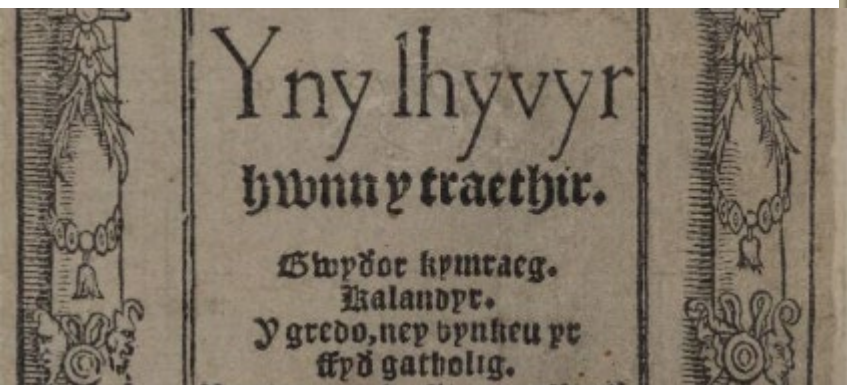
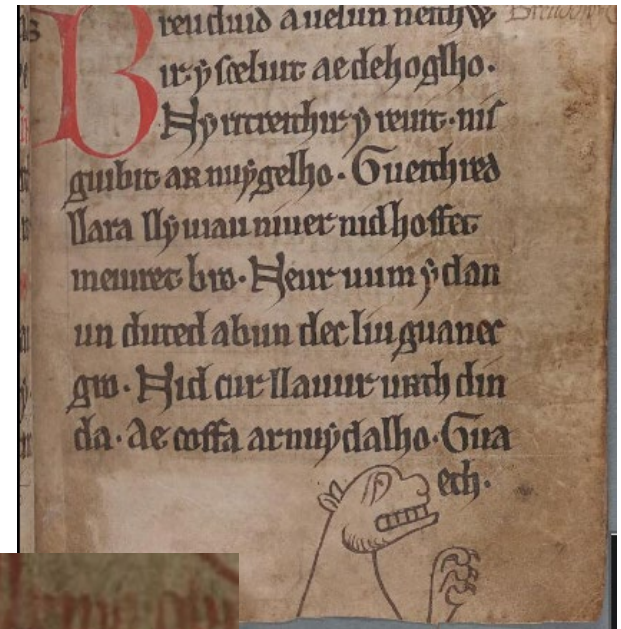


The Renaissance in Wales: before and after

- overview of the material so far
- manuscripts
- Welsh literature and learning in the fifteenth century
- the Renaissance

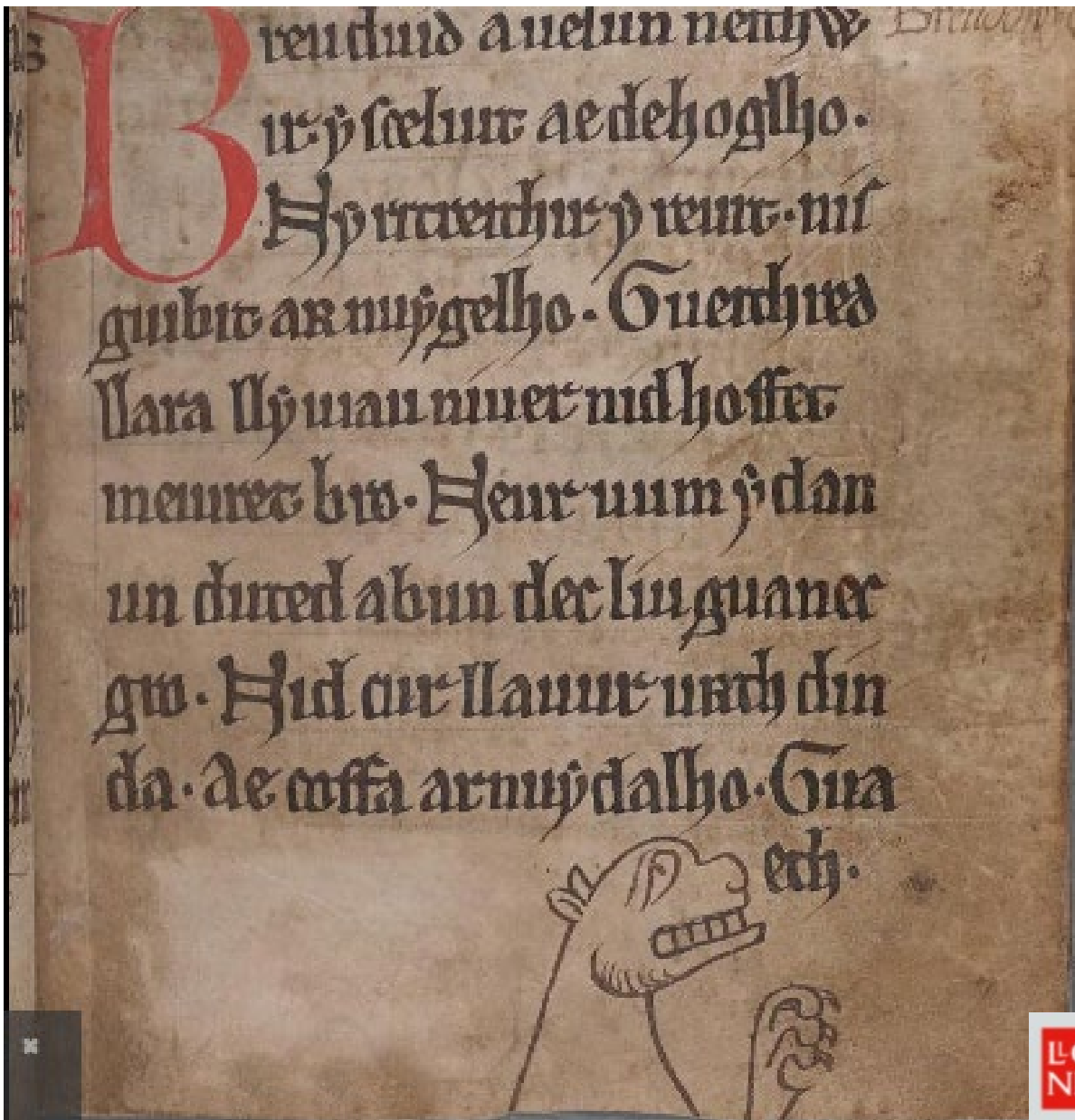


- Lyric poetry, e.g. 'Sadness in Springtime', love poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym...
- Heroic poetry, e.g. the 'Gododdin'
- Saga poetry, e.g. cycles of Heledd and Llywarch Hen
- Praise poetry, e.g. poems of Taliesin or the Poets of the Princes

Praise poetry remained the dominant genre amongst the later Poets of the Gentry, but they also composed love poems, satires, poems of request and thanks, and religious poems...

(see <dafyddapgwilym.net>, <gutorglyn.net>, <www.welshsaints.ac.uk>)

The Black Book of Carmarthen



mid-13c, Carmarthen
Priory (Augustinian)



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Literacy

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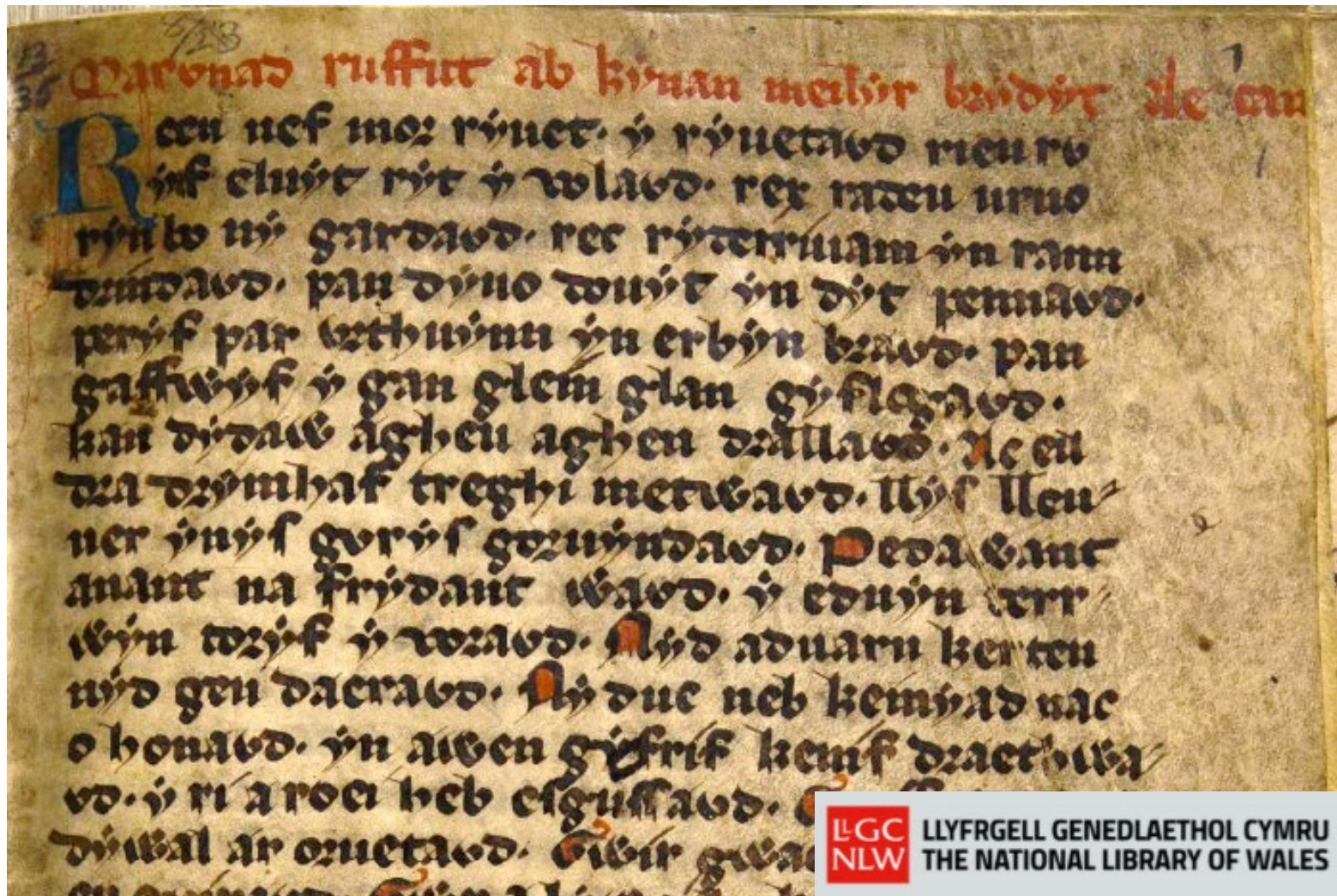
Medicine and Health

The Book of Aneirin



2nd half 13c, Aberconwy Abbey (Cistercian)

The Hendregadredd Manuscript

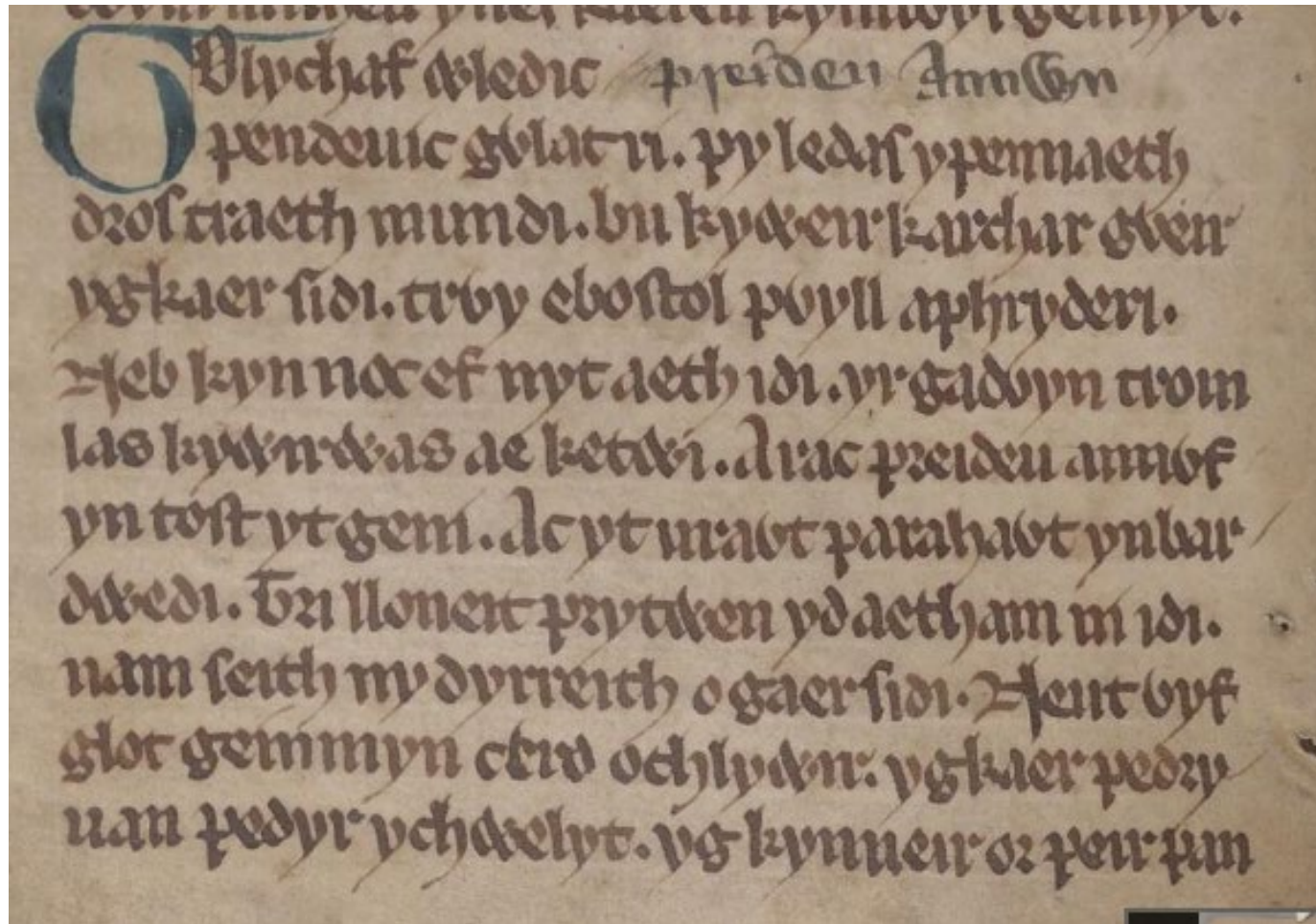


late 13c - 2nd half 14c, Strata Florida Abbey (Cistercian)
(named after its much later home, Hendregadredd, a mansion near Cricieth)

- LLYFRGELL GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU
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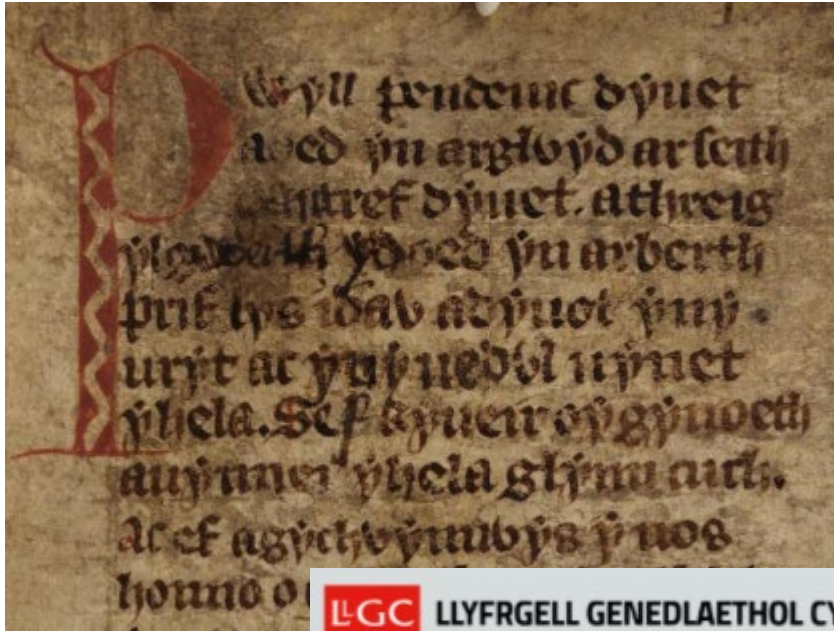
see Dafydd Johnston, 'The Manuscript Tradition' <dafyddapgwilym.net>

The Book of Taliesin

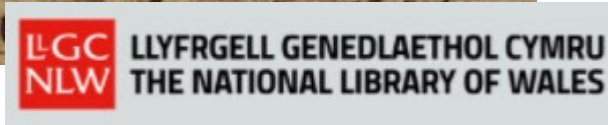


first half 14c, S.E. Wales (Cwm-hir Abbey?? (Cistercian))

The White Book of Rhydderch



mid-14c, probably for
Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd of
Parcrhydderch, Llangeitho,
Ceredigion



The Red Book of Hergest

- c.1400, written for **Hopcyn ap Tomas** of Ynysforan, near Swansea
- the work of **Hywel Fychan** and two other scribes
 - named after its later-medieval home, Hergest Court, nr Kington, Herefordshire)

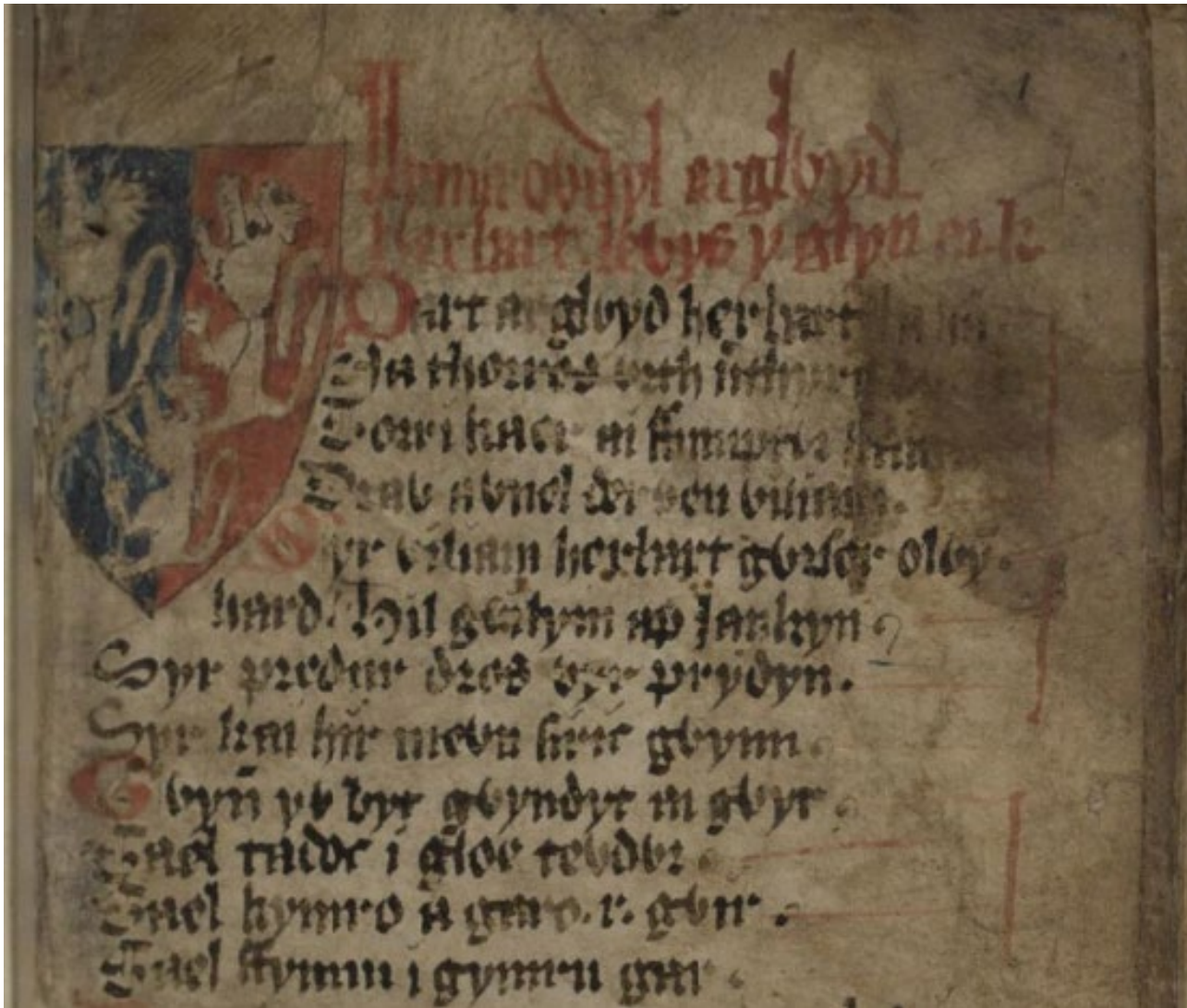
- 1250 – 1350: over fifty books
- Earliest surviving books written in Welsh appear mid-13c (including Welsh laws, *Brut y Brenhinedd* and poetry (Black Book of Carmarthen))
 - *Brut y Brenhinedd*: 13c/14c translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* 'History of the Kings of Britain' (1130s)
 - (pseudo-)history of Britain; descent from the Trojans, Arthur as national hero
 - later chronicles often presented as a continuance of it
 - *Brut y Tywysogion* 'the Chronicle of the Princes'
 - *Brenhinedd y Saesson* 'the Kings of the English'

Gerald of Wales and Geoffrey of Monmouth

‘When [Meilyr] was harrassed beyond endurance by these unclean spirits, St John’s Gospel was placed on his lap, and then they all vanished immediately ... If the Gospel were removed and the *History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth put there in its place, just to see what would happen, the demons would alight all over his body, and on the book too, staying there longer than usual’

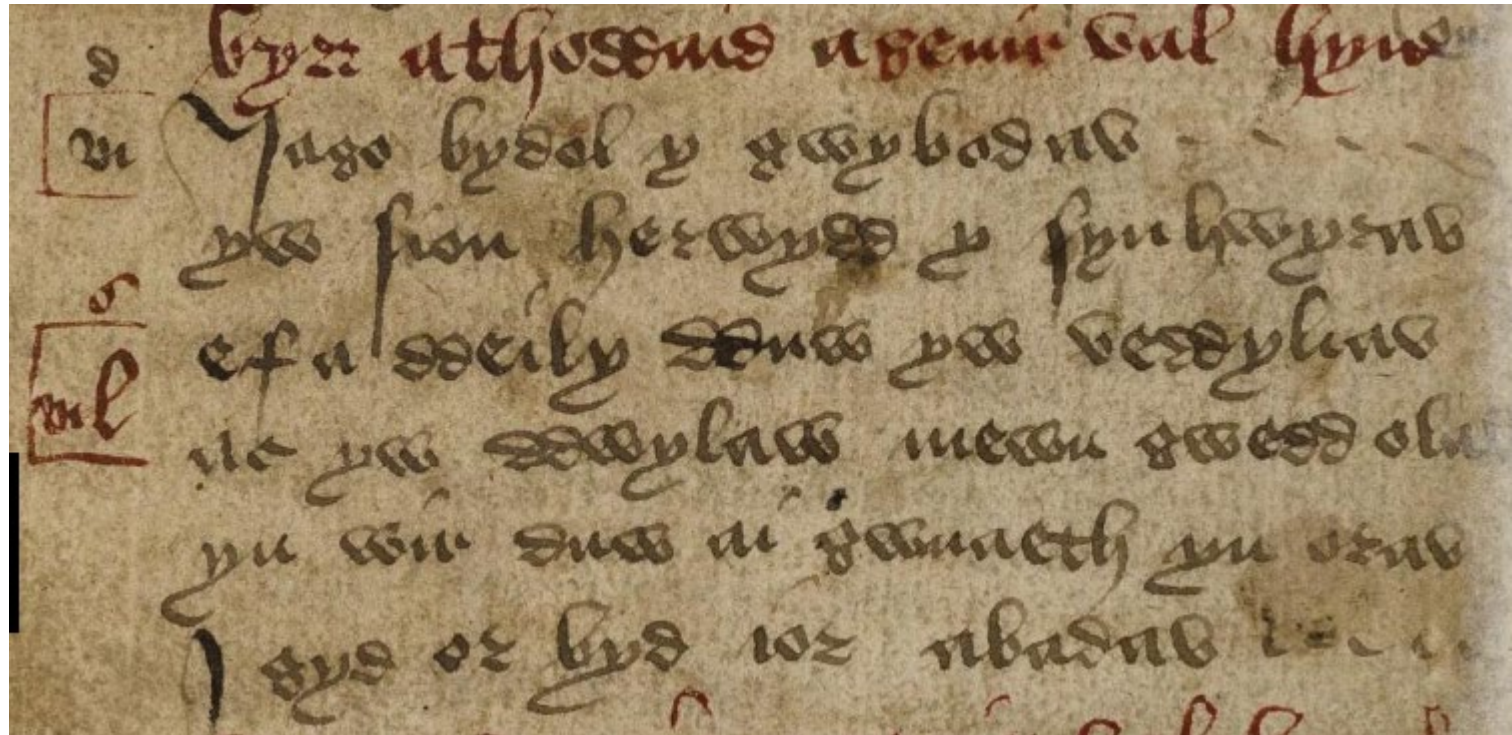
‘The Journey through Wales’, trans. Lewis Thorpe
(Penguin Classics)

Lewys Glyn Cothi



Peniarth MS 109,
1470s

Gutun Owain



Llanstephan MS 28, 1450s

byrr a thoddaid a genir val hyn...

‘byr a thoddaid’ is sung like this...

‘Ode in praise of Abbot Siôn ap Rhisiart of Valle Crucis’

Iago bydol y gwybodau
Yw Siôn herwydd y synhwyrdd;
Ef a ddeilydd Dduw i’w feddyliau
Ac i’w ddwylaw mewn gwedd olau;
Yn wir, Duw a’i gwnaeth yn orau – i gyd
O’r byd, iôr abadau!



Siôn is the earthly St James of all branches of knowledge
by virtue of his mental powers;
he keeps God in his thoughts
and in his hands* in an enlightened manner;
indeed, God has made him the best of all
of the whole world, the lord of abbots!

**Ed./trans. Jenny Day
(forthcoming edition)**

*Apparently a reference to the rite of Holy Communion

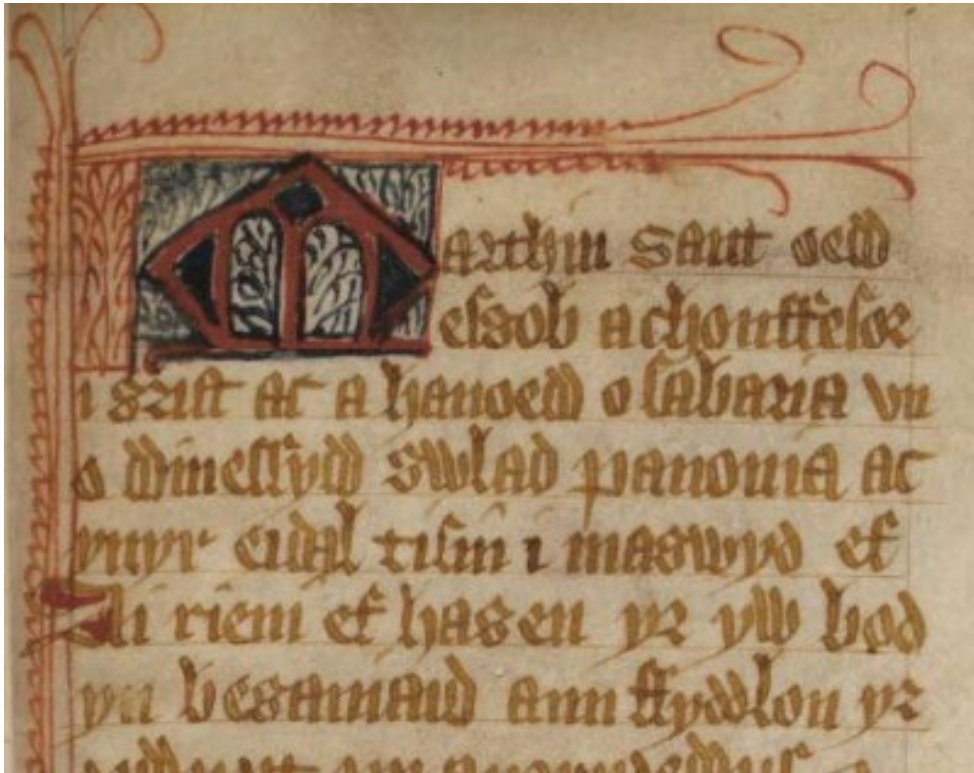
Robert gwffert a gafas
Ei brif ddoethineb a'i ras;
I Siôn y rhoed y synnwyr
A'r chwedlau o'r llyfrau'n llwyr;
Ei faint a'i gryfder efô
Mewn Edwart mae'n eu ado;
Ac i Risiart, 'yn Groeswen,
Ei liw a'i sut a'i lys wen.

Guto'r Glyn, 'Elegy for Edward ap
Dafydd of Bryncunallt (near Chirk)'
Ed./trans. Ann Parry Owen
<gutorglyn.net>, poem 104

Robert, the defender, received
his prime wisdom and his gentleness;
to Siôn was bestowed entirely the meaning
as well as the legends from the books;
his physique and his strength
he leaves behind in Edward;
and to Richard, in the name of the Holy Cross,
his complexion and his appearance and his whitewashed court.

'A Gutun Owain Manuscript'

NLW MS 3026C (Mostyn 88) , 1487-9



Marthin Sant oedd
esgob a chonffesor
i Grist ac a hanoedd o Sabaria, vn
o ddinessydd gwlad Panonia, ac
yn yr Eidal Tisin i magwyd ef.
A'i rieni ef, hagen, yr yw bod
yn beganiaid annffyddlon ...

Saint Martin was a bishop and confessor of Christ and came from Sabaria, one of the cities of the province of Pannonia, and he was raised in Pavia in Italy. And his parents, however, though they were pagans without faith ...

<https://www.welshsaints.ac.uk/edition/texts/prose/BMartin/edited-text.eng.html>

John Trevor a droes y vuchedd honn o'r Llading yn
Gymraec a Guttn Owain a'i hysgrivennodd pan
oed[d] oed Krist Mil cccc lxxxviii o vlynyddoedd yn
amser Harri Seithved, nid amgen y drydedd
vlwyddyn o goronedigaeth yr vn Hari.

John Trevor translated this Life from the Latin into
Welsh and Gutun Owain wrote it
in the year of our Lord 1488 in
the time of Henry the Seventh, namely the third
year after the coronation of the same Henry.

'A Gutun Owain Manuscript'

NLW MS 3026C (Mostyn 88) , 1488-98

Page 1-7: notes on astrological matters

Page 9: a volvella (device to workout the position of the sun and moon in the zodiac)

Page 10&25: ecclesiastical tables (holy days)

Page 11: medical diagram (for bloodletting)

Page 12: a chart of the planets

Page 13-24: a calendar of saint days

Page 26: Medical/astrological 'Zodiac Man'

Page 26: sayings relating to medicine

Page 27: an astrological chart

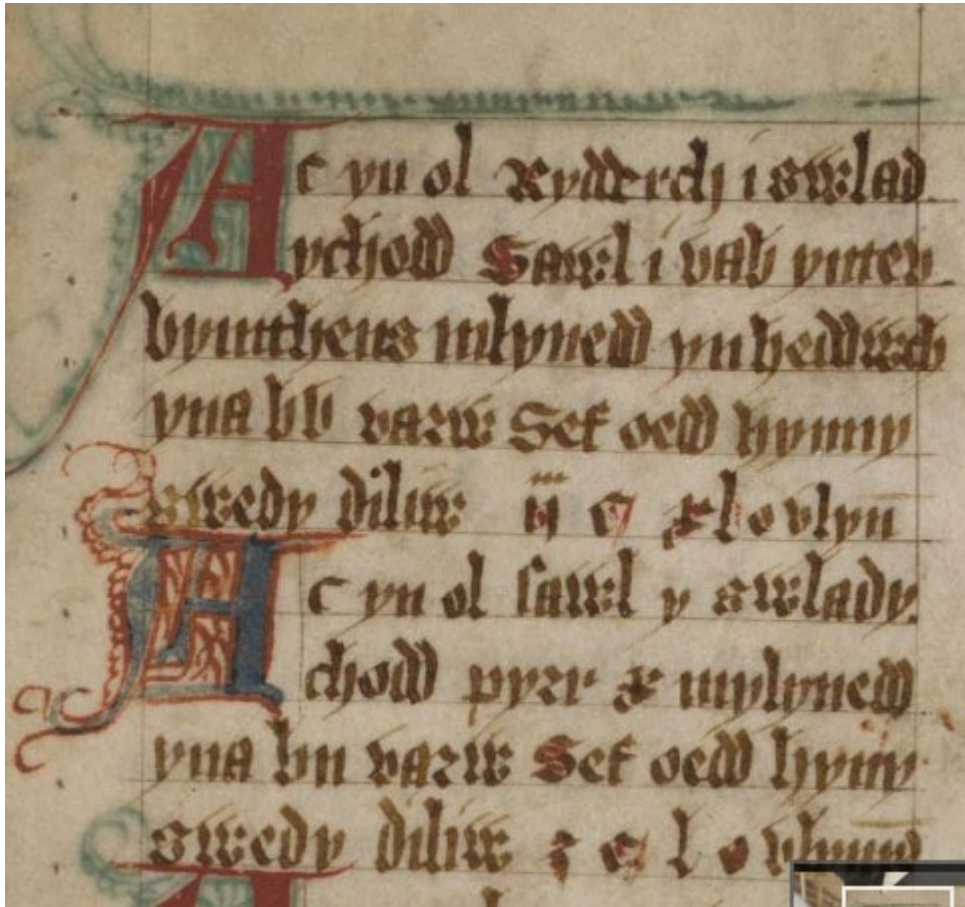
Page 28-36: chart & essay on uroscopy

Page 37-62: the Life of Saint Martin

Page 63: genealogy and history



The Black Book of Basingwerk



- *Ystoria Dared* – a version of the 13c medieval Welsh adaptation of a 6c Latin account of the destruction of Troy, attributed to Dares Phrygius
- *Brut y Brenhinedd* - a Welsh version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*
- *Brenhinedd y Saesson* 'the Kings of the English', a chronicle up to 1461

Written perhaps for Basingwerk Abbey but at Valle Crucis abbey, late 15c (after 1461).

Begun by an unknown scribe, completed by Gutun Owain.

The (Italian) Renaissance, 14c – 16c

- new appreciation of classical literature, also leading to a flourishing of painting, sculpture and architecture
- emphasis on the value of learning, especially in the areas of rhetoric and moral philosophy (i.e. eloquence and wisdom) as being essential for reaching full human potential
- (Renaissance) humanism – not the same as modern (Secular) Humanism
- the spreading of texts and ideas was aided by the invention of the printing press (Germany, mid-15c)

- the Bible considered pre-eminent, over and above later theology (rejection of ideas of asceticism)
- emphasis on active life, and individualism, and confidence in man's own creative powers
- particular interest in Latin and Greek texts, and also Hebrew
- seeking to discover texts in their purest, uncorrupted form, and produce accurate editions



- Invention of the movable-type printing press in Germany, c.1440, by Johannes Gutenberg
- Aided distribution of **edited texts**, and teaching aids, e.g. **grammars** and **dictionaries**

Recreated Gutenberg press at the International Printing Museum, Carson, California

By vlasta2 - Flickr: PrintMus 038, CC BY 2.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16412858>

The Renaissance reaches England, late 15c

- first Italian humanists arrived at Oxford and Cambridge around the end of the 15c
- two-way movement of scholars between England and Italy
- Henry VIII welcomed scholars to his court

The Renaissance reaches Wales, 1525 - 1550

- Why so late?
 - no universities
 - no royal courts
- the English Protestant Reformation, 1529 – 1537
 - Henry VIII separates the English Church from the Catholic Church
 - the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1530s)
- the Acts of Union, 1536 a 1542
 - ‘no person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manor, office or fees ... unless he or they use and exercise the speech or language of English.’ (1536)

Administration, education and 'free movement'

- attending grammar schools in England (Shrewsbury, Winchester, Westminster),
- endowed grammar schools founded in Wales (where there had earlier been (a few) monastically sponsored schools)
- more attendees at Oxford and Cambridge, and continental universities (especially in the case of exiled Catholics)

The Renaissance in Wales

- Catholic and Protestant humanists
 - members of the gentry
 - many from N. E. Wales
- Latin scholars, who wanted to elevate and restore the status of the Welsh language and its literature
- Interested in Wales's (traditional) history and 'foundation myths'*

(*see R. Geraint Gruffydd's chapter 'Wales and the Renaissance' in G. Williams & R.O. Jones (eds.) *The Celts and the Renaissance*)

Wales's 'foundation myths'

- **Samothēs** – son of Japhet (Noah's son), occupied the Celtic lands after the Flood and founded a line of kings including Druys and Bardus who established the bardic and druidic orders (based on the 'pseudo-Berosus', published in Rome, 1498)
- **Brutus** – great-grandson of Aeneas of Troy, founded the kingdom of Britain and its line of kings including Arthur (Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1136)
- **Joseph of Arimathea** – preached the pure faith in Britain 30 years after the Crucifixion, which was upheld until the British were forced to renounce it with the arrival of St Augustine in 597 (monks at Glastonbury, 13c, but favoured by later Protestants).
- **Ysgolan** – a malefactor who destroyed Wales's books of ancient learning (Black Book of Carmarthen, 13c, also a Breton Ballad, *Gwerz Skolan*)

Aims of the Welsh humanists

- ‘restore’ the quality and status of Welsh prose
- ‘restore’ poetry to its former glory (poets accused of lack of originality, and of telling lies, lack of learning, and excessive secrecy)
- standardize and ‘elevate’ the Welsh language
- defend the ‘foundation myths’
 - fierce debate beginning with Polydore Vergil's attack in 1534, defence by John Leland and Sir John Prise...

Success or failure?

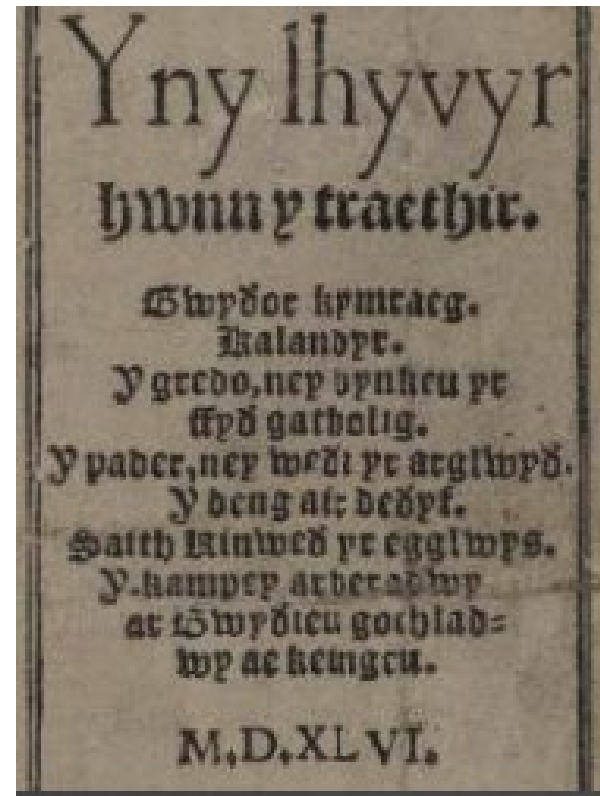
- **History:** Foundation myths eventually abandoned.
More recent history less controversial:
 - translation of *Brut y Tywysogion* (Humphrey Lhuyd, 1559)
 - printing of writings of Gerald of Wales (David Powell of Ruabon, 1584)
 - local histories e.g. George Owen's *History of Pembrokeshire* (1584-1604)

- **Collection and preservation of manuscripts**

- e.g. Sir John Prise, appointed Visitor of the Monasteries, ‘rescued’ the contents of monastic libraries

Price (‘the earliest identifiable Welsh humanist’) was also responsible for the first printed book in Welsh

Yny lhyvyr hwnn contains ‘the alphabet, instructions on how to read Welsh and to count, together with a calendar, the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and various other Christian texts’



Later (printed) religious books

- *Kynniver llith a ban*: William Salesbury, 1551
- *Y Testament Newydd & Y Llyfr Gweddi Cyffredin*: William Salesbury, 1567
- *Athrauaeth Gristnogawl*: Morys Clynnog (Milan, 1568)
- *Y Drych Cristionogawl*: the first book printed on Welsh soil (Robert Gwyn (?), 1586-87)
- *Y Beibl Cyssegr-lan*: William Morgan, 1588

Dictionaries and grammars

- William Salesbury's English-Welsh dictionary of 1547
- Thomas Wiliems's Latin Welsh dictionary (1604-1608), unpublished...
- ... formed basis for John Davies of Mallwyd's *Dictionarium Duplex* of 1632.
- Grammar of Dr Gruffudd Robert, a Catholic exile (Milan, 1567)
- Another, produced by John Davies of Mallwyd in 1621, has been called 'the crowning glory of the Renaissance in Wales'

Outcomes...

- positive
 - safeguarding the Welsh language
 - the Welsh Bible set a standard for Welsh prose
 - collecting and preserving manuscripts containing a wealth of medieval literature (and copying texts)
- negative
 - helped speed the decline of strict metre poetry?

Was the humanist ‘project’ a success, in general?