

Suggested activities for week one

- Watch the two-part lecture in Moodle.
- Read chapter two in Dafydd Johnston's *The Literature of Wales*.
- Read chapter nine in Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, *An introduction to early Irish literature*,¹ with its discussion of the role of poetry in prose sagas, and early Irish lyric poetry including 'The Old Woman of Beara'.
- To hear some Old Irish, visit the University of Cambridge website (https://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/spokenword/i_pangur.php?d=tt) where you'll find text and translation of the poem 'White Pangur' with an audio file (click on the icon at the bottom of the poem).
- Read the [pdf](#) (on Moodle) on 'Sadness in Springtime', which we will discuss in the seminar. Time permitting, we will also discuss Gwalchmai's 'Gorhoffedd' ([text](#) and [translation](#) ('Exhultation') pdfs), and 'Suibne the Wild Man in the Forest' (on [archive.org](#), from page 63), so you might want to look at these through the links provided above or through the reading list on Leganto, which will allow you to see the entirety of both poems and also to see the Suibne poem in its prose context (but you don't need to read the entire saga!).
- If you would like to do more you could read some of the nature or lyric poems in Kenneth Jackson's *Celtic Miscellany*, or any of the other sources on the reading list. For this stage of the course I'd suggest only looking at things that are earlier than about 1500. To get you started you could perhaps look at Jackson's poem 15 ('Winter') and poem 223 ('The Wish of Manchán of Liath'). You might also like to look at two poems on the Dafydd ap Gwilym website (numbers 32 ('May') and 34 ('Summer'))², or you could leave those until week 4 when we'll look at Dafydd's poetry in more detail.
- As you read the poems, think about **how the poet uses the natural world and the changing seasons** for his particular literary purposes, e.g. to convey or emphasize emotions, or as a metaphor for changing circumstances (loss, old age), or to praise God (by praising His creation).
- Also, **how is the poem structured**? How does one theme lead in to another?
- Consider too, **who is speaking** in the poem? Are the emotions and circumstances the poet's own, or are they generalized, or are they fictional and conveyed by a 'mask' or 'persona' he has adopted?
- And what is the poet's purpose? Is it pure artistic expression or is there an intention to please, or perhaps instruct, a particular **audience**? Who might that audience be?
- If there is a particular poem or aspect that interests you, especially re. the assignment, I will be happy to advise on where to find suitable texts and translations, and on further reading.

¹ It is available as an ebook through the UWTSO library or through the Leganto reading list on Moodle. The link on the contents list doesn't go to the start of the chapter but if you scroll up you should be able to find where it begins.

² <<http://www.dafyddapgwilym.net/>>. To get to the poems, choose the 'English' option on the front page, then 'The Poems' on the next page, then when that page comes up select the poem you want from the box in the lower left-hand corner. When the poem comes up you can select 'English Translation from the links at the bottom right.