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THE WELSH HYMN TO THE VIRGIN:
Contexts and reception

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MA (Hons)

A dissertation submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Research questions

The Hymn to the Virgin is a poem attributed to the Welsh poet Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, thought to have been written around 1470 while he was a student at the University of Oxford. Reputedly the first poem to have ever been written in English by a Welshman (Stephens 1998: 341), the poem survives in twelve manuscripts as well as several printed copies, some of which have a contextualising prologue. These prologues tell us how *The Hymn* was composed during a poetry contest, following taunts uttered by English students who claimed that *nad oedd na mesur na chynghanedd ynghymbraeg* ‘that there was neither metre, nor alliteration, in Welsh’ (Garlick 1985: 7). Ieuan thus supposedly set out to prove them wrong by writing a poem in English, but using a Welsh metre and poetic form that, he claimed, no English-speaker could master. The poem consists, in its fuller version as established by E.J. Dobson (1955) and R. Garlick (1985), of 96 lines. As promised by the poet, *The Hymn* is written in the late fifteenth-century English of the period. However, perhaps even more than its metre, the poem’s greatest peculiarity is the spelling system in which it seems to have been composed, which is that of contemporary Welsh.

This last characteristic makes *The Hymn to the Virgin* a work of considerable philological interest, used by Dobson among others as evidence for the dating of the sound-change known as the Great Vowel Shift: a major redistribution of the long vowels of late Middle English within the lexicon that is traditionally taken as a principal marker of the transition from Middle to Early Modern English. By comparison, Middle Welsh pronunciation does not differ so markedly from Modern Welsh, and its letter-values have not changed as dramatically. Thus the action of the Shift, a series of raisings and diphthongisations, is demonstrated in the text by Welsh-type spellings such as *swn*, with <w> standing for /u(:)/ ‘soon’ (cf. Middle English /o:/, Old English *sōna*); *Kreist*, with <ei> standing for /ai/ ‘Christ’ (cf. Middle English /i:/, Old English *Crīst*); *kwin*, with <i> standing for /i(:)/ ‘queen’ (cf. Middle English /e:/, Old English *cwēn*); and *wythrowt*, with <ow> standing for the diphthong /oʊ/, ‘without’ (cf. Middle English /u:/, Old English *wipūtan*) (Smith 1996: 89).

The most detailed analysis of the poem to date is Dobson (1955), a comprehensive study of *The Hymn* published in the *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*. In this article, in which he also gives a list of all the extant manuscripts, their ancestry, and variant readings, Dobson was able to establish what should be the original form of the poem as it was written in 1470. The results of his analysis were also used for the first volume of his *English Pronunciation 1500-1700* (1957, second edition 1968), where *The Hymn* stands as his first source of evidence. Dobson's study went well beyond that of his predecessor, the energetic and prolific Victorian editor F.J. Furnivall (1880). Furnivall shared Dobson's philological focus but was confused about the origins of the text, describing it as 'An English Hymn to the Virgin and a Welsh copy of it soon after', first composed in English by an Englishman and then copied with Welsh letter-values: a view later disproved by Max Förster's 1926 article, 'Datierung und Character des kymrisch-englischen Marien-Hymnus.'

Dobson found that the manuscripts of *The Hymn*, ranging in date from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, could be divided into two groups. The first group, α , consists of Oxford Balliol College MS. 353, Aberystwyth National Library of Wales (hence NLW) Peniarth MS. 96, Aberystwyth NLW Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44, Aberystwyth NLW Llanstephan MSS. 47, 53, and 54, and Aberystwyth NLW MS. Panton 42. The remaining manuscripts belong to a group β : Aberystwyth NLW Peniarth MSS. 98b and 111, Cwrtmawr MS. 11, Panton MS. 33, and London British Library Additional MS. 14866. Dobson distinguished these two main groups through identifying common variants, e.g. missing lines etc. Both groups had an ultimate common ancestor or 'archetype', flagged by Dobson with the sigil χ , which was 'more probably separated from the [author's] original manuscript ω by a fairly extensive process of copying and corruption' (Dobson 1955: 76). Thus, despite its peculiarities, we can infer from its survival in extant manuscripts over several centuries, along with the presumed existence of copies now lost including those between its time of composition in the fifteenth century and the first extant copy a century later, that the poem had achieved an appreciable degree of socio-cultural impact.

Dobson accounts for the Welsh spelling-system with the following argument:

It is clear that the main reason why the poem is spelt in accordance with Welsh letter-values is that it is written in accordance to Welsh rules of metre; in many cases the basis of the alliteration is made clear only by the Welsh spellings and is immediately obscured if these are anglicized. But as the alliteration is not

intended for the eye alone, but for the ear, it follows that the spellings which made the alliteration visually apparent must have reflected the intended spoken forms of the words. (Dobson 1955: 71)

This explanation, though in its own terms satisfying, is of course skewed to Dobson's own interest in the poem as evidence for the Great Vowel Shift. Dobson does not consider at any moment any literary or cultural implications of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, and it is a puzzle as to whether he considers the poem to have been apprehended primarily by ear – whereby the spelling would have been immaterial – or by eye, in which case it would have been crucial. Besides, the poem is written in Middle English, in which spelling was still quite flexible, and in principle a variety of Middle English spelling could have been used to have the alliteration made clear without resorting to the use of the Welsh letter-values. Their use, therefore, must have an importance for the composition of the poem beyond the fact that it was written 'in accordance to Welsh rules of metre.'

The other main strand in previous studies of *The Hymn to the Virgin* relates to it as a contribution to Anglo-Welsh literature, defined by Garlick as 'a convenient shorthand for "writing in the English language by Welshmen"' (Garlick 1972: 9). The term 'Anglo-Welsh' was first coined in Evan Evans's preface for his 1772 poem 'The Love of Our Country,' his first and best-known poem composed in English, though praising Welsh culture and history and including a celebration of Owain Glyndwr. Evans (1731-1788), who wrote under the pseudonym Ieuan Fardd, was familiar with *The Hymn*, referring to it as 'Chwedl o Rhydychen.'

The distinctive nature of Anglo-Welsh literature has raised complex questions of cultural affiliation and identity. To what culture does a Welshman writing in English contribute? Garlick writes:

When, however, the contemporary Anglo-Welsh writer finds himself described - particularly in a London publication - as an English poet, he is likely to find the epithet ambiguous. Does the fact that a man writes in the English language make him English, and a contributor to English literature? 'Despite our speech we are not English:' most Anglo-Welsh writers would endorse R.S. Thomas's line. As to contributing to English literature, in the sense of the literature of England, it is clear that much Anglo-Welsh writing articulates (in Yeats's phrase) 'a separate world from that of England.' No Englishman would accept for a moment that R.S. Thomas's poetry, for example, or Emyr Humphreys' novels, are about the world of England. (Garlick 1972: 12-13).

The same is true of *The Hymn*. As the alleged first work in English written by a Welshman, this poem set a precedent, but the questions raised by Garlick when speaking of R.S. Thomas, Dylan Thomas, and all of the Welsh writers who once composed in English still apply to it. Does *The Hymn to the Virgin* contribute rather to English literature, or to Welsh? It was copied and printed exclusively in Welsh poetry anthologies, with the exception of Garlick's 1985 edition of the poem on its own, Dobson's article from 1955, and Furnivall's much earlier edition from 1880.

Garlick, a traditionalist critic keen to find continuities in literary history, has suggested that *The Hymn* might have influenced subsequent Anglo-Welsh literature, and poetry in particular, not only as a text written in English by a Welshman, but in terms of motifs as well. He notes that the way the poem is composed—for instance, the syntax and diction, the choice of rhymes, the verse-form and devices of style, as well as the concept that poetry is not a gift, but rather work and craft—recalls Dylan Thomas's poetry (Garlick 1985: 5). He argues perhaps more cogently that '[*The Hymn*] is a praise poem in the additional sense that [...] it uses English as a means of celebrating the Welsh language and its poetic techniques': something found in later Anglo-Welsh poets, such as the aforementioned Evan Evans (Garlick 1985: 5). Like Dobson, Garlick explains the spelling-system used throughout the poem as a way 'to make possible a whole series of sound effects, some of them cast in the formal patterns of *cynghanedd*' (Garlick 1985: 5).

These two approaches to the poem, however, are not the only ones possible; several other aspects of the poem have been much less investigated. Its afterlife, and reception in the centuries following its composition, for instance, have received comparatively little scholarly attention: we have Dobson's study of the variant readings of the manuscripts, but nothing in terms of analysis of their copyists, or the types of manuscripts these are, and their implications for the reception of *The Hymn*. My own Honours dissertation (Thuillier 2017), titled *Chewdl o Rydychen: a Study of The Welsh Hymn to the Virgin*, left much unsaid, since it raised questions from a descriptive viewpoint rather than providing answers. One approach would be to study the textual evolution of the poem: some manuscripts do share corrupt readings, which allows to find the relationship they have to each other, but what about the reasons which led to these corrupt readings? How and why did they happen? It appears that with such a text, and its spelling system, quite a lot of these scribal mistakes are in fact not due to sloppy copying, but rather linguistic evolution and shifts in the mastery of the languages involved. Indeed, most such misreadings in the poem seem to derive from the

copyists being bilingual Welsh-English speakers. Also interesting are tendencies to anglicisation of the text, a reason why *The Hymn* was for many years thought to have been originally English, despite everything (and especially the prologues accompanying it) stating quite the contrary.

Aside from assertions of its ‘foundational’ role in the traditional history of Anglo-Welsh literature, little has been done on *The Hymn to the Virgin*’s cultural significance. It has been noted that the poem was Anglo-Welsh: but is it possible to develop a more nuanced understanding than locating it as part of a retrospectively perceived ‘great tradition’? I propose to turn to the manuscripts and printed copies of the poem in order to see how the ways it was transmitted can shed light upon its role as a work of cultural and linguistic interchange, allowing us to learn more about the relationship between English and Welsh cultures and languages, and more specifically how the bilingual speakers of these two languages engaged with them in the context of literature. How far was *The Hymn* designed to be performed orally rather than in silence (or is that distinction too crude)? What were the copyists’ and scholars’ interests in this poem? How was it copied, and/or used, and why was it so? For what audiences were the copies meant, and how did the compilers and editors adapt the text? How was it received by its readers? And, in a case such as Aberystwyth NLW Panton MSS. 33 and 42, both in the hand of Evan Evans, with the latest of the two manuscripts in anglicised spelling, it will be interesting to see how the copyist engaged differently with the poem depending on the language in which he was copying it.

The aim of this study is to learn more about the poem itself, from the way it is composed to its reception in subsequent centuries. Bringing linguistic, palaeographical, historical, and literary study into articulation will allow us to develop a more sophisticated view of how an early piece of literature changes in its functions as it moves through time.

In pursuing this overall aim, this thesis will address the following three sets of research questions:

- How was the poem composed, and who was its author? In what context did he write it?
- How was the poem copied in the subsequent centuries, and by whom? For what audience? In what context? How was it afterwards edited and studied?
- How does language function in the poem? How does it evolve from copy to copy?

In order to answer these questions, it is essential first to survey the different sources in which *The Hymn* is to be found, both in print and manuscript. This approach will allow for a thorough analysis of the poem in all its different copies. Thus, the heart of the thesis consists of detailed studies of each surviving manuscript, providing as much information as possible about the copyist(s) involved and their copying practices. The intention is to provide a basis for future study of this complex and culturally impactful work.

2. *Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal and his poem*

Before delving into the survey of the copies, both manuscript and printed, in which *The Hymn to the Virgin* is to be found, it is important to contextualise the poet who composed it. Thus, here follows a brief discussion of Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, to whom *The Hymn* is now generally attributed, even though the manuscripts attribute the poem to three different authors. I will then analyse in some detail what we may learn from the prologues accompanying the poem.

Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal was a Welsh poet who flourished c. 1430-1480 (Stephens 1998: 344). He was the son of Hywel Swrdwal (fl. c. 1450) who was a poet himself, and brother of yet another Swrdwal poet, Dafydd ap Hywel Swrdwal. The surname Swrdwal appears to be derived from Sourdeval, “which is attested in the medieval lordship of Brecon and suggests descent from a Norman family” (Caerwyn Williams 2004). Hywel’s poems tend to indicate that he had a connection with the first earl of Pembroke, William Herbert, whose family had a long tradition of being patrons to Welsh poets¹: the former lamented the death of the latter in 1469 (Stephens 1998: 343) at the hands of the English, which apparently gave him (and probably his son) reasons to dislike them.

If Ieuan wrote an entire poem in the English language and spelled it in Welsh, he may have shared this idea with his father. Indeed, in Hywel Swrdwal’s poem ‘Marwnad Wiliam Herbert’ (‘Elegy for William Herbert’), the following line may be found: ‘Hwrswns o Hors a Heinsiust.’ It designates the English who caused the death of his patron in terms which may only appear clear to a non-Welsh speaker when written phonetically, /hursunz/: the translation being ‘the /hɔrsənz/ [i.e. ‘whoresons’] of Horsa and Hengist.’ Thus, the insult is doubled: it is in the language of those it targets, all the while being unreadable to them if

¹ This is the same Herbert family from which the poet George Herbert (1593-1633), who is known for showing Welsh tendencies in his English prosody, was descended.

they cannot understand Welsh. This poem, as well as all the surviving works written by the Swrdwals, may be found in Dylan Foster Evans's *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'i deulu* (2000), which includes an edition of *The Hymn to the Virgin* along with a translation, both with the title *Awdl i Fair*² (Evans 2000: 124-129)

The Hymn, while it is no insult, does function in a similar way. Both poems may well have been composed at the same time, as the father's is dated 1469 and *The Hymn to the Virgin* is thought to have been composed around 1470 (Stephens 1998: 340-341). It is very interesting that both father and son should have used the same linguistic devices in a context in which they were in a conflict with Englishmen.

Both Hywel and Ieuan seem to have been men of learning, the latter being a student at the University of Oxford when he supposedly composed *The Hymn*; father and son are both said to have written a history of Wales, although both versions are lost to us. Indeed, it happens that the Swrdwal poets, though they were regarded as proficient, have "not been well served by the Welsh manuscript tradition [...] comparatively few of their poems have been preserved and some of the poems are attributed to both father and son as well to other poets"³ (Caerwyn Williams 2004).

The manuscripts' colophons are a primary source of information about the putative authorship of the poem. Although *The Hymn to the Virgin* is generally attributed to Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, especially in modern editions of the poem, two other names come up as that of the potential author of *The Hymn* in some of the manuscripts along with his. One of those is Hywel Swrdwal, Ieuan's father, whose name appears in seven out of twelve manuscripts: Balliol College Oxford MS. 353, Peniarth MS. 96, Llanstephan MSS. 47, 53, 54, Panton MS. 42, Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 (which is also known as "The Long Book of Llanharan"). The other poet named as the author of *The Hymn* is Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd (fl. 1430-1470), who, like Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, was probably educated at Oxford (Jenkins 1959). His name appears in the remaining five manuscripts, namely British Library Additional MS. 14866, Peniarth MSS. 98b and 111, Panton MS. 33, Cwrtmawr MS. 11, along with that of Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal.

² 'Ode to Mary'

³ In the case of Dafydd, there is only one poem which has survived for us to read.

If three different names are to be found in the manuscripts, it is, according to Dobson, the result of alterations by the scribes of the first copy of the poem, who “ascribed [it] without qualification to Ieuan ap Howell Swrđwal” (Dobson 1968: 3). Dobson adds that all the manuscripts agree on the fact that the poem dates from the fifteenth century, when all three poets were active. Nevertheless, a consensus of the manuscripts suggests that Ieuan ap Hywel Swrđwal is the poem’s author (see Table 1).

Name of the manuscript	End-colophon	Folio / page	MS affiliation (Dobson 1955: 76-77)
Oxford, MS. Balliol College 353	Howel Surdevall sang it	f. 88v	A
London, British Library, MS. Additional 14866	Ieuan ap hywel Swrđwal ai cant. medd ereill Ieuan ap Rytherch ap Ieuan lloyd	p. 47	β
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 96	almichdi ladi howell swrdwal ai kant	f. 76r	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Peniarth 111	Ieuan ap Rhydderch // medd eraill Ieuan ap hywel Siwrđwal / ai kant	p. 291	β
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Peniarth 98b	Jeun ap Rydderch ap Jeun lloyd ai k. medd eraill Ieun ap holl Swrđwal	p. 70	β
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Llanstephan 47	O michti ladi owr leding Howel Swrđwal ai kant	p.38	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Cardiff Free Library 5.44	O michti ladi owr leding Howel Swrđwal ai kant	f. 6r	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Llanstephan 53	ko: anamam fair Howel Swrđwal ai kant	p. 463	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Llanstephan 54	O mighti ladi owr leding Howel Swrđwal ai kant	p. 157	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Panton 33	Ieuan ap Rhydderch medd eraill Ieuan ap Howel Swrđwal ai cant	p. 68	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Panton 42	Howel Swrđwal ai Cant	p. 162	α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Cwrtmawr 11B	Phai a ddywedant, mai Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd o Orgodan, yr hwn oedd yn byw o gylch Fl.1420, a’i Cant; eraill, mai Ieuan ap Hywel Swrđwal, yr hwn by yng. hylch y Fl.1460.	p. 101	β

Table 1: The manuscripts’ end-colophons

Dobson explains the different author attributions of the poem as follows:

The ascriptions of authorship in the end-colophons depend on the manuscript tradition and go back respectively to α , which ascribed the poem to Howell Swrdwal, and to β , which ascribed it to his son Ieuan ap Howell Swrdwal or alternatively to Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Lloyd; and it appears likely that these variant colophons are alterations by the scribes of α and β of one in χ which ascribed the poem without qualification to Ieuan ap Howell Swrdwal. (Dobson 1957: 3)

Although three names are proposed for the author, and some manuscripts name two, most details would favour Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal as the author. Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd is never named on his own, but always alongside either Ieuan or Hywel; Hywel Swrdwal, on the other hand, is often named alone. However, when all three variants are considered, the end-colophons appear to either always have the name ‘Ieuan’ in common, or that of Hywel Swrdwal. As it would be quite difficult to get from Hywel Swrdwal to Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd, or the contrary, through a scribal error, but it is easy for the two Ieuans to be confused, it seems very likely that Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal is the author. As Dobson explained it, the archetype χ , and more importantly the original manuscript he calls ω , must have ascribed the poem to Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal; and as the process of copying introduced misreadings in the text, so did it to the end colophons. It might even be that χ itself was ‘separated from original MS ω by a fairly extensive process of copying and corruption’ (Dobson 1955: 76), and thus had already introduced the name of Ieuan ap Rhydderch as that of the potential author.

Four of the manuscripts copy *The Hymn to the Virgin* along with a prologue, of which there exist two versions: a shorter one, which will hereafter be named Prologue A, to be found exclusively in London, British Library Additional MS. 14866; and a longer one, Prologue B, which exists in Aberystwyth NLW Peniarth MS. 111, Panton MS. 33, and Cwrtmawr MS. 11. Below, for readers’ convenience, are the translations into English of both versions (after Raymond Garlick’s *The Hymn to the Virgin attributed to Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal*, 1985):⁴

Prologue A

Here is another ode to God and to Mary which a Welshman in Oxford composed while a student, because one of the Englishmen said that there was ‘neither metre

⁴ Texts of the originals for MS Additional 14866 and Peniarth MS.111, after Dobson, follow in chapter 2

nor alliteration (*cynghanedd*)⁵ in Welsh. He answered him that he would compose an English poem in Welsh metre and *cynghanedd*, so that neither the Englishman nor anyone of his companions could make one like it in their own language: and he composed it as follows. But since I am writing this book entirely in Welsh orthography this much of English can follow our manner: read it as Welsh.

(Translation of Prologue A from Garlick 1985: 7)

Prologue B

It happened once in Oxford that the Englishmen were scoffing at the Welsh and dispraising them greatly because of their lack of scholarship, for they said that there was not one good Welsh scholar and that it was not possible to make of a Welshman a scholar as good, as learned, and as wise and as good a poet as of an Englishman, and that the Welsh were not to be compared in scholarship with the English.

Then an excellent Welshman arose and stood on his feet and spoke as follows: 'I am only a poor scholar as regards my scholarship and am not to be compared with many learned and distinguished scholars from Wales, whose steps I am not competent to follow. But nevertheless it would be weakness in me if a poor unaccomplished Welshman could not compete with the most learned Englishman in poetic composition and in many other points. But our best scholars are not so frivolous and worthless as to apply their minds and thought to disputing and quarrelling with the bragging English. But I shall give you an answer to this question in the following way: let the most learned Englishman among you compose a poem in Latin; if I do not make as good a poem as he, let the Welsh be condemned. Let him compose a poem in English or in Welsh; if I do not equal him, deride the Welsh. Let him compose a poem in any language he chooses, which I know; if I do not compose as good a one as he does, let him calumniate the Welsh and spare them not. I shall compose a poem in English, in your own tongue; and if all the Englishmen in England compose such a poem or equal it, revile the Welsh. If you cannot compose it, leave the Welsh the privilege which God has given them. And recognize yourselves that you cannot compete with the Welsh.' And for that reason he composed this English poem ode in *Cynghanedd groes*, which an Englishman cannot compose. (Translation of Prologue B from Garlick 1985: 9)

Though no name is given, both prologues give details which help understand the context for the composition of *The Hymn*, and give an idea about who its author was as well.

Both versions agree on the facts that the poem was composed (a) in Oxford, (b) by a student, and (c) by a Welshman. This is not simply anecdotal: there is a long educational connexion between Oxford and Wales, especially at the end of the 15th century. The University had already brought quite a number of students from the west by the twelfth century, and there are about 400 Welshmen known to have studied at Oxford before 1500

⁵ The parenthesis is present in Garlick's translation. *Cynghanedd* would more properly be translated as 'line-internal ornamentation,' as it can consist of internal rhyme as well as alliteration.

(Evans 2010: 119). However, Owain Glyndŵr's revolt (1400-1415) did cause problems, including for Welsh students who suffered from a bad reputation. While this and the defiance against the Welsh had subsided by 1470 and Ieuan's time in Oxford, 'the features which made the Welsh-born distinctive in an English environment—their names and manners— attracted mockery of a generally light-hearted sort' (Griffiths 2001: 155), which is in keeping with what the prologues have to tell about the composition of the Hymn. Indeed, one may see that Prologue B does not hide that the words of the Englishmen were meant as a mockery: what Garlick translates as 'scoffing' is in Welsh [*g*]oganu, 'to defame, to satirize.' This suggests a culture of banter rather than physical aggression, which is probably why a poetry contest, rather than a fight, was the reaction preferred by Ieuan. It could also be comparable to some extent to the Older Scots tradition of flyting, as witnessed by the late medieval *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy*, where two poets would engage in a contest of verbal abuse.

Both prologue-versions do note that *The Hymn* was meant to be compared to English poetry. Prologue A reads *fal na fedrei 'r sais, nag yr un oi gyfeillion wneythur moi math yn hiaith i hunein* 'so that neither he nor his companions could compose one such in their own language', while Prologue B uses direct speech to have the poet himself explain, in more detail than in Prologue A, what he intended to do when he composed *The Hymn*. There, the poetry contest becomes more evident, with an invitation made by the Welsh poet for the 'most learned Englishman' among those whom he faces to compose a poem in whichever language of his choice. The insistence on the poet being *ysgolhaic gwael disas o Gymro* ('a poor shabby scholar of a Welshman') probably is more of a *pique* than Ieuan really downgrading his own talents: in the sense that even though he will be composing in a language which is not his own, as is underlined by both prologues, his being Welsh—though a poor Welshman and a poor scholar—guarantees the superior quality of his poem. The way the poem was subsequently copied and read may have been influenced by the presence of the prologue in the manuscripts as well as in the edited copies.

There is no sure way to know how exactly *The Hymn to the Virgin* was meant to be shared when its author composed it: besides not having any information about that even in the prologues, the way it is spelled raises the question of whom it was written (vs. composed) for. Interestingly, the poem survives in manuscripts which are entirely written in Welsh, and generally are poetry compilations: it thus seems quite clear that, when it comes to the manuscript copies of the poem, the intended audience, if there was one, was one of Welsh speakers. Indeed, the use of Welsh letter-values, rather than English, prevents anyone who

does not know Welsh from reading the poem: but from what the prologues relate, the first audience of *The Hymn* was made of a majority of non-Welsh speakers. The spelling-system is a visual code that leads to an oral interpretation for those adept in interpretation; like his father's 'whoreson' insult, there is clearly a humorous intention. We are reminded that the dividing line between oral and literate culture is a fuzzy one, even in the fifteenth century.

According to Dobson, the poem 'is likely to have been written down immediately' (Dobson 1968: 3), given the highly idiosyncratic nature of the spelling-sound mapping. However, he explains the use of that spelling as being 'undoubtedly [a way] to demonstrate the conformity of the metre to Welsh rules of alliteration' (ibid.), a debatable point. Alliteration has to do with sounds, rather than with spelling, and it is for the ear before being for the eye: even so, the spelling of English in the fifteenth century was still flexible enough for the poet to showcase the alliterations in his poetry using English letter-values, should he have wished to do so. It also seems dubious to pretend that Ieuan may have spelled *The Hymn* this way because it was easier for him: he was a student at the University of Oxford, and thus one might rightly assume that he would need to have mastered the English language as well as its spelling-system. The use of Welsh letter-values in the poem was a choice, and not happenstance.

The Hymn, as the prologues show, was composed as a way to defend Welsh poetry, and more generally, Welsh culture and language, against attacks from Ieuan's fellow students. However the prologues also suggest that there is a dimension of scholarship to be taken into account, as in Prologue B: *nad oedd ysgolhaic da o Gymro nag ni ellid gwneuthur o Gymro ysgolhaic kystal [...] o Sais, ac nad oed y Kymru yw kystadlu ar Saesson am ysgolheictod* ('there was no good Welsh scholar, nor could there be made from a Welshman a scholar as good [...] as from an Englishman, and that it was not possible to compare the Welsh to the English in matters of scholarship'). Thus, as the Englishmen who triggered the composition of *The Hymn* were insulting the learning of the Welsh, the use of the Welsh spelling system may have been there as an answer: can one really judge on the scholarship of a people whose language one cannot even decipher? Indeed, reading *The Hymn to the Virgin* demands, if not some degree of bilingualism, at least fair knowledge of both languages in which it is written; the obstruction of readability the form of the poem presents actually demanded scholarly ability, which could then be flaunted. As the poem was copied and re-copied over time, however, this humorous and competitive aspect to the poem's reception changed – as we will see.

This study of the manuscripts of *The Hymn to the Virgin* in this thesis will proceed as follows: first, basic information about the twelve manuscripts will be presented in the form of a table along with some general information. This table will be followed by a discussion of each manuscript in turn. These discussions will take the form of a transcription of *The Hymn* as it was written by the copyists, followed by a short biography of the latter, and concluding with a description of the manuscript along with comments on each version of the poem and its spelling system.

Chapter 2: *The manuscripts of The Hymn to the Virgin*

1. *Overview of the manuscripts*

The Hymn to the Virgin survives in twelve manuscripts, dating from the mid-16th century to the end of the 18th century. One peculiarity with these manuscripts is that, even though nowadays one is kept in an Oxford library and another in London, all of them are Welsh in origin, and bring together a variety of works otherwise exclusively in the Welsh language: a significant fact as it suggests that the poem has been of greater interest to Welsh readers than to English. As an easy point of reference, Table 2 below gives some basic details about each of these manuscripts.

It is worth noting what these manuscripts share before engaging with the peculiarities of each separate version of *The Hymn*. First, almost all of the manuscripts are Welsh poetry compilations which seem to reflect a distinct set of cultural tastes. The exception is Oxford Balliol College MS. 353, a commonplace book not organised so that any reader other than the scribe can really appreciate its contents; however, even this manuscript contains a number of poetical works. Of course, the remaining compilations show varying degrees of organisation: some have tables of contents and others not, some manuscripts organise the poems in different categories (e.g. Additional MS. 14866), while others simply present the texts in no discernible thematic order. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that *The Hymn to the Virgin* is always treated in these manuscripts as any other poem: nothing sets it apart, despite it being in English, and not even the prologues, since not only are those written in Welsh, but also other poems have accompanying prologues.

The prologues, both versions A and B, are all to be found in β manuscripts, and thus would appear to derive from the original β manuscript, which one might suspect to be the ‘old copy’ mentioned beside the colophon in British Library Additional MS. 14866. However, given that this manuscript is the oldest of all containing a prologue, there is also the possibility that Prologue B is an extended version of Prologue A, whether David Jones copied Prologue A from the ‘old copy’ he mentions or wrote it himself.

Name of the manuscript	Copyist	Date	Contents	Spelling of the Hymn in the manuscript	Prologue	MS. affiliation (Dobson 1955: 76-77)
Oxford, MS. Balliol College 353	Sir John Prise	ca. 1540	Commonplace book (Welsh, Latin, English)	Both Welsh and anglicised spelling		α
Oxford, MS. Balliol College 353 — f.136r	Unknown later hand	Early 17 th century	Commonplace book (Welsh, Latin, English)	Anglicised spelling		α
London, British Library, MS. Additional 14866	David Jones	1587	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling	Short prologue (A)	β
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 96	Lewis Dwnn	1601-1616	Welsh-language poetry compilation ('The poetical works of Lewis Dwnn')	Welsh spelling		α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Peniarth 111	John Jones of Gelilyfdy	1607-1610	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling	Long prologue (B)	β
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Peniarth 98b	John Davies	1601-1644	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Anglicised spelling		β
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Llanstephan 47	Llywelyn Siôn	ca. 1630	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling		α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Cardiff Free Library 5.44 ('The Long Book of Llanharan')	Llywelyn Siôn	1613	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling		α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Llanstephan 53	Siâms (James) Dwnn	1647	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling		α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Llanstephan 54	Unknown hand	1631-1680	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling		α
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Panton 33	Evan Evans	before 1772	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Welsh spelling	Long prologue (B)	β
Aberystwyth, NLW, MS. Panton 42	Evan Evans	1772	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Anglicised spelling		α
Aberystwyth, NLW, Cwrtmawr 11	David Ellis	1785	Welsh-language poetry compilation	Both Welsh and anglicised spelling	Long prologue (B)	β

Table 2: The manuscripts containing a version of *The Hymn to the Virgin* (after Thuillier 2018: 31-32)

Another noteworthy detail about the copies of *The Hymn* in these manuscripts is that not only it is only to be found among other Welsh (poetry) works, but it happens that all of the scribes were Welshmen and wrote the manuscripts in question while in Wales. As we

shall see below, all of the copyists were learned men, either poets or churchmen, with a special concern for the preservation or sharing of Welsh culture, language, and literature.

The remainder of this section presents manuscript transcriptions accompanied by detailed descriptions. In the manuscript transcriptions, I have used several abbreviations and other marks to indicate special features of the manuscripts. Here is a key to these conventions:

↑a↑ the letters or words between the arrows are written above the preceding letters or words

↓a↓ the letters or words between the arrows are written below the preceding letters or words

<a> letters or words added, because they are barely legible, missing, or part of an abbreviation

[a] letters or words added by a different hand than the copyist's

^a letters or words written above the line, but not above another word or letter

(a)**e** the letter or word between parentheses was written over by the letter or word in bold font

When the text is underlined in the transcription, it means it is also underlined in the manuscript; the same goes for when a smaller font is used in the transcriptions. Similarly, the words or letters which are struck through were similarly deleted in the manuscript; those which have an accent or any marker had one in the copies. I have tried to follow as closely as possible the punctuation found in the manuscripts.

2. *Manuscript transcriptions and descriptions*

2.1 Oxford Balliol College MS. 353

2.1.1 *Manuscript transcription*

f. 1r

1 O mýchtí Ladí owr leding to have
 at hevyn our abeyding
 ynto thy fest everlesting
 wy sett a branche us to bring
 Ar:11

f. 1v

Ei tel tu iow, as swm du siow
 as now ei trow wi w yws nót right
 a boi wyð bow hys lwks so low
 how mae ei know fro hým a kníght
 Dý trywth ýs kýt th ðát yrd ys cást
 ddei índs by lást t ddei hands by light
 o gód sét hýt gúd as ýt wás
 ddei rywl dwth pás ddy world hadd píght
 A prettí thíng wi prai tu thest
 ðát gúd byhest dát god byhight
 and he vs fíng yntu hys fest
 that evyr shál lest wyð deivers light
 ddy world e awae ys dwn as dae
 yt ys no nae yt ys nei níght
 a sowl ei sae ei wish yn ffae
 ild a gúd mae wuld gód ei míght
 awar wi wld ðy ffyndys ffold
 and by not hold wyð a band tíght
 ddy iwng and old wyð hým ðey hold
 ddy Jues háð sold þát Jesus híght
 wi tryst di kreist ðát werst a crown
 er wi dei down owr redi dight
 tu thank tu át ðei rwd tri
 ðan went ál wi ðy nwn tu light
 tu grawnt agri a mán ↑amen↑ wyð mí
 t ðát ei mae si ði tu mei sight.

f. 63r

<after> the english	Almightie Ladie leding to hav
<aft>er the welsh	A Almíghti ladi ledíng to haf
	hevȳn at our ending.

hevyn att owr ending. als. at hevyn o<ur> abeyding
 Into thy feste everlesting
 yn tw ddei ffest evyrlesting
 I sett us to bring
 • ws tw bring
 I wynne this with blysse thy blessing of god
 ei wynn ddys wydd blyss thei blessing of god
 for our good abearíng
 ffor owr gwd abéring
 where ye been for yo<ur> wenyng
 hwir i byn ffor yowr wyning
 syns quene and thy soonne is king
 syns quyn and thei swnn ýs king
 Owr old forfather owr feeding owr pure
 owr old fforffaddyr owr ffying owr pywr
 on ~~ow~~ o<ur> ~~pp~~ pappes hath sucking
 ón owr páps hadd swcking.
 who wedde such with a rich ring
 hwo wéd sits wyd a ryts ring
 as god made this gaye wedding
 as god maed th ddýs gae wedding.⁶

f. 88v

Owr Luck owr kíng owr lock owr kaí
 mei gód ei prai mei geíd upright
 ei syk ei sing ei siak ei sai
 ei wer awai a wiri wight
 agast ei go mei frynds mi ffro
 ei ffownd a ffo wyð ffynd ei ffight
 ei síng also ýn welth ýn wo
 ei kán no mo to quyn o might.
 Howel Surdevall sang ít

f. 136r

Almighty Lady our leadinge to have att heven our abydinge,
 unto thy feast everlastinge, thou sett a branche,
 us to bringe,

2.1.2 Copyist biography: Sir John Prise

Sir John Prise, or Sir Sion ap Rhys (1501/2-1555) was an administrator and scholar who was in the service of Thomas Cromwell in 1530, during which he recorded, in his role as public notary, the interrogations of a number of traitors in the Tower of London. He also drew up documents concerning the divorces of Henry VIII from Anne Boleyn and Anne of Cleves.

⁶ There are two additional lines in a different hand, in Welsh, below this one, which Dobson describes as 'scribblings' (1955: 74)

Sir John Prise is known to have studied at both Oxford and Cambridge universities, graduating BCL from the latter in 1535/6. After Cromwell's execution in July 1540 his career focused on Wales; from September of that same year he was appointed secretary for life of the council in the marches of Wales. He dissolved the Benedictine priory of St Guthlac in Hereford in 1542, and was granted Brecon Priory in that same year, though he seemed to have resided at the former. He was knighted on 22 February 1547, two days after Edward VI's coronation (Pryce 2004). His will, written nine days prior to his death, shows that he was a Catholic, as he entrusts his soul to God and to 'owre blessedde ladie Sainte Marye And to all the blessed cumpanie of heavin' (Morgan 1956: 255).

Though he dissolved a number of monasteries, Prise collected, studied, and preserved an important number of their manuscripts, and is known to have owned or annotated over a hundred of them. He is responsible for the earliest known printed book in Welsh (1546), *Yny lhyvyr hwn...* ('In this book...'), a compilation of medieval religious texts in Welsh. This book shows a 'deep dissatisfaction with the failure of the clergy to provide elementary religious instruction but also an awareness, shared by other contemporary humanists, of the potential of print as a means of preserving and disseminating the vernacular literary heritage of Wales' (Pryce 2004).

2.1.3 *Manuscript description*

Balliol College Oxford MS. 353 was Sir John Prise's commonplace book, copied c. 1540 (f. 6r is dated from 13 February 1538, though it only applies to that page), and is composed of 175 folios, according to the contemporary foliation which uses 150 twice and omits 155, with 1, 12, 64, 86, 97, 99, 101, 103, 104, 125, 137, 139, 144, 145, 165, 167, 174 missing, and two folios having changed places (2 and 11; 34 and 10) and 87 being misbound at the beginning of the volume. It is almost entirely in the hand of Sir John Prise, with a later hand having added some words, including the beginning of *The Hymn to the Virgin* on f. 136r.

The Hymn to the Virgin in this manuscript is neither complete, nor written on pages following each other. The first four lines occur on f. 1r in anglicised spelling; then f. 1v gives lines 43-84 (Dobson 1955: 73) in Welsh spelling. Another copy of the beginning of the poem, up to line 10, as well as lines 19-20, are to be found on f. 63r, with each line written in English, and then in Welsh; though Dobson notes that 'despite the order the English

version was made from the Welsh, as its additional errors show' (Dobson 1955: 74). The lines on f. 63r, according to Dobson, were presumably written prior to those found on f. 1rv, as f. 1 was misbound when collating the manuscript and should have been f. 87. On f. 88v the last eight lines of *The Hymn to the Virgin* are to be found, at the bottom end of the page, the first half of it having been left blank along with f. 88r, presumably with the intention to write the rest of the poem on it; which would have directly followed f. 87rv, now f. 1rv. Finally, on f. 136r was added in a later hand, after an entry in Latin entitled 'Somnus,' the first four lines of *The Hymn* again, though not laid out as verse and in anglicised spelling. Sir John Prise writes in a very neat secretary hand, which makes one regret that he did not find the time or the energy to copy *The Hymn* in full. The later hand appearing on f. 136r is analysed by Dobson (1955: 75) as belonging to the early seventeenth century.

In the way it is copied, it seems evident that, to Sir John Prise, *The Hymn* was important for its bilingual nature: it is found both in Welsh and anglicised spelling in this manuscript, which is also the oldest surviving version of the poem. There is a possibility that the excerpts in anglicised spelling on f.1r and 63r are the first attempts at an English(-spelling) translation of the poem, given that Prise worked for the English monarchy for the longest part of his life. What we find on f.1r, f.1v, and f.88v was, it would seem, meant to be a copy of the poem in Welsh spelling faced with the anglicised copy. However, this copy is not complete: blank spaces were left on the pages, meaning that Prise had probably considered coming back to his copy, though it did not happen. On f.63r Prise once again tried to have a copy of *The Hymn* in both Welsh and English spelling, this time with one line in English immediately followed by its Welsh counterpart.

Interestingly, the copies show considerable differences. We might note for instance the first four lines in anglicised spelling as found in f.1r and f.63r:

O mýchtí Ladí owr leding to have	Almightie Ladíe leding to hav
at hevyn our abeyding	hev̄yn at our ending.
ynto thy fest everlesting	Into thy feste everlesting
wy sett a branche us to bring	I sett us to bring
(f.1r)	(f.63r)

One has to bear in mind that f.1r was misplaced and originally was f.87r: thus, f.63r would be an earlier try at copying and translating the Hymn, which would explain the misreadings, which are more frequent on this folio than on ff.1r-v and f.88v. Thus, line 4 on f.63r has part of it left blank in both Welsh and anglicised spellings and Prise gives two different readings

for line 2 in his copy of it in Welsh spelling: either *hevyn at owr ending* (which is what he wrote in English) or *at hevyn o<ur> abeyding*, which is the preferred version in all of the other manuscripts. It seems dubious, then, that *hevyn at owr ending* was to be found in manuscript α , as Balliol MS. 353 f.63r is the only place where this line appears: there might have been a confusion on the part of Prise with line 22 of the poem, *asoel ws at owr ending* (in Dobson's version, 1955: 106; see also Dobson 1955: 82, note 26, where he states this explanation as his preferred one), or a simple miscopying on the scribe's part. The affiliations of ff.1r-v, 88v and f.63r are however not the same according to Dobson (1955: 81): the latter would not be a copy of α , according to him, but rather of an unknown copy twice removed from α . This copy ϵ , still according to Dobson, supposedly gave f.136r in this same manuscript, as well as ζ from which Peniarth MS. 96 and Llanstephan MS. 53 are derived: however, none of them copy line 2 as *hevyn at owr ending*.

Without access to either α or ϵ , it is difficult to determine how accurate Prise was as a copyist. However, he does correct himself in several instances throughout the manuscript. One interesting point is his use of different graphemes to express what would now be in Present-Day English spelled <th>. In the copy of the Hymn found on ff.1v and 88v, there are five different spellings of it: <dd>, <ð> which represent beyond the shadow of a doubt the sound /ð/; <d>, <th>, which here stands for either /ð/ or /θ/; and <þ>. There is only one instance in which the latter is used, which corresponds to line 74 in Dobson's restored text, 'þát Jesus híght;' it is peculiar, as the sound /ð/ and not /θ/ is expected here; it may be a remnant of <þ> being used indifferently for /ð/ and /θ/ in Old English and retained in Middle English 'until the advent of printing at the end of the fifteenth century, especially in the north and west of England' (Smith 2005: 93), which Prise may have seen as he had had access to some medieval manuscripts from the border regions between England and Wales.

As for the others, Prise is not always regular in his spelling. Though 'with' is consistently spelled *wyð* throughout his copy on ff.1v and 88v, it is not for instance the case for 'the,' which is found four times spelled *ddy*, twice *ðy*, and once *dy*; the first five instances of the word here would be pronounced /ðə/, while the last one would be /də/; it is possible, however, that Prise mistraced his <ð>, as it is a majuscule in the manuscript. Another such instance of a possibly mistraced <ð> is to be found in the following line, *ðát gúd byhest dát god byhight*, with *dát* possibly meant to have read *ðát*, as the <d> is traced very much like Prise's <ð>. One also has to consider the fact that in Middle Welsh manuscripts pre-1400, it was the norm to find <d> for <dd> /ð/, and this may just be an example of that here. There

moreover are four instances of ‘that’ spelled *ðat*, and one other is spelled *that*, probably under the influence of more conventional English spelling; while this is the only instance of <th> used as /ð/ in ff.1v and 88v in Balliol MS.353, the usage is more common in f.63r, which has twice *thei* for ‘thy.’ The latter is a common word in *The Hymn*; in the folios at which we are presently looking, it appears four times: in three instances it is spelled *ddei*, and once *ðei*. The use of <ð>, while it may seem strange at first, as <dd> is usually expected to express the sound /ð/ in Welsh, is however in keeping with the Welsh spelling of the poem, as it has been occasionally used by some authors in Welsh; one example is William Salesbury’s *Testament Newydd* (‘New Testament’) published in 1567, where one can read for instance ‘Yn y dechrae ydd oeð y Gair, a’r Gair oeð y gyd a Duw, a’r Gair hwnw oeð Duw.’⁷ (Salesbury 1567). It may be noted, however, that Salesbury was very experimental when it comes to the Welsh spelling system, and had views, with others, about reforming it.

Interestingly, if in these examples there are variant spellings for the consonants, *Prise* happens to be extremely regular with the vowels he uses. There is overlapping, with both <u> and <w> expressing the phoneme /u/, with <w> also standing for the labio-velar approximant /w/; however, this also is the case in Welsh.

The ten most used words in *Prise*’s version of *The Hymn* in folios 1r-v and 88v are the following: *a*, *ei*, *tu*, *wi*, *wyð*, *ys*, *as*, *ddy*, *ðat*, and *and*. We have seen above that *ddy* (‘the’) and *ðat* (‘that’) could have their consonants spelled differently; however, it is not the case with the vowel. Whenever <y> is preceded by a grapheme expressing the sound-equivalent /ð/, <y> will always be pronounced /ə/; as well, *ei* always stands for ‘I’ in *Prise*’s copy, and <ei> for the sound /ai/ or /ei/ (cf. *ddei* for ‘thy;’ *deivers* for ‘divers;’ *kreist* for ‘Christ;’ *geïd* for ‘guide’). The indefinite article is always spelled *a*, and *tu* always stands for the preposition ‘to,’ while *ys* consistently represents in *Prise*’s hand the third person singular present form of ‘be,’ i.e. ‘is.’ These usages all align with Welsh practice.

However, there are other signs that *Prise* was nevertheless influenced by the English language as he was copying *The Hymn*, as we have already seen where words beginning in <th> for /ð/ in English were also written <th>. There are further examples. The <v> in *deivers*, on f.1v, appears where we would expect a <f> to express the sound /v/ in Welsh; <v> is not used in that language only appearing as an alternate form of <u> representing a

⁷ ‘In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.’

vowel.⁸ Similarly, f.63r shows that Prise, perhaps because he was writing the Welsh and the English versions of the poem at the same time, does have some involuntary anglicised spellings in the Welsh lines of the poem: *hevyn* and *evyrlesting* are among them, for the same reasons as *deivers* above, as well as *thei* for ‘thy.’ The reverse is also true: in several instances, in his anglicised versions, Prise had *owr* instead of *our*, and in one case (line 10 for Dobson) started to write <ow> before crossing this out and replacing it with *our*. Similarly, there are several instances in which he started out a <th-> word with <t> or <th>, before crossing these out and writing <dd> or <ð> instead, showing that he was conscious that he might involuntarily write in English spelling (because he was used to doing so), and that whenever he noticed that he tried to correct it. This may point to the fact that to Prise, the peculiar spelling of *The Hymn* was important enough to be respected and copied as accurately as possible.

The first four lines of *The Hymn* copied on f.136r are in fully anglicised spelling, in a hand which dates to the early 17th century according to Dobson (1955: 75). The consistent use of the ending in <-inge> for <-ing> (including *bringe*) may be noted, as well as the layout which does not follow a verse form. The spelling *thou sett a branche*, where Prise had written *wy* (‘we’) on f.1r and ‘I’ (though there is no Welsh spelling for this one) on f.63r, shows that this later scribe did not copy *The Hymn* from any of the two versions already present in the manuscript. It was, however, copied from the same manuscript ε as the excerpt on f.63r, according to Dobson (1955: 81); indicating that ε probably read ‘i,’ for the second person ‘ye,’ which explains Prise’s misreading of this form as being the first person singular ‘I.’ It is, otherwise, a very short excerpt from the poem, which does not give the occasion for many comments on it.

⁸ <u> and <v> may be found standing for the phoneme /v/; however, this happens most of the time in the case of a soft initial mutation of the letters <m> or ; cf. for example ‘Branwen uerch Llyr’ for ‘Branwen daughter of Lyr,’ the unlenited form of *uerch* being *merch*.

2.2 London British Library Additional MS. 14866

2.2.1 *Manuscript transcription*

Llyma owdyl arall i dduw, ag i fair, a wnaeth kymbro yn Rhudychen wrth ddysgu. Achos dwedyd o un or season and oedd na mesur na chynghanedd ynghymbraeg. Yntau ai atebod, i gwnai ef gerdd o saesnaeg ar vesur a chynghanedd kymbraeg, fal na fedrei 'r sais, nag yr un oi gyfeillion wneythur moi math yn i hiaith i hunein: ac i canodd ef val i canlyn. Ond am fy mod i'n scrivennu'r llyfr hwn oll ag orthographi kymbraeg e gaiff hyn o saesneg ganlyn yn llwybr ni: darllenwch hi val kymbraeg.⁹

O meichti ladi, owr leding / tw haf
at hefn owr abeiding,
in-tw thei ffest efrlesting,
i set a braents, ws tw bring.

yw wan~ ddy↑u↑s, wyth blûs, dde blessing / off god,
ffor ywr gwd abering:
wher yw bunn, for yw'r wunning,
syns kwin, and ywr sonn ûs king.

Owr fforffdders ffadder, owr ffiding / owr po<p>
on ywr paps had swcking,
in hefn blûs, ffor ddûs thing,
attendans wythowt ending.

We↑e↑i↑ sing to↑w↑ breicht king, wyth coning / and bli<s>
ddei blosswm ffruwt bering;
Ei wowld, as owld as ei sing,
win ywr lof, on yøwr lafing.

Qwin od, off owr god, owr geiding / moëder
mayden not wyth-standing,
who wed sich↑ts↑, wyth a rich↑ts↑ ring,
as god wad t̄ ddus gwd weding.

Help ws, prae ffor ws, prefferring
owr sowls, assoel ws at ending.
mak

mak ddat awl, wi ffwal to ffing ffing for ffeind
ywr sons lof, owr syns lefing.

As we wi mae, dde dae off owr deiing, resef
owr saviowr in howsling [Bedd]
as he↑i↑ mae tâk ws wâking,
tw hûm in hûs meichti whing.

⁹ After Dobson 1955: 100

- 1.¹⁰ O^[ff] meicht hi twk, mi ocht to tel
 owt, sowls off hel, tw soels off heig↑c↑ht.
 Wi aish wyth bŵk : wi wish with bel
 tw hefn ffwl wel : tw haf on ffleig↑c↑ht.

Awl dids wel dwn : t'abeid te bwn
 a god mad trwn : a gwd mît wreight.
 and se so sŵn : and north and nŵn
 and synn and mŵn : and so non meight

- 2 as sŵn as preid : is now swpprest
 his hel is pe↑a↑st, his sowl is peight.
 ei tel tw io / as swm dē↑w↑ shio
 as now ei tro / wi uws not reight.

a boe wyth bo /, hys lŵcks ys lo /,
 how mae uw kno / ffrom hym a ~~knig~~ kneight

- 3 dde ~~th~~ truwth ûs yt, ddat iyrth is cast,
 dde en↑d↑s bi last, dde hands bi light.

o god set yt / gwd as yt was,
 dde rywl doth pas / ~~th~~ dde wo↑r↑ld hath peight

4. a pretti thing / we prae to thest, that good behest / that god be height || no...
 and hi ws ffinng, ~~untw~~ hÿs ffest
 ddat efr shawl lest / wyth deifyrs leight.

dde wo↑r↑ld awae / is dwn as dae,
 yt ys no nae / yt ys nei neight.
 as owld ei sae ., ei was in ffae /
 eild a gwd mae / wowld god ei meight
 a wâr wi wowld ~~the~~ dde syns ddeû sowld¹¹ /
 an' bi not bowld / in a bant height.
 and

and iwng and owld wyth hymn they howld /
 dde g↑J↑ews has sowld / ddat J↑g↑esus height

- 6 o ^gJesuw Creist / ddat werst a crown /
 and wi dei down / a wedi deight.
 (here laketh a vers for it

¹⁰ The numbers preceding the following stanzas are copied from the manuscript.

¹¹ Gloss reads:

Corruptus
 est hic versus
 ut nonnulli
 alii propter
 inscitiam
 scriptorum.

Translation: 'This line is corrupt, as well as a number of others, because of the ignorance of the scribes'

was not in my copi/
tw thank tw thi / at the rŵd tri
went all wi. wntw thi leight.

7. owr kŵk owr king / owr cok owr cae ;
mei god, ei prae / mei geid up-reight.
ei sick, ei sing / ei shiâk ei sae
ei wêr awae / a weiri weight.
ei gainst ei go / me†i†i ffrinds mi ffro /
a ffond a ffo / wyth ffend ei ffeight
ei sing also / in welth and wô
ei can no mô / tŵ kwin ô meight.

o meighti ladi etc.

kymerwch fi yn esgusodol
er nad yw yr owdyl hon
yma yn gwbl ac yn iawn
ni fedrais i weled ond hyn,
mewn hen gopi gida S. vychan.¹³

Jeuan ap hywel Swrdwal
ai cant. medd ereill
Jeuan ap Rytherch ap Joan lloyd.¹²

2.2.2 Copyist biography: Reverend David Johns

David Johns (fl. 1572-1598) was a native of the Dyfi valley, Merioneth. Nothing is known of his education; he was, however, inducted vicar of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd in 1573. His friend John Williams, to whom he dedicates MS Addit. 14866, also happened to have been presented to the vicarage in 1598 or 1603, ‘but the reason for the vacancy is not noted’ (Roberts 2004). Johns was known to be a literary antiquary, and the copyist, in addition to the manuscript discussed here, of Bodleian Oxford, Jesus College MS.15; Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MSS. Peniarth 59 and Mostyn 110.

Johns was friendly with many scholars and antiquaries from the Vale of Clwyd and the neighbouring area, which hosted a great number of manuscript collectors, copyists, and literary antiquaries throughout his life, and indeed beyond (Roberts 2004). He shared his works with theirs, which might have helped him to compile BL Additional MS. 14866. Johns’s preface to the manuscript emphasizes the need to publish Welsh books and to preserve Welsh literature; he himself wrote poetry, though all that survives are two religious

¹² Translation: ‘Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal sang this, others say Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd.’

¹³ Translation: ‘Excuse me for this ode is not complete and correct, I was not able to see [anything else] but this in an old copy by S. Fychan.’

Simwnt Fychan (c.1530-1606) was a Welsh-language poet from Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, ‘notable as a man well versed in the bardic traditions [who] compiled a bardic grammar composed of five parts and it is in this work that we find the bardic grammar in its definitive form’ (Williams 1959)

cywyddau he had sent in a letter to David Salysbury in 1587, and he was mostly known for his translations from Latin to Welsh and vice-versa (Roberts 2004).

2.2.3 *Manuscript description*

Also known as *The Book of David Johns, vicar of Llanvair Dyffryn Klwyd* (Evans 1910: 1022) and *A Welch Poetical Book with Divers sorts of Poetry in it; All by different hands*, British Library Additional MS. 14866 is the second oldest of the manuscripts in which *The Hymn to the Virgin* survives. It was dedicated by its copyist—David Johns—to one of his friends, John Williams, as evidenced by ff. 7r.-v. in the manuscript, dated from 12th February 1587. It is an anthology of fourteenth- to sixteenth-century Welsh poetry, arranged in five books: of its 621 pages, pp. 11-69 are dedicated, according to the manuscript's labels, to Sacred Subjects (in which part *The Hymn to the Virgin* is included), pp. 70-189 in praise of the Great, pp. 190-316 in praise of the Fair, pp. 317-425 being dedicated to Petitions and Thanks and pp. 426-542 to 'Death and such things.'

David Johns writes in a careful and skilled secretary hand, and his is probably one of the most legible copies of the poem. *The Hymn* is preceded by Prologue A (cf. Table 2), which may either be the exact copy of a prologue-version which would have been found in manuscript β, or a shorter version of it written by David Johns himself. I would tend to prefer the second option: Prologue A begins with the words *Llyma owdyl arall i dduw, ag i fair*, ('Here is another ode to God, and to Mary'), which would refer to the poem immediately preceding *The Hymn* in the manuscript, an *awdl* beginning with the words *Mair yw'n hyder rhag perigl... by Ieuan ap Rhydderch ap Ieuan Lloyd*. These words also make sense in the particular context of this manuscript, as this part of it is dedicated to sacred poetry. Furthermore, Prologue A ends with the sentence: *ond am fy mod i'n scrivennu'r llyfr hwn oll ag orthographi kymbraeg e gaiff hyn o saesneg ganlyn yn llywbr ni: darllenwch hi val kymbraeg* 'but since I am writing this book all in Welsh orthography, only this much of English can follow our manner: read it as Welsh.' Once again, this sentence makes sense in the context of the manuscript being an anthology of Welsh poetry, all the more so that it is dedicated to a particular reader.

In terms of readership, the *Book of David Johns* has an interesting history. There is no information on how this gift was received by John Williams; however, we know that, in 1744, it was the property of the Reverend Mr. Edward Morgan of Towyn Meirionydd (f.1r),

during which year it had been borrowed by Lewis Morris of Penbryn in Cardiganshire (1701-1765)—this we know from Morris himself, as he wrote this information as well as his opinion on the manuscript on its first folio. The same Lewis Morris gained the ownership of the manuscript in 1755 as a present from the Reverend Morgan's executor. He was a land surveyor and author born on Anglesey who settled in Cardiganshire in 1742, as well as a friend of the well-known manuscript collector William Vaughan, which means that Morris may have had access to other manuscripts containing *The Hymn* (the Peniarth collection, for instance). He had as an ambition to write two volumes, one of which being 'a Critical, Historical, Etymological, Chronological & Geographical Dictionary of Celtic and British names of Men & places,' which he left unfinished. Morris is also known to have written poetry, though nothing major.

It is rare to be able to know exactly who read one given manuscript, and in what circumstances, which makes the information about Lewis Morris interesting. It confirms that if the copyists of the poem were scholars or learned men, all interested to some degree in Welsh literature or language, this also was the case for some of the readers of the manuscripts, who are otherwise much more difficult to track down. In this case, we even know that the manuscript was sufficiently well-presented, or interesting, to be borrowed—which is probably not the case for others, such as Balliol College MS. 353.

David Johns's version of *The Hymn* is fascinating in many ways. One might note, for instance, that the punctuation, though consistent throughout the copy, is in faded reddish-brown ink on p.45 while it is in the same ink as the body of the text on pp.46-47, which may suggest that it was added on p.45 after the text was copied, while Johns wrote both text and punctuation at the same time on the two others. It is a very careful copy from a now lost manuscript in the hand of Simwnt Fychan, a manuscript which according to Dobson (1955: 77) was a copy of β and not β itself, as the numerous corrections over the text in the hand of Johns may prove.

MS. Additional 14866 is indeed perhaps the most corrected and annotated version of *The Hymn*, though unfortunately some of the annotations are now barely legible, partly because of the way the manuscript was rebound. The annotations show how careful a copyist David Johns was: one in Latin seems to aim at explaining why there are a number of misreadings throughout the poem (which means that Johns was aware of them, and chose not to correct them); another in the end-colophon and in Welsh presents what could be

understood as apologies over the imperfection of the copy, blaming again the manuscript the poem was copied from, and the difficulty Johns had reading it. A rather touching note can also be found in the 6th *cywydd* (according to Johns's notation), which reads: *here laketh a vers for it was not in my copi* 'here lacks a line for it was not in my copy,' i.e. Simwnt Fychan's manuscript), after which Garlick (1982: 46) and Dobson (1955: 102) place lines 75-76 of the poem.¹⁴ This desire to show the greatest possible accuracy in his copy is unique when it comes to the copies of *The Hymn to the Virgin*: it may be explained because MS. Additional 14866 was meant to be gifted, but it is nonetheless admirable, and demonstrates how conscientious Johns was as a copyist.

The corrections in the body of the text are also telling of his accuracy. Each superscript letter or group of letters was added, it would seem, after the entire poem was copied: and the annotations always aim at perfecting the Welsh spelling used throughout, be it because the spelling was involuntarily anglicised (as in *to* corrected to *tw*, line 13; or *he* corrected to *hi*, line 27) or because there was room for improvement, as in *ddys* on line 5 corrected to *ddus*; as <u> in South Wales would be pronounced /ɪ/, the correction thus changes the equivalent pronunciation from /ðəs/ to /ðɪs/, which more accurately reproduces the English pronunciation expected for the word 'this.'

Among these superscript corrections can also be found *sich* and *rich* in line 19, with both having their <ch> replaced with an ending in <ts>, thus *sits* and *rits*, as the consonant cluster <ch> would be pronounced /x/ rather than /tʃ/ in Welsh, while <ts> is closer to the phoneme wanted here (it should theoretically be pronounced /ts/; however palatalization could be expected in this case). Another interesting example is *wold* corrected twice to *world* on lines 46 and 50: it may either be because Johns forgot the <r> twice, or, more probably, because in an attempt to get the best Welsh-pronunciation equivalent for the word 'world,' he first wrote (or copied from the manuscript in the hand of Fychan) *wold* before coming back to his copy and adding the <r> to get closer to the (Middle) English pronunciation /wɔːrld/.

Another interesting instance of Johns adding or changing letters in superscript is found on lines 57-58, with the words 'Jews' and 'Jesus' (twice, for the latter): Johns first wrote respectively *gews*, *Jesus*, and *Jesuw*, but added a superscript <J> above the <g> in

¹⁴ Both indicate that the missing line, or lines according to their versions, is to be found above the one reading *O trysti Kreist...*

gews, while he added a <g> above the <J> in *Jesus* (and on the left of it the second time). There is no letter <j> in Welsh, nor any /dʒ/ or /ʒ/ sound; and all the copies of *The Hymn* show that these words thus presented a difficulty for the copyists. Johns seems to be hesitating here between choosing a spelling which would use graphemes available in Welsh, here <g>, and using the English letter and spelling for these words; bearing in mind that this manuscript was then gifted to a friend, it might also be a way to avoid confusion as to the meaning of these words.

At other times, Johns corrects himself immediately: this is when he tends to strike out a word or the beginning of one, as in line 20, a <t> being suppressed in favour of *ddus* ('this'); line 25, *we* is replaced by *wi*, as the former was influenced by English but did not follow the Welsh letter-values; or *kneight* on line 42 which was corrected from what Johns had begun to write, i.e. <knig>, which clearly would have followed the English spelling of the word 'knight.' Immediate corrections also concern minor and almost aesthetic details in his copy, as for instance line 48 which has *his* replaced by *hys*, which does not imply a major change to the pronunciation of the word but tends to make the spelling of the poem appear as more Welsh.

Johns is extremely regular when it comes to spelling. Out of twelve instances for 'the', only once does he write it as in English, and the ten other occurrences are all spelled *dde*. The same goes for 'we,' written once as *we* and nine other times *wi* in Welsh spelling. The personal pronoun 'us' is consistently spelled *ws* throughout the poem, while 'us' (used twice) only stands for the third person singular of 'be', i.e. 'is'—though the latter spelling also is present in the poem, and appears five times; *ys*, for the same verb, is used three times. The grapheme <u> stands for /i/ nineteen times out of twenty occurrences, the exception being *up-reight* line 65, which follows the English spelling-system for the initial vowel. It is worth noting, however, that at least in South Wales, <u>, <i> and <y> could all represent /i/: the variation thus displayed by Johns is consistent in terms of grapheme to phoneme representation.

Though this version is generally very accurate when it comes to the use of Welsh letter-values, it is however possible to find some instances where the spelling of a word shows the influence that English had on Johns; some of these examples have already been discussed above. To these we may add line 3, *thei* for /ðai/ (it would be pronounced /θei/ according to Welsh letter-values) and the entire line 47, *a pretti thing we prae to thest, that*

good behest / that god be height, which was added later on by Johns, as he had first missed it in his copy: the anglicised spelling here may reveal that he added it hastily, and thus did not take care of either copying *litteratim* from Fychan's manuscript, or using the Welsh spelling-system. What this tells us, combined with the numerous corrections found in the manuscript, is that writing in English using the English spelling-system came more naturally to Johns than using Welsh letter-values.

A last interesting point in this manuscript concerns the several words in <-eight> which constitute the main rhyme of the *cywyddau*, which Johns numbered from 1 to 7. In the *awdlau* (i.e. the preceding stanzas) these words are consistently spelled <-eight>: see *meichti* line 1, *breicht* line 13. This spelling reflects the Middle English sound /x/, which in Present-Day English has become silent with only spellings with <gh> to flag its previous, historical presence. However, two such words in the first *cywyddau* were corrected from *height* and *ffleight* to *heicht* and *fleicht*; this is not the case for the others, which all kept their spelling with a <g>. There is some evidence that Middle English /x/ was kept in Early Modern English up to the middle of the sixteenth century (Smith 2005: 130). It may also be that <ch> for /x/ was used in Fychan's manuscript, but that by 1587 /x/ was not part of the phonetic system anymore; Johns could thus have considered the digraph <ch> as meant to be silent, just as <gh> in the English spelling-system, and not thought it necessary to change it further. This raises the question of why Johns did not simply leave these digraphs out of this copy altogether. One answer might be that, being used to the English spelling-system, and probably copying from a manuscript which retained the older usage, he simply might not have thought about that possibility. It is also possible that he was trying to achieve a 'more pure' Welsh orthography, in line with the ideas first developed by Salesbury, prompting further questions about his motivation and/or exemplar.

2.3 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 96

2.3.1 *Manuscript transcription*

in English owdl vair

Awl michti ladi owr leding to hav H.S.
 heven owr a beiding
 in to the ffeest ever lesting
 ei sett a braens vs to bring.

ei win thys wyth blys the blessing / off god
 ffor yowr godod a bering
 Whwer ei bynn ffor yowr wininng
 Syns gwin g↑i↑ving and yowr sonn ys king

owr owld ffer ffader owr ffiding / owr pob
 onn yowr paps hath swking
 in hevn blvs too had thys thing
 a tendens wythowt ending

helpws prae ffor ws preffering owr sowl
 a soel ws at owr ending
 mak awll that wi ffa↑w↑l to ffinng
 Iowr sonn'↑s↑ lov owr syns leving.

as wee ae the doe off deing / resevd
 owr saviwr in howsling
 as hee mae tackws wacking
 to hym in hys michti whwing

Michti tak mee ocht too tel
 owr sowl off hel to soels off heicht
 wee as with bwks wi wys wyth bel
 to hevn ffwl wel to hav onn fflicht
 awl dids wel doonn / ddo bid ddo a bonn
 a good matron a good maed reicht
 and see so sonn and north and non
 a sonn a nonn so in onn micht

ei tel too yow as sonn doo siow
 as now ei tro wee see not rycht
 a boi wyth bow hys lwks so low
 how mae i know ffrom hym a knicht

the trovwth is kytt thatt yrd is kast
 nei nids bey last theei hands bee leicht
 a god sett yt good as yt was
 they rvwl doth pas the world hath picht

a preti thing wee prae to thest
 that good by hest thad god bee heicht
 and hi vs ffein ynto hys ffest
 thas ever siffawl lest wyth deivers licht

the world awaey is dwnn as day
 i tis no naey / it vs nei neicht
 a saowl ei say / ei wys inffae
 Ild a good mae / owld god ei nicht

a warr wee wowld / the ffens a ffowld
 and bee nodt sowld / wyth a band heicht
 the jong and owld / wyth hym thei howld
 the jiws hath soawld / that jessws heicht

Wee trvst thee kreist / that wers a krown
 or wee dei drownd owr redi dreicht
 doo thanrk too thee / at the rwt tree
 then want all wee the nwnn to leicht
 to grawnt a gree / amen wyth me
 thath ei mae see thee too mei seicht

Mei lwk mei king mei lock mei kaey
 mei god ei prae mei geid upreicht
 ei seek ei sèng ei siagk ei say
 ei wer a wae a wÿrÿ weicht

àgàst ei go mei ffrynds mei ffro
 ei ffownd affo / wyth ffeind ei ffeicht
 ei sing sa↑w↑lssso / in welth ÿnn woe
 ei kano moo / tw kwinn ameicht

almichdi ladi

howell swrdwal
 ai kant

2.3.2 Copyist biography: Lewys Dwnn

Lewys Dwnn, or Lewys ap Rhys ab Owain (c.1545-c.1616) was a well-known Welsh-language poet and herald at arms who had a traditional bardic training, his tutors being Hywel ap Syr Mathew, Owain Gwynedd, and William Llŷn, from all of whom he said he had inherited several manuscripts (Siddons 2004). His description of his patrons' ancestry

and coats of arms in his works led to his appointment as deputy herald for the entirety of Wales on 3 February 1586 (Siddons 2004).

He was a proficient poet, and much of his works survives in Peniarth MS. 96, as well as in another manuscript, National Library of Wales MS. 5270B. However, several of his biographers note that his work showed obvious marks of the decline of the bardic art of poetry at the time (Hughes 1959).

2.3.3 *Manuscript description*

Despite the fact that *The Hymn to the Virgin* is to be found in this manuscript, along with poems from several other authors, NLW Peniarth MS. 96 is first and foremost a manuscript containing poems by Lewys Dwnn: the manuscript bears the title of *The Poetical Works of Lewis Dwnn*. J. Gwenogvryn Evans dates the manuscript to between 1601 (the date given for the poem immediately preceding *The Hymn* in the manuscript, cf. Förster 1926: 188) and 1616, at which point Lewis Dwnn died. The handwriting varies heavily in the manuscript, to the point where ‘the writing on pages 433-45 is so shaky as to be clearly that of one who is infirm and old’ (Evans 1899: 592). The manuscript was thus probably the work of a lifetime, and its author might have intended for it to have been an extensive record of his poems, though as Evans notes, some of his *cywyddau* lack the second half of the lines: he attributes that to the poet having forgotten what he had written, as the original manuscript could have been worn off enough to render the restoration of the text ‘difficult if not impossible’ (Evans 1899: 592). Another possibility is that these *cywyddau* could have been works in progress, as Dwnn seems to have kept writing in this manuscript until his death.

The Hymn as it is to be found in Peniarth MS. 96 seems to have been copied with little care when compared to other manuscripts: the handwriting is difficult to read, though the tracing of the letters is very regular and resembles a secretary hand; the lines are uneven, and the stanzas are separated by hand-drawn lines rather than with blank spaces. There are several corrections added to the text, though it is not the version which has the most of them. The general outlook of the manuscript and the way poems are copied indicates that Lewys Dwnn may not have intended it so much for others to read than for himself, in order to keep a trace of his own works as well as some others. There are two tables of contents of this manuscript, one modern to be found on page 16, and the other on page 18, seemingly in Lewys Dwnn’s hand and in continuation of the one on page 16 (Evans 1899: 592).

While Balliol College MS. 353 was a commonplace book compiling a number of Welsh poems, and MS. Additional 14866 an anthology of Welsh poetry, Peniarth MS. 96 differs from them as it is a compilation of poetry made by a professional poet. This manuscript contains poetry from a variety of authors, as stated above, but mostly the works of Lewys Dwnn; it is possible that the poems he copied from other authors were there in order to serve as inspiration for Dwnn.

The handwriting makes one think at first that the copy is not going to be a very careful one. The spelling used throughout is however surprisingly regular, with some exceptions. For instance, when Dwnn spells a word with <ee> for /i:/, it is to stand for a word which in English spelling would be spelled with either <ee> or <e> standing for /i:/: cf. line 19 *hee*; line 21 *mee*; ll.17, 23, 30, 37, 45, 49, 50, 52, *wee*; *bee* in lines 34, 38, and 46; *thee* ll. 51 and 54 and *tree* line 51; *see* occurring in lines 27, 30 and 54 as well as *seek* in line 57. Two odd uses of <ee> are to be found in the copy: the first on line 34 with *theei hands bee leicht*, where Dwnn probably first wrote *thee* before realising that /ðai/, ‘thy’ was more suited to the sentence; and as he appears to very rarely cross out letters in his copy, and only when it is absolutely necessary, he simply added an <i> to change the word and indicate its pronunciation. The second such occurrence is in *ffeeest* in line 3, pronounced /fi:st/. All of these spellings show that the influence of English, as doubled vowels are rare in Welsh, and in any case would not call for this pronunciation (i.e. <ee> would rather give /ɛ:/, not /i:/); in the case of *ffeeest* it ‘might also have been a reflection of Middle English doubled vowels to show vowel length; however, since Middle English, *ē* had already moved from /ɛ:/ to /i:/ (Barber *et al.* 2009: 202)’ (Thuillier 2018: 38).

Dwnn tends to indicate vowel length through spelling: this is the case above, and it can also be seen in the different uses of <w> and <oo>, with <w> standing for /ʊ/ (bwks, lwks, nwnn, lwk) and <oo> for /u:/ (good, too, doonn, doo). There are some occurrences of a single <o> standing for /u:/, in words such as *to* and *ynto*’; again, this may be due to the copyist’s familiarity with English, and the fact that this spelling could have come more naturally to him.

Despite its regularity, and obvious use of Welsh letter-values, Dwnn’s version may however be deemed imperfect. He never uses any other digraph than <th> to express indifferently the sounds /ð/ and /θ/, while in Welsh it can only produce the latter sound; as

seen in other manuscripts, <dd> would be expected for /ð/ according to Welsh letter-values. Similarly, if he uses <ff> whenever he needs to express the sound /f/, and never uses <f> to express /v/, but rather <v>: just in the first stanzas there are three examples of <v> as /v/ and <ff> as /f/, and this continues throughout the poem with no exceptions. Similarly, some spellings when pronounced with Welsh letter-values are explainable only on account of the copyist's inattention. There is, for instance, *awll* in line 15, which is supposed to read *all* (as is the case with *awl* in the first line for example), but which should be pronounced /aʊl/ according to the Welsh spelling-system and pronunciation. However, the copyist might have used Welsh-like spellings to give a patina of Welshness to the poem, without having actually thought about letter-values.

There are nevertheless corrections in the manuscript which show a desire on Dwinn's part to produce a good copy of the poem from the exemplar he had. One may thus note line 15, *ffawl* altered from *fall*, with <w> added above the line, or line 40 *ffawl* corrected to *siawl*, where the copyist crossed out <ff> and replaced it with <si>, once again written above the line. There also is an interesting correction on line 8, with *gwin* replaced by *gving* and then *giving* with the missing <i> added above the line; this example might show that Dwinn had had trouble reading what was in the manuscript he copied the Hymn from. Indeed, the other copies agree that this word should read *qwin*, or any variation of it (Dobson 1955: 100 has *kwin*), for the English 'queen.' The copyist may have had trouble deciphering the word in his copy, and as the spelling-system is so distinctive, it can be noted that he went back to a word which exists in English with this spelling, i.e. 'giving.'

2.4 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 111

2.4.1. *Manuscript transcription*

Ef a ddamweiniodd ar amser yn Rydychen ir Saeson oganu y Kymru ai anghanmol hwynt yn vawr am i hanysgolheictod gan ddywedud and oedd un ysgolhaic da o Gymro nag ni ellid gwneuthur o Gymro ysgolhaic ysgolhaic kystal, mor ddysgedic, ac mor ddoeth, a chystal mydyrwr ag y gellit o Sais, ac and oed y Kymru yw kystadlu ar Saesson am ysgolheictod.

Yna y kododd Kymro ardderchawc ac a safodd ar i draet, ac a ddywedodd mal hynn: “Nid wyf vi ond ysgolhaic disas herwydd vy ysgolheictod, nac im kyfflybu i lawer o ysgolheigion dygedic ardderchogion o Gymru y rhai nid ydwy vi addas i arwain ei llyru yn ei hol. Etto her hynn i gyd llesg vydde gennyf na alle ysgolhaic gwael disas o Gymro ymgystadly ar Sais goreu i ysgolheictod am wneuthur mydr ac am lawer o bwyntieu eraill. Ond nid yw yn ysgolheigion goreu ni kimint I maswedd ac mor over, a am roi i pennau ai meddwl i amrysson ac i ymgomi ar Saesson boksachus. Eithyr mi a atebaf y kwestiwn hwn i chwi val hynn: gwnaed y Sais goreu i ddysgeidieth o honoch vydr yn Lladin; oni wnaif inne vydyr Saesnech neu yn Gymraec; oni chystadla i evo, gogenwch y Kymru. Gwnaed vydyr yn yr iaith a vynno ar a vettrw vi, oni wnaif i un kystal ac efo, kabled y Kymru ac and arbeded. Minneu a wnaif vydyr yn Saesnech, yn ych iaith ych hun; ac os holl Saeson Lloegyr a wneiff y vath vydyr ne ai kystadla, gogenwch y Kymru. Onis gellwch i wneuthur, gadewch y Kymru yn y braint a rhoes Duw uddunt. A gwybyddwch chwithieu and ydych chwi I ymgystadlu ar Kymru.” Ac am hynny y gwnaeth ef yr owdwl Saesnech honn ar y groes gynghanedd yr hynn ni vedyr Sais moi gwneuthur.¹⁵

O micht_↓↑d↑i ladi :·

owr leding // to haf
at hefn owr abeiding

yntw ddei ffest everlasting
i set a braynts ws tw bring /

yw wann ddys wyth blyss dde bblessing // off God
ffor ywr gwd abering
hwier yw bynn ffor ywr wynni↑n↑g
syns kwin and ywr synn ys king ·/

Owr fforffaddyrs ffaddyr, owr ffiding // owr pop
on ywr paps had swking
yn hefn blyss i had ~~h~~addyrs thing
atendans wythowt ending ·/

¹⁵ After Dobson 1955: 99-100.

Wi sin dde bricht kwin wyth kwning // and blys
 the blossom ffruwt bering
 ei wowl'd as owl as ei sing
 wynn ywr lyf on ywr laving

Kwin od off owr god owr geiding // myddyr
 maedyn not wythstanding...
 hw wed syts wyth a ryts ring
 as god m↑w↑ad ddys gae↑wd↑ weding

Help ws prae ffor ws preffering // owr sowls
 asoel ws at ending
 mak awl ddat wi ffawl tw ffig
 ywr synn s lyf owr syns leving /

As wi mae dde dae off owr deing // resef
 owr saviowr yn howsling
 as hi mae tak ws waking
 tw hym yn hys michti wing ·/

Micht hyt twk // mi ocht tw tel //
 owr sols off hel // tw soels off hicht :/
 wi aish wyth bwk // wi wish wyth bel ///
 tw hefn ffwl wel /// tw haf on fflicht ·/

Awl dids wél dywn //
 tabyd deo bwn / } a gwd met wricht
 a god mad trwn //
 and se so swn //
 and north and mwn // } and so non micht ·/
 and synn an mwn //

as sŵn as preid // ys now syprest
 hys sol ys beste /// his sol ys picht
 Ei tel tw yo //
 as sym dwth shio // } wi uws not richt:
 as now ei tro //
 a boy wyth ^a bo //
 hys lw↑o↑ke is s↑l↑o . } hym↑2↑ ffrom↑1↑ a knight
 how mae yw know

Dde trvth ys kyt // ddat yerth ys kast //
 dde ends bi last // dde hands bi licht /.
 o God set yt // gwd as yt was //

dde rvwl dwth pass // dde world hath picht

A preti thing wi prae to thest //
 ddat gwd bi|hest // ddat God bihicht ·/
 and hi was ffig // yntw hys ffest //
 ddat eer shal lest // wyth deivers licht ·/
 dde world away /
 ys dynn as day // } yt ys nei nicht ·/
 yt ys no nay //
 as owld éi say //
 ei was yn ffay // } wld God ei nicht ·/
 eild a gwd may //

Awar wi wowld /
 dde syns ddey sowld // } in a bant hicht ·/
 and bi not howld //
 and ywng and owld //
 wyth hym ddei howld // } ddat Dsiesws hicht
 dde Dsie↑v↑ws has sowld

O trysti kreist // ddat werst a krown /
 er wi dei down // a redi dicht

Tw thank to↑w↑ ddi //
 at dde rwd tri // } ddey now tw licht ·/
 dden went all wi //
 tw grawnt agri //
 amen wyth mi // } ddi tw mei sicht ·/
 ddat ei mae si //

Owr lwk ovr king // ovr lók ovr k↑a↑e ///
 mei God ei prae /// mi geid ypricht ·/
 ei sík ei sing // ei sh↑i↑ak ei sae ///
 ei wer awae /// a wiri wicht ·/
 e↑a_↑ gaynst ei go ///
 mei ffrynds mi ffro // } wyth ffynd ei ffeicht
 a↑ei↑ ffo↑w↑nd e↑a↑ ffo //
 ei sing also //
 yn welth and wo // } tw kwín off nicht ·/
 ei kan no mo //

Ieuan ap Rhydderch // medd eraill
 Ieuan ap hywel Siwrdwal / ai kant ·/

2.4.2 Copyist biography: John Jones of Gellilyfdy

John Jones (before 1585-1658) was a copyist, and according to his biographer even the ‘most prolific and skilled of Welsh copyists,’ (Lloyd 2004) and manuscript collector born in Gellilyfdy; his father, William Jones, and grandfather, Siôn ap William, were copyists themselves as well as patrons of poets. Between 1603 and 1610 he is known to have copied twenty-five manuscripts belonging either to his family or to neighbouring gentry, clergymen, and scholars in the Vale of Clwyd which was reputed for its population interested in manuscript collecting (ibid.). In 1611-1612 Jones compiled a list of owners of Welsh manuscripts and books on both sides of the border; he was however imprisoned in 1617, which would happen several times in his life, generally as a result of litigation-disputes. Perhaps paradoxically these were the moments when he was most prolific as a copyist (ibid.).

Peniarth MS. 111 was copied around 1610 according to Evans, which would correspond to ‘the period [...] when [Jones] borrowed new manuscripts from other scholars’ (Lloyd 2004): overall, more than eighty manuscripts wholly or partially written in his hand survive in various repositories. They cover a wide range of subjects touching Welsh history and literature up to the seventeenth century: both ancient and contemporary poetry, bardic grammars, historical texts, prose works, laws, saints’ lives, genealogies, but also astrological, mathematical and other (pseudo-)scientific texts (Lloyd 2004).

2.4.3 *Manuscript description*

According to Dobson (1955: 75), this is ‘the most beautifully written of the early MSS. of the Hymn:’ and it is true that the secretary hand of John Jones is both careful and easily legible. It was, as mentioned above, copied around 1610 from another manuscript, and is known as the *Llyfr Sion ap Wiliam ap Sion o hen gerdd a hen fydr ardderchawg*; it compiles poetry from Taliessin, as well as from the Black Book of Carmarthen, the White Book of Rhydderch, and others. It is still in very good condition and has kept its original full calf binding.

The Hymn itself takes a lot of space in this manuscript, spanning over five pages when counting the Prologue: the lines are very clear and the layout even allows for blank space on the page, rather than trying to use the entirety of it. The first line is written out as a title in bigger letters, in imitation of a gothic script.

As is the case for the entire Peniarth collection, which is also known under the name of Hengwrt, this manuscript was acquired by the seventeenth-century antiquary Robert Vaughan (c.1592-1666), and thus was afterwards collected along with two other copies of *The Hymn*: Peniarth MSS. 96 and 98b.

This is another version of *The Hymn* which uses Welsh letter-values:¹⁶ once again, the copyist was very regular in his spelling. The ten most used words in this manuscript appear as in Table 3 below:

Item	Frequency	English spelling
ei	20	I
owr	16	our
a	15	a (indefinite article)
tw	14	To
as	13	As
and	12	And
dde	12	The
wi	11	We
wyth	10	With
ys	9	Is

Table 3 - the ten most used items in *The Hymn to the Virgin* in Peniarth MS. 111

Of these ten, only three appear with alternate, English letter-values spellings: *tw* is twice written *to*, in lines 2 and 56. There is one occurrence of *dde* being spelled *the* (line 15), and one of *ys* spelled *is*. With reference to this last word, it may be noted that Jones uses here the letter <y> as it would be in Middle Welsh, i.e. either standing for the sound /i(:)/ or for the sound /ə/. It would seem that, more precisely in this case, the copyist chose to use <y> for /i/; see for instance line 6, *yw wann ddys wyth blyss dde blessing // off God* where <y> is indeed used for short vowels; the exception being in the verbs with an <-ing> ending, which, though these are short vowels, are always spelled <-ing>. For uses of <y> as /ə/, see line 10, *Owr fforffaddyrs ffaddyr, owr ffiding // owr pop*; it is used in polysyllabic words (vs. monosyllabic words when used as /i/, or compounds such as *wythstanding* line 19) in unstressed syllables. One exception here is *myddyr*, line 18, where the first syllable is stressed and reads /ə/, which is a common feature in disyllabic words in Welsh.

¹⁶ One may be starting to see at this point that each manuscript using Welsh letter-values in its version of *The Hymn* does not use the exact same one; and that if there was one original version into Welsh orthography, the manuscripts which survived are not copies of that one, all employing a slightly different way to render English into Welsh. There might be a relation between this and Salesbury's work as an orthoepist, and more precisely his reforming interests; this could be an interesting point of study for a later, more detailed work.

The use of <u>, <v> (as a vowel here; it also is found as a consonant in this version of *The Hymn.*), is also very interesting in this copy, as the usage here is typical of North Wales, where Gellilyfdy is situated. Indeed, while <u> might be pronounced /ɪ/, it is not the case in North Wales, nor in this manuscript: it is here to be understood as /y/. It is to be found exclusively in conjunction with a <w>, in these five words: *ffruwt* (line 15), *uws* (line 45), *trvwth* (line 52), *rvwl* (line 55), and *Dsivws* (line 76, corrected from *Dsiewws*). Dobson (1957: 702) writes as follows on this particular spelling:

The *Welsh Hymn*, Salesbury (Vol. I, pp. 15-16), and the *Welsh Breviary* (Vol. I, p. 345) transcribe ME [y:], &c. as *uw*; as these Welsh sources use *u* as a transcription for ME *ī*, this should mean a pronunciation [ɪu], with a lax first element (and not [yu] as assumed by Ellis followed by Viëtor and Luick); but the purpose may have been to avoid the suggestion of the ‘rising diphthong’ [ju(:)] which the transcription *iw* would give.

It may be however that Dobson has not considered that the copyist of Peniarth MS. 111 was from North Wales, and thus might not have used <u> as /ɪ/ as he claims. Furthermore, here is what D. Simon Evans (1964: 1-2) writes about the use of the letter <u> in Middle Welsh:

It appears that in MW the sound of *u* was different from that of ModW, where it is not distinguishable from [i] N. Wales and [i] S. Wales.¹⁷ It was a central [ü]. This sound persisted longer in accented syllables (including monosyllabic words) than in unaccented finals, where it became unrounded and approximated to [i] as early as the late MW period. In this position *u* and *y* are confused from the fourteenth century on [...]. In monosyllables where *u* was followed by *ch* the rounding was retained; this is evidenced by the glide *w* in ModW [...]. This development already appears in late MW.

Considering the above, I would tend to think that <u>, <v> stands for /y/, despite Dobson’s views. Indeed, out of these five words, four of them (*ffruwt*, *rvwl*, *uws*, *Dsivws*) have a Latinate origin, and have come into Middle English from French, who had (and still has) a sound /y/, including in those words (cf. Old French *fruit* /fryjt/, *user* /y:ze/, *riule*, /ɾjyl/, and *giu*, cf. Present-Day French *juif*, /ʒyif/).¹⁸ It would seem strange to have these words, pronounced respectively /fɹu:t/, /ɹu:l/, /ju:z/, and /dʒu:z/, i.e. with a /u:/ where Peniarth MS. 111 has <uw>, while it would seem natural to have a development from French /y/ to /yu/ to finally /u:/, which is what the spelling of these words in this manuscript tends to show.

¹⁷ One may note, however, that Simon Evans was a South Walian; it could be argued that this description of North Wales’ <u> is not exactly accurate.

¹⁸ On the other hand, ‘truth,’ spelled *trvwth* in this manuscript, comes from the Old English *trēowþ*, *trīewþ*. However, late Old English would have had a form *trȳwþ* < *trīewþ*, and OED notes common influence on the noun of the related adjective *true*; so the general point made here still holds.

Dobson does not deny the existence of the pronunciation /y/ in English: ‘OF [y], when introduced into ME, was identified with native sounds; in the East Midlands it was normally replaced by [iu]’ (Dobson 1957: 711). However, in the specific case of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, given that this manuscript was copied by a Welshman from North Wales, in North Wales, it is very likely that (a) he had the sound /y/ in his system, (b) he had no difficulty reproducing it, expressing it by the same letter <u>, and (c) as *The Hymn* was composed c. 1470, the sound /y/ might have appeared in the original pronunciation of the poem.

This would furthermore give an indication as to what spelling was used in at least manuscript β . Such spellings are indeed to be found in Peniarth MS. 111, but also in Panton MS. 33, Cwrtmawr MS. 11 (which both are copies of the first), MS. Additional 14866, and Peniarth MS. 96. With the exception of the last, all are related to β : MS Additional 14866 through one copy, and similarly with Peniarth MS. 111 which is separated from β by a lost manuscript Dobson names η . As both use this spelling in <uw> at least once, it is possible that the usage goes back to β , rather than it being an innovation by Jones, who simply sustained it since it was part of his ‘own’ usage as well.

Since, however, this spelling is also found in Peniarth MS. 96 (cf. *rvwl*), which according to Dobson ultimately descends from α , it might even be possible that <u>, <v> was used in both α and β , i.e. perhaps in χ or even in ω , the original copy. Such a conclusion is however only speculation, and one has to keep in mind that there exists a ‘sister copy’ of Peniarth MS. 96, Llanstephan MS. 53, copied from the same manuscript ζ (itself copied from ϵ), which does not show any sign of this spelling used anywhere in its version of *The Hymn*.

In the spelling system used in Peniarth MS. 111, <v> does not only stand for /y/; it sometimes is found to have the value of a consonant, in forms such as *everlasting* (line 4), *laving* (line 17), or *deivers* (line 59). However, <f> is also found for /v/, as in *haf* lines 2 and 33, *lyf* (/lɔv/, ‘love’) lines 17 and 25, and *resef* line 26; it is interestingly always used at the end of words, which is also what Evans (1964: 8) notes as its normal use. Evans also states that /v/ can be expressed by <v>, <f>, <u> in the middle of words, which is thus the case here with the words having <v> for /v/ when preceded and followed by vowels.

Peniarth MS. 111 was according to Dobson the most beautifully written of the copies of *The Hymn*; I would tend to add that it might also well be the most regular when it comes to its spelling system. There are, as mentioned above, some words which are spelled as they

would be in English, and the second word of the poem, *michti*, was indeed wrongly corrected to *michdi*, 'to give a visual parallel to *(la)di* later in the line' (Dobson 1955: 77). However, the corrections do suggest a wish to reproduce the presumed exemplar more closely. An interesting example for such a correction is that of line 21: *as god mad ddys gae weding*, corrected afterwards to *as god wad ddys gwd weding*. This correction, according to Dobson, was made to restore the alliteration in the line, correcting a misreading present in η.

2.5 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 98b

2.5.1 *Manuscript transcription*

O mightie Ladie our leading / to have
 at heaven our abiding
 vnto the feast everlasting
 is sette a branche ws to bring
 You wanne this w<i>th blisse the blessing / of God
 for your good abearing
 where you bene for yo^r winning
 since queene & yo^r Sonne is king
 Our forefaders fader our feeding / our pope
 on yo^r pappes had swcking
 in heaven blisse I had this thing
 attendaunce w<i>thout ending
 We seene the bright queen - w<i>th cuning / & blisse
 the blossome fruite bearing
 I would as ould as I sing
 winne yo^r love on yo^r lavinge
 Q↑u↑eene odde of our God our guiding / moder
 mayden notwithstandinge
 who wed such w<i>th a rich ring
 as God woud this good wedding
 Helpe us pray for us pr<e>ferring / our soules
 assoilv vs at ending
 make all that we fall to ffiging
 yo^r Sonnes live our sinnes leaving

As we may the day, of dying receive
 our in housling
 as he may take us waking
 to him in his mightie wing
 Might hit tooke / me ought to tell
 our soules of hell / to soiles of hight
 wee ask with booke / we wish w<i>th bell
 to heaven full well / to have our flight.
 All deeds well done
 t'abide deo bo↑o↑ne } a good meete wright
 a god made trone
 and say so soone
 and north and noone } & so none might
 and sonne & moone

as soone as pride/ is nowe suppress
 his soule is best / his soule is pight
 I tell to yo^u
 as some doe showe } we use not right
 as now I trowe

a boy w<i>th bowe
 his look is slowe } him from a knight.
 howe may knowe _
 The truth is kisse / that earth is cast
 the ends be last / the hands be light

O godde sette it / good as it was
 the rule doth passe / the worlde hath pight.

A prettie thing / we pray to thest
 that good behest / that god behight.
 & he was ffiging / into his feaste
 that euer shall lest / with diuerse light.
 The world awae
 is done as day } it is nighe night.
 it is no nay
 as ould I say
 I was in fay } would God I might.
 yelde a good may
 Aware we would,
 the sinnes we sould } in a bant highte.
 & be not hould
 And young and ould
 with him they hould } that Jesus highte.
 the Iewes has sould

O trusti Criste / that werst y crowne
 ere wee die downe / a readie dight
 to thank to thee
 at the roode tree } thee to my sight.
 that I may see

Our lucke, our kinge / our locke, our key
 My God I pray / my guide vpright.¹⁹

I seeke I sing / I shake I say
 I ware away / a werie wight
 against I goe / my frends me fro
 I found a foe / w<i>th fende I fight.
 I sing allso / in welth & woe
 I can no mor to queene of might
 Jeun ap Rydderch ap Jeun lloyd ai k.
 medd eraill Jeun ap holl Swardwal

2.5.2 Copyist biography: John Davies

¹⁹ From line 53 ('O godde sette it...') to line 86 ('my God I pray...'), this is from Furnivall and Ellis 1880: 301-303. I happen to have missed a folio in the manuscript, which I had access to on microfilm, and have not had the occasion to see it again since I realised these lines were missing from my copy.

Dr. John Davies of Mallwyd (c.1570-1644) was a Church of England clergyman and a Welsh scholar; he was educated by William Morgan, who translated the Bible into Welsh, and graduated from Jesus College, Oxford, in 1594 (Evans 2004). The overarching purpose of his work appears to be the ‘propagat[ion of] the faith to the people in their native tongue’ (ibid.), which is in keeping with those who influenced him: and it happens that Davies himself appears to have produced a translation of the Bible in 1620, though it appeared under the name of Richard Parry, another man influential in Davies’s education (ibid.).

Most interesting for us are his works written as an ‘attempt to provide materials through which English-speaking clergymen could learn Welsh in order to communicate with their Welsh-speaking parishioners’ (ibid.); this includes a Welsh grammar in Latin as well as a Welsh-Latin dictionary, which was cited as an authority in later English dictionaries, and of which Samuel Johnson himself was known to have a copy. Overall, he was a renowned Welsh scholar, described by his contemporary Rowland Vaughan as ‘the only excellent Plato of [their] tongue,’ and by Sir Glanmor Williams as ‘the greatest Welsh scholar of his age, if not of all time’ (Williams 1987: 476), and ‘his achievements in propagating both the Bible and the Welsh language deeply influenced Welsh culture’ (Evans 2004).

2.5.3 *Manuscript description*

Peniarth MS. 98b dates from the first half of the seventeenth century, and is a collation of ancient Welsh poetry, which includes ‘a copy of the greater part of the *Black Book of Carmarthen, Eiry Mynydd &c*’ (Evans 1899: 611). On Davies’s method, Evans (ibid.) notes:

This MS. [...] is of great interest as an example of his methods and accuracy as a copyist. A comparison of certain portions with the original shows that Dr. Davies was generally accurate, but in the difficult and obscure passages he both blunders and amends (without notification) in such a way as to make one still regret the disappearance of certain MSS., the texts of which survive only in transcripts made either by himself or under his supervision.

Dr. Davies’s text is in a neat secretary hand, and it may be noted that there are few corrections he made on his copy, compared to some of the other manuscripts. *The Hymn* is neatly set on the page, with the second line of each *awdlau* stanza starting further away from the left-hand margin than the rest. The spelling is consistently anglicised throughout.

This manuscript is a copy of Peniarth MS. 111 (see 2.4); however, as the spelling is anglicised in Peniarth MS. 98b, the resemblance might not appear obvious. A close look at both copies shows that John Davies was indeed a very accurate and very careful copyist: it is however not a verbatim copy. Indeed, though the copyist of Peniarth 98b follows most of the choices made by the one of Peniarth MS. 111, there are some divergences; it seems likely that these are not the result of misreadings, but are intentional, as when MS. 98b does not diverge from MS. 111 it is a verbatim copy of it—and might well have been a litteratim one if the spelling had not been anglicised throughout.

Some changes undertaken by Davies probably are the result of him not understanding the intentions of the copyist of Peniarth MS. 111, as he is known to amend passages he deems obscure in manuscripts. On line 4 for instance we have *is sette a branche* where John Jones (the copyist of MS. 111) has *i set a braynts*. Where there was a second person singular pronoun and ‘to set’ thus in the indicative second person singular, Davies understands that the verb should be in the passive voice, thus changing slightly the meaning of the line: originally the Virgin was actively helping the poet (and, more generally, humankind), and the passive voice makes it so that it is not the case any longer. Similarly, though actually an improvement on Jones’s copy, *yntw ddei ffeft everlasting* in MS. 111 became *vnto the feaft everlasting* in MS. 98b: as what was expected (see Dobson 1955: 112-113) is *ddy*, the emendation to *the* is thus correct.

There are however a few occurrences of Davies simply copying what he finds in Jones’s copy, probably because of inattention: this is the case in lines 4, with *ws* instead of *us* which would have been expected in an anglicised text; 10, where *swcking* is written where *sucking* would have been the expected spelling; 11, with the first person singular pronoun ‘I’ being confused with ‘i’ standing for a second person singular in MS. 111; or 57, with ‘ffing’ which kept its <ff>, though it is unnecessary in English. There are other mistakes in the copy, such as an omitted <h> on line 78, *te roode tree* instead of *the*, as well as evidently careless omissions: line 26 reads *our in housling* instead of *our saviour in housling*, and similarly with line 50, which reads *howe may knowe* rather than *how may you know*. One may also note the misreading of MS. 111 *lyf*, here copied on line 24 as *live*; the pronunciation /lɔv/ is most probably what the copyist of Peniarth MS. 111 was aiming at. However, the vowel <y> in Welsh being versatile, here Jones seems to have understood it to stand for /ɪ/, giving thus /lɪv/, and ‘live’ in MS. 98b.

Interestingly, the ten most used items in Peniarth MS. 98b are not the same as those in Peniarth MS. 111. We might compare Table 3 below with the later Table 4:

Item	Frequency
I	20
Our	16
To	16
The	13
A	12
As	12
Is	11
With	10
That	8
We	8

Table 4 - the ten most used items in *The Hymn to the Virgin* in Peniarth MS. 98b

Although the items ‘I,’ ‘our,’ ‘with’ are used the same amount of times in both MS. 111 and its anglicised copy, it is not the case for the other items; the difference may be explained by variant forms, as is the case for *tw* in MS. 111, replaced twice by the anglicised usage *to*, and *dde*, replaced once by *the*. ‘And’ is not among the ten most used items in this manuscript because the copyist frequently used the abbreviation & in its place. The item ‘we’ appears twice as *wee* in MS. 98b, and once, as *wi*, in MS. 111 in a catchword. Variant readings also account for the mismatch between the manuscripts in numbers of tokens for ‘a’.

The version of *The Hymn* in Peniarth MS 98b is overall an interesting anglicisation of the poem. It would seem there was significant demand for an English-spelling version of *The Hymn to the Virgin*.

2.6 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Llanstephan 47

2.6.1 *Manuscript transcription*

X O michti ladi owr leding · tw haf
 at hefn owr abiding
 intw they ffeast efr leasting
 ye set a brains ws tw bring

Ye win thys with blys the ble sing · of god
 ffor yowr gwd abering
 wher ye bin ffor yowr wining
 syns qwin and your son ys king

Owr owld ffer ffader owr ffeding · owr pop
 on yowr paps hath swking
 in hefn blys tw had thys thing
 atendawns withowt ending

Help ws pray ffor vs preffering · owr sowls
 a soel vs at owr ending
 mak all that wee ffal tw ffig
 yowr sons lof owr syns leving

As wee mae the dae off deing · resef
 owr savior in howsling

as hee mae tak vs waking
 tw him in hys michti whing

Micht he tak mee ocht tw tel
 owr sowls off hell tw soels off hicht
 wee as with bwk wee wis with bel
 tw hefn ffwl wel tw haf on fflicht
 all dids wel don · diw bid diw bon
 a god matron · a gwd maed richt
 and see so son · and north and non
 a sonn a mon · so in on micht

I tell tw yow · as swn dw siow
 as now j trow · wee jese not richt
 a boy with bow · hys lwks so low
 how mae j know · ffrom hym a knight

the truth is kwt · that yrd is kast
 they inds be last · they hands be licht
 o god set yt gwd as yt was
 they rvl dw pas · the world hath picht

a preti thing wee pray tw thest

that god bee hest · that gwd bee hicht
 and hee vs ffing · vntw hys ffest
 that efr siawl lest · with divers licht

the world a way · is dwnn as day
 yt is no nay · yt ys ny nicht
 a sowl j say · j wis in ffay
 yld a gwd may · wld god j micht

a war wee wold · the ffends a ffold
 and bee not hold · with a band hicht

the jwng and old · with hym they hold
 the jews hath sold · tha jesus hicht

wee trvst thee krist · that werst a krown
 or wee dye drown · owr redy dricht
 dw thank tw thee · at the rwd tree
 then want all wee · the nwn tw licht
 tw grawnt agree · amen with me
 that j mae see · thee · tw my sicht

Owr lwke owr king · owr loke owr kay
 my god j pray · my geid up richt
 j seek j sing · j siak j say
 j wear a way · a wyeri wicht

a gast j go · my ffrynds my ffro
 j ffownd a ffo · with ffend i fficht
 j sing allso · in welth in wo
 j kan no mo · tw qvin o micht

O michti ladi owr leding
 Howel Swrdwal
 ai kant 12

2.6.2 Copyist biography: *Llywelyn Siôn*, cf. 2.7.2

Evans (1903: 516) describes the hand of Llanstephan MS. 47 as ‘the same hand as MSS.48, 134 and MS Llywarch Reynolds,’ while Dobson (1955: 75) sees that as ‘undoubtedly in the same hand as [the Long Book of Llanharan], and therefore written by Llywelyn Siôn,’ adding that the latter is known to have used the name of Llywarch Reynolds as well. I would tend to side with Dobson on that point and agree that Llywelyn Siôn is the scribe behind Llanstephan MS. 47 as well as Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 (see 2.7 below).

Llywelyn of Llangewyd, or Llywelyn Siôn (c.1540-1615) was a Catholic Welsh-language poet and copyist as well as a recusant,²⁰ which led him to be ‘summoned before the courts at least six times between 1587 and 1593’ (Williams 2004). He is known to have composed in the fixed and free metres of Welsh verse, but only fourteen of his poems are known to us.

Llywelyn Siôn is ‘known to have undergone a formal instruction in the art of copying’ (Williams 2004) and became one of the most important Welsh scribes of his generation, transcribing manuscripts for the gentry of Glamorgan and having access to an important number of libraries; he was, however, not extremely meticulous and his copies contain many errors. Out of thirteen extant manuscripts, seven are collections of *cywyddau* and *awdlau*, one of *cwndidau* (carols), four in prose, and one is dedicated to genealogies (Phillips 1959); Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44, one of his most important works, falls into the first category.

2.6.3 *Manuscript description*

Evans dates the manuscript to c. 1630; however, this seems dubious due to the fact that Llywelyn Siôn is believed to have died in 1615.²¹ It contains poetry by various authors and is in good condition; it contains 580 pages, with *The Hymn to the Virgin* copied on pages 36-37. The same care was put in copying *The Hymn* in this manuscript as in the Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 (cf. 2.7 below).

Both Llanstephan MS. 47 and Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 were not only copied by Llywelyn Siôn, but also both had δ as an exemplar, according to Dobson (1955: 79-81). Here is what he writes about it (1955: 79-80):

Between C[ardiff Free Library MS. 5.44] and L₁ [Llanstephan MS. 47] [...], the relationship is, as might be expected, very close, but there are some differences. In ten cases L₁ preserves the α reading where C alters it; on the other hand in five cases C preserves the α reading against L₁. Moreover C, though it occasionally preserves the Welsh spelling where L₁ anglicizes, in general anglicizes more freely. Though neither MS. is an accurate copy of its exemplar, L₁ is the more accurate. There can be no doubt that they are direct copies of a common

²⁰ An individual who refused to attend Anglican services; the 1558 Recusancy Acts imposed various types of punishments on whoever was not part of the Anglican church.

²¹ Similarly, Dobson dates the Llyfr Hir Llanharan to 1623; the NLW however dates it to 1613, which is why this is the date I have indicated here.

exemplar δ , which we may identify with the “archetypal MS.” which it has already been deduced, on other grounds, that Llywelyn Siôn possessed. This MS. δ was characterized by *jvse* “use” (whence C *jus*, L₁ *jese*) in l. 46 and *kwt* “cut” (so both C and L1) for *kyt* in l. 51.

What is interesting here is that Siôn (a) apparently did not copy *The Hymn* in Llanstephan MS. 47 from his first version in Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44, and (b) that he found an interest in copying the same text twice, both times using Welsh letter-values, from the same manuscript.²² Dobson notes differences between the two manuscripts: these would in my opinion tend to show that Llanstephan MS. 47 is a more careful copy than Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44.

Both manuscripts are exceptional among the other copies of *The Hymn to the Virgin* in that the copyist makes very few, if any, corrections to his copy. In the Llyfr Hir Llanharan, the only correction was a missing line: there are none in Llanstephan MS. 47. Dobson states that there are ‘some differences’ between the two manuscripts and focuses mainly on the ways each differs from α (and thus potentially δ); however, comparing both manuscripts highlights that the differences lie mainly in the accuracy of the use of the Welsh spelling-system, and that Llanstephan MS. 47 is, indeed, much less anglicised than Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44.

It is tempting to wonder whether or not Siôn had his first version of *The Hymn* on hand when he produced this one. This however would not seem to be the case, as otherwise there would not be anglicised words in Llanstephan MS. 47 in places where Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 had managed to maintain a Welsh spelling. This is the case for instance in line 8, with *your* in Llanstephan 47 and *yowr* in the Long Book, or line 49 with *thee* in Llanstephan and *thy* (/thi:/) in Llanharan.

Llanstephan MS. 47 is however clearly more accurate with the spelling as well as with the copy itself: Siôn avoided some misreadings he made in the Long Book, such as *Ei* in lines 4 and 5 instead of the second person singular pronoun, which he used in Llanstephan MS. 47 with the spelling *ye*. He also is more consistent in his spelling in this manuscript than in the preceding one, with <ff> being used consistently when /f/ is expected, while <f> is used only when /v/ is needed (along with <v>, as in Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44). The same can be said of <w>, which is used both as a vowel and a consonant in both manuscripts

²² The only other copyist to have produced two copies of *The Hymn to the Virgin* is Evan Evans, and his copy are neither from the same exemplar manuscript, nor using the same spelling system.

but is more consistently used for /u/ in this one while in the Llyfr Hir Llanharan there are occurrences of it being replaced by <oo> instead.

Most interesting however are the resemblances between both manuscripts, and perhaps most importantly what we can see of Llywelyn Siôn's Anglo-Welsh spelling system in them. (Another Anglo-Welsh poem is also found in the Llyfr Hir, which would repay future study.) While the manuscripts all have their similarities in terms of spelling system and use of Welsh letter-values, the fact that we should have two in the same hand really helps to note that each copyist seems to have devised his own system and habits when it comes to writing in English using Welsh letter-values: this is evident for Llywelyn Siôn.

Both manuscripts have the same tendency to write the same words with a (potentially) anglicised spelling, with <ll> used in the same way in Llanstephan MS. 47 as in Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44, as well as the words ending in <-icht> / <-ight> and <-ing>. We also find <ee> and <ea> for /i:/ (*leasting, thee, wee* etc.), and in both manuscripts the diphthongs are either not indicated by spelling (this is the case for /aɪ/), or some of them such as /æ/, /aʊ/, /oʊ/, are spelled <ae> (*mae, dae* beside *day*), <aw> (*ffawl, atendawns*), <ow> (*owr, withowt, drown, ffownd*). As mentioned above, <f>, <ff>, and <v> are also used in a consistent manner both within each manuscript and between both of them. As well, one may note that Llanstephan MS. 47 only ever uses either *I* or *j* for the first-person singular pronoun, where Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 also had *ei* and *y*, which might indicate that Llywelyn Siôn has developed a more mature spelling-system.

2.7 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Cardiff Free Library 5.44

2.7.1 *Manuscript transcription*

f. 5v

O michti ladi owr leding | tw haf
 at hefn owr abiding
 into they ffest ever lesting
 Ei set a braints ws to bring

<Ei> wyn thys with blys the blesing | of god
 or yowr gwd abering
 <wher ye> bin ffor yowr wining
 <en> and yowr son is king

for ffader owr ffeding | owr pob
 <a>ps hat swking
 <lys> to haf thys thing
 <ot> ending

f. 6r

help us pray ffor us preffering | our sowls
 a soel ws at owr ending
 mak all that wee ffal tw fing
 yowr sons lof owr sins leving

as we may the day off deing | resef
 owr savior in howsling
 as he mae tak us waking
 tw hym in hys michti whing

micht hee tak mee och tw tell
 owr sowls off hel to soes off hicht
 wee as with book wee wis with bell
 tw hefn ffwlwell tw haf on flicht
 all dids well don, diw bid diw bon
 a god matron | a good maed richt
 and see so son | and north and non
 a son and mon | so in on micht

y tell tw yow | as swm dw siaw
 as now y trow | wee jus not richt
 a boy with bow | his lwks so low
 how may ye know from hym a knight

the truth is kwt | that yrd is kast
 the inds bee last | the hands by licht
 o god set yt gwd as yt was.
 they rywl dwth pas the world hath picht

a prety thing wee pray tw theast
 that gwd by heast | that god by hicht
 and hee us ffind | into his ffeast
 that efr siawl least | with divers licht

the world a way | is donn as day
 yt is no way | it ys ny nicht
 a sowl y say | y wischs in ffay
 Ild a gwd may | wld god I micht

a wae wee wold | the ffends a ffold
 and bee not hold | with a band hicht
 the jwng and old | with hym they hold
 the jews hath sold | that jesus hicht

wee trust thy krist thats werst a krown
 or wee dy diown, ovr weedy dicht
 dw thank tw thee | at the rwd tree
 tw grawnt agree | amen with me
 that I mae see | thee tw my sicht

ðan want all wi the nwn

owr lok ovr king ovr lwk ovr kay
 mi god I pray my gyd upright
 I seek I sing | I siak J say
 I wer a way | a wery wicht

a gast I go | my ffrynds my ffro
 I fynd a fo | with ffend I ficht
 J sing allso | in welth in wo
 I kan no mo | tw queen o micht

O michti ladi ovr leding
 Howel Swrdwal
 ai kant 9

2.7.2 *Copyist biography: Llywelyn Siôn [c.f. 2.6.2]*

The biography of Llywelyn Siôn is discussed in 2.6.2 above.

2.7.3 *Manuscript description*

Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 is an interesting one when it comes to its shape, as it is a long book in ‘ledger’ format, as indicated by its Welsh name: *Llyfr Hir Llanharan* (‘The Long Book of Llanharan’). It was written in 1613 by Llywelyn Siôn in collaboration with another secretary hand, though the name of this second scribe is unknown; that second hand copied a few leaves within Siôn’s text, as well as the contents lists, and other poems added

later (up to 1618, cf. f. 333). Some other poems and hands dating from the late 17th century may be found on ff.334v-356v. The manuscript is known to have been in possession of the Powell family of Maesteg, Glamorgan, in the 17th century, which means that the *Llyfr Hir Llanharan* did not move from its place of origin immediately after its composition.

The lines take the full width of the manuscript's folios and are very carefully written; the secretary handwriting is regular and easily legible, while the layout probably is the neatest of all the copies of *The Hymn*. However, the manuscript was damaged by damp, and the writing in the bottom left-hand corner of f.5v has faded as a consequence, meaning that the beginnings of lines 6 to 12 of *The Hymn* are now illegible.

Despite the fact that the first folio on which *The Hymn* is found in this manuscript is poorly damaged, the major part of the poem survives: there are some interesting comments to make on the spelling-system used in this copy.

Siôn does use Welsh letter-values throughout: this system however is not consistent in his copy. As is the case with other manuscripts, <f> (only in the beginning of words) and <ff> are both used to express /f/, while <f> (at the end of words) and <v> can also both express /v/. These usages can be observed in almost all Welsh copies of *The Hymn*, and is explained by the fact that <v>, <u> was used in Middle Welsh as /v/ in the middle of words, while <f> for /f/ in the same position was common in Middle Welsh orthography: this indicates that the lack of consistency in the spellings chosen could be due to the copyist not spelling the words in the poem in a systematic way, but rather naturally, as he would if he were writing fully in Welsh.

Other spellings in this manuscript may also be noted. The way the copyist uses the spelling <ee> for instance is quite interesting: in words such as *see*, *mee*, *wee*, or *hee*, is it to be understood as standing for the sound /ɛ:/, or for /i:/? As for the occurrence of this spelling in Peniarth MS. 96, it might be that it is supposed to express /i:/, and that the copyist used <ee> because he was used to the English spelling of these words; he also uses *me*, *he*, and *we* in the copy, albeit only once for each of these words.

A similar phenomenon may be observed with <ll>, which would tend to confirm that *Siôn* was indeed writing in English as much as he was writing in Welsh when he copied this poem. In Welsh, <ll> would be pronounced /l̪/; this sound does not exist in English, and we

might thus expect that, in this version of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, <ll> signified /l/ as it would in English.²³ The reason for the use of this consonant cluster by Llywelyn Siôn is that there is no conflict between Welsh and English as regards this spelling, as it does not stand for anything different than <l> in English, and /l/ is not to be accounted for in that language either. Thus, *tell*, *all*, *allso*, *well*, and *ffwlwell* are all and always written in this manner.

Some letters are also used in a more versatile manner in this version of *The Hymn*, and it is particularly the case for <i>, <y>, and <j>. Now <y> in Welsh already has two possible realisations, /i(:)/ and /ə/; here it can be read as either /i(:)/ or /ai/, along with <i> and <j>. For both <y> and <i>, it would seem that they have to be understood as /i(:)/ when used between two consonants or as the word final letter (cf. *michti*, *ladi*, *wischs*, *hys*, *hym*, *ffrynds*, every word in <-ing>), with the exception perhaps of words ending in <-icht> or <-ight>, and *gyd* on line 55, which could either be read as a diphthong (/ai/) or an /i(:)/. However, when used on their own, both <i> and <y> seem to have the value of /ai/. It is surprising at first, since in the two first stanzas of the poem we do find *Ei* for the first-person singular pronoun ‘I’, and *they* standing for the second person singular possessive pronoun *thy*; one might expect the copyist to be regular and to always use two letters to express a diphthong.

Nevertheless, this outcome is not the case in this manuscript, and an evolution within the text can be observed. If we focus only on the first person singular pronouns, it is possible to see that from *ei* in the first few lines of the poem, the copyist then goes on to writing *y* which cannot be interpreted as anything but the first person singular: see for instance *y tell to yow*, which could hardly be a second person singular pronoun,²⁴ but also *a sowl y say / y wischs in ffay*. The copyist then changes again his preferred spelling for the first person singular pronoun, and uses *I* from line 44 on, with two occurrences of *J* used as ‘I’ as well, lines 56 and 60. <j> is also used four other times in the poem, in *jus* (line 30), *jwng* (line 47), *jews*, and *jesus* (both on line 48): its use in *jwng* (in English ‘young’) as well as an alternate spelling of ‘I’ would tend to indicate that it is in this case to be pronounced as either a voiced palatal approximant /j/ (which is common in Welsh manuscripts of the 15th century and later) or a voiced palatal fricative /j̥/, but probably not /ʒ/ (which sound does not exist in Welsh, and not on its own in English) or /dʒ/. However, whether or not Siôn intended for it

²³ One may have seen other MSS. using <ll> for /l/ above; these should be discussed in more depth in a later work.

²⁴ Which is consistently spelled either *ye* or *yow* (for ‘you’).

to be pronounced /j/, /j̃/, or /dʒ/ in *jews* and *jesus* as well is hard to determine, as he does use English spellings for English pronunciations in his copy, as we have just seen. In terms of *cynghanedd*, all possibilities would make sense, as both words are on the same line and should thus alliterate together.

Llywelyn Siôn never indicates in spelling any difference between /ð/ and /θ/: he uses <th> indifferently throughout the copy, with one exception in a line which he added next to lines 51-52, and which he probably forgot to copy at first: *ðan want all wi the nwn*. This addition is very interesting in that this is the only use of <ð> in the entire copy, as well as the only occurrence of the spelling *wi* for the first-person plural pronoun ‘we.’ The handwriting for this line is noticeably smaller than for the rest, so the <ð> might have been used in an attempt on the copyist’s part to save space on the page; as for *wi*, it is peculiar to have it spelled this way only in this instance. It might be that this addition was copied more carefully (looking more closely at the exemplar manuscript for instance) than the others, and thus copied exactly, while in the rest of the poem the scribe was less careful. Evidence from the other manuscripts show that *wi* is a common spelling for ‘we’ in *The Hymn to the Virgin*’s spelling system and might well have been in the exemplar which Llywelyn Siôn used.

As stated earlier, the Long Book of Llanharan stands among the Welsh-spelled copies of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, as is made quite evident with the use of spellings such as <ff>, <w> for /u/, etc. However, and more so than some copies of *The Hymn* discussed above, it is comparatively more anglicised, revealing that the scribe knew that a number of words which might be read as spelled according to Welsh letter-values might also be spelled according to English letter-values; see for instance *ladi*, *lesting*, *bring*, *wining*, *whing* (for ‘wing’), *non* (for ‘noon’), *mon* (for ‘moon’) etc. Describing Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 as a fully anglicised version would however be incorrect, as these spellings were probably not intentional on the part of the copyist; the copyists/editors of the fully (or near-fully) anglicised copies of *The Hymn to the Virgin* had the intention to produce an English ‘translation’ of the poem, while here Siôn shows signs of trying to stick to the Welsh spelling-system.

Once again, the question arises whether these English spellings are here because the copyist was not paying enough attention to the spelling he ought to be using if he wanted to

use Welsh letter-values,²⁵ or because he did not see any other way to spell these words with Welsh letter-values and still express the right English pronunciation at the same time. The first possibility seems more likely but would be verifiable if we had access to δ , which according to Dobson (1955: 81) is the exemplar for this manuscript.

²⁵ Be it because he was copying at a fast pace or because he was not that interested in it (this possibility seems unlikely; in that event, he probably would have made no effort to keep the Welsh letter-values in his copy).

2.8 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Llanstephan 53

2.8.1 *Manuscript transcription*

hs,

owdl i fair yn saesneg

Almeichdi ladi owr leding / to have
 too hevn owr abeiding
 in too the ffest ever lesting
ei set a braens ys to bring

ei winn this with blis the blessing of God
 for yowr good abering
 wher yow bin ffor the wining
syns yw kwin yowr sonn is king

owr owld ffer ffader owr ffiding owr pope
 onn yowr paps hath sowking
 in hevn blys had thys thing
a tendens wythout ending

Help ws prae ffor ws preffering —
 owr souls / soel ws at owr ending
 mak awl that wi ffowl in ffig
yowr sons love owr sins leving

as wee mae to thee doo of deing / resevede
 owr saviowr in howsling
 as hi mae tak ws waking
to hym, in his meichti hwing

Meichti tak mi ocht to tel
 owr sowl of hel yowr soels of heicht
 wee as with bwks wee wis with bel
too hevn ffwl wel tw hav onn fflicht

owld dids wel donn
 diew bid dew bonn
 a gwd matronn / a gwd maed reicht
 and see so sonn / and north and nonn
a sonn a nonn / so in onn neicht /

ei tel to yow / as sonn doo s↓i↓ow
 as now ei trow, wi ↑in↑ see not reicht
 a boy with bow / his lwk so low
how mae yow know ffrom hym a kneicht

the triwth is kytt / that j(i)ord i kast
 nei and bei last thy hands bi leicht
 a god sett yt good as itt was
thei riwl doth pas ; the world hath peicht

o preti thing wee pray to thest
 that good by hest / that god by heicht
 and hi ws ffeind in to his ffest
that ever saw last / with deivers leicht

the word a way / i donn as day
 it is no nay / ît is no neicht
 a sawl ei say / ei wis in ffay
ild a gwd mae // owld god a meicht

a warr wee wowld / the ffens a ffowld
 and by not howld / with a bend heicht
 the yong and owld / wyth him the howld
the Ji(e)ws ath sowld / that Jesws heicht

wee tryst thi krist that wers a krown
 or wee dy down owr redi deicht
 doo thank to thi / at the rwt tri
 thenn want all wee / the nwnn tw leicht
 too grawnt a gree / a men wyth mee
that ei mae see thi to my seicht

Mei lwk mei king mei lok mei kae
 mei god ei prae mei geid vp reicht
 i siak ei sing / ei sik ei sae
 ei wer a wae a wiri weicht

ei gasb ei go / mei ffrinds mei ffro
 ei ffownd a ffo / wyth ffein↑d↑ ffeicht
 ei sing awl so / in welth in wo
ei kann no mo / too kwin o meicht

ko: anamam | Howel Swrdwal ai kant
 fair |

2.8.2 Copyist biography: Siâms (James) Dwenn

James (or Siâms) Dwenn was a Montgomeryshire poet born c. 1570 (d. c.1660), and possibly the eldest son of Lewys Dwenn (Hughes 1959), the copyist of MS. Peniarth 96 (cf. 3.4). Both frequently wrote for the same persons, including Dr. John Davies of Mallwyd, the hand behind MS. Peniarth 98b (cf. 2.4); however, James Dwenn had a smaller audience than his father, as he tended to restrict his works for his own neighbourhood.

2.8.3 *Manuscript description*

Llanstephan MS. 53, also known as the *Llyvyr Jams Dwnn* ('Book of James Dwnn'), contains the bulk of James Dwnn's poetic creation (Hughes 1959), though some other manuscripts do have poems he composed. It is dated c. 1647 for the pp.1-498 by Evans (1903: 534). Two other hands are to be found in the manuscript pp.499-542 (cf. Evans); however, *The Hymn to the Virgin* was copied on pp.461-463 of the MS, thus by James Dwnn himself.

The book seems to have belonged to several persons, three of whom are named at some point in the manuscript. On p.159 one can read *Mr. Charles Herbertt of pant:y:Sheriff in the parish of Caron 1653* (Evans 1903: 534), and on pp.451 and 481 the name of *Morgan John Moris*. On page 16 is a letter dated from 1716 to *Mr. Alban Thomas near Blaenporth* signed *Jen: Jenkins*, which seemed to have accompanied the manuscript as it was sent to Thomas. The Llanstephan manuscripts were part of the personal collection of Sir John Williams, the National Library of Wales's main benefactor, which acquired the collection in 1909; it is thus safe to assume, as the manuscript is now in Aberystwyth, that it remained in Welsh hands (and in Wales).

The poem is written in a secretary hand, and coincidentally the layout of the poem in Llanstephan MS. 53 resembles closely that in Peniarth MS. 96, which is in the hand of Lewys Dwnn (as just flagged, possibly the Llanstephan scribe's father). The stanzas are generally four lines long, and separated by hand-drawn, irregular lines. However, while it would be tempting to think that Llanstephan MS. 53 is a copy of Peniarth MS. 96, Dobson (1955: 80) notes that '[Llanstephan 53] is right against [Peniarth 96] in six places. [Peniarth 96] and [Llanstephan 53] must then be independent copies of a MS. ζ which was responsible for their distinctive shared readings [...].'

The fact that Peniarth MS. 96 and Llanstephan MS. 53 were copied from the same exemplar is very obvious when both copies of the Hymn are compared. 265 words (269 with the end colophon) out of 448 in Llanstephan MS. 53 are identical to those found in the version in Peniarth MS. 96; a further 26 words only show a change in the spelling of some words from <y> to <i> and vice-versa. The other words are either one letter away from what

is found in Peniarth MS. 96, give another reading, or are an addition, which confirms that Llanstephan MS. 53 is indeed not a copy of Peniarth MS. 96.

As James Dwnn is believed to have been the son of Lewys Dwnn, it seems that MS. ζ belonged to their family and stayed with them for at least two generations; the exemplar might have been lost when their manuscripts, and thus manuscript production, was passed on to other hands. Both manuscripts we have now belonged to separate collections, with the Peniarth collection having been collected by the Vaughan family and kept in Hengwrt until 1859, then in Peniarth as the property of W.W.E. Wynne, and then in the possession of Sir John Williams from 1904 until it was transferred to the National Library of Wales in 1909; while the Llanstephan collection was the property of the Williams family before they were bought by Sir John from the Shirburn Castle collection in 1899, until they came into the hands of Sir John Williams as well. There is no information on ζ specifically, however, neither on what it was exactly nor on who last possessed it.

A comparison of Peniarth MS. 96 and Llanstephan MS. 53 can give some idea about what ζ looked like. For instance, both manuscripts have *The Hymn* preceded with a line describing in what language it is written: the Peniarth manuscript has *in English owdl vair* ('in English, ode to virgin') the Llanstephan one has *owdl i fair yn saesneg* ('ode to the Virgin in English'), which means there probably was such a line in the ζ manuscript. The idea that the exemplar might have contained a prologue to *The Hymn* is also tempting, but it seems unlikely that two manuscripts from a copy with a prologue should choose to include almost the same line (i.e. not exactly the same line), and not the entire prologue; and even more unlikely that they should use this line independently and not as part of the copy.

Other features of the ζ manuscript may also be deduced. It is likely that ζ contained the spellings in <ow> (*owr, howsling, yowr, owld, howld*), <ei> (for the first-person singular pronoun, *deing, heicht, reicht, leicht*, etc.), *ws* for 'us'. The spelling <ee> used for /i:/, which is also found in various other manuscripts, might go back as far as γ, given that it is used in all manuscripts descended from that exemplar with the exception of Balliol College MS. 353; it also is present in Peniarth MS. 111, which may lead to the conclusion that it was in MS. χ or even in the original ω, as it is a common spelling in English from the Early Modern English period, i.e. the period during which the earliest manuscripts we have were copied, and all the words spelled that way happen to have had *ē* in Middle English (cf. Old English *wē* for PDE 'we', OE *mē* for 'me', OE *sēon* and ME *seen* for 'see.' On the other hand, a

word such as ‘agree’ comes from Anglo-Norman *agerer*, cf. Present-Day French *agr  er*, which also as /e:/ for <ee>).²⁶

In Llanstephan MS. 53, the copyist did take greater care than in Peniarth MS. 96 to show in spelling the pronunciation /aɪ/; indeed, while in the oldest of the two manuscripts there are several occurrences of <i> for /aɪ/ in words ending in <-cht>, all of those are spelled as <-eicht> in Llanstephan MS. 53. It probably is not intended as a correction of what is in the Peniarth manuscript, as the copyist might not have been looking at it, and might not even have had access to it. We may thus assume that this is not a correction of what is found in ζ, but a simple copy.

Another significant difference between Lewys Dwnn’s and James Dwnn’s manuscripts is the <y> which is far less frequently used in Llanstephan MS. 53; there are, as mentioned above, 26 words where <y> and <i> are reversed compared to their use in Peniarth MS. 96. There seems however not to be any rule for the use of these spellings; Llanstephan MS. 53 uses indifferently *him* and *hym*, *blis* and *blys*. The only case in which James Dwnn is consistent with his use of <y> is for the second person pronoun, which always takes a <y> in his copy. As in the other manuscripts, when a word has <y> it is either used as standing for /i(:)/ or /ə/.

Misreadings are also interesting, as they show confusion over the spelling-system. Two words in particular are often misread one for the other: ‘God’ and ‘good’. We note in this manuscript line 26, *a gwd matron / a gwd maed reicht*, which in Peniarth MS. 96 is read the same way (*a good matron a good maed reicht*): these are the only two manuscripts to misread the first word as ‘good,’ as all others have a phrase meaning ‘a God-made throne,’ which makes it safe to assume that the misreading was already to be found at least in their exemplar.

However, the two known copies of ζ also diverge in some instances, such as line 2 which does not have *to* as the first word of the line in Peniarth MS. 96, and line 7 where this manuscript has *ei* while Llanstephan MS. 53 has *yow* (which in context is more

²⁶ Dobson, following some of the manuscripts, uses <i> in place of <ee> which is commonly deployed in many other versions of the Hymn. Such patterns of replacement raise significant issues of textual criticism in relation to the choice of ‘accidentals,’ issues I hope to pursue in future research.

appropriate). The copyist of Llanstephan MS. 53 also writes ‘the wining’ where the Peniarth manuscript has *yowr winning* (which also seems more likely to be correct).

2.9 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Llanstephan 54

2.9.1 *Manuscript transcription*

O might(i)y ladi owr leding tw haf
 at hefa↑n↑ owr abiding
 intw th↑e↑y ffeast efr leasting
ye set a brains us to bring.
 ye win thys with blys the plesing off god
 ffor yowr gwd abearing
 wher ye bin ffor yowr wining
 Syns qwin and yowr Son ys king.
 Owr owld ffor ffadeer owr ffeding owr pop
 on yowr paps hath swking
 in hefn blys tw had thys thing
 atendawns without ending
 help us pray ffor us preffering owr sowls
 a soel us at owr ending
 mak all that wee ffall to ffining
 yowr sons lof owr syns leving.
 as wee mae the dae off deing resef
 owr saviowr in howsling •

As hee mae tak us waking
 tw him in hys mighti whing
 Might hee tak mee ocht tw tel
 owr sowls off hell to soles off hight
 wee as with bwk wee wis with bel
 tw hefn ffwl wel tw on ffight
 all deds wel don diw bid diw bon
 a god matron a gwd maed bright
 and see so son and north and non
 a sonn and mon so in on might
 I tel tw yow as swm dw siow
 as now j trow wee jese not right
 a boy with bow hys lwks so low
 how mae i know ffrom hym a knight
 the truth is kwt that yrd is kast
 they inds be last they hands be light
 o god set yt gwd as yt was
 they rul dw pas the world hath pight
 a prety king wee pray tw thest
 that god bee hest that gwd be hight
 the world away is dwonn as day
 yt ys no w↑n↑ay yt ys no night
 a sowl I say i wis in ffay
 yld a gwd may wld the ffends affold
 and bee not hold with a band hight

the ywng and old with hym they hold
the Jews hath sold tha Jesus hight

wee trust thee Krist that werst a krown
or wee dye drown owr redy dright
dw thank tw thee at the rwd tree
than want all wee the nwn tw light
tw grawnt agree amen with me
that i mae see thee tw my sight
a gast i go my ffrynds my ffro
i ffownd a ffo with ffend i ffight
I sing allso in welth in wo
I kan no mo tw qwin o might
O mighti ladi owr leding.
Howel Swrdwal ai kant

2.9.2 Copyist biography

There is unfortunately no information on who the copyist for the version of *The Hymn to the Virgin* was, as the hand for pages 1-236 of the manuscripts is anonymous (cf. 2.9.3. below). However, it might still be of interest to know who the second hand was for this manuscript, though he did not copy the *Hymn*, as the fact that he should have possessed and/or completed it means he was interested in its contents: thus, this is still valuable information.

William Maurice (1619/20-1680) was an antiquary, born to a family of scholars: his father was ‘a man of literary interests,’ while his maternal grandfather was a vicar (Huws 2004). He started to make copies of Welsh poetry in the 1630s, during which time Llanstephan MS. 54 was written. He is said to have become ‘the best-read Welsh antiquary of his generation, with interest in literature, history, and law’ (Huws 2004). His collection of manuscripts contained over a hundred items, though it unfortunately burned down during a fire at the Wynnstay library in 1858; as an associate of Robert Vaughan, he also catalogued the Hengwrt manuscripts in 1658—including, thus, the Peniarth manuscripts, which were known as Hengwrt MSS. 176 (MS.96), 479 (MS.98b), 294 (MS.111).

Maurice is best known for his works compiling Welsh laws, as his analysis served as a basis for the modern classification of the texts. One of his biographers (Jones 1959) also notes that ‘in some manuscripts he used a Welsh orthography peculiar to himself, and no manuscript was too precious for him to disfigure with his scrawl.’

2.9.3 *Manuscript description*

Llanstephan MS. 54, dated c.1634, is a compilation of Welsh poetry including an extensive transcript of the *Black Book of Carmarthen*. It is composed of 276 paper folios, of which 1-236 are written on one side only, which makes the manuscript 298 pages long. Evans notes that pages 237-298 are in the autograph of William Maurice, which does not include *The Hymn*; there is however no information on an eventual other hand for this manuscript.

The Hymn to the Virgin in Llanstephan MS. 54 is written in a clear cursive hand, which is comparable with those found in Panton MSS. 33 and 42. The stanzas are not separated by blanks; the pages seem to have been lined (traces of it are still visible), which makes for a very regular layout for the poem.

Dobson (1955: 81) indicates that Llanstephan MS. 54 is a copy of Llanstephan MS. 47 (cf. 3.8.). A comparison of the two copies of *The Hymn* shows that that is indeed the case, and furthermore, that the copyist was a very careful one. This is not the most accurate copy of *The Hymn* that survives, as the copyist of Cwrtmawr MS. 11, who had Peniarth MS. 111 as an exemplar, was even more accurate than the copyist of Llanstephan MS. 54. This manuscript is nonetheless a very impressive example of this copyist's talents. The vast majority of the manuscript, or at least of *The Hymn to the Virgin* in this manuscript, is a litteratim copy from Llanstephan MS. 47: the few exceptions are discussed below.

There is, first, the fact that a total of seven lines are missing from Llanstephan 54: these correspond to ll. 39-40, the second half of l.44 and first half of l.45, and ll.55-58 in Llanstephan MS. 47. It is surprising given that the copyist copies accurately the rest of the time; however, they might be explained by brief inattention. Lines 44 and 45 in particular do have *wld / wold* at the same place on the line, which might indicate that the hand simply lost track of where he was in his copy. Similarly, *haf* is omitted on line 24, as well as the <l> in *ff(l)ight* on the same line; there is also a peculiar misreading on line 37, which has *prety king* instead of *preti thing*.

The other differences between Llanstephan MS. 47 and Llanstephan MS. 54 generally have to do with the anglicisation of some words: all of those which were spelled <-icht> were corrected to <-ight> in Llanstephan 54, as well as a number of *ws*-forms which

were changed to *us* (to which we may add <v> for <u>, which was replaced by the latter letter). Interestingly, the second word of the poem was first copied as *mighti*, with the <cht> replaced to <ght> as everywhere in the manuscript, but was then corrected to *mighty*, thus giving a fully anglicised spelling of the word.

Other corrections seem to show that the copyist was aware of some improvements which could be made to Llywelyn Siôn copy. This process yields in line 9 the correction from Llanstephan 47 '*ffer ffader*' to MS. 54 '*ffor ffader*' (it initially had *ffadeer*, but the subpuncted *e* indicates that this form was suppressed afterwards; in line 18, *savior* corrected to *saviowr*, which would point to a diphthong where Present-Day English now has /ə/; or in the final line of the poem, *qvin* being changed to *qwin*, which presumably reflects the approximant /w/ present in Present-Day English /kwi:n/.

2.10 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Panton 33

2.10.1 *Manuscript transcription*

O michti ladi owr leding to haf
 at hefn owr abeiding
 unto thei ffeast everlasting
 i set a braentes ws tw bring

Yw wann this wyth blyss dde blessing of God
 ffor ywr good abering
 hwier yw bynn ffor ywr winning
 syns kwin and your Son y<i>s king

Our forefathers father owr feeding our Pop
 on your paps had swking
 yn hefn blyss, had this thing
 attendance without ending.

Wee sin dde bright kwin with cwning & bliss
 the bosswm ·ffruwt bering

ei would as old as I sing
 Wynn ywr love on ywr loving.
 Kwin od off our God owr geiding mwdder
 Maeden notwithstanding
 hw wed sits with a rits ring
 as God wad ddys good weding.
 Help ws pray ffor ws preffering owr sowls
 apsoil was at ending
 Mak all that wee fawl to ffiging
Your Sons love oŵr Synns leving.
 As wi mae the dae of our deiying resef
 Owr Safiowr yn howsling
 as he mae tak ws waking
 tw him in his mighti wing .

Mighty he took mi oght tw tell
 all sowl of hel to soels of hight

We ask with bok we wish with bel
 tw hefn ffwl wel to haf on fflight

Awl deds wel dwn
 tabyd Deo bwn } a gwd met wright
 a god Mad trwn
 And se so swm
 and north and nwn ↑ noon } and So non might
 and Syn and Moo↑w↑n

As swn as Preid ys now sypresst
 hys soll is best, his Soul is pight

Ei tel to yo
 as sym do shio } we uws not right
 as now Ei tro
 A boy with bo
 his loks is so } him ffrom a knight
 How mae yw knu

Dde truwth ys kyt ddath yerth is kast
 dde ends bi last dde hands bi light
 O God set it gwd as yt was
 dde ruwl doth past dde wold hath pight

A pretti thing wi pray to thest
 ddat gw bi hest that God behight
 and he was ffinng with his ffest
 that ever shall last, with deverse light
 the word away ys donn as day
 yt ys no nay it is nei night

As owld I say
 Ei was yn ffay } wld God I might
 eild a good may

Away wi would
 dde sins they sowld } in a bant hight
 and be not ho↑w↑ld

and ywng and owld
 with him thei howld } that Ddsiesws hight
 dde Dsiws has sold

O tryti Crist ddat werst a krown
 er we dei down a redi dight
 tw thank to ddi
 at dde rwd tri } ddein own tw light
 then went all we

Tw grawnt agri
 amen wyth mi } ddi to my sight
 ddat I mae si

Owr lwc our king owr look our kae
 Mei God ei pray mi geid upright
 Ei sik I sing, I siak I say
 Ei wer away a wiri wight

Against ei go
 Me ffrynds my ffro } with ffynd I fight
 ei ffound a ffo

Ei sing also
 yn wealth and wo } tw kwin of might
 Ei can no mo

Ieuan ap Rhydderch medd erall Ieuan
 ap Howel Swrdwal ai cant

2.10.1 Copyist biography: Evan Evans

Evan Evans (1731-1788), also known as Ieuan Fardd ('Ieuan the Bard') or Ieuan Brydydd Hir ('Ieuan the Tall Poet') was a scholar and poet born in Cardiganshire and is the copyist of both Panton MS. 33 and Panton MS. 42. He entered Merton College, Oxford in 1750 but left without graduating. He was ordained priest by 1754 and spent two decades 'wandering disconsolately from curacy to curacy' (Jenkins 2004). Two issues preoccupied Evans for a large part of his life: one was the Anglicisation of the church in Wales, and the other the 'sorry plight of Welsh culture' (ibid.).

The first of Evans' preoccupations resulted from the appointment of non-Welsh prelates in Welsh churches, which the poet saw as an injustice towards deserving Welsh clergymen. He continued to consider the English churchmen as 'arrogant, [...] tithe-grabbing landowners' even on his death bed, and seemed to have despised their language in particular who, as non-Welsh-speakers, were deemed by Evan Evans to preach 'horrid unintelligible jargon' (ibid.); he also was the author in 1764-1765 of an unpublished pamphlet referring to these same English churchmen as 'ravenous wolves,' 'useless rogues,' 'ignorant bunglers,' and to the church thus changed as a 'den of thieves.'

The other object of his preoccupations was 'the sorry plight of Welsh culture' (ibid.), as Wales was facing an ever-increasing lack of libraries and other cultural institutions. Evans thus set out to defend the cause of Welsh scholarship, joining Lewis Morris (who possessed British Library Additional MS. 14866) and others to spend his free time collecting and copying manuscripts of literary and historical interest. He travelled around Wales to find unpublished manuscripts, many of which were in poor shape, and his knowledge of manuscripts was 'second to none' (ibid.). He is known for his poetry compilation, *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards*, published in 1764, which was the first attempt at an interpretation of the works of the Poets of the Princes and at an overview of Welsh poetry from the sixth century to the Tudor period.

Evans was also a poet who composed *awdlau*, *cywyddau*, and *englynion*; with time his writings became ‘passionately patriotic and Anglophobe’ (Jenkins 2004) and he wrote of some of his fellow countrymen as ‘wearing the badge of their vassalage, by adopting the language of their conquerors, which is a mark of the most despicable meanness of spirit’ (ibid.). He did however write a poem in English in 1772, entitled *The Love of Our Country*, in which Owain Glyndŵr is depicted as a hero. Interestingly, this is also in the preface to this poem that the term Anglo-Welsh was coined, despite the hard feelings of Evans towards his English-speaking fellow countrymen; however, Garlick notes that in this preface the epithet is ‘applied not to poets but to prelates. The term thus originates (if this is its first appearance) as a sign of contradiction, and in its later, literary application this element is still discernible’ (Garlick 1972: 1).

2.10.3 Manuscript description

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales Panton MS. 33, dated by Dobson from ‘before 1772’ (Dobson 1955: 75) is a 180-page compilation of poetry, in great part copied from the *Black Book of Carmarthen* and the *Red Book of Hergest*; Evans adds a note inviting his readers to compare this manuscript to Peniarth MS. 111 (Evans 1899: 841).

The Hymn is written in an extremely neat cursive hand, and preceded by Prologue B. It can also be noted that the poem, or at least the prologue, was given a title by Evan Evans, ‘Chwedyl O Rydychen,’ which can be translated as ‘Legend/Anecdote from Oxford:’ it is an interesting title, as it puts the stress on the context for the poem’s composition rather than its content. Given Evans’s personal history, it might be a way to show that, if Welsh people in Wales were gradually forced into speaking English, *The Hymn to the Virgin* (as Prologue B demonstrates it) centuries before was indeed the work of a Welshman though he was in Oxford. The ‘Chwedyl’ from the title would set the Hymn as a ‘legendary forefather for all of Anglo-Welsh literature, yet [one] often treated as an anecdote’ (Thuillier 2017: 21). Placed before the prologue as it is the case in Panton MS. 33, it may also hint at the doubtful nature of the context which follows, but one which, just as is the case for the legends composing the body of Welsh mythology, has a cultural importance.

This manuscript is supposedly a copy from Peniarth MS. 111 (see Dobson 1955: 81), and there are indeed enough common readings in both manuscripts to confirm that view. The

layout of both MSS is the same, the difference being that Evans has more stanzas in Panton MS. 33 as he spaced the lines slightly differently in the *awdlau* part of the poem. It is however far from a litteratim copy, as Evans took a lot of liberties with the spelling used by John Jones. This difference is particularly visible when Panton MS. 33 is compared to another copy of *The Hymn* from Peniarth MS. 111, Cwrtmawr MS. 11, which is much more accurate and practically litteratim.

Jones had corrected his copy of *The Hymn* in a number of instances; however, Evans, when he copied *The Hymn*, did not take all these corrections into account. We might note line 47 for instance, *his loks is so*, where Peniarth MS. 111 had *hys loks is (s)lo*, with the <s> corrected for a <l>, which the copyist of Panton MS. 33 either did not see or did not think was necessary. Similarly, in line 49 Panton MS. 33 has *him from a knight* where Peniarth 111 reads *ffrom hym a knicht* -- or, more precisely, *hym² ffrom¹ a knicht* with the superscript number indicating that the two words should be transposed, which Evans did not reproduce in his copy. Similarly, in line 75 where Evans keeps *to*, Jones had corrected the form to *tw*.

Despite Panton MS.33 being intended to be a Welsh-spelling version of *The Hymn*, it is heavily anglicised. The first person singular pronoun is often spelled *I*, especially earlier in Evans's copy, though *ei* can be found throughout the poem and especially towards the end, e.g. lines 15, 43, 45, 62, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 93. Each word ending with the sound /art/ in PDE and /ɪxt/ in ME, which were all spelled <-icht> in Peniarth MS. 111, are spelled <-ight> in Panton MS. 33.

As Evans sometimes copies exactly from the exemplar, but sometimes uses either the English spelling of a word with English letter-values (cf. the first-person plural pronoun, where Peniarth MS. 111 has *wi* while Evans uses *wi*, *we*, or *wee*), his version of *The Hymn to the Virgin* is irregular in terms of spelling. This variation might show that Evans was not that interested in the spelling of the poem, but rather by the context for its creation, something he underlined by his inclusion of the prologue. As already noted, Evans would later be known for a poem composed in English (*The Love of Our Country*) and is also the copyist of Panton MS. 42 which has *The Hymn* in a fully anglicised spelling (which, interestingly, is copied from another manuscript, i.e. the *Llyfr Hir Llanharan*). It might be therefore that his rather careless copying of the exemplar does not come from a lack of interest in the poem, but rather a view that the most important detail about it is not its spelling-system, but the fact that it should have been written by a Welshman in English.

Interestingly, most of the lines in the Panton MS. 33 version have had a modification of some sorts when compared to Peniarth MS. 111, with the exception of lines 34-36, 79-81, which are all short 4-syllable lines, and the first two lines of the poem. This ‘false start’ subsequently overtaken by anglicisation might suggest that Evans at first paid close attention to the Welsh-style spelling, and then decided against sustaining it. It can be noted that, as is the case in other manuscripts containing a version of *The Hymn*, the majority of the anglicised words in the version are actually quite common words in English, and often short ones. It must be noted, however, that not all Panton MS. 33’s spellings that replace those in Peniarth MS. 111 are anglicisations; a number are other possible spellings of the words with Welsh letter-values, as in *braentes*, *bosswm* (a misreading for P.111 ‘blosswm,’ but still in Welsh spelling), *maeden*, *bok*—this last one furthermore triggers some questions about Evans’s accent. It may indicate that in his variety of English, /o:/ had not yet raised to /u:/; we would thus have to understand both <oo> and <o> in his version as standing for /o:/. However, his correction of *moon* to *mwn* (line 39) is worthy of investigation: did he correct it according to the exemplar he was copying from, in which case this indicates nothing of his own variety of English, or did he correct it according to the pronunciation of it, which could mean that *bok* is simply a misspelling and not an attempt at spelling-pronunciation? In Panton MS. 33 <w> as /u/ only occurs in words which were copied exactly from Peniarth MS. 111, or which already had <w> even when Evans was not accurate when copying them (this is the case for ‘dwn’ line 33, ‘nwn’ line 38, ‘lwc’ line 83, etc.)

One last interesting detail in Panton MS. 33 is when Evans actually corrects Peniarth MS. 111 in his copy, especially an entire line with a reading found in other copies of *The Hymn*. This practice suggests that Evans had access to another version of *The Hymn* besides Peniarth MS. 111. This is line 78, where the Peniarth manuscript reads *ddey now tw licht* while Panton MS. 33 shares the reading found in a majority of other manuscripts, viz. *ddein own tw light*. While it is likely that John Jones misspelled the word and inverted <o> and <n>, that the same misreading should have happened in Panton MS. 33 is on the other hand doubtful, since Evans does have the ‘right’ line in the end. The change from Peniarth MS. 111 *now* to Panton MS. 33 *own* might also have been prompted in order to have the *cynghanedd* function here, as this line and the one preceding it read:

Then went all we
Ddein own tw light.

One may see that the alliterating pattern here is /ð/, /n/, /w/, /n/, /l/, each phoneme being repeated in the same order twice, which qualifies this line²⁷ as a *cynghanedd groes* ('cross-harmony'); this pattern however does not apply as well to Peniarth MS. 111:

Dden went all wi
Ddey now tw licht

Where the second /n/ is missing from the line, and /w/ is thus misplaced. It is likely that Evans did bring this correction in his copy on account of his knowledge of *cynghanedd*, and of its patterns, which could confirm that if he did not pay the closest attention to the spelling of the poem, he was however attentive to its metre, and overall what makes it a poem to begin with.

²⁷ It may be written over two lines, but in terms of rhyming patterns it does function as one entity.

2.11 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Panton 42

2.11.1 *Manuscript transcription*

O mighty Lady our leading to have
 at heaven our abiding
 into thy feast everlasting
I set a branch us to bring.

I win this with bliss the blessing of God
 for your good a bearing
 where you binn↑been↑ for your winning↑wooning↑
Since Queen and your Son is King.

Our old for fador our feeding our Pope
 on your paps hath sucking
 in heaven bliss to have this thing
attendance without ending

help us pray for us preferring our souls
 assoil us at our ending
 make all that we fall to fing
 your Son s love our sins leaving

As we may the day of dying receive
 our Saviour in housling
 as he makes take us waking
 to him in his mighty wing.

Mighty he took me ought to tell
 all souls of hell to soils of hight
 we as. with book we wish with bell
 to heaven to full well to have our flight
 all deeds well don, due bed due boon
 a god matron a good maid right
 and see so soon and north and noon
a sun and moon so in one might

I tell to you as some do show
 as now I trow we use not right
 a boy with bow his looks so low
 how may I know from him a knight

the truth is cut that earth is cast
 the inds be last thy hands be light
 o God set it good as it was
 thy rule doth pass the world hath pight

A pretty thing we pray to theast

that good behest that God by hight
 and he us fing into his feast
 that for ever shall last with diverse light

The world away is dow as day
 it is no nay it is nigh night
 a soul I say I wish in fay
 yield a good may would God I might

Aware we wold the fiends a fold
 and be not hold with a band hight
 they young and old with him they hold
 the Jews hath sold that Jesus hight

We trust thee Christ that wearst a Crown
 or we dy drown our weedy dright
 to thank to thee at the Rood tree
 then went all we thine own to light
 to grant agree Amen with me
 that I may see thee to my sight

Our luck our King our look our key
 M My God I pray me guide upright
 I seek I sing, I shake I say
 I wear away a weary wight

Aghast I go my friends my froe
 I find a foe with find I fight
 I sing also in wealth and woe
 I can no moe to Queen of might

Howel Swrdwal ai Cant

2.11.2 *Copyist biography: Evan Evans*

See the discussion in 2.10 above.

2.11.3 *Manuscript description*

Panton MS. 42 is another manuscript in the hand of Evan Evans and was copied in 1772 from the Long Book of Llanharan, then in the possession of the Reverend Mr. Powell (Dobson 1955: 75). It is 336 pages long, with *The Hymn to the Virgin* copied from page 159 to 162 in a cursive hand which does not differ from that of Panton MS. 33.

What is interesting with this version of *The Hymn* is that it is, first of all, anglicised throughout: which was neither the case for Evans' first copy of the work, nor for that by Llywelyn Siôn in Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44. Panton MS. 33 was not copied from the same manuscript either, and the version in MS. 42 is not accompanied by a prologue nor by a title. Finally, when looking at the dates, one can see that this manuscript was copied the same year as Evans published his first poem in English (see 2.10): and it might be particularly significant, then, that this should coincide with an anglicised version of this poem, which is the first identified example of Anglo-Welsh literature, while *The Love of Our Country* is but one of its descendants, using the English language to praise the Welsh, and Welsh culture.

For his second version of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, Evan Evans had another exemplar manuscript than the one he used for Panton MS. 33: the exemplar for Panton MS. 42 is indeed the Llyfr Hir Llanharan / Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44. It must have been copied by Evans before the Long Book was deteriorated by damp, as he has lines 5-12 in full in his copy. Evan Evans reproduced the layout of the poem from the Llyfr Hir in Panton MS. 42 and makes quite a good translation of *The Hymn* from it. There are, however, some interesting details to be found in this anglicised version of the poem.

There are some differences with Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 which are worth noting. One of them is line 7, which has two corrected words in Panton MS. 42: *binn*, with the corrected spelling *been* written above it; and *winning*, which was changed by Evans to *wooning*. This last example might seem a bit strange, given that the Llyfr Hir had *wining* in this place. It might simply be that Evans thought the archaic anglicism *wooning* (a synonym for 'dwelling,' cf. OED *wonning*, *woning*, and see also Present-Day German *wohnen*) made more sense in that context, as *win* is already present in line 5, and the repetition might have seemed odd (as it happens, *I win* in line 5 is a misreading for *i wann* (Dobson 1955: 100), 'you won') to the copyist. Moreover, the poet is here talking about Heaven, which indeed is the Virgin's dwelling place, which might explain such an interpretation.

There are other occurrences of Evans replacing one word from Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 with another in Panton MS. 42; however, this practice generally happens with much smaller words, and are not as obviously intentional as with *wooning* above. This is the case with *all* for *owr* (line 22), line 32 *I* for *ye* (line 32), line 39 *fing* for *ffind* (line 39) etc.

Some of these changes or misreadings tend to show that the Welsh letter-values used throughout *The Hymn* in Cardiff Free Library MS. 5.44 (and, thus, most of the manuscripts

which have *The Hymn to the Virgin*) might have been confusing for the copyist. Indeed, as can be seen above in Panton MS. 33, some of the words were easier to spell as in English than with Welsh letter-values for Evans; there was however no way to see in this version whether he fully understood the words he did copy using the Welsh spelling-system or not. In Panton MS. 42, there are some instances where we can see that the copyist did not always manage to understand what he was supposed to read in his exemplar.

2.12 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Cwrtmawr 11B

2.12.1 *Manuscript transcription*

O michti Ladi, owr leding ; to haf
 At hefn owr abeiding ;
 Yntw ddei ffest everlasting
 I set a braynts ws tw bring
 O mighty Lady our leading, to have
 at Heaven our abiding ;
 Unto thy feast everlasting,
 I set a braynts us to bring.

 Yw wann ddys wyth blys dde blessing, of God
 Ffor ywr gwd abering ;
 Hwier yw bynn ffor ywr wynning,
 Syns kwin and ywr Synn ys king
 You wone this with bliss, the blessing, of God
 For your good abearing ;
 Where you been for your winning,
 Since Queen and your Son is King.

 Owr fforffaddyrs ffaddyr, owr ffiding ; owr Pop
 On ywr paps had swking ;
 Yn hefn blyss had this thing,
 Atendans wythowt ending.
 Our forefathers' father, our fiding ; our Pope
 On your paps had sucking ;

In Heaven bliss *I had this thing, *9. he
 Attendance without ending.

Wi sin dde bricht kwin wyth kwning ; and blyss
 The blosswm ffruwt bering ;
 Ei wowld as owld as I sing,
 Wynn ywr lyf on ywr laving.
 We seen the bright Queen with cunning, and bliss
 The blossom fruit bearing ;
 I would as old as I sing,
 Win your love on your laving.

Kwin od off owr God owr geiding, Mwddyr
 Maedyn notwythstanding ;
 Hw wed syts wyth a ryts ring,
 As God wad ddys gwd weding.
 Queen od of our God our guiding, mother
 Maiden notwithstanding ;
 Who wed such with a rich ring
 As God wad his good wedding.

Help ws prae ffor ws preffering, owr Sowls,
 Assel ws at ending ;
 Make awl ddat wi ffawl tw ffing,
 Ywr Syn's lyf owr syns leving.
 Help us pray for us prefering, our souls
⁹Assel ws at ending ;
 Make all that we fall to ⁹ffing,
 Your Son's love our Sins leaving.

As wi mae dde dae off owr deing, resef
 Owr Saviowr yn howsling ;
 As hi mae tak ws waking,
 Tw hym yn hys michti wing.
 As we may the Day of our dying, receive
 Our Saviour in housling ;
 As he may take us waking,
 To him in his mighty wing.

Might hyt twk, mi ocht tw tel,
 Owr sols off hel, tw soels off hicht,
 Wi aish wyth bwk, wi wish wyth bel,
 To hefn ffwl wel, tw haf on fflicht.
 Mighty he took, me ought to tell,
 Our Souls of hell, to soils of Hight, ⁹height.
 We ⁹aish with book, we wish with bell,
 To heaven full well, to have on flight.

Awl dids wel do↑wæ↑n
 Tabyd Deo bwn } a gwd met wrig↑c↑ht
 A God mad trwn
 And se so sw'n
 And north and nwn } and so non micht.
 And synn and mon
 All deeds well done,
⁹Tabyd Deo boon, } a good met wright
 A God made troon
 And say so soon,
 And north and noon } and so none might.
 And sun and moon

As sw'n ad preid, is now syprest
 Hys sel ys best, hys sol ys pight
 I tel tw yo
 As sym dwth shio } Wi uws not richt
 As now ei tro
 A boy wyth bo
 Hys læwk is lo } hym ffrom a knicht
 How mae yw kno
 As soon as pride, is now supprest
 His zeal is best his soul is pight,

I tell to you
 As some doth show } we use not right.
 As now I trow
 A boy with's bow
 His look is low } him from a Knight.
 How may you know ~~him~~

Dde truwth ys kyt, ddat yerth ys kast,
 Dde ends bi last, ~~th~~↑dd↑e hands bei light,
 O God set yt, gwd as yt was
 Dde ruwl dwth pass, ~~th~~dde world hath picht
 The truth is cut, that earth is cast,
 The ends be last, the hands be light,
 O God set it, good as it was,
 The rule doth pass, the world hath pight.

 A preti thing, we prae to thest
 Ddat gwd bi hest, that God bi hicht
 And he was ffig, yntw his ffest,
 Ddat ever shal lest wyth deivers licht
 Dde world away
 Ys dynn as day } yt ys nei nicht
 Yt ys no nay _
 As owld ei say
 Ei was ynffay } wld God ei nicht.
 Eild a gwd may

A pretty thing, we pray to thest
 That good be hest, that God be hight,
 And he was ffig, unto his fest
 That ever shall lest with divers light
 The world away
 Is done as day } It is nigh night,
 It is no nay
 As old I say
 I was in ffay } would God I might.
 Yield a good may

Awar wi wowld / weuld
 Dde syns ~~th~~ddey sowld } in a bant hight
 And bi not howld
 And ywng and owld
 Wyth hym ~~th~~ddei howld } Ddat Siesws hight.
 Dde Siws hav sowld
 Aware we would,
 The sins they sold, } in a bant hight
 And be not hold
 And young and old
 With him they hold } the Jesus hight.
 The Jew hav sold

O trysti Kreist, ddat werst a krown,
 Er wi dei down, a redi deicht,
 Tw thank tw ddi
 At dde rwd tri } ddey now tw licht
 Tw den went awl wi
 Tw grawnt agri
 Amen wyth mi } ddi tw mei sicht.
 Ddat ei mae si

O trusty Christ, that werst a crown,
 Ere we die down a ready dight;
 To thank to thee,
 At the rood tree } they now to light,
 Then went all we
 To grant agree
 Amen with me } thee to my sight.
 That I may see

Owr lwck our King, owr lok owr ke
 Mei God ei prae, mei geid ypreicht,
 Ei sik ei sing, ei shak ei sae,
 Ei wer awae, a wiri wight ;
 Agaynst ei go,
 Mei ffrynds mi ffro, } wyth ffynd ei ffeicht,
 Ei ffownd a ffo

Ei sing also,
 Yn welth yn wo. } tw kwin off micht.
 Ei kan no mo.

Our luck our King, our lock our key
 My God I may, my guide upright,
 I seek, I sing, I shake I say,
 I wear away, a wiry wight.
 Against I go
 My friend mi fro } with fiend I fight.
 I found a foe
 I sing also,
 In wealth in wo, } to Queen of might.
 I can no mo

Phai [?] a ddywedant, mai Ieuan ap Rhydderch
 ap Ieuan Llwyd o Ogorddan, yr hwn oedd yn
 byw o gylch y Fl.1420, a'i Cant; eraill, mai
 Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, yr hwn by yng.
 hylch y Fl.1460.

Yr hôn Gordd uchod, a'sgrifonwyd allan
 o Llyfr Sion ap William Sion o Gell Lyfrdy
 yn Swydd Fflint, yr hwn yn byw o gylch y
 Fl. 1630 A.D. 1785²⁸

²⁸ Translation: 'This old poem was written from the book of John Williams of Gell Lyfrdy in Flintshire, who lived around the year 1630. A.D. 1785'.

2.12.2 Copyist biography: David Ellis

David Ellis (1736-1795) was a cleric, poet, translator, and transcriber of manuscripts. He was a student at Jesus College, Oxford, from March to June 1764, when he left without graduating; he was subsequently ordered deacon at Bangor the following month, and priest a year later (Jenkins 1959). He held curacies in Llanberis, Llangeinwen, Derwen, and Almwch (where he copied Cwrtmawr MS. 11) before he was appointed vicar of Llanberis in 1788 (ibid.).

Ellis wrote elegies on Evan Evans (see 2.10 and 2.11), and also on his former schoolmaster Edward Richard. However, he is best known for his translations of English works into Welsh, such as *The knowledge and practice of Christianity* by Thomas Wilson (1774), *A short manuel of prayers for common occasions* by James Merrick (1774), and *The History of the Holy Jesus* by William Smith (1776). He is also known for a translation into Welsh of Evan Evans's *The Penitent Shepherd* (ibid). He copied a large number of manuscripts which are now kept in the National Library of Wales, as is the case for the one studied here.

2.12.3 Manuscript description

Cwrtmawr MS. 11 contains Welsh poetry, including *Y Gododdin* and *Hanes Taliesin*; a note on page 493 indicates that it was written by the Rev. David Ellis, curate of Amlwch in June 1777; however, the end-colophon for the copy of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, copied on pages 586-595, gives the date 1785. The manuscript is divided into three parts, with *The Hymn* appearing to the third section, which also contains a copy of the *Gododdin* with 'a transliteration in modern orthography with the lines metrically rearranged.'

The Hymn in this manuscript is written in both Welsh and Anglicised spelling, with each stanza in Welsh immediately transcribed into English below it. The hand is easily legible. The stanzas are separated by ligns on page 586, however from page 587 onwards a blank space is left between each. Furthermore, the Welsh- and English-spelling stanzas are not set apart, but rather written as one long stanza.

Cwrtmawr MS. 11B is another copy from Peniarth MS. 111, just as Panton MS. 33 above (see 2.10); it is, however, a much more accurate copy, as it is a quasi-litteratim one. Between David Ellis's Welsh-spelled copy of the Hymn and John Jones's, there are only 29 words which are not identical, two of which, *ke* line 169 and *shak* line 171, are the spellings of the words before they were corrected in Peniarth MS. 111. There are a few instances where it is unclear whether Ellis decided against the corrections made by John Jones or if it is a misreading, such as line 88 *hys lwk is lo*, where Peniarth MS. 111 has *hys lw↑o↑kes is s↑l↑o* (thus *hys loks is slo* after correction, and *hys lwkes is so* before). Interestingly, line 90, *hym ffrom a knicht*, also had been corrected in Peniarth MS. 111, with 2 written next to *hym* in superscript and 1 next to *ffrom* to indicate that the two words should be transposed: like the copyist in Panton MS. 33, David Ellis ignored this correction, which does seem to be in John Jones's hand and not added by a later scribe. One omission (*i* line 19) may also be noted, as well as an interesting difference which may be a correction of Peniarth MS. 111, i.e. *Mwddyr* in line 33 instead of *Myddyr*. Indeed, the spelling found in Cwrtmawr MS. 11B would suggest a /muðər/ pronunciation, while the one in Peniarth MS. 111 would be /mæðər/ or /miðər/.

One other notable difference is in Cwrtmawr MS. 11B's spelling of 'Jews' and 'Jesus' as *Siws* (line 139) and *Siesws* (line 140) where Peniarth MS. 111 had *Dsivws* and *Dsiesws*. In the latter manuscript, the copyist provided a spelling-equivalent to the /dʒ/ sound, which did not exist in Middle Welsh (as /ʒ/ was not used to begin with, cf. Evans 1964: 7), deploying a <dsi> spelling which would map onto a /dʒ/ sound.

Perhaps the most interesting point of Cwrtmawr MS. 11B is the fact that it is the only manuscript which gives complete versions of both a Welsh-spelled and an anglicised copy of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, the closest equivalent being Sir John Prise's Balliol College Oxford MS. 353, f.63r. David Ellis quite obviously made his translation from his own copy of *The Hymn* with Welsh letter-values; the layout of the poem in Cwrtmawr MS. 11B also indicates that he did not do this all at once, but stanza by stanza, with the lines first copied in Welsh letter-values and then in English. That can also be deduced from the fact that he does not seem to have resorted to leaving blank spaces between each stanza before translating it.

The translation is overall a good one; it does not wholly agree with Dobson's, Garlick's, or Conran's, but seems however to correspond to Ellis's Welsh-spelled version of *The Hymn*. There is only one occurrence where the translation does not correspond exactly to Ellis's Welsh version of the poem: on line 19 of the poem in Cwrtmawr MS. 11B, he has

Yn hefn blyss had this thing, which omits the ‘i’ that was present in Peniarth MS. 111. However, in his translation on line 23, Ellis has *In Heaven bliss I had this thing*, which (a) would show that he wrote his translation while looking at the exemplar, and not his copy, and (b) is a misreading, as ‘i’ in Peniarth MS. 111 stood for the second person singular pronoun ‘ye,’ not the first person singular ‘I.’ Even when Ellis corrected his translation, he replaced ‘I’ with ‘he’—which is thus still a misreading.

Interestingly, just as was the case in Panton MS. 42, the anglicisation of the poem indicates that the copyist did not always understand what he was supposed to read in the Welsh-spelled copy of the poem. In his copy, Ellis underlined the words he did not manage to translate in his anglicised version of the poem: these are line 46 *Assel* (PDE ‘absolve’), line 47 *ffing* (‘accept’²⁹), line 64 *aish* (for ‘ask’), and line 74 *Tabyd* (for ‘to abide’). The forms *assel* (presumably reflecting assimilation of earlier /bs/, cf. Old French *asoldre*), *aish* (cf. e.g. forms such as *asshe*, cited in OED *ask* vb.), *tabyd* (reflecting elision of the vowel in *to*) clearly confused the copyist even though they are all well-attested in earlier varieties of English. The form *ffing*, as Dobson points it out (1955: 115, see footnote 30 below), was similarly archaic, even when Ellis copied Cwrtmawr MS. 11B (cf. OED entry for ‘fang; the most recent record for this verb, apart from a Cornish dialect in 1846, dates from 1482). In the case of Cwrtmawr MS. 11B therefore, as for other anglicised copies, we can see that even a bilingual copyist could not grasp the meaning of some of the words used in the poem, not only with obsolete words such as *ffing*, but also with those for which the Welsh letter-values spellings were chosen by previous copyists: in this case, while the copyist of Peniarth MS. 111 chose to have <y> stand for a diphthong in places, this was not understood by Ellis, who therefore found himself unable to translate ‘tabyd.’ This further proves that there is not one Welsh spelling-system used to copy *The Hymn to the Virgin*, but indeed several: as they are practically unique to each copyist, and thus non-standard both for the Welsh and for the English language, it is not surprising to see some misunderstandings from copy to copy. What would be interesting to know is if the readers of each version of *The Hymn* did encounter the same difficulties as the various copyists when they read them.

²⁹ Dobson (1955: 115) writes: ‘*Ffing* is a form of fang, vb. (< OE *fōn*, *fangan*), developed from the old past tense *feng* by the regular change of ME *ē* to *i* before *ng* (cf. *wing* < *weng*); it is here used as the infinitive stem (cf. l.65) by analogy with *hing*, which in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was both p. t. (< ME *hēng* < OE *hēng*) and infinitive (< ON *hengja*) beside *hang* infin. (< OE *hangian* and *hōn*, *hangen*). The sentence means “Bring it about that we all consent to accept your son’s love, abandoning our sins.”’

Chapter 3: Conclusion

This study of the different manuscripts of *The Hymn to the Virgin* shows that there is no one ‘authoritative’ version of the poem, but that it has been repeatedly revisited to reflect changing socio-cultural developments and imperatives, not least in terms of contemporary developments in literacy, both in English and Welsh. There are also issues of textual relations that have emerged in the discussion above. Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal’s version is lost to us; Dobson’s restored edition is, it may be argued, simply another version of the poem reflecting the editor’s own concerns. This thesis has shown that much remains to be done on the textual relationships of the various versions. What we have now is the confirmation that there is a wide variety of copies, and that though Dobson’s division of the witnesses into two textual groups α and β is useful, there remain significant questions about the way in which the transmission of the text took place.

Another area of special focus in the thesis has been linguistic. Although all the spelling-systems found in the manuscripts share some similarities —the use of <w> for /u/ for instance is widely shared across the copies; the commonly-deployed Welsh <dd> for /ð/, and the regular representation of multiple sounds by <y> -- there are also significant differences. There seems, for instance, to be a difference between North and South Wales copyists, who demonstrate slightly different letter-values in their systems; the influence of the English language on copyists’ usage, too, has clearly left a mark, as does the relationship of copyists to their putative exemplars.

The fact that each copyist should have their own spelling-system for this poem, while still using Welsh letter-values, is interesting. It might show a difference of pronunciation in their accents, or in their comprehension either of the English language or of English accents; they also show that there are different ways to apprehend spelling in a language. In the case of Llywelyn Siôn, the fact that he manages to write with both Welsh and English letter-values a text can show that he was bilingual but also that writing with Welsh letter-values in English did not come naturally to him (it seems to me that it is especially evident with the <ll> spelling, as it does have a particular sound in Welsh). In that respect, each version of *The Hymn* is unique, and reinvents the language of the poem (as well as the poem itself, to some extent). This could be compared to the way Scots is written nowadays, with no fixed spelling-system, but a variety of usages which are not mutually exclusive and share a number of similarities.

Interestingly, the study also shows that, as time passes, copyists' difficulties in reading the poem, i.e. understanding what they are copying, increase. This change may be due to the evolution of the English language, which was affected by not only the Great Vowel Shift but also lexical changes, e.g. *fang*, a form which fell into disuse some decades after the composition of *The Hymn*); however, one must also question whether greater familiarity with the English language by the copyists could not have been a source of confusion. There are numerous instances across all manuscripts (with the exception of the deliberately anglicised versions, obviously) where the spelling of some words is anglicised, seemingly because the copyists of *The Hymn* did not notice what they were doing, even though some correct themselves when they notice such 'misspellings.' Such instances prove that the use of earlier Welsh letter-values is not necessarily easier to understand for later Welsh speakers; and in future research it would be interesting to see what such developments could mean in terms of bilingualism, and how two different languages can interact in the system of individuals.

The research for this thesis, however, has thrown up several questions that I propose to pursue in future work:

(1) The *Llyfr Hir Llanharan*, for instance, contains another, less-known poem written in English and spelled in Welsh, which should be included in any study of comparable texts. Part of this discussion should include research into the other -- surprisingly numerous -- works composed in the same manner, e.g. the poem known as *Sir Richard's Confession*, written by Richard William, a priest from east Glamorgan who flourished between 1590 and 1630 (Garlick 1972: 16), which uses a spelling system very similar to that of *The Hymn*.

(2) There are several printed versions of *The Hymn to the Virgin*, from Hugh Hughes's *Yr Hynafion Cymreig* (1823) to Dylan Foster Evans's *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'i deulu* (2000). A study of these editions would further help to define what the *Hymn* became in its afterlife: has its (intended) readership changed over the years? Are the attitudes of those who printed the *Hymn* comparable or different from those who copied the text in manuscripts? What do these editions reveal to us about *The Hymn's* contemporary reception?

(3) The spelling-system used in *The Hymn* has an obvious linguistic importance, as discussed by Dobson among others, but there are also under-researched implications for the history of poetry. Dobson's views on Ieuan's spelling-system clarifies aspects of his deployment of the *cynghanedd* form; however, work on this poetic device could, as I have suggested in chapter 2 above, be taken further.

(4) Given the poem's subject-matter there is scope for discussing its reception in the light of the history of Welsh Catholic devotion (see Cartwright 2008, and the preliminary study by Conran 1995). Such an investigation would increase and add nuance to our understanding of the origins of Anglo-Welsh literature.

These questions form the starting-point for a proposed doctoral thesis to be undertaken at Glasgow from 2018-19. This future study, for which the current MPhil is a preliminary survey, is in broader terms an attempt to bring a better understanding of the way bilingual speakers engaged with both English and Welsh, something that remains a current concern and (indeed) a source of cultural anxiety. In this context, it is perhaps appropriate to conclude with a quotation from Idris Davies's poem *I was born in Rhymney* (quoted in Garlick 1972: 17):

I lost my native language
For the one the Saxon spake
By going to school by order
For education's sake

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