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Module: Peoples, Present Societies: Research Methods and Skills (HPHI7016)

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Manuscript Transcription:
Black Book of Carmarthen, Pages 14-24

The first step taken in completing this exercise was to write out every line by hand. This allowed me to figure out what letters were familiar, and which were new or potentially abbreviated. I do not know Welsh, so the page selection was chosen at random. I could not locate sources that specified if there were any abbreviations that were common in Welsh manuscripts, therefore I relied on Adriano Cappelli's *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum* to translate any unfamiliar letters or abbreviations. I then went through each line transcribing these letters and abbreviations in full modern lettering. There were two towards the end of the transcription that I could not find an identical symbol or an equal within the lexicon which leads me to believe they could be Welsh specific or specific to the author. These were "*o^e*" and "*r^c*" located on page 24. These abbreviations only appeared once within the selected pages therefore there was no contextual evidence to deduce their meaning from. Page 19 contains an entry on the bottom of the page that is not fully legible due to age, therefore I could not transcribe this section. It appears to be written in another hand which leads me to believe that it was a later addition to the manuscript.

The page selections come from the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, which is the earliest surviving complete manuscript written in Welsh. According to the National Library of Wales, it was most likely written by one author over a period of a few years. The text is mostly poetry containing stories of Welsh heroes as well as some poetry concerning *Myrddan*, or Merlin. The scribe is unknown.¹

The full manuscript, including pages 14-24 which were transcribed, can be found here on the National Library of Wales official website:

<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/the-black-book-of-carmarthen>

This is the best way to view the document as the website allows viewers to easily zoom in and see details clearly. I chose to link the document instead of taking screenshots to use as still images as screenshots of the document become pixelated when zooming in.

After transcribing a few pages from the manuscript and learning some of the document's history one aspect of the way manuscripts were written became evident. This is that while spelling is largely language dependent and will therefore vary from document to document, the *Black Book of Carmarthen* shows that if a document was written in the Roman alphabet, the abbreviations used by scribes remained the largely same. This is further evidenced by the content of the book, as it was most likely written by a religious scribe who would have known Latin but chose to write these poetic tales in

¹ *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin*, pg. 14-24, The National Library of Wales (1225 – 1275)

Welsh as a labor of love with abbreviations common to them from religious text instead of creating an entirely new set of Welsh specific abbreviations.

Index of Letters

j = y

ā = A

f or s = s

pp = pp

l = i

x = x

W = w

H = H, capital

m = ~~m~~ or

U = G, capital

oo = Capital "M"

m = cccc

"i" = i

"H" = ~~N~~ N

G = g

c = +

b = h

Black Book of Carmarthen PG.14

Line 1

Moes vreis̃c vreyr • moes

final line:

Moes vreis̃c vreyr. Moes

"j" = antigraphus" vIII

on pg. 468, abbreviation

"jm" shows "j" is just "y"

"j" is "s", found on page 400.

Line 2

Wirth vehir • milwir mwith •

final line:

Wirth vehir. milwer mwith.

Wirth vehir. milwer orvith

Line 3

Maer^(or D) clær kijwid • mad cath

final line:

maer clær kijwid. mad cath

"V" most likely stylistic choice for "v" or "w"

pg. 399-400 have similar

"w", example "Var"

"Oz" most likely, either "m"

(looks similar to

↑ examples on pg. 272

"Oz" = "or", pg. 316

PG. 14 Continued...

Line 4

yl kyvid · moidit ieith · ∞as

"∞" most likely "m" as
 "∞", or "infinity" makes no
 sense.

final line:

could be "w" but does
 not look like other elsewhere

yl kyvid · moidit ieith · Mas

Line 5

cas nognav · minhev nev frav ·

final line:

cas nognav · minhev nev frav ·

Line 6

molav fravfraeth · ∞unervuo

final line:molav fravfraeth · ~~Munervuo~~ Munervuo

Line 7

dauc • maeranhetauc • marer

final line:

dauc maeranhetauc. marer

Line 8

auc doet • Medel visamel

final line:

auc doet. Medel visamel

Line 9

vartoni • mynogi gvŷth • ~~cccc~~
cccc

~~cccc~~ look similar to
symbol for "cccc" on pg. 476

final line:

vartoni. mynogi gvŷth. cccc

PG. 14 Continued...

4

Line 10

o jnvínad vron(vmn?) • metv(mew?) ton(wn)

"i" is "i", pg. 232

final line:

Mynvinad vron. metv ton

Line 11

dws traeth • Oer Kertev ~~oo~~

final line:

dros traeth. Mer Kertev ~~ccc~~ cccc

Line 1

Kein • mywir covein • mire (mice?)

Final line:

Kein. mywir covein. mire

Line 2.

inanoeth • oeneftir • vytud.

Final line:

inanoeth. meneftir. vytud.

Line 3. (switch with Line 4, accidentally skipped Line)

muith • music agan mal

Final line:

muith. music agan mal

Line 4. (see note on Line 3)

meuvet vetvd (vewd?) • molud es

final line:

meuvet vetvd . molud es

Line 5

euro mian • man • vahahieth •

eur orian • man vahanieth •

final line:

~~eur mian . man vahanieth .~~

eur ~~aa~~ orian . man vahanieth

Line 6

Overth (oveith) reith rysset • gvi

final line:

Overth reith rysset . gvi

Line 7

ch ruich ryvet rinuet re

final line:

ch ruich ryvet rinuet re

Line 8

en. Rec ry⁸siolaw. recaar

final line:

en. Rec rysiolaw. recaar

Line 9

chaw. ruy⁹mar uirthen (wrthen).

final line:

chaw. ruy⁹mar uirthen.

Line 10

ruthur • vthir avel • Ryn

final line:

ruthur. vthir avel. Ryn

Line 11

aut uvel • Ryvel vebiH •

"H" most likely "h"

but add that it is

that way at end of word.

final line:

"H" = N, pg. 292

~~aut uvel. Ryvel vebiH~~

aut vvel. Ryvel vebin

Line 1

Ruteur dyrlit. Ry chud

final line:

Ruteur dyrlit. Ry chud

Line 2

clodrit. Rihit aden. Rev

final line:

clodrit. Rihit aden. Rev

Line 3

~~Wafcaud (wafraud?)~~

~~Wet parand (paramd?) • Rín vynn.~~

wet parand (paramd?) • Rín vynn.

final line:

Wet paraird. Rín vynn.

PG. 16 Continued

10

Line 4

~~Wel parand (paramd?) • Rín vinn •~~
Wasraud (wascaud) • tra gvaud wo -

final line:

Wasraud. tra gvaud wo -

Line 5

briH • Ry hart itaut • Ry

final line:

briH. Ry hart itaut. Ry

Line 6

cheidv ynaut • Rac cant

final line:

cheidv ynaut. Rac cant

Line 7

gelin · Ry. Chedwis tetyf.

"Ĉ" most likely "t"
pg. 432

final line:

gelin. Ry. Chedwis tetyf.

Line 8

Ry chynis gretyw · Rac

final line:

Ry chynis gretyw · Rac

Line 9

lletyw og y rven · Rac.

final line:

lletyw og y rven · Rac.

Line 10

dac · dmssow · Reghíd

final line:

dac · drossow · Reghíd

Line 11

brid bot · Rot cu gelín ·

"h" = h, script
ink messy slightly

final line:

brid bot · Rot cu helin

Line 1

hervit vrten. autyl

final line:

hervit vrten. autyl

Line 2

Kyrridven. og yr

final line:

Kyrridven. og yr

Line 3ven amhad. $\bar{a}$ m had $\bar{a} = A$, pg. 64final line:ven amhad. ~~dm~~ Amhad

Line 4.

anav. areith awyrll

final line:

anav. areith awyrll

Line 5.

av. y cav keineid. cv

"v̄", just v on closer
look

final line:

av. y cav keineid. Cv

Line 6.

helin doeth. Kymraer (kymraec)

final line:

helin doeth. kymraec

Line 7.

oeth • Kyvoeth awyr

final line:

Meth. Kyvoeth awyr

Line 8.

llav • Keluit id gran.

final line:

llav. keluit id gran.

Line 9.

cluir vír aedan • Ky

final line:

Cluir vir aedan. Ky

Line 10

wlaavan lev. Kert

final line:

wlaavan lev. Kert

Line 11

Ky wlaander • Kater (Kater)

final line:Ky wlaander. ~~Kater~~ Kater

Line 1

dirper cadir wober. yv.

final line:

dirper cadir wober. yv.

Line 2

Kanholiaon caffod eilon.

final line:

Kanholiaon caffod eilon.

Line 3

Keinon vrthav. Cau tyirn

final line:

Keinon vrthav. Cau tyirn

PG. 18 Continued

18

Line 4

et carthil (cathil) Kyhidet Kyuryss:

" " = ;

final line:

et cathil Kyhidet Kyuryss;

Line 5.

Wjv. Campusj veirch.

final line:

Wjv. Campusy veirch.

Line 6.

can hyn aepeirch (aepeirch) . Ky wre ✓

final line:

can hyn aepeirch. Ky wre

Line 7

neurh glyv. Cor wa-

final line:

neurh glyv. Cor wa

Line 8

radred. Kenetyl noted ked

final line:

radred. Kenetyl noted ked

Line 9

Ky wetliv. Iliwed ahun.

final line:

Ky wetliv. Iliwed ahun.

Line 10

llyssait ertun. llun venediv.

final line:

llyssait ertun. llun venediv.

Line 11.

llydam ky vor. uog dessef

final line:

llydam ky vor. llog dessef

Line 12.

for. llogporth anav. llvgj (uvgy)

final line:

for. llogporth anav. llvgj

Line 1Rin Kytrim. ~~Hedvegíng~~ Hedvegin grin. (grím?)final line:

Rin Kytrim. Hedvegin grim.

Line 2

Him yd grim glew. Hleuver

final line:

Him yd grim glew Hleuver

Line 3Synhuir. Haueravyr. Hlv
(gvr, in margin)final line:Synhuir. Haueravyr. Hlv
gvr (in between)

Synhuir Haueragvr. Hlv

Note: Section on this page
not legible and in different hand.

Line 4

irid voriv • Gorpp gulet

"po" = pp, pg. 346

final line:

irid voriv Gorpp gulet

Line 5

druj tagnevet het ohet ✓
• IV

final line:

druj tagnevet het. IV

Line 1

R(k?) yvaenad Keluit • Kyne

final line:

Kyvaenad Keluit. Kyne

Line 2

lv o douit • Kyuaenad

final line:

lv o douit. Kyuaenad

Line 3

Kynan o crift Kein did-

final line:

Kynan o crift Kein did

PG. 20 Continued

24

Line 4

an. Acvei gyuerkinan am. y.

final line:

an. Acvei gyuerkinan am. y.

Line 5

gyilchin huan. Ar gyuerpe

final line:

gyilchin huan. Ar gyuerpe

Line 6

gor y flit y dan mor. Ar gny

final line:

gor yssit y dan mor. Ar gny

Line 7

uer • edeinauca aoruc Kyuoeth

final line:

uer edeinauca aoruc Kyuoeth

Line 8

auc • AcXei • vei • paup • tri try

"X" = x, pg. 464

final line:

auc • Acxei • vei • paup • tri try

Line 9

chant tauand • Hyellynt ve

"H" = capital H
pg. 220

final line:

chant tauand • Hyellynt ve

Line 10

traethand • Kywoethev y trin

final line:

traethand. Kywoethev y trin

Line 11

dand • M(s)in dyual y fand • Hy

final line:

"M" is G.

dand. Gin dyual y fand. Hy

Line 1

eruill cospauð • Kymun H bid pa

final line:

eruill cospauð. Kymun bid pa

Line 2

rauð • inerbía tridauð • Bid

final line:

rauð. inerbía tridauð. Bid

Line 3

glafglefyð(ch)auð • Ban wan -

final line:~~glafglefyð~~ ~~glafglefyð~~

glafglefychauð. Ban wan

Line 4

ha . y gnaud y diodrut . yisica

final line:

ha . y gnaud y diodrut . yisica

Line 5

ud . Guae a din hew id pir

final line:

ud . Guae a din hewid pir

Line 6

dod uid unbid . Onid imwa

final line:

dod uid unbid . Onid imwa

line 7

redit. or druc digonit. ~~Has~~ Hev

final line:

redit. or druc digonit. Hev

line 8

duid y thrihit. ythurid. a.

final line:

duid y thrihit. ythurid. a.

line 9

Kerit. Grud dytihenit. dy

final line:

Kerit. Grud dytihenit. dy

Line 10.

ímtuín Har llogylwit • TRV

final line:

ímtuínar llogylwit. Trv

Line 11.

ach dydivet • dy lauriav • o •

final line:

ach dydivet. dy lauriav. o.

Line 1

vet. a segi athraed ymlith prit

final line:

vet. a segi athraed ymlith prit

Line 2

ath y dwet. Mihafal dyimte

final line:

ath y dwet. ~~Gihafat~~ Gihafal dyimte

Line 3

ith dyisscar ath kedimteith.

final line:

ith dyisscar ath kedimteith.

Line 4

Corph diffid direid • gobuill • o •

final line:

Corph diffid direid • gobuill • o •

Line 5

th enid • Corph niglivit paleue

final line:

th enid • Corph niglivit paleue

Line 6

ir ygilit • Pa Roteifte o th Rev

final line:

ir ygilit • Pa roteifte o th rev

Line 7

vet. KínKýues argel. Paro

final line:

vet. KínKýues argel. Paro

Line 8.

teiste otholud Kín muill moll

final line:

teiste otholud Kín muill moll

Line 9

mud. acýhárúetud. acýdad

final line:

mud. acýhárúetud. acýdad

PG. 22 End

Line 10

and. Acnyruie lssud ymeint agar

final line:

and. Acnyruie lssud ymeint agar

Line 11.

yssud. Acitoetowud y luv teint

final line:

~~yssud. Acitoetowud y luv teint~~

~~yssud Acitoetowud y luv teint~~

Line 1

dud. 2daon itaethant ig kym

final line:

dud. Adaon itaethant ig kym

Line 2.

eint offiiiant (offiliant?) • Prit primide

final line:eint ~~offiiiant~~ offiliant. Prit primideLine 3.

chant. othriit ageugant • dr

final line:

chant. othriit ageugant • dr

PG. 23 Continued

Line 4.

ysmortiunt mal gossod am

final line:

ysmortiunt mal gossod am

Line 5.

rant. Aueleifte o garant afv

final line:

rant. Aueleifte o garant afv

Line 6.

treis tiagissant. Hypherchei

final line:

treis tiagissant. Hypherchei

Line 7.

fte gueneroth vaur etyllter.

final line:

fte gueneroth vaur etyllter

Line 8.

Hidi Hicheuntofte pader na phil

final line:

Hicheuntofte pader naphil

Line 9.

geint na gosper. pader priw

final line:

geint na gosper. pader priw

Line 10

traethaud • gobuill oneband

final line:

traethaud. gobuill oneband

Line 11

namiun H y trindaud • Ry talud

final line:

namiun y trindaud. Ry talud

Line 12

iftedlit tri serth pader beunit.

final line:

iftedlit tri serth pader beunit

Line 13.

Offv acnidoes. acnithreghis.

final line:

Affv acnidoes. acnithreghis

PG 24 Start

40

Line 1.

evhoes · moe y dinwaffilte mer

final line:

evhoes. moe y dinwassilte mer

Line 2.

Verit · nophregeth evegil · In

final line:

werit. nophregeth evegil. An

Line 3.

deidiglethuir guŕth nabuo

couldn't find meaning for
'ε'
'R'.

final line:

deidiglethuir guŕth nabuo

Line 4.

ft vffil. Hiphercheifte aeir

final line:

ft vffil. Hiphercheifte aeir

Line 5.

evina lloc ua (lla, na?) llanev. Hiden

final line:

evina lloc ua llanev. niden

Line 6.

deueifte Kiwrev beirt gouer

final line:

deueifte Kiwrev beirt gouer

Line 7.

higlev. Hipherch eifte kíurfer Kíurei

final line:

higlev. Hipherch eifte Kíurei

Line 8.

th aeandir new kin llerch lly

final line:

th aeandir new kin llerch lly

Line 9.

aus aghiuieth a todute ar

final line:

aus aghiuieth a todute ar

line 10

diareith. Gvae vi pir imtei

$G = g$, pg. 210

final line:

diareith. Gvae vi pir imtei

line 11

th genhide in Kyueth. Gvae

final line:

th genhide in Kyueth. Gvae

Line 12.

vi pir Wuuf ar diKiuolv.

final line:

vi pir Wuuf ar diKiuolv

PG. 24 End.

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Line 13

pan douthume attad o^eth

o^e, is "O^e" pg. 308

means omnia, but

text is in welsh not

~~lat~~ Latin.

final line:

pan douthume attad o^eth

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