Women in the Middle Ages: Sources from the Celtic Regions

The Portrayal of the Noblewoman in the work of the Poets of the Gentry (c.1300 – c.1550)

1. Introduction

1.1 Rhisierdyn to Myfanwy wife of Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur from Penmynydd:
‘Mygr hoywlamp Bowys, magwyr hywledd’ (GS 5.8)

‘magwyr hywledd’ – a patron who offers generous feasts
‘magwyr’ – ‘wall’

1.2 ‘i mewn y rhol mae enw Rhys / yn ei ôl mae enw Elys’
(GLGC, 162.33-4).

In the roll (pedigree roll or chart) we find Rhys’s name
After his, there is Elys’s name.

1.3 The sub-genres of the elegies, which include the elegies to women as well as elegies to poets and children.

1.4 ‘y berthynas agos sydd gan y bardd â’r gwrthrych’ (LlYU, 291)

close relationship between the poet and the object

1.5 ‘Yr argraff a geir yw bod agosrwydd perthynas rhwng y beirdd a’r uchelwragedd yn allweddol, ac mae hynny i raddau helaeth i’w briodoli i natur personoliaeth bardd unigol a’i amgylchiadau personol.’ (1998b, 127)

The impression given is that the closeness of the poets and noblewoman is key, and that is, to a great extent attributed to the nature of an individual poet’s personality and his personal circumstances

2. The Relationship bewteen the Poet and his Female Patron

2.1 **‘**The fact that aristocratic women in Provence and France could own land in their own right made them worthy of pursuit ... The praise of patrons’ wives also indicated the need of the knights for influential support for their emergence as a powerful new class.’
(Fulton, 1989, 229)

2.2 **‘**Elias Careil declares frankly, ‘I’m not singing to gain sexual pleasure / but for honor and profit’ (e s’ieu ên dizia lauszor / ên mon chantar, no’l dis per drudaria, / mas per honor e pro qu’ieu n’ atendia).’
(Burns, yn Moras, 2005, 35)

2.3 ‘In medieval Wales, however, women did not generally hold land or money in their own right. Praise of Welsh noblewomen was merely a displacement of the eulogies directed at the lord in whose court they lived. By honouring a patron’s wife or daughter, a poet was honouring the patron himself, and therefore fulfilling part of his obligation as court-poet.’ (Fulton, 1989, 77)

2.4 ‘Gureyc e brenhyn a eyll rod *hep y ganhyat* traean deuot a del e gan e brenhyn. Gureyc ucheluur a eyll rody e mantell a’e chrys a’e hesgydyeu a’e phenllyeyn a’e buet a’e dyaut a chraun e chell, a benfygyau e holl deodreuen. Gureyc taeauc ny eyll rody namen e penguuch na benfygyau namen e gogyr, a henne mal e klewer e llef e ar y tom o’e duen adref.’ (Wiliam, 1960, 29)

The King’s wife can give away without his leave the third of the casual aquisitions which comes from the King. An uchelwr’s wife can give away her mantle and her shift and her shoes and her headkerchief and her food and her drink and the store of her larder, and can lend all her equipment. A villein’s wife cannot give away anything save her headcloth, nor lend anything save her sieve, and that only so that her call from the dunghill to bring it back can be heard.
(Jenkins, 2000, 54)

The Elegies – Y Canu Marwnad

2.5 a) Marwnad Gwenhwyfar wraig Hywel ap Tudur ap Gruffudd o Goedan by Gronw Gyriog (GGrG, 2)
b) Marwnad Gwenhwyfar wraig Hywel ap Tudur ap Gruffudd o Goedan by Mab Clochyddyn (GGrG, 6)
c) Marwnad Gwenhwyfar o Bentraeth by Gruffudd ap Maredudd (GGM, 5)

2.6 Merch Fadog rieddog radd;[1]
(GGrG, 2.30)

Madog’s Daughter, royal her grace.[2]

Rhyhoyw falchloyw o feilchlwyth;[3]

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[1] ‘Merch Madog frenhinol ei hurddas’. The modernized versions all come from the Beirdd yr Uchelwyr series.

[2] Translations are my own unless noted otherwise. Translations for Guto’r Glyn’s work all come from www.gutorglyn.net.

(GGrG, 6.10)

A very beautiful and brilliant one from the tribe of the wonderful ones

2.7 Llaw roddfrys, o'i llys, lluosydd – edlid,
Llym dengyn ofid prid pob prydydd.[4]
(GGrG, 6.55–6)

[Gwenhwyfar] with the hand ready to give from her court, large groups of people mourn after her, / A great costly worry is upon all poets

2.8 A'm rhoes ganwaith, gwiwne glwysfaith, gwin a glasfedd,
A'm rhoes edmyg a phob rhyfyg a phob rheufedd,
A roes i fyrdd ac aur a gwyrdd, ac eiry ei gwedd
A wnaeth boddiant aelaw ariant i lawereddd.[5]
(GGrG, 6.85–88)

She gave to me a hundred times, the one ever beautiful and fair, shining wine and mead, / She gave honour to me and every glory and every wealth, / And she gave to many not only god but also green clothing, the one with the appearance of snow / And she gave pleasure through often giving money to many

2.9 … er llonydd – riain
Lluniais arwyrain, coelfain celfydd.[6]
(GGrG, 6.71–2)

for the quiet girl / I composed a poem of praise, a gift of a man by song

2.10 Marwnad Gwerful ferch Fadog o Fro Danad gan Guto'r Glyn:
'dwyn fy mhorthiant i'
(gutorglyn.net, 88.10)

takes my nourishment[7]

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[3]'Un hardd a disglair siriol iawn o lwyth rhai gwych'.
[4]'[Gwenhwyfar a chanddi] law barod at roi, o'i llys, [y mae'n achos] hiraeth minteioedd, / Llym yw gofid cyndyn costfawr pob prydydd'.
[5]'A roddodd imi ganwaith, [yr un] hardd [a] bythol dirion, win a medd gloyw, / A roddodd imi anrhydedd a phob rhwysg a phob cyfoeth, / A rododd i liaws nid yn unig aur ond hefyd ddillad gwyrdd, a['r un a]'i gwedd fel eira / A roddodd foddhad [drwy] amlder arian i laweroedd'.
[6]'... er mwyn y ferch dawel / Lluniais gân fawl, anrheg gŵr wrth gerdd'.
[7]As noted, all translations for Guto'r Glyn's work come from the translations on the website www.gutorglyn.net.

2.11 Lewys Glyn Cothi i Gwenllian ferch Rys:

Rhoddi, fal y rhyddhâi fôr,
gwin a gwyrdd, gwyn i gerddor.
(GLGC, 44.43–4)

She gave... / wine and green, white to a poet

2.12 Medraist, aurdelaist er adeilad – gwawd,
Im nychdawd ddifrawd, ddyfrys golliad.
(GGLl 1.81–2)

2.13 Casnodyn to Gwenllïant:

Aur mâl a'm bu dâl, dolur atreg – fraw,
Yn llaw, ŵyl andaw, gan ail Indeg.[8]
(GC, 5.15–6)

There was pure gold as payment for me, an occasion of pain and fear, / In my hand, one who listens gently, one similar to Indeg

2.14 Rhodd hael, rheg afael, rhy gafas – am wawd
Ei dafawd, y difas;
Unllythyr llathrwaith cyweithias,
Unlliw ag aur gwiw gae'r gwas.

Nid mau rheg adnau: rhag adnair – dilys
Rhoi gwregys gwraig ddiwair;
Doe y'm doeth cyfoeth cywair,
Da o fywn gra a fu'n grair.[9]
(GGDT, 3.5–8, 21–4)

A generous gift, one in possession of gifts, she had for poems, / His tongue, the thoughtful one; / One letter decorated brightly and skilful, / The same colour as beautiful gold is the belt of the young boy

This is not a gift to pay her back: I am careful not to reproach / To give a belt of a pure woman; / Yesterday the skilful treasure came to me, / A good thing was a treasure within fur

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[8]'Bu aur gloyw [yn] dâl imi, [achlysur] braw gofid[us a] phoen[us], / Yn [fy] llaw, [un sy'n] gwrando'n dirion [ydyw], gan un debyg i Indeg'.
[9]'Rhodd hael, caffaeliad anrheg, a gafodd am gerdd / Ei dafod, yr un meddylgar; / Un llythyren wedi'i haddurno'n ddisglair [a] chywrain, / Unlliw ag aur hardd yw gwregys y gwas...
Nid anrheg i'w thalu'n ôl yw fy un i: diogel rhag edliw / Yw rhoi gwregys gwraig bur; / Doe y daeth [y] trysor cywrain imi, / Peth da a fu'n drysor o fewn ffwr'.

2.15 'Gwasgarai wyrdd'[10]
(GGrG, 6.6)

2.16 Sefnyn yn moli Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur a'i wraig Myfanwy:
'Gwâr ddihengis gwyrdd o'i angad'[11]
(GS, 3.96)

He spread green clothing

2.17 Rhisierdyn i Myfanwy:
'Cerir ei mawrdwf nid er cared'[12]
(GS, 5.17)

I love her beautiful body but not to commit a sin

2.18 'Gofynnai fawlgerdd yn gyfannedd'[13]
(GS, 5.9)

She frequently asked for songs of praise

2.19 For example, Casnodyn says og Gwenllïant:

'Mynnawd molawd gnawd, gne ton waeddgreg'[14]
(GC, 5.25)

The one of fair skin would ask for poems frequently

Llywelyn Brydydd Hoddnant:

'Llun hy a'i dyly iaith a dalaf'[15]
(GLlBH, 3.20)

Confident in her appearance that deserves the poems I sing to her

2.20 'Hyd yn oed yn anterth materoliaeth y bymthegfed ganrif, nid yw cyfeiriadau'r beirdd at ferched yn rhoi dillad agos mor niferus â'r rhai sy'n eu dangos yn estyn bwyd a diod' (Haycock, 2001, 58).

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[10] 'Gwasgarai ddillad gwyrdd.'
[11] 'Yn hynaws y llithrodd [dillad] gwyrdd o'i law'.
[12] 'Cerir ei chorff lluniaidd ond nid er mwyn cyflawni pechod'.
[13] Gofynnai am gerdd fawl yn barhaus'.
[14] 'Bydd[yr un o] liw ton groch yn dymuno mawl mynych'
[15] '[Un] hyderus [ei] gwedd sy'n teilyngu['r] farddoniaeth a dalaf [iddi]'.

Even in the hight of materialism in the fifteenth century, the references to women giving clothes is not half as numerous as those that show them offering food and drink.

2.21 'Garin advises the lady to welcome troubadours and minstrels (a bit of self-interest here). She would listen to their poems, memorize her favourite passages, and give them gifts so that they will praise her and spread her good fame. By honoring guests as well as she can, she will earn a good reputation.'
(Bornstein, 1983, 34)

2.22 'Women faced the inevitable double standard and were sometimes castigated for excessive generosity as patrons. Although generosity was considered a great medieval virtue in men, it could quickly be interpreted as prodigality in women, even in a dynasty with strong traditions of patronage.'
(McCash, 1996, 20)

2.23 'nad ydoedd mewn gwirionedd yn dderbyniol gorliwio'r elfen hon o rinweddau arglwyddes' (Moras, 2005, 48)

In reality it was not acceptable to over-colour this element of the noblewoman's virtues.

2.24 'Wrongfully giving away property was also a beatable offence, since the kind of property a wife is allowed to part with is specified and determined by the actual status of the husband' (Owen, 1980, 52)

2.25 'Cynnyrch cymdeithas lle'r oedd y bardd yn ddibynnol ar nawdd' (Huws, 1998b, 39).

A product of society where the poet was dependent on patronage

2.26 'Mae cynnwys barddoniaeth y bymthegfed ganrif, yn enwedig, yn brawf o ddiddordeb y beirdd mewn gwrthrychau a thrugareddau materol'
(Huws, 1998b, 64).

The content of the poetry of the fifteenth century especially is a test to the interest the poets had in materialistic objects and things

2.27 For a full list see Huws, 1998b, 231–8.

2.28 'tipyn mwy o sylw i wragedd ym marddoniaeth y cyfnod' (LlYU, 306).

Much more attention to women in the poetry of the period

2.29 Elis Hol (GLGC, 163).

2.30 ac yn noethach y'm gwnaethant
no'r gleisiad yn nofiad nant.
Yr wyf yn noeth heb fawr wrid, *I am naked without much colour*
mae naw carl i'm un cwrlid.
(GLGC, 227.31–4)

2.31

Fy nghwyn wrth Annes a'i charesau,	*This is my complaint to Annes and her friends*
i Gaer Lleon Gawr yn gorllwyn gau	*That the men of Chester*
fy yspeiliaw draw dri Iau – o'm mawredd	*robbed me of my greatness*
ac o'm holl annedd ac o'm llennau.	*And from all my goods and my mantles*

(GLGC, 119.25–8)

2.32 'a dilligent collector of textiles' (Payne, 1939, 17)

2.33 'A oedd Lewys o ddifrif yn disgwyl cael y llen yn rhodd iddo'i hun?' (LlYU, 306).

Did Lewis seriously expect to have the mantle for himself?

2.34 'defod lenyddol a oedd wrth wraidd y cywyddau gofyn, nid tlodi' (Huws, 1998b, 43)

It was literary convention that was at its root, not poverty.

2.35 Y nos y câr, fy nisyn,
fwrw ei led ar gylched gwyn,
cysgu awr, o cwsg erof,
estynnu uwch sidan of.
(GLGC, 186.39–42)

In the night, My little child / Would love to lie on a white circle / To sleep an hour, if sleep becomes, / To reach above for silk

2.36 Beirddion yw ei meibion maeth.
(gutorglyn.net, 53.30)

the poets are her foster sons.

2.37 O chaf yn y Llannerch Wen
Ffaling, cerdd a gaiff Elen
(gutorglyn.net, 53.39–40)

If I receive in Fair Llanerch / a mantle, Elen will recieve a poem

2.38 Ni cheisiaf, o chanaf chwaith
Wedy gwin, wadu gweniaith.

O thraethir y gwir a'r gau,
Y gair tecaf yw'r gorau.
(gutorglyn.net, 18.11–12 ; 17–18)

I won't attempt, if I sing anything / after wine, to deny flattery.

If true and false are told together, / the fairest word is the best.

2.39 'moli gwyrda heb grybwyll ei gwragedd a wnâi gan mwyaf'
(Huws, 1998b, 106)

more often than not he is praising noblemen without mentioning their wives

2.40 'anacronistaidd fyddai tybio fod Lewys yn gweld gŵr a gwraig yn gyfartal'
(BYG, 74).

Anachronistic to assume that Lewys saw the male and female as equals

2.41 'Ynt-hwy a rydd yn gytûn / O rodd a archer uddun' (GLGC 207.25–6)

The give in agreement / if a gift is asked from them

2.42 medd Elys, "Rhys, rho i hwn",
medd Rhys, "Elys, na tholiwn".
(GLGC 162.53–4)

Elys says "Rhys, give to this one" / Rhys says, "Elys, we won't hold back"

2.43 ei gŵr yn bennach nog un — *her husband is above anyone*
i roi o'i gost aur a gwin
i ŵr o gerdd er ei gân.
(GLGC, 119.6–8)

2.44 Pennaf swyddogaeth y canu hwn yn gyffredinol oedd cadarnhau a dathlu'r rhwydweithiau rhwng y boneddigion a'i gilydd, er mai merched yn aml oedd y ddolen gyswllt rhyngddynt – y *servers* i'r We, megis. (Haycock, 2001, 60)

The main objective of this poem in general was to strengthen and celebrate the networks that existed between the noblemen, even though it was often the women who were the link between them – the 'servers' to the web so to speak

2.45 Pibau organ a ganant
yn gytûn fal y gwna tant;
mor gytûn yw'r fun feinael
i roi rhodd â'i heryr hael.
Hwn a rydd tra fo hinion
erchi rhoi arch a ŵyr hon.
Gantho fo y caf wahodd,
genthi er hyn ganwaith rodd.
Gruffudd yn rhoi'i fudd yw fo,
y hi Annes yw honno.
(GLGC 230.43–52)

The pipes of an organ sing together / In harmony like a string does / The woman with the thin eyebrow is so agreeable / To give a gift with her generous eagle. / He will give as long as he lives / She will request to give, that is what she knows how to do

2.46 yntau'n rhoi gynau, 'm Gwynnen – a gwleddau,
hithau y gwyliau yn deg ei gwên.
(GLGC 97.71–2)

He gives mantles and feasts / She watches, gentle her smile

2.47 Gorwydd y mab a garwn,
Gras hir i'r gŵr a roes hwn,
A chynnydd, bryd hafddydd tes,
Ar Elen a'i heirioles.
(gutorglyn.net, 51.65–8)

I loved the young man's stallion, / let there be a long blessing to the man who gave it, / and prosperity, the face like the sunshine on a summer's day, / for Elen who petitioned for it.

2.48 'Ni raid inni dybio mai cyfeiriad defodol diarwyddocâd yn unig oedd motiff y wraig yn eiriol, oherwydd hyhi wedi'r cyfan oedd agosaf at glust ei gŵr, a naturiol oedd i fardd gredu y gallai hi ddwyn perswâd arno.' (Huws, 1998b, 109)

We do not need to assume that the motif of the wife as intercessor was only a customary, insignificant reference, because after all she was the closest to her husband's ear and it would be natural for a poet to believe tha she could pursuade her husband.

The Poems Thanking for Care – Y Cerddi Diolch am Ymgeledd

2.49 'Y mae'n syndod cyn lleied o drafod a fu ar iechyd y Cymry yn yr Oesoedd Canol diweddar o ystyried fod y farddoniaeth yn ffynhonnell ddigon gwerthfawr o wybodaeth' (Huws, 2013, 283)

It is facinating how little discussion there has been on the health of the Welsh in the later Middle Ages given that the poetry is a valuable source of information

2.50 Dyma flwyddyn i ffisygwr
I ybseilio pob gwanwr
Ac i addo yn iach ei wneuthyd
O'r saith anaele glefyd.

A chael dwybunt i ddechre
Am werth grôt o gyffurie,
A rhoi iddo arian lawer
A'r claf yn waeth o'r hanner.
(yn Davies, 1997, 93)

Gŵyl Ieuan, mi a glywais,
do, i Siôn gredu i Sais.
Doeth meddig â ffusig ffa
o Loegr aml i gaer yma.

Â'i bowdr lladdai bob oedran
a'i ffleimiau dur fal fflam dân.
(GLGC 30.31–34; 37–8)

2.51 Poems thanking for care: Two by Lewys Glyn Cothi (GLGC, 41 a 88), one by Tudur Penllyn (GTP, 13), two poems by Guto'r Glyn (gutorglyn.net, 81).

2.52 'a hypochondriac who nevertheless lived to a great age' (Haycock, 1999, 20)

'manteisio ar ei anhwylderau ei hun droeon yn ei gerddi mawl' (LlYU, 309)

took advantage of his illnesses many times in his poems of praise

2.53 Mae i'm cefn er ys pythefnos
Henwayw ni ad hun y nos;
Mae gwayw arall i'm gwyro
Yn fy nghlun, anaf yng nghlo.
(gutorglyn.net, 81.1–4).

There has been an old pain in my back for a fortnight / which will not let me sleep at night; / there is another sharp pain in my thigh /which makes me crooked, a locked deformity.

A'i gwledd hi a giliodd haint,
A'i gwin oedd well nog ennaint.
A'i llyn a'm gwnâi'n llawenach,
A'i thân onn a'm gwnaeth yn iach.
(gutorglyn.net, 81.67–70)

and her feast caused illness to retreat, / and her wine was better than a medicinal bath, / and her drink made me merrier, / and her ash-wood fire made me healthy.

Ni bu oraens, neu beren,
Na ffrwyth, llysieuyn na phren,
Ni bu irllwyth ar berllan
Na chnau ar wŷdd na chawn ran.
(gutorglyn.net, 81.61–4)

there was neither orange nor pear, / nor the fruit of any plant or tree, / no fresh load from an orchard, / or nuts on trees of which I did not have my share.

2.54 ac yn hawdd y cawn gan hon
maeth a hen ameuthunion.
Canel o Ffrainc a unwyd,
pupur o fewn pob rhyw fwyd,
saffrwm, mas hoff o'r meysydd,
a graens gardd, ac orains gwŷdd,
sugr candi i mi 'mhob modd,
sinser ar ddewis ansodd,
sinamwn, almwns, cwmin,
balsamẃm yw blas 'y min.
Cawn ofwy i'm cynefin,
costard, bwngernard a gwin,
cyflaith rhag cainc o afles,

cywion teg, graens rhag haint gwres.
(GLGC 88.39–52)

2.55 ‘fe welir bod yma rai pethau o leiaf a oedd yn addas i glaf, fel y “costard” hawdd ei dreulio a’r sbeisys i adfer ei archwaeth’ (LlYU, 310).

we see here that there are some things at least that were suitable for patients, such as the ‘custard’ that is easy to digest and the spices that restore his appetite

2.56 Mair a all, hyd y mae’r iaith
Iechyd ym, a’i chydymaith:
Os gall dyn is gallt annwyl,
Lowri a’i gall, lawer gŵyl.
(GTP, 13.47–50)

a gweddïo’n deg ddiwarth
ar Dduw’dd oedd gwawr ddydd o’r Garth.
(GLGC, 88.25–6)

2.57 ‘bod rhywun annwyl a fu’n ddifrifol wael ar wella’ (Huws, 2013, 303)

That someone who has been seriously ill is about to recover

2.58 Ni cherddwn ddau rwn yn ddrud,
Ni chwarddwn oni cherddud;
Chwerddais pan welais dy wên,
Chwarddodd ac wylodd Elen.
(GTP, 14.43–46)

2.59 Moli merched mal Meirchiawn,
Moli gwŷr mwy elw a gawn.
(gutorglyn.net 20.49–50)

praising women like Meirchion; / praising men, I’d get more reward

3. The ‘Ideal’ Women in the Eyes of the Poets – Merched ‘Delfrydol’ y Beirdd

3.1 Gwreigdda a uolir o doethineb, a chymendawt, a diweirdeb, a haelyoni, a thegwch pryt a gwed a ffuryf, a dysymylder ymadrodyon a gweithredoed. (GP, 16)

Riein a uolir o bryt, a thegwch, a chymhendawt, a disymylder, ac eglurder mod a deuodeu, a haelyoni, a diweirdeb, a molyanrwyd, a

boned, a lletneisrwyd, a charedicrwyd, ac idi y perthyn serch a charyat. (GP, 16)

A noblewoman is praised for her wisdom, her elegance, her virginity and generosity and fairness of face and appearance, and the humility of her wordsand actions.

A young woman is praised for her appearance and fairness and wisdom and humility and the excellence of her way and actions, and generosity and virginity and fame and nobility and modesty and kindness and to her belongs love and affection.

3.2 Yn un Mair a Non a'i mab
a dyfant hoedl i'w deufab;[16]
(GLGC, 168.39–40)

Mary and Non and her son together / Will ensure a long life to her two sons

3.3 Mihangel â'r gwayw melyn
A bwysa drwg a da dyn.
Pan bwyser ei haelder hi
Pawb a rydd pybyr weddi.
(gutorglyn.net, 88.45–8)

Michael with the yellow spear / weighs the wickedness and goodness of a woman. / When her generosity is weighed / everyone will give an ardent prayer.

3.4 O'i llaw y gwna Gwenllian
rannu ei gost i'r hen gwan.
(GLGC, 34.51–2)

From her hand Gwenllian / shares her fortune with the old and weak

I ŵr gwan y rhôi ginio
ac ar ei fraich ei faich fo.
I wraig wan y rhôi geiniog
a deunaw llwyth eidion llog.
(GLGC, 39.39–42)

To a weak man, she gave food / to a weak woman she would give Money

[16]The saint Non was 'chaste and pregnant' according to Dafydd Llwyd from Mathafarn (GDLl, 13.5).

Yn ei dydd ni adai wan
acw'n llaw-wag Gwenllian;
ni adai ag osai gwyn
ar un ieuanc awr newyn,
ac ni adai'r gwan oediog
o bai'n glaf, heb ŵn neu glog.
(GLGC, 44.25–30)

In her day a weak person would not leave / there empty handed from Gwenllian; They would not leave without sweet white wine / one young person in the hour of hunger, / and she would not let the aged and old / if they were sick, without a mantle or a cloak

3.5 I hen llawn o haint
rhoych win, rhoych ennaint,
a da i'r holsaint, rai a welsoch.
(GLGC, 59.27–9)

To the old, full of disease / you gave wine, you gave ointment, / and good for the all saints, those you saw

Ar wan cyfrannu,
ar henwyr rhannu
a gair y Iesu a garasoch.
(GLGC, 59.33–5)

3.6 Ni bu yno neb anael,
Ni bu'r cwrt na bai wraig hael.
(gutorglyn.net, 87.33–4)

Never may there be an ungenerous person there, / the courtyard was never without a generous wife,

Siwan am arian a medd
a ŵyr hynny o'i rhinwedd
(GLGC 25.39–40).

Siwan for money and mead / knows this naturally

3.7 *A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.* (Timotheus 2: 11–14)

3.8 ‘Oed gwynnach y chnawd no distrych y don’ (CO, t.18 ll.491)

Whiter was her flesh than the foam of the wave

3.9 An Elegy to Gwenhwyfar o Bentraeth, Gruffudd ap Maredudd
In Praise of Myfanwy Gwraig Goronwy Fychan, Rhisierdyn
An Elegy to Glwadys daughter of Dafydd Gam, Lewys Glyn Cothi
To Comfort Ann Herbert, countess of Pembroke, after the death of her husband

3.10 ‘orwyr deg traws Eraint’ (GGM, 5.19).[17]

the great granddaughter of strong Geraint’

3.11 ‘awgrym yw mai merch ifanc ddibriod ydoedd, a mwy fyth felly o achos galaru ar ei hôl gan ei rhieni’ (Williams, 1984, 85)

The suggestion is that she is a young, unmarried girl, and that the mourning for her by her parents would be great.

3.12 ‘... heb fod gennym ar y naill law gorff o gerddi marwnad i ferched ifanc dibriod ac ar y llaw arall i wragedd priod, a bod modd adnabod tueddiadau a gwahaniaethau clir rhyngddynt, ni ellir gwneud mwy nag awgrymu yn betrusgar mai gwraig briod ifanc oedd Gwenhwyfar pan fu farw.’ (GGM, t.169)

Without having on the one hand a body of elegies for young, unmarried women and on the other for married women, and that there is way to know the clear differences between them, we can’t do more than cautiously suggest that she was a young unmarried woman when she died.

3.13 Yn sicr, mae’r farwnad ysblennydd hon, fel nifer tebyg eu naws yn ail hanner y ganrif, yn dystiolaeth i’r modd y dyfnhawyd ac y miniogwyd yr ymateb i angau gan ddifrod y pla. (LlYU, 71)

This splendid elegy, like many other poems similar in their nature from the second half of the fifteenth century, is evidence to the way the reaction to death deepend and sharpened as a result to the fatality of the plague

3.14 ‘Diwair oedd a doeth, deddf goeth gywir’ (GGM, 5.109).[18]

[17]‘Gorwyres hardd Geraint nerthol’.
[18]‘Pur ydoedd a doeth, gwych [a] chywir [ei] dull’.

pure and wise, splendid and correct in her manner

'gwin a medd a'i maeth' (GGM, 5.28).[19]

wine and mead.

'helifedd hael'[20] (GGM, 5.8)

provides mead generously

'Trefnawdd hon arnawdd, cawdd ni'w cuddir' (GGM, 5.111) [21]

This one arranged feasts and sustenance, the loss of this misfortune will not be hidden

... henw mawrweini,
Mygr windefeirn, milioedd a feirn, mal ydd wyf i.[22]
(GGM, 5.140–1)

...there is fame and honour on her vast service / Her taverns of wine are splendid, thousands praise these, as do I

'Dygn gofion Rhiannon rhodd' (GGrG, 2.15).

'Oedd gwingar wen, oedd gwen gall'(GGrG, 6.36)

3.15 'Mi a debygaf na werendeweist eiryoet ar ymdidanwreic well no hi' (PKM, 50)

I am sure that you have never herad a woman converse better than Rhiannon.[23]

Ac yna dechreu kydeisted ac ymdidan o Uanawydan a Riannon; ac o'r ymdidan tirioni a wnaeth y uryt a'y uedwl wrthi. (PKM, 50)

Then Manawydan and Rhiannon sat together and began to converse; and as a result of that conversation his head and heart grew tender towards her.[24]

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[19]'ar win a medd y'i magwyd hi'.
[20]'yn darparu medd yn hael'.
[21]'Bu i hon drefnu cynhaliaeth, [dyma] dramgwydd nas cuddir'.
[22]'[un y mae] bri [ar ei] gwasanaethu helaeth, / [Ei] thafarnau gwin ysblennydd, y mae miloedd yn canmol [y rhain], fel yr wyf i'.
[23]These translation comes from Davies, 2007, 35.
[24]Davies, 2007, 36.

A dechreu ymdidan a wnaeth ef a'r urenhines. Ac o'r a welsei eiryoet wrth ymdidan a hi, disymlaf gwreic a bonedigeidaf i hannwyt a'y hymdidan oed. (PKM, 4)

And he and the queen began to converse. As he converesed with her, he found her to be the most noble woman and the most graciousof disposition and discourse he had ever seen.[25]

3.16 'cain a thawel' (GGM, 5.142)

beautiful and gentle

'gwan gwâr' (GGM, 5.24)

civilized

'fun dawel uchelwaed' (GGM, 5.43).

quiet woman of high blood

3.17 'tristyd a'm cyfyd' (GGM, 5.33).

3.18 'All these poems to ladies, however, pale into insignificance when set against the elegy to Gwenhwyfar, a maiden cut down at the height of her youth and beauty' (Lloyd, 1979, 52).

3.19 'mwyalchliw ddwyael' (GGM, 5.6)[26]

one with two eyebrows the same colour as the blackbird

'Y tâl dan aur mâl am ael feinir' (GGM, 5.106)[27]

The forehead under pure gold around the eyebrows of the girl.

'Oedd grudd gwrel' (GGM, 5.142)[28]

She had cheeks the colour of coral

'fy nyn llwyd' GGM, 5.81).[29]

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[25]Davies, 2007, 5.
[26]'[Un a chanddi] ddwy ael o liw mwyalchen'.
[27]'Y talcen dan aur gloyw o amgylch ael y feinir'.
[28]'[Un â] grudd o liw cwrel ydoedd [hi]'. Dyma ddelwedd a ddefnyddir yn aml i ddisgrifio coch y bochau, er enghraifft: 'Gwrel rudd ger ael rydu' (GMB, 6.20). Gweler hefyd GMB, 6.20n.
[29]Roedd hyn yn amlwg yn ddelfryd o brydferthwch ymysg y beirdd, er enghraifft, gwelir Sypyn Cyfeiliog yn eu gwrthgyferbynnu fel hyn: 'A'r ael uchel... / Asgell mwyalch ar galch gwyn' (GDB, 4.5–6).

my pale woman

'deg ei llun lliw nyf gorthir' (GGM, 5.102),[30]

'bryd eiry celli' (GGM, 5.155).[31]

'hoen geirw creignaint – glwys'(GGM, 5.17);[32]

'lliw berw basryd' (GGM, 5.84);[33]

'Hithau, hoen gwendon lon don am dir' (GGM, 5.131).[34]

3.20 'ail Luned, em oleuni' GGM, 5.149[35]

one similar to Luned, the brilliance of a gem

'arail bryd Nyf' GGM, 5.159

Of the same appearance as Nyf

'gwiwliw Derdri' GGM, 5.148[36]

of the fair appearance of Derdri

'Enid unrhwyf Wenhwyfar' GGrG, 6.2

'Llywied ail Elen i lewenydd' (GGrG, 6.74).

3.21 Lle bu cyn pallu (pwyll a hoffir)
Sirig a syndal, mal y molir,
Lle bu fflwch degwch (deigrw a wylir)
A Phorffor a rhudd, neud grudd grodir.[37]
(GGM, 5.117–120)

3.22 'A diheu oed gan Owein na weslei eiryoet niuer kyhardet a hwnnw o bali a seric a syndal' (Thomson, 1968, ll.351–3)

3.23 'Llenn borfor pedeir ael ymdanaw, ac aul rudeur vrth pob ael iti' (CO, t.3, ll.76)

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[30]'Hardd ei gwedd o ddisgleirdeb eira'r mynydd-dir'.
[31]'yr un o] wedd eira [ar] lwyn'.
[32]'[merch o] ddisgleirdeb dŵr crych nentydd hardd sy'n llifo dros welyau creigiog'.
[33]'[un o] liw ewyn [ar] ryd fas'.
[34]'Hithau, disgleirdeb ton wen nwyfus wedi torri ar dir'.
[35]'un debyg i Luned, disgleirdeb gem'.
[36]' [yr un o] brydferthwch Nyf'; 'gwedd hardd Derdri'.
[37]'Lle y bu cyn [iddi] farw ([ei] doethineb a folir) / Sidan a lliain main, fel y molir, / Lle y bu harddwch disglair (dagrau a wylir) / A dillad porffor a choch, y mae grudd [bellach] mewn graeandir'.

3.24 ‘A phorffor a rhudd’ (GGM, 5.120)

‘Lle bu ra a gwyrdd, lle bu rudd – a glas’ (GGM, 5.45).[38]

3.25 Byddai lliw a chyfoeth y defnyddiau yn gosod Gwenhwyfar ar wahân i’r bobl gyffredin a nyddai eu gwlân a’u lliain eu hunain mewn lliwiau llwm. Yr oedd lliw ei hun yn farciwr cymdeithasol, ac nid rhyfedd fod y beirdd yn aml yn cyfeirio at wisgoedd eu noddwyr wrth eu lliwiau yn unig. (GGM, t.149)

3.26 ‘Hael o fywn urael yn euro gwir’ (GGM, 5.110).[39]

3.27 ‘Call o’i phall ei phwyll oedd ddoe’ (GGrG, 6.37).[40]

3.28 ‘Y tâl dan aur mâl am ael feinir’ (GGM, 5.106)[41]

Teg o’m pwyll ofeg (ym pall afael – hun)
Oedd wenfun hoywlun hael
A gerais dan frig urael
Ac aur mâl uwch ei gwrm ael.[42]
(GGM, 3.21–4)

3.29 Lle bu ra a gwyrdd, lle bu rudd – a glas,
Neud gloes angau gystudd;
Lle bu aur am ei deurudd,
Lle bu borffor, côr a’i cudd.

Gwisgwyd hael gwindraul ger gwyndraeth – Cyrchell
Mwyn carchar glasfedd caeth...[43]
(GGM, 5.45–51)

Moliant Myfanwy Wraig Goronwy Fychan, Rhisierdyn

3.30 ‘Enwog falch fynog o feilch fonedd’ (GS, 5.2).[44]
The noble one, honourable and famous from the lineage of hobourable men.

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[38]‘Lle y bu ffwr a dillad gwyrdd, lle y bu dillad coch a glas’.
[39]‘Yn fonheddig mewn [gwisg o] liain main yn anrhydeddu['r] gwir’.
[40]‘Doeth ei synnwyr yn ei mantell oedd [hi] ddoe’.
[41]‘Y talcen dan aur gloyw o amgylch ael y feinir’.
[42]‘Hardd oherwydd fy ymadrodd doeth (gwan ei afael yw cwsg i mi) / Oedd merch ddisglair brydweddol [a] hael / A gerais dan benwisg o liain main / Ac aur gloyw uwch eo hael[iau] tywyll’.
[43]‘Lle y bu ffwr a dillad gwyrdd, lle y bu dillad coch a glas, / Y mae gorthrymder artaith angau; / Lle y bu aur o amgylch ei deurudd, / Lle y bu proffor, cangell [eglwys bellach] sy’n ei gorchuddio. / Gwisgwyd haul a fu’n rhannu gwin ger traeth gwyn [Afon] Cyrchell / Yng ngharchar bedd cynamserol caeth...’
[44]‘[Yr] un bendefigaidd, urddasol [ac] enwog o dras gwŷr urddasol’.

3.31 ‘Lluniad diornair llin teÿrnedd’ (GS, 5.14),[45]

3.32 ‘Difai fonedd yw da Fyfanwy’ (GS, 3.44),[46]

Good Myfanwy is flawless in her nobility

3.33 ‘Cymhendod dafod, etifedd – lwyddiant’ (GS, 5.19).[47]

One from the language of elegant speech, the reason of the growth of her descendents.

3.34 ‘Un ni fwrw ei phwyll yn oferedd’ (GS, 5.4);[48]

One who does not direct her thoughts to vanity.

3.35 ‘Deall aelaw doeth, diell wyled’ (GS, 5.32);[49]

3.36 ‘Eirgall ddiwall ball, bwyll ogyweg’ (GC, 5.13).[50]

3.37 ‘Llythr a ddysgodd bun llathraidd osgedd’ (GS, 5.13).[51]

The brilliant girl learnt her letters

3.38 ‘Gofynnai fawlgerdd yn gyfannedd’ (GS, 5.9).[52]

frequently asks for poems

3.39 Aur mâl a’m bu dâl, dolur atreg – fraw,
Yn llaw, ŵyl andaw, gan ail Indeg.[53]
(GC, 5.15–6)

3.40 ‘Gwasgawd inseilwawd ansalwedd – arfer’ (GS, 5.11).[54]

3.41 ‘Gwenlwys eurswllt bobl, gwinllys orsedd’ (GS, 5.10),[55]

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[45]‘[Yr un] ddi-fai [ei] ffurf [o] linach brenhinoedd’.
[46]‘Di-fai [ei] bonedd yw Myfanwy dda’.
[47]‘[Un o] iaith huodledd, [achos] ffyniant [ei] disgynyddion’.
[48]‘Un nad yw’n cyfeirio ei meddwl at oferedd’.
[49]‘[Un a chanddi] feddwl rhwydd [a] doeth [a] gwyleidd-dra perffaith’.
[50]‘[Yr un ddoeth dy air [mewn] mantell wych, yn llestair [i] synnwyr’.
[51]‘Dysgodd [y] fun ddisglair [ei] llun lythrennau’. Gweler hefyd Lloyd-Morgan, 1996 a 1998 ac am addysg a llythrennedd merched ym Mhrydain y cyfnod, gweler Meale, 1996a.
[52]‘Gofynnai am gerdd fawl yn barhaus’.
[53]‘Bu aur gloyw [yn] dâl imi, [achlysur] braw gofid[us a] phoen[us], / Yn [fy] llaw, [un sy’n] gwrando’n dirion [ydyw], gan un debyg i Indeg’.
[54]‘Noddwraig barddoniaeth ddilys [ac iddi] arfer [llawn] gweddeiddrwydd’.
[55]‘Llusern hardd [a] gwych Powys, noddwraig sy’n darparu gwleddoedd moethus’; ‘[Un] hardd a theg [y] bobl [sy’n derbyn] rhodd wych, penaethes y llys lle llifa’r gwin’.

3.42 ‘Cu fynogwymp wawr, cyfiawn agwedd’[56] (GS, 5.21).

One who has an unbiased opinion.

3.43 ‘Anwylgain firain o fawredd – didwyll’ (GS, 5.3).[57]

A beautiful one, fair and beautiful from true greatness

3.44 Mawl i hirwen ddoeth, mil a’i harwedd
Manon aur hoywdal mywn enrhydedd.[58]
(GS, 5.5–6)

Praise to the one, fair and tall, a thousand spread your word / the splendind lady with a beautiful forehead in honour.

3.45 ‘(Claer aur freisg-gorff llathr) clêr ar frwysgedd’ (GS, 5.24).[59]

3.46 ‘dianhunedd – ddeigr’ (GS, 5.35).[60]

3.47 ‘Cerir ei mawrdwf nid er cared’ (GS, 5.17).[61]
Her beautiful body is loved but not to commit sin.

3.48 ‘goludog gymar... Goronwy Fychan, gwron fuchedd’ (GS, 5.33–4)
‘gymar hy ener’ (GS, 5.12).[62]

3.49 ‘Heb ennill ei chyfryw’ (GGM, 5.2),[63]

4. Y Marwnad Gwladys ferch Syr Dafydd Gam, Lewys Glyn Cothi

4.1 ‘Ni cheir yr argraff fod y bardd yn ymateb i farwolaeth a oedd newydd ddigwydd’ (GLGC, t.577)

we do not get the impression that the poet is responding to a death that had just happened’

4.2 O hon y cawn frenhinwaed
a ieirll Gwent eurlliw o’i gwaed.

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[56]‘Arglwyddes hardd, urddasol [ac] annwyl, [un] ddiduedd [ei] hagwedd’.
[57]‘Un hardd, annwyl a phrydferth o wir fawredd’.
[58]‘Moliant i[‘r] un ddoeth, dal a goleubryd, mae mil yn ei gludo [ar led], / [Y] rhiain wych [a] hardd ei thalcen mewn anrhydedd’.
[59]‘([Yr un a chanddi] gorff cryf, disglair, coeth [a] hyglod), [sef y] beirdd mewn medd-dod’.
[60]‘[yn achosi] dagrau [o ganlyniad i] ddiffyg cwsg ofnadwy’.
[61]‘Cerir ei chorff lluniaidd ond nid er mwyn cyflawni pechod’.
[62]‘Gymhares oludog, [un] hael, wâr [a] disglair fel yr haul, / Goronwy Fychan, [un ac iddo] ymarweddiad arwr’; ‘Cymhares arglwydd dewr’.
[63]‘[A ninnau] heb gael neb tebyg iddi [yn ei lle]’.

(GLGC, 110.21–2)

From her we had royal blood
And earls from Gwent, from her blood, the colour of gold

Y mae'i meibion hirion hi
i roi gwleddau'n arglwyddi.
(GLGC, 110.13–14)

Her tall sons / are here to give feats as lords

4.3 Gwladus lwyddiannus ddinam
oedd o gorff Syr Dafydd Gam.
(GLGC, 110.3–4)

Gwladus succesful and faultless / was from Sir Dafydd Gam's body

Arglwyddes a santes oedd,
o'r hen arglwyddi'r hanoedd.
(GLGC, 110.11–2)

She was a lady and a saint / she came from a long line of lords

4.4 Galw ar Iesu tra fu fyw,
ac ar y Grog a oryw.
(GLGC, 110.9–10)

She called upon Jesus when she was alive

4.5 Edudful bob Sul y sydd
yn galw o sant i'w gilydd,
a'i meibion draw yn llawen
am ei gweddi hi fydd hen.
(GLGC, 168.53–6)

Edudful every Sunday / calls upon the saints / and her sons will be happy / and because of her prayer, they wil life a long life.

4.6 Marsia gynt, Gymräes gall,
ar ddwyiaith a rôi ddeall.

Marsia, a wise Welsh woman / understood two lanaguages
Gwladus, a hi'n gweled saint,
oedd ail hon i ddaly henaint.
(GLGC, 110.15–16; 19–20)

Gwladus, she sees the saints/ was second to this one

4.7 ‘ar wreic honno oe hethrylithr a dechymygwys kyfreith a alwei y brytanyeit kyfreit[h] Marchia. Ar gyfreith honno a droes aluryt vrenhin o gymraec yn saesnec’ (Rhŷs, 1890, 79)

and that woman of genius imagined a law that the Britains called Marsia’s law. And that law turned King Alfred from Welsh to English.

4.8 Yn seren ar ben y bedd
y rhoed i gadw’r anrhydedd
maes glas fal cledd Pandrasus
a llew lir â’r liw o lus.
O gylch y tŵr yn glych teg
Duw a oedd, ef a’r deuddeg;
englynion gwynion o’i gylch
a drig bob dri o’i gylch.
Organau oll hyd frig nef
ag arianllais, gôr unllef;
mil o dyrs amliw o dân,
mil eraill aml o arian;
mwy no mil o feudwyaid
dan gŵyr bob deunaw a gaid;
yn nesaf mae deunawsaint
yn bwrw naw sens gerbron saint.
(GLGC, 110.43–58)

4.9 Main beril cylch Syr Wiliam
oedd fedd gwyn merch Dafydd Gam.
Dau a wnaeth i’r deau nawdd,
Duw Iesu a’u dewisawdd,
ac o’u rhyw’n benáig yrhawg
y dewiswn dywysawg.
(GLGC, 110.59-64)

and from their type, leader for a long time / we will chose a prince.

To Comfort Ann Herbert, countess of Pembroke, after the death of her husband

4.10 Gynt y rhoed yn gynta’ rhan
Gwynedd yn llaw ferch Gynan,
Ac unrhodd fu am ganrhent
Gwraig wedi’i gŵr i gadw Gwent.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.1–4)

Once upon a time Gwynedd was given, / as the foremost portion, into the hands of Cynan’s daughter, / and a wife has been equally endowed, possessing a hundred rents, / to maintain Gwent after her husband.

4.11 Ail Sibli, o lys Weblai,
Ddoeth, deg, bendith Dduw i'th dai!
(gutorglyn.net, 26.7–8)

a second Sibyl, wise and fair, / from the court of Weobley, God's blessing on your home!

4.12 Esyllt dristwyllt am Drystan
Wedi dy ŵr ydwyd, Ann,
Martha irder merthyrdawd,
Mair brudd wedi marw ei brawd,
Anhunedd y frenhines
Am ei thad, liw Mai a thes.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.31–36)

You are an Isolde fiercely grieving for Tristan / after your husband, Ann, / a Martha in the vigour of martyrdom, / a mournful Mary after her brother's death, / the sleeplessness of the queen / on account of her father, one with the hue of Maytime and fair weather.

4.13 *Saint Ann* y'th alwan i'th iaith,
Sant Elen dros Went eilwaith.
Elen oedd fam Gwstennin,
A'i mab, traws a fu 'mhob trin.
Mam Iarll Wiliam ieirll aelwyd.
Ac Elen wych Raglan wŷd;
(gutorglyn.net, 26.55-60)

They call you Saint Ann for your people, / Saint Helen too over Gwent. / Helen was the mother of Constantine, / and her son, he was fierce in every battle. / You are the mother of Earl William of the home of earls / and the splendid Helen of Raglan;

4.14 Mam iarll ag arf wyarlled,
Gwraig yr iarll gorau o Gred.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.19–20)

Ni chreodd fy nechreuwr
Gwraig iarll mor gywir i'w gŵr.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.15–16)

4.15 Dilid y broffwydoliaeth
A'i daly 'dd wyd, wrth dy law 'dd aeth.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.47–48)

4.16 Treio ystorm a gormes

Trwy Raglan dir, troi'r glaw'n des.
Arglwyddfab y wraig wleddfawr
A geidw'r llys, nis gad i'r llawr.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.39–42)

4.17 Ymherodr yma hirwyn,
Fal ei mab, fo Wiliam ynn.
(gutorglyn.net, 26.65–66)

a tall fair emperor here, / like her son, may William be for us

4.18 'mewn cyfnod pan oedd y teulu cnewyllol yn dechrau ymffurfio fel uned ar wahân' (LlYU, 245)

in a period when the nuclear family was starting to form as a separate unit.