

- um die Wissenschaft, durch äußerst gründliche philologische Aufbereitung des in Manuskripten überlieferten Materials (insgesamt 23 Gedichte, von denen die meisten ganz oder teilweise von Gwerful stammen und die übrigen sich auf sie beziehen);
- um ihre Leser, durch maßvolle Modernisierung der mittelkymrischen Orthographie, mehr noch durch ein sehr hilfreiches Glossar und insbesondere durch Anmerkungen und Erläuterungen, die das Verständnis der Gedichte erheblich erleichtern;
- um einen erweiterten, geisteswissenschaftlich interessierten Leserkreis, dem in einer langen und instruktiven Einleitung einerseits dargelegt wird, in welchem intellektuellen Kontext, im Kreise ihrer Familie, in der Gesellschaft ihrer Heimat und im Kontakt mit anderen Dichtern Gwerful Mechain stand, und andererseits, welche Verbindungslinien sich zwischen ihr und bedeutenden Dichterinnen des europäischen Mittelalters ziehen lassen.

Gwerful Mechains erhaltende Werke gehören zwei Gebieten an, die völlig konträr erscheinen und dennoch zur gleichen Persönlichkeit gehören: Zwei langen Gedichten religiösen Inhalts (*Dioddefaint Crist* und *Angau a Barn*) stehen etliche andere mit sehr handfester erotischer Thematik gegenüber. Es verbindet sich der Ausdruck des Wunsches nach Erlösung im Jenseits mit dem der Erlösung von Wünschen im Diesseits. In der Frage, wieweit die kraftvolle Sprache Gwerfuls, in der Körperteile und -funktionen, die andere diskret verschweigen, im Vordergrund stehen, ein Merkmal besonderer dichterischer Qualitäten ist, wird man geteilter Meinung sein können. Es besteht aber kein Zweifel, daß Gwerful Mechain eine bemerkenswerte Gestalt von mehr als lokaler Bedeutung ist. Ihr Werk, und selbst ihr Name sind in dem Standardwerk von Thomas Parry nicht erwähnt; umsomehr ist das Buch über sie eine wichtige Ergänzung und Erweiterung der uns zugänglichen Informationen über die Geschichte der walisischen Literatur.

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Gwaith Hywel Surdwal a'i Deulu, golygwyd gan DYLAN FOSTER EVANS.
Aberystwyth: Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol
Cymru, 2001. xx + 244 pp., £10.00. ISBN 0-947531-90-4. [Cyfres Beirdd
yr Uchelwyr].

This is the eighteenth volume of a series, of a projected thirty, begun in 1994 by the Aberystwyth Centre for Advanced Studies that aims to present the work of Welsh poets of the later medieval period (14th–16th centuries). This volume follows the established format of the series with an introductory section (1–19) followed by 34 poems (20–132), followed by

notes (133–215), a vocabulary of noteworthy elements (217–24), an onomastic index (225–31), and a list of some 123 manuscripts consulted to assemble the present work (233–40). The whole is preceded by a note on the editorial method of the series, the contents as well as reference and general abbreviations (v–xx).

Here we have the work of more than one poet and the editor has attributed the poems in the following manner: 22 to Hywel Swrðwal (ns. 1–18, 20–23); 9 to Ieuan ab Hywel Swrðwal (ns. 24–31, 33); 1 to Dafydd ab Hywel Swrðwal (n. 34) as well as 2 to Llawdden (ns. 19, 32) which were composed in response to ns. 18, 31. As is usual with poetry preserved in a number of different medieval recensions, there is no absolute certainty as to the authorship of some of the poems. The editor devotes a few pages (10–13, 14–17) to discuss poems of questionable attribution (including ns. 20–23, 28, 33 of the present volume) and evidence of lost pieces.

The relationship of the poets to each other is given as follows: Hywel Swrðwal was the father of Ieuan, however in the case of Dafydd ab Hywel Swrðwal mentioned above the editor wonders whether he was in fact Dafydd ab Ieuan ab Hywel Swrðwal, his grandson rather than his son. This is quite justified as a query but for want of proof this volume follows the attribution in the only extant manuscript of this poem. Hywel Swrðwal lived in Aberysgir in the lordship of Brycheiniog in the fifteenth century and descended from a French family which had its origins in the village of Sourdeval in Normandy. The surname, spelt Surdeval, is attested in Brycheiniog as early as 1205, and this lineage was probably originally endowed with the knight's fee of Aberysgir after the conquest of Brycheiniog by the Anglo-Normans. By the fifteenth century Hywel and his son were members of the lesser gentry and held official positions from time to time. The poetry of both Hywel and his son display effective contemporary mastery of *cynghanedd* which goes to show how integrated into Welsh society this family of foreign origin had become: indeed the author of poem 23 – either Hywel or his son – states *Cymro a'i cân* and in poem 7 Hywel gives vent to anti-English sentiment *Hwrswns o Hors Heinsiust*. The editor judiciously refers to a poem by another fifteenth century poet Hywel Dafî that explained the excellence of the aristocracy of Brycheiniog as due to the intermixture of French and Welsh blood and indeed mentioned Swrðwal's family. The descendants of the family survived into the early Modern period, but as with a number of other originally foreign families the Welsh patronymic style was adopted which meant that Swrðwal, the hereditary surname, was abandoned. The poetry of the Swrðwals is quite typical of Welsh poetry of the period, poems of praise and elegy to the nobles, religious poems and humorous contention poetry (*ymryson*) with a certain Llawdden. Apart from a glimpse into their ethnic outlook, through the extant poetry we see that the Swrðwals' world was centred around Brycheiniog and the adjoining lordships in south-east Wales and they supported the Yorkist cause through the patronage of the powerful Herbert family of Raglan (Hywel was the bailiff of the Duke of York in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, for a while in the 1450s). Two poems refer to Cemais in West

Wales and Cedewain in Powys, but it is clear that none of the poetry is addressed to personages in the Principality, either in West or North Wales.

As Jerry Hunter ("Testun Dadl" in 1995 *Tu Chwith* n. 3 pp. 81–85) and Graham Isaac (a review of *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi* by Dafydd Johnston in 1999 *ZcP* vol. 51 pp. 325–27), I am uneasy with the by now traditional practice of modernising and regularising medieval Welsh orthography in academic editions. Let me state clearly that my unease is not with modernising *per se*, only when modernising is presented *at the expense* of a "real" version. I fear that the easy availability of *only* modernised versions will cloak the eyes – and perhaps minds – of students to medieval reality. It is obvious that scholars from a literary background and those from a linguistic background will emphasise a different approach of medieval Welsh poetry, and perhaps from a literary point of view the editions in *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* are satisfactory (though Hunter argues that this is not necessarily so). However I can safely say that from the point of view of the linguist they are frustrating as they only hint at what may lie at the source. I would be most interested to know how the language of the poems relates to well-attested contemporary southern features such as the loss of jod in suffixes, but I cannot arrive at any conclusions based on these "sanitised" versions. Of course, such problems can only begin to be answered through the publishing of diplomatic editions of the original manuscripts. Since we shall probably be waiting quite a while for such editions I would have preferred that this series, as the previous series *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion*, would have included an original manuscript version of each poem. Doubtless there would sometimes arise difficulties in finding a preferred manuscript version, but it should be pointed out that some of the poems in Peniarth MS 54 are supposed to be penned in the poets' own handwriting. It may well be that there is not enough funding for publishing proper diplomatic editions of the texts, but we should not make a virtue of this deficiency. Perhaps the Welsh academic community should be thinking of extending the electronic projects for medieval Welsh manuscripts similar to those at <www.image.ox.ac.uk>.

As to the methodology adopted by the editor and the series, it is fine to accept archaic as well as colloquial deviations from Modern Welsh when it can be seen from internal metre, rhyme, of alliteration that this was what the poet aimed at, but not the occasional admittance of pure variants like *yinnill* (28), *emyl* (56), *diliw* (58), *yfô* (65), *cnewillyn* (108), *cylennig* (111), *garbron* (114), *Meliennydd* (114). The form *marfolaeth* (64) is justified by the editor as following the lesson of the oldest manuscripts, which is fine, but since the poems are supposed to be regularised versions it really begs the question as to why should some phonological particularities be noted but not others. Of course the same variant in another context may answer prosodic exigencies but this would constitute a defensible case as is the case of *ym* / *Gwilym* (59) against *dim* / *Gwilim* (62) and the variation between *-rd* and *-rt* in the consonant cluster at the end of names such as *Edwart*, *Roberd*, *Herbard*. I found some unsatisfactory regularising in the noting of the 3Pl suffix of prepositions as sometimes *-un* or sometimes *-un'*

(the latter, presumably, being correct). Likewise, in at least two cases, *Pre-dur* (25) and *Cradog* (101) were written without apostrophe contrary to the practice elsewhere. The accent of *hursiwns* (156) is unexplained and deserves editorial comment as was done with *Ysbaen* (150). A rather more complicated matter is the perfect rhyme between the historical graphemes < *u* > and < *y* > exemplified a number of times in these poems (e. g. *Nudd / cynnydd*; *ffynud / byd* (67); *glyn / uddun* (68); *dyn / cyd-gyfun* (102); etc.). Now since such rhymes are attested in these poems would it not have been better to write *-yn/-ynt*, the Modern form of the 3Pl suffix of prepositions, rather than the historical and archaic *-un'* (despite usually rhyming here with *un*). I suspect that in *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion*, the previous series published by the same centre, the sounds represented by < *u* > and < *y* > were wholly distinct phonemes, and reasons of editorial uniformity have kept archaic spellings longer than is historically justifiable. Editors face a comparable problem with a similar development that was changing final < *-yw* > to < *-iw* > so that the poets of the period could rhyme *ydyw* with *yw* (56, 106) or with *lliw* (108): the editor spells the word *ydyw* or *ydiw* according to the rhyming scheme, though in view of the editorial policy it would have been more advisable to keep to the historical and Modern spellings *Gwynllyw / ydyw* than *Gwynlliw / ydiw* (32).

Despite the reserve I have for the editorial methodology followed by *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, the series, nevertheless, constitutes an invaluable reference tool that enables researchers to quickly gain a good appreciation of each individual contribution to the extant corpus of medieval Welsh poetry. In this respect we should not be churlish, *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* is making the field of medieval Welsh poetry much more accessible than it had hitherto been.

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Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn, Syr Lewys Meudwy a Mastr Harri ap Hywel, golygwyd gan M. PAUL BRYANT-QUIN. Aberystwyth: Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol Cymru, 2001. xix + 167 pp., £10.00. Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr. ISBN 0-947531-26-2.

The *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* series from the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth, under the general editorship of Ann Parry Owen provides an invaluable service to the student of medieval Welsh literature. We have come to expect from it high quality and exhaustive editions of the work of the traditional poets who sang to the *uchelwyr*, the Welsh aristocrats who formed the backbone of local government in Wales following the Edwardian Conquest of 1282–3,