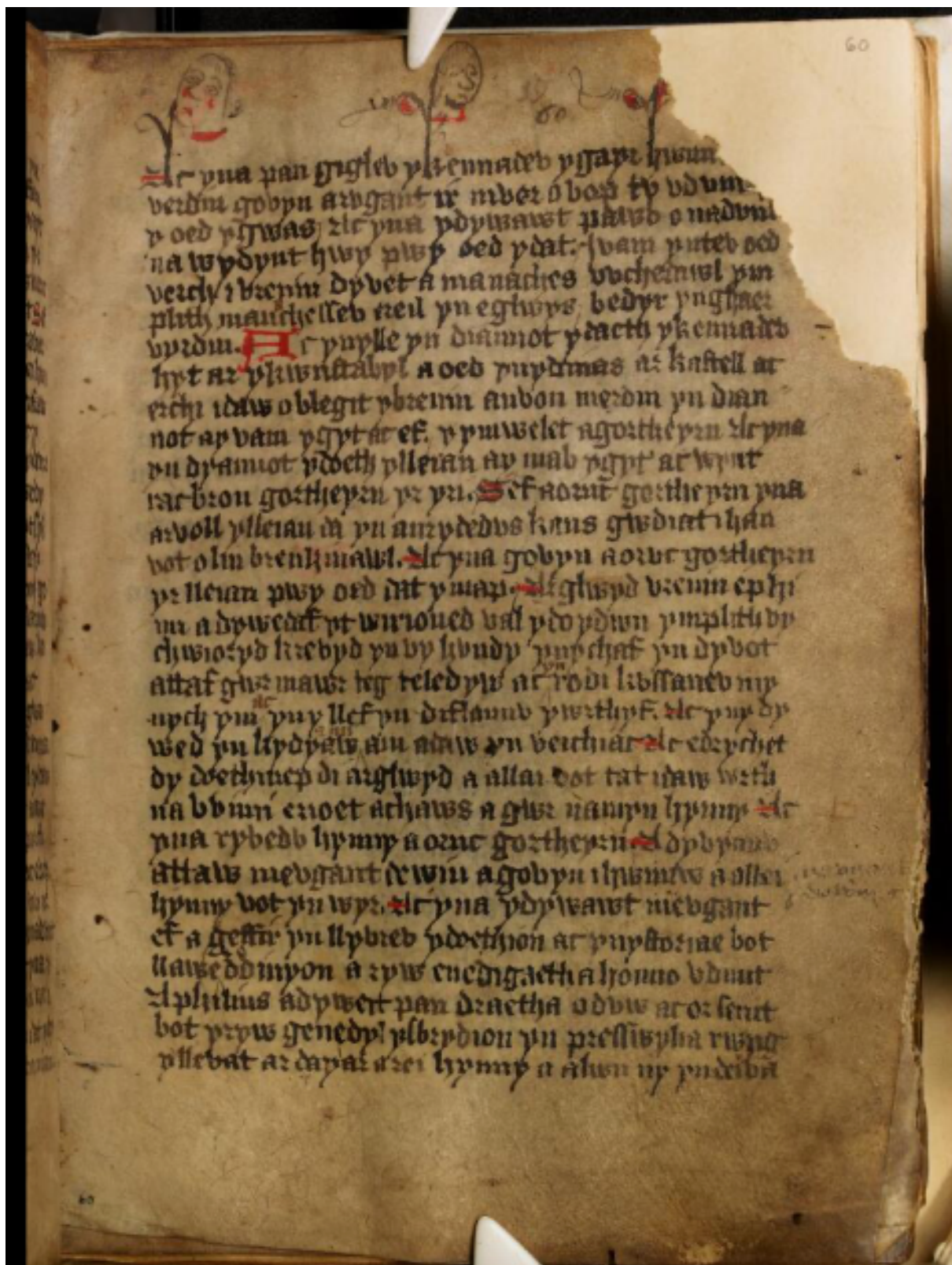


Folio 59v/Page 124

<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/history-of-the-kings?c=&m=&s=&cv=123&xywh=-665%2C-1%2C4538%2C3870>

Folio 59v

Ac yna galw attaw aoruc
 holl doythion ygvoeth agovyn kyngor vdvnt Sef
 agowsant yn ev kyngor Gwneuthur kastell kadar—
 naf ar a ellit yny lle kadarnaf awypit megis ybei hwn—
 nw yn amdiffin idaw Ac odynd ydaethbwyt y geisiaw
 lle kadarn. Sef ykowsant lle ymynydd eryr. Ac y
 knvllwyt gweithwyr a holl seui mein ynys brydein
 or a[] allwyt ev kaffel ac ev dwyn hyd yno ac wedy
 ev dyvo yno dechrev ygweith a orvgant a gossot syl
 veni ac a wnehynt beynydd owaith a lynkey ydey—
 ar benoeth. Ac wedy mynegi yortheyrn hynny go—
 vyn a oruc ynteu oydeyuion beth awnei divlanuv
 ygwaith vylly Ac yna yd erchis y dewnyon idaw kei—
 siaw map hep dat idaw a llad hwnnw ac agwaet
 hwnnw naw ymam ar kalch ac velly ysavei ygwa—
 ith. Ac yna yndiannuot a danvones gortheyrn kenna—
 dev ybob lle ygeisiaw ykeis hwnnw Ac val ydaw
 ykennadev yr dinas aelwit kaer vyrddin. wynt awe—
 lynt swrn owession ievenic yn gware yn emyl porth
 ydinas Sef a orvgant ykennadev yna ente ac edry—
 char y gware. Ac val ydoydynt velly yny chaf dav or
 gweision yn darvot yryngthvnt. Yr neill onadvnt
 a elwit merddin ar llall aelwit dunawt. Ac yna y
 dywawt dynawt wrth verdin. Ryt wyt vu wr a
 myvi kaus dyn tenghetveunawl wyt ti hep dat ytty
 amynneu ohanwyf o lin brenhynawl o dat a mam.

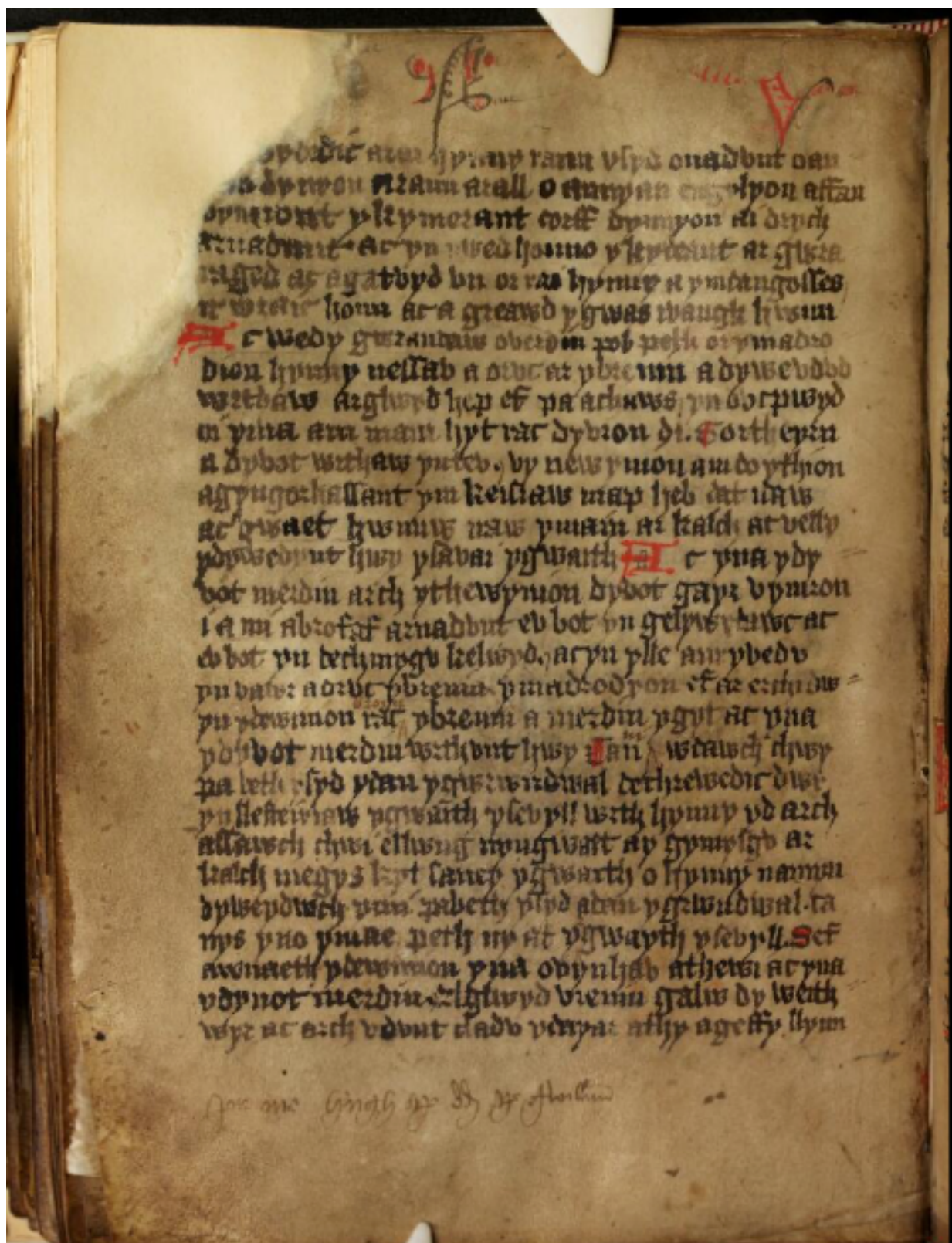


Folio 60r/Page 125

<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/history-of-the-kings#c=&m=&s=&cv=124&xywh=-720%2C-1%2C4433%2C3780>

Folio 60r

Ac yna pan giglev ykennadev ygayr hwenn[_ _ _ _]
 verdin govyn arvgant ir niver o bop ty vdvnt [_ _]
 y oed ygwaw Ac yna ydywawt pawb o nadvnt
 na wydynt hwy pwy oed ydat. Mam yntev oed
 verch i brenin dyvet a manaches vvchedawl ym—
 plith man^achessev ereu yn eglwys bedyr ynghaer
 vyrdin. Ac yuylle yn diannot y daeth y kennadev
 hyt ar ykwnstabyl a oed ynydinas ar kastell ac
 erchi idaw oblegit ybrenin anvon merdin yn dian—
 not ay vam ytyt ac ef. y ymwelet agortheyrn Ac yna—
 yn dyannot ydoeth ylleian ay mab ygyt ac wynt
 rac bron gortheyrn yr yri. Sef aoruc gortheyrn yna
 arvoll ylleian da yn anrydedus kaus gwdiat i han—
 vot olin brenhinawl. Ac yna govyn aoruc gortheyrn
 yr lleian pwy oed dat y map. Arglwyd vrenin ephi
 uu a dywedaf yt wirioned val ydo ydwn ymplith vy
 chwioryd krevyd yn vy hvndy yny chaf yn dyvot
 attaf gwr mawr teg teledyw ac ^{yn} rodi kvssanev my—
 nych ym ^{ac} yny llef yn diflannv ywrthyf. Ac yny dy
 wed yn kydyaw^{ann} am adaw yn veichiac Ac edrychet
 dy doethmep di arglwyd a allai. vot tat idaw wrth
 na bvum erioet achaws a gwr namyn hynny Ac
 yna ryvedv hynny a oruc gortheyrn. A dyvynnv
 attaw mevgant dewin agovyn ihwennw a allei
 hynny vot yn wyr. Ac yna ydywawt mevgant
 ef a geffir yn llyvrev ydoethion ac ynystoriae bot
 llaweddinyon a ryw enedigaeth a honno vdunt
 Aphilius adyweit pan draetha odvw ac or senit
 bot yryw genedyl ysbrydion yn presswylia rwng
 yllevat ar dayar a rei hynny a alwn ny yndeivyl



Folio 60v/Page 126

<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/history-of-the-kings#c=&m=&s=&cv=125&xywh=-692%2C-1%2C4538%2C3870>

Folio 60v

[_ _ _] ydedic arni hynny ranu ysyd onadvnt oan—
 [_]n dynyon arauu arall o annyan engylyon affau
 [_]ynnont ykymerant corff dynnyon ai drych
 arnadunt ac yn ywed honno y kydeant ar gwra—
 inged ac agatvyd vu or ran hynny a ymdangosses
 ir wraic honn ac a greawd y gwas ivangk hwnn
 Ac wedy gwrandaw overdin pob peth or ymadro—
 dion hynny nessav a orvc ar ybrenin adywevdvd
 wrthaw arglwyd hep ef pa achaws yn dvcpwyd
 in yma am mam hyt nac dyvron di. Gortheyrn
 a dyvot wrthaw ynteu. vy newynion am doythion
 agyngorhassant ym keisiaw map heb dat idaw
 ac gwaet hwnnnw naw ymam ar kald ac velly
 ydywedynt hwy ysavai ygwaith Ac yna ydy—
 vot merdin arch ythewynion dyvot gayr vymron
 i a mi abrofaf arnadvnt ev bot yn gelywydawc ac
 ev bot yn dechmygv kelwyd. ac yn ylle anryvedv
 yn vawr aorvc ybrenin ymadrodyon ef ar erchi dw—
 yn ydewinion rac ^{^Groyn} ybrenin a merdin ygyt ac yna
 ydyvot merdin wrthvnt hwy Can ni wdawch chwy
 pa beth ysyd ydan ygrwndwal dechrewedic dwr
 yn llesteiviau ygwaith ysevyll wrth hynny yd arch
 assawch chwi ellwng nyugwast ay gymysgv ar
 kalch megys kyt sauey ygwaith o hynny namyn
 dyweydwch ynn pabeth ysyd adan ygrwndwal. ca
 nys yno ymae peth ny at y^rgwayth ysevyll. Sef
 awnaeth ydewinion yna ovynhav athewi ac yna
 ydyvot merdin. Arglwyd vrenin galw dy weith—
 wyr ac arch vdvnt cladv ydayar athy ageffy llynn

dan ydwar a hwmus i at yr t a sebyll. **G**
 gwnebyth yr hwmus yllwm agallat yr hwmus aw
 nay ydwar yn dawallat. Zlc awua yr gwarth yn
 faw Zlc eilwath nesab adur merdm at ydwar ypon
 agod yn ydwar coydurh ym eb et dwyllwyr heb
 alic pabeth vlydd yngwaelawt yllwm. **S**ef a
 a othgaut writh eb hwi. **Z**l yma ydwarawt merdm
 with othepm par di arglwyd eilwng yllwm yn
 gyfredm athi awely do daryn heb ym gwaelawt
 Zl ymao yn yr heym dwy dret yn llyfgyd llydodd
 hwmus adur gothepm am welet yllwm yn aw Zl
 ffawb oed yn rybedd ar a oed yn gwlanawt Zl yma
 edrych ar ygwaw rebangli yn dyweddyt hwmus. **E**

Go: the
yung
theneb.

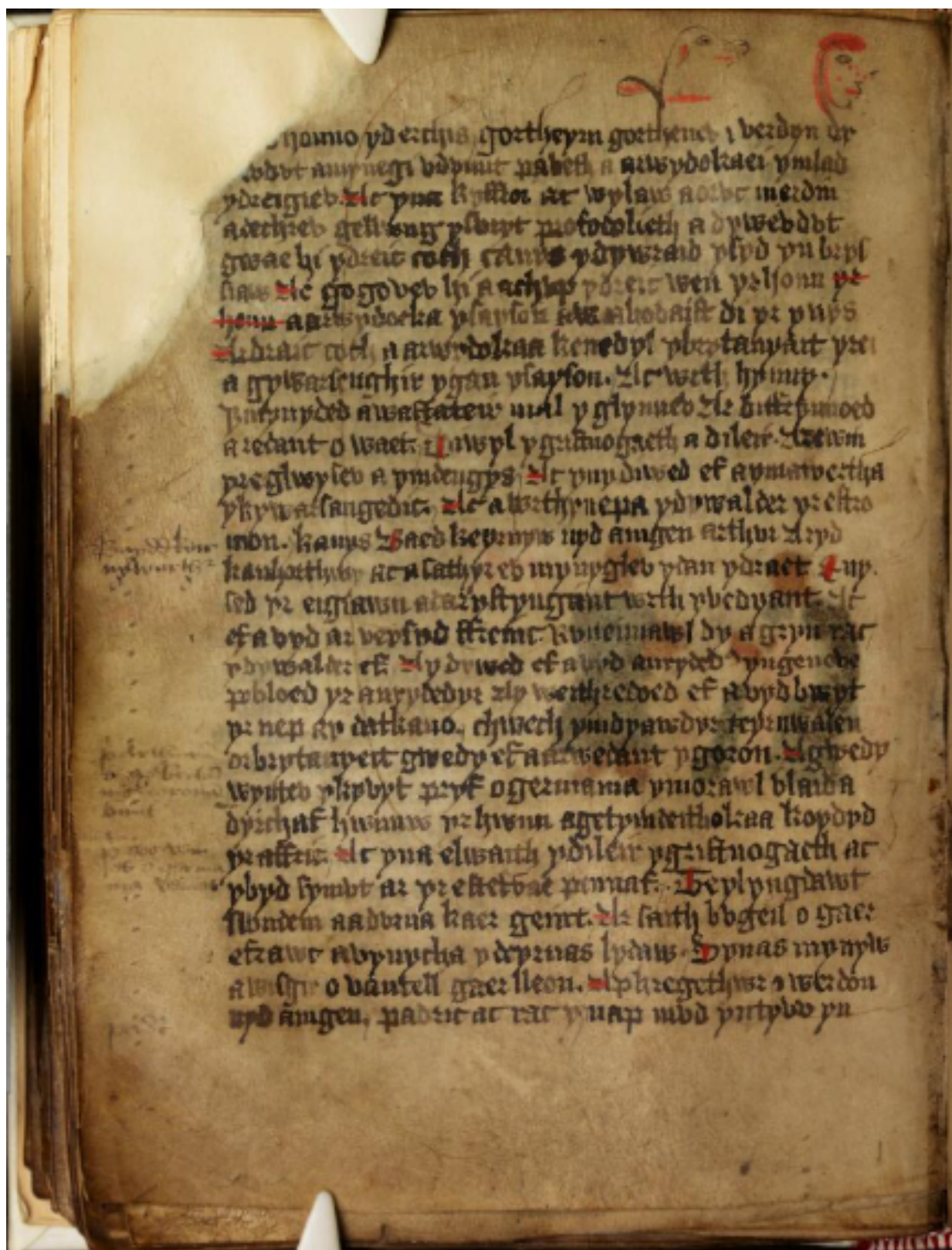
Arval ydowed gothegyn
gotheneb yu aseb
a: lan ygwahai edic lynn
hwmau myrthaf diwy de
it yu lybodyn ar naill o
uadbot yu wen a: llall
yu goch. **E**t yna gwee: eb
lybodi ar eb dybot yngy
dages. **E**t wput adareb girat yuad a: wnaethant
et ellwnt tan oc eb llyadyl. **E**t yna arderlyeb
ygorbb ydreic weim a: ymell ydreic cochl yto llyt
ar erthloed yllynn. **E**t yna gweedy gwelet ordreic
o: dreic cochl ybot yu wethladedic harach o: llym
et yfefaoneth lly yna colvriaw yu baw a: dwyn
rddyn yz dreic wen adymell drachel yu ywreth
Et yna llyt tra ytoedynt ydreigreb yu ymlad ar

Folio 61r

dan ydayar ahwnnw ny at yr twr sevyll. Gw[_ _]
 gwnevthyr hynny yllynn agaffat yr hwnn aw
 nay ydayar yn anwastat. Ac awna yr gwaith yn
 sav Ac eilwaith nesav aoruc merdin at ydewinyon
 agovyn vdvunt doydwch ynn eb ef dwyllwyr gev
 awc pabeth ysydd yngwaelawt yllynn. Sef a
 aorvgant wyntev tewi Ac yna ydywawt merdin
 wrth ortheyrn par di arglwyd ellwng yllynn yn
 gyfredin athi awely dev vayn geu yny gwaelawt
 Ac ymae yn yr heyni. dwy drec yn kysgv Achredv
 hynny aoruc gortheyrrn am welet yllynn yn wn A
 ffawb oed yn ryvedu ar a oed yn gwranda Ac yna
 edrych ar ygwass ievangk yn dywevdyt hynny

Ac val ydoed gortheyrrn
 gorthenev yn esteiv
 ar lan ygwahavedic lynn
 hwnnw ynnychaf dwy dre
 ic yn kyvody ar naill o
 uadvnt yn wen ar llall
 yn goch Ac yna gwedy ev
 kyvodi ac ev dyvot yngy

vagos ygyt wynt adechreu girat ynad awnaethant
 .Ac ellwnt tan oc ev hanadyl. Ac yna ar dechrev
 ygorvv ydreic wenn athyniell ydreic coch ytto hyt
 ar eithaoed yllynn. Ac yna gwedy gwelet or dreic
 or dreic coch ybot yn wrthladedic kayach or llynn
 Ac yfefawneth hi yna dolvriaw yn vawr adwyn
 rvthyr yr dreic wen achymell drachevyn ywrthi
 Ac yna hyt tra ytoedyut ydreigieu yn ymlad ar



Folio 61v/Page 128

<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/history-of-the-kings#c=&m=&s=&cv=127&xywh=-15%2C-111%2C4202%2C3583>

Folio 61v

[_ _ _] honno yd erchis gortheyrn gortheinev i verdyn dy
[_] dodvt amynegi vdvunt pabeth a arwydoka ei ymlad
y dreigiev. Ac yna kyffroi ac wylaw aorvc merdin
adechrev gellwng ysbryt profodolieth a dywevdt
gwae vi...

(Merlin's prophecy begins at this point)

Some things of note about this transcription exercise are the different letter forms and the spellings of words which seem to show how the language is changing. To me, the letters *A*, *c*, *r*, and *w* were almost unrecognizable, and it was only when I found a word with one of these letters and knew what it meant that I could figure them out. But there are a few instances when an *r* like we use is present. What was particularly interesting is the spellings. While there are a couple times when two full words are written so closely together that they appear as one word, this happens very frequently with small particle words in front of full words (e.g. *ykennadeu*) as if at this time they were not given full weight.

Finally, it is interesting to note the way the writer chose to spell Merlin's name. Several centuries earlier Gerald of Wales had written that the city derived its name from Merlin's because it was his city.² Here, however, Merlin is *merdin* (*merdyn* once) while Carmarthen is *kaer vyrdin*. With these spellings, the scribe appears to be making a clear distinction between the magician/prophet and the city as if he did not believe that the two names were related. Additionally, the scribe of Cotton Cleopatra B, written also in the fifteenth century, gives a completely different meaning for the name of the city and says that Merlin originally had a different name that was then changed to match the name of the city he was from.³ Both later writers seem to show some ambivalence about the most famous character to come from Carmarthen and to question the importance of his connection to the city as if views about him among the Welsh have changed.

² Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), pp. 120–121, 139.

³ John Jay Parry, trans., *Brut y Brenhinedd* (Cambridge: The Medieval Academy of America, 1937), p. 124.