

Highlighting Hair:
What can be revealed from reading hair in
Medieval Welsh literature



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Abstract

In this thesis I examine in detail the role hair plays in Welsh medieval literature, predominantly in the work of the poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries known as the *Cywyddwyr*, but also in the *Mabinogion*. While the messages are sometimes ambiguous, the exercise of examining them can nevertheless deepen our understanding of the cultural and social context in which the men and women of Wales played out their lives.

In a short Part One, we see how in recent decades many studies have considered the semiotics of the body, but how in medieval scholarship, opportunities have been missed by taking for granted some of the social constructs such as the traditional link between a woman's hair and her beauty, and the dominance of the male figure, omissions which this thesis will seek to redress. To help interpret the signs transmitted by different hairstyles in the period, this first part also outlines some relevant aspects of the value systems of medieval society, in particular the division between men and women, and the conflicting expectations imposed on women by contemporary notions of virtues and ideals.

The main body of the thesis focuses on the texts themselves, and for the first time draws together the plethora of references to the hair of both men and women, offering translations into English of all the extracts examined. Part Two looks in detail at women's hair, considering briefly how a close analysis of the poems to hair might pose a challenge to the traditional distinctions between the *Canu Serch* and *Canu Mawl* categorisation. Part Three considers men's hair, including, of course, their beards. This side-by-side approach is important as it goes part of the way towards bucking the trend of treating men and women in isolation, appreciating that to understand either sex fully, they need to be discussed in the same arena.

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Introduction

‘Hair is political’.¹ Those were the words of the author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in a 2013 interview on a Channel 4 news programme as she discussed her novel *Americanah*.² One of the novel’s central themes is hair, where the important, if sometimes subliminal, messages it carries are explored. The novel had become newsworthy on account of the author’s claim that: ‘if Michelle Obama had natural hair, Barak Obama would not have won... She might be thought to be radical, a Black Panther, difficult’.³ Warming to his interviewee’s argument, the newsreader offered his own personal experience of the significance of hair, if not as a political statement then certainly as a social marker, as he revealed how his mother had suffered from alopecia, and how the depression following her loss of hair had been deeply traumatic for the whole family.⁴ In the case of the journalist’s mother, losing control of something that in the past she herself had been able to mould and shape led to low self-esteem and a sense of loss of self. Conversely, the comments made about Michelle Obama’s hair suggest that gaining control of one’s hair, and being able to change it, twist, plait and straighten it, enables the creation of an identity, and shows that hair can be manipulated into revealing to the world what we want it to know about us, our beliefs and allegiances. If the newscaster’s mother had lost her self-esteem as she lost control of her hair, Mrs Obama controlled her hair and

¹ Channel 4 News, ‘Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: ‘Hair is Political’’ [video], YouTube (uploaded April 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ck2o34DS64>, accessed 22 September 2015.

² C. Adichie, *Americanah* (London, 2013).

³ Det Kongelige Bibliotek, ‘Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: "If Michelle Obama had natural hair, Barack Obama would not have won"' [video], YouTube (uploaded May 2014), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tz8MHG-IIYM>, accessed 22 September 2015.

⁴ Channel 4 News, ‘Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: ‘Hair is Political’’ [video], YouTube (uploaded April 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ck2o34DS64>, accessed 22 September 2015.

gained what many Americans would consider to be the highest-degree of self-esteem: she moulded her hairstyle into a key to the White House and the chambers of the First Lady.⁵

Hair is thus symbolic and, as with all symbolism, its successful interpretation requires a shared understanding of its cultural context. We can decode the hairstyles referred to above for we share a time and place with them, though we will find that the semiotics of hair is not uniquely a twenty-first-century phenomenon. The malleability of hair and the complex and varied symbolism it can carry is manifested in the way it has attracted the attention of numerous interrelated disciplines. The social sciences have been particularly interested in the subject, and anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists have all produced a range of concepts about the role and symbolism of hair. Works by Charles de Berg, Edmund Leach and C. R. Hallpike, amongst others have revealed how hairstyles have an age-old tradition of acting as codes that represent and reflect the values of the society to which they belong.⁶

⁵ For a discussion on the cultural significance of black hair see, for example, M. Craig, *Ain't I a Beauty Queen: Black Women, Beauty and the Politics of Race* (Oxford, 2002); I. Banks, *Hair Matters: Beauty, Power and Black Women's Consciousness* (New York, 2000); K. Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle* (New York, 1994); A. D. Byrd and L. L. Tharps, *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America* (New York, 2001); K. Soper, *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford, 1995).

⁶ See C. Berg, *The Unconscious Significance of Hair* (London, 1951); E. Leach, 'Magical Hair', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 88: 2 (1958), 147–164; C. R. Hallpike, 'Social Hair', *Man*, 4: 2 (1969), 256–264. For its role in mourning rituals see G. A. Wilken, *Ueber das Haaropfer und einige andere Trauergebräuche bei den Völkern Indonesien's* (Amsterdam, 1886). See also E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), 275. For its sexual connotations see, for example, E. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* (London, 1871).

The role gender plays in terms of interpreting hair has been the subject of much work. The mid-eighties saw the publication of Anthony Synnott's 'Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair' where he discussed the hair on women's heads, its length and style, and its importance in defining femininity, while explaining that for men, because of their tendency to lose their head hair, body hair is far more important in defining their masculinity.⁷ The sociologist Rose Weitz explored further the difference between the genders and the symbolism their hair carries in an article that noted how women seek power 'through resisting and accommodating mainstream norms for female hair'.⁸ She argued that women's hair is key to their social position. Seven years later, in 2008, Susan Niditch's work, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man*, was published, dedicated entirely to the importance of hair in the Bible.⁹ Accepting that hair is a carrier of meanings, her main concern was to question *why* this is the case, and insisted that exploring the cultural context is crucial to understanding the symbolism of hair and its importance.¹⁰

⁷ A. Synnott, 'Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 38: 3 (1987), 381–413.

⁸ R. Weitz, 'Women and Their Hair: Seeking Power through Resistance and Accommodation', *Gender Society*, 15: 5 (2001), 667–686.

⁹ S. Niditch, *"My Brother Esau is a Hairy Man": Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 2008). See also S. Olyan, 'What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish and What Do they Signal in Biblical Ritual Contexts?', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 117 (1998), 611–622 and G. Mobley, 'The Wild Man in the Bible and the Ancient Near East', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 116 (1997), 217–233.

¹⁰ Other studies that emphasize the cultural context include: J. L. Watson, 'Living Ghosts: Long-Haired Prostitutes in Colonial Hong Kong' in A. Hildebrandt and B. D. Miller (eds.), *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Cultures*, (New York, 1998), 177–193; P. Olivelle, 'Hair and Society: Social Significance of Hair in South Asian Traditions' in A. Hildebrandt and B. D. Miller (eds.), *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Cultures*, (New York, 1998), 11–49; J. Mageo, 'Hairdos and Don'ts: Hair Symbolism and History in Samoa', *Man*, 29: 2 (1994), 407–432; V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (rev. edn., New York, 1997); F. Herreman, 'Hair: Sculptural Modes of Representation' in R. Sieber and F. Herreman (eds.), *Hair in African Art and Culture* (New York, 2000), 47–57 and R. Sieber, 'Prologue and History' in R. Sieber and F. Herreman (eds.), *Hair in African Art and Culture* (New York, 2000), 15–23.

This is the point Raymond Firth made in his *Symbols: Public and Private*, as his cross-cultural perspective on hair demonstrates how we must be cautious when trying to apply theories about the symbolism of hair to a variety of contexts. He explains how the role hair plays can change not only between cultures but also within the same culture over a period of time.¹¹ P. Hershman echoes this when he noted that ‘hair never means any one particular thing, but rather in various contexts it is used as a means of expressing many different things’.¹²

While there might be contradictions in the various interpretations of the symbolism of hair, there is consensus that it is a powerful transmitter of social signals, that it is often closely associated with gender and sexuality, and that these meanings and associations depend very much on time and place. We can decode the symbolism of hair as presented in the news programme for we are contemporaries, but the further the spatial and temporal distance between the reference and the reader, the more difficult it becomes to understand the symbol and interpret the message.

This claim extends beyond the symbolism of hair to the semiotics of the body in general. Yet, while the interpretative challenge may be daunting, facing up to it reaps benefits, as Amy Eichorn-Mulligan demonstrated in her work on the grotesque body in medieval Irish and Norse literature.¹³ By coining the term ‘corporeal semiology’, and by reading literature as social commentary, she has shown how we can learn much about the period in which texts are composed by

¹¹ R. Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private* (London, 1973), 28.

¹² P. Hershman ‘Hair, Sex and Dirt’, *Man*, 9: 2 (1994), 274–288 (p. 279).

¹³ A. Eichorn-Mulligan, ‘Form and Function of the Grotesque Body in Medieval Irish and Norse Literature’, DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2003.

combing through them to interpret the messages parts of the body carry.¹⁴ They communicate attitudes on gender, religion, culture, politics and the economy:

The body is the structure through which an understanding of oneself and the world is mediated, and when its integrity and unity are challenged and vexed, so too are the relationships between individuals and the broader realms that encompass them.¹⁵

Having been ignored for decades by scholars, the body as a source of such rich social insight has attracted much interest over the past twenty years, and historians and scholars of medieval literature have started the task of interpreting the subject of hair.¹⁶ In order to set the context for Parts Two and Three, where the main substance of the thesis is found with focus on the role of hair in the work of the *Cywyddwyr* in Welsh medieval literature, Part One, in two brief chapters, will consider the work of some of these scholars. Chapter One provides an outline of the main works that have looked at hair in the Middle Ages, while Chapter Two discusses aspects of the customs and beliefs of the period. This, I hope, will help establish what some of the signals sent out by hair would have meant in the society of the day.

¹⁴ Eichorn-Mulligan, 'Form and Function', 1. See also A. Eichorn-Mulligan, 'The Anatomy of Power and the Miracle of Kingship: The Female Body of Sovereignty in a Medieval Irish Kingship Tale', *Speculum* 81: 4 (2006), 1014–54.

¹⁵ Eichorn-Mulligan, 'Form and Function', 10.

¹⁶ See for example C. Bynum, 'Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective', *Critical Inquiry*, 22 (1995), 1–33 and L. Kalof (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Medieval Age* (London, 2014). See also K. L. Walter (ed.), *Reading Skin in Medieval Literature and Culture* (New York, 2013).

Part One: Contexts

Chapter One: Hair, History and Gender

i) Hair, Historians and Scholars of Medieval Literature

Robert Bartlett's extensive article on the symbolic meanings of hair in the Middle Ages demonstrates that there is a good deal of material to 'read' in terms of this part of the body. He offers ample evidence that the treatment of hair in this period demonstrated how people belonged to certain groups within society, how it was used in rituals of mourning and of acceptance, how cutting or growing it would demonstrate control, and perhaps most significantly how it was used as a clear marker for gender.¹⁷ While he explains that the role hair plays in differentiating between genders gives 'basic structures to the symbolic grammar of hair', he sees that it leaves plenty of room for further interpretation.¹⁸ He emphasizes its importance in establishing ethnic groups, and draws upon Irish and Iberian examples of the links between hairstyles and political or religious social groups. He also draws attention to the way hair was used to symbolize the transition between different stages of life. For example, the first cutting of a young boy's hair would often mark the transition from infancy to boyhood, whereby 'an important relationship was established between the boy whose hair was cut and the person who cut it'.¹⁹ (Later in this thesis, I shall explore the Welsh evidence of such rituals.) Haircuts would also denote specific personal beliefs, with many examples of penitents cutting or growing their hair to demonstrate their current state of remorse. Pilgrims and warriors alike adopted certain rituals to signify their status,

¹⁷ R. Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4 (1994), 43–60.

¹⁸ Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings', 44.

¹⁹ Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings', 48.

where cutting their hair would often be a symbol of submission to the deity or to their war band.²⁰

The cutting of hair was especially important in distinguishing gender roles. Long hair was associated with women and shorter hair with men. However, these deeply engrained associations were sometimes challenged, and when that happened, ‘Both the strength of the association and its purely conventional nature are brought out sharply’.²¹ Long hair amongst men in the eleventh and early-twelfth centuries in northern France and England was a point of particularly sore conflict between different social groups, where the ‘cult of luxuriant male hair’ was heavily criticised by the Church.²² Archbishop Anselm refused to give his blessing to men who ‘grew their hair like girls’, and of councils, such as the Council of Westminster, ruling that ‘long-haired men should have their hair cut so that part of the ears is visible and the eyes are not covered’.²³

Exploring the role gender plays in determining the symbolism of hair, and inspired by the interpretation of Mary Magdalene in medieval art, Roberta Milliken explores in depth the link between gender and hair in her study of women’s locks in medieval art and literature.²⁴ In this iconology, she argues that for women, hair was indeed the most important body part, due to its crucial role in defining femininity and, as such, a woman’s worth. She explains that this relationship is a largely

²⁰ Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings’, 52–53.

²¹ Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings’, 50.

²² Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings’, 50.

²³ Eadmer, *Historia novorum*, ed. Martin Rule (Rolls Series, 1884), 48, 143; *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church I (871–1204)*, eds. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C. N. L. Brooke, 2 vols (Oxford, 1981), ii, 677–678.

²⁴ R. Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks: An Iconology of Hair in Medieval Art and Literature* (North Carolina, 2012).

unexplored area, arguing that the importance of the relationship between women and their hair has been taken for granted. Milliken goes as far as stating that interpreting the way this highly communicative part of the body is portrayed is the key to understanding what it meant to be a woman in this period:

Whereas fashion whimsically dictated the appropriate hairiness of men over time – from having beards to being clean-shaven, or from having longer hair in the back to shaving the front – the expectation of women to have long hair seems a constant basic feature of their sex. Moreover, in the ages mentioned, the divisions between the sexes were deemed fundamental and important to the maintenance of social order. It was believed that one needed to be able to distinguish between men and women as well as the various classes to uphold social order and stability.²⁵

She explores the role the androcentric authorities had in shaping the ideas of society about womanhood, and how a woman's hair is inextricably linked to both her femininity and sexuality. Furthermore, she demonstrates how the artists and authors of the period use this body part to manipulate their audiences' estimations of the female figures portrayed, and she elaborates on the complicated and often confusing messages society directed towards women (referred to in more detail in the forthcoming discussion of the Virgin Mary and other pious women).²⁶ The woman needed to strike the correct balance between beauty, modesty and humility.²⁷

Other signals imparted through hair have been found in the way it features in the punishments administered to women, as they are often depicted being pulled or tied up by their hair for wrongdoing. Attacking the hair would be a way of restraining a woman's sexuality, and showing a woman without her hair, the clearest marker of her femininity, would be a way of depicting her as a worthless human being, cast out of society.

²⁵ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 10.

²⁶ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 4.

²⁷ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 4–5.

ii) Gender in Medieval Wales

The important associations between hair and gender have been emphasized by both Bartlett and Milliken, and since the early seventies, it seems that gender-based studies focusing on the medieval period were designed as a corrective to earlier androcentric viewpoints and thus focused on the portrayal of women. This decade saw the publication of the seminal volume *Medieval Women* by Eileen Power, which was followed in the eighties and nineties by a number of other important studies such as *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages* by Shulamith Shahar; *The Lady in the Tower: Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women* by Diane Bornstein; *Medieval English Prose for Women*, a collection of essays edited by Bella Millet and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne; and *Virgin Lives and Holy Death*, edited by Glenn Burgess and Wogan-Browne.²⁸ Women and the patronage system have been explored, and research has also been conducted into the works of literature by women in the period.²⁹ Indeed, the scholarly work on the role of women in the European literature of the Middle Ages is substantial.

In the works on the literary texts of the period that throw light specifically on women in medieval Wales, we find that they too have been concerned with

²⁸ E. Power, *Medieval Women*, ed. M. M. Postman (Cambridge, 1975); S. Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, trans. C. Galai (rev. edn., London, 2003); D. Bornstein, *The Lady in the Tower: Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women* (Hamden, 1983); B. Millet and J. Wogan-Browne (eds.), *Medieval English Prose for Women* (Oxford, 1990). See also H. Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England, 450–1500* (London, 1995), 240.

²⁹ See, for example, J. McCash (ed.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (London, 1996). On literary works by women see, for example, P. Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (d. 203) to Marguerite Porete (d. 1310)* (Cambridge, 1984); A. Blamires et al. (eds.), *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford, 1992).

correcting androcentric viewpoints.³⁰ We can note for example, Sioned Davies' valuable article 'Y Ferch yng Nghymru yn yr Oesoedd Canol'.³¹ Morfydd Owen and Dafydd Jenkins concentrate on women from a legal angle in *The Welsh Law of Women*, while the education and literacy of women is the main focus of Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan's work, 'More written about than writing? Welsh women and the written word' which spans the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.³² Jane Cartwright's study of the female saints, the Virgin Mary and nuns in Wales deliberately sets about 'cywiro'r darlun unlllygeidiog a geir o'r gymdeithas ganoloesol Gymreig, gan roi sylw arbennig i ferched' (*to correct the biased image of medieval Welsh society, by giving special attention to women*).³³ In addition to these works, Elisa Moras examined what was deemed to be the 'appropriate' behaviour of women in terms of their conversational skills and generosity, whilst Marged Haycock explored the gender question by looking at the imagery used in the poems to women.³⁴ Of particular interest to this study are the examples she cites of sewing and weaving and how these are used to describe women's hair.³⁵ Two sections in Alaw Mai

³⁰ Early examples of scholars studying women within the literature of the period are the works of T. Gwyn Jones, *Rhieingerddi'r Gogynfeirdd* (Dinbych, 1925), and fifty years later, J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Cerddi'r Gogynfeirdd i Wragedd a Merched', *Llên Cymru*, 13 (1975), 3–112.

³¹ S. Davies, 'Y Ferch yng Nghymru yn yr Oesoedd Canol' in G. H. Jenkins (ed.), *Cenedl IX: Ysgrifau ar Hanes Cymru* (Llandysul, 1994), 3–31. See also A. Conran, 'The Lack of the Feminine', *The New Welsh Review*, 17 (1992), 28–31.

³² M. E. Owen and D. Jenkins (eds.), *The Welsh Law of Women* (Cardiff, 1980) and C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'More written about than writing? Welsh women and the written word' in H. Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge, 1998), 149–165.

³³ J. Cartwright, *Y Forwyn Fair, Santesau a Lleianod* (Cardiff, 1999), 3. See also J. Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, 2008).

Translations are my own unless where stated otherwise.

³⁴ E. Moras, "'Mabddysg oedd iddi rhoddi yn rhwydd": Nawdd Barddol gan Wragedd yn yr Oesoedd Canol', *Llên Cymru*, 28 (2005), 26–52 and "'Nid di-boen na'm atebud, nid hawdd ymadrawdd â mud": Cwynion Beirdd Llys am Ferched', *Llên Cymru*, 30 (2007), 17–43. See also M. Haycock, "'Defnydd hyd Ddydd Brawd': Rhai Agweddau ar y Ferch ym Marddoniaeth yr Oesoedd Canol' in G. H. Jenkins (ed.), *Cymru a'r Cymry 2000 Trafodion Cynhadledd Milflwyddiant Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol Cymru* (Llandysul, 2001), 41–70.

³⁵ Haycock, 'Defnydd hyd Ddydd Brawd', 52.

Jones's PhD thesis expand on these ideas by discussing clothes and accessories in the period c.700–c.1600 and one chapter focuses entirely on head-gear.³⁶ Jones uses literature to trace the fashion trends of the period and thus, to some extent, society's attitude towards women. She develops her work on the interpretation of the headdress in an article in *Dwned*, where she focuses on the use of the imagery of the peacock, suggesting that this is a metaphor for a woman's pride.³⁷

Turning to the research that has specifically studied the interpretations of the body in medieval Welsh literature (of both men and women), we find that there is work to be done to develop the field. The late eighties saw Sioned Davies's 'Pryd a Gwedd yn y Mabinogion', which gave a comprehensive overview of the kind of descriptions in the texts of this corpus.³⁸ Fifteen years later, the body and hair were touched upon in Fiona Winward's thesis 'Colour Terms', which explores the semantics of colours in the *Mabinogion*, the Early Welsh Poetry and the work of the Gogynfeirdd. Like Sioned Davies, she notes, for example, how yellow is a symbol for beauty, and grey/white (*gwynllwyd*) is connected to age and wisdom, and notes how a 'colour term' in the *Mabinogion* is attached to characters of particular importance.³⁹ Over ten years after Winward's thesis, focus again turned towards the body with Lowri Morgans's PhD thesis considering the importance of body

³⁶ A. M. Jones, 'Gwisgoedd ac Ategolion yn Llenyddiaeth yr Oesoedd Canol c. 700–c. 1600'. PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2007, 236–250.

³⁷ A. M. Edwards (née Jones), 'Pen un wisg â'r paun o'r ne!': Penwisgoedd Merched yn y Canu Serch', *Dwned*, 19 (2013), 39–58.

³⁸ S. Davies, 'Pryd a Gwedd yn y Mabinogion' in J. E. Caerwyn Williams (ed.), *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*, 14 (Dinbych, 1988), 115–133. See also S. Davies, *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (Llandysul, 1993), 36–37 and the hair-colour chart in S. Davies, *Crefft y Cyfarwydd: Astudiaeth o Dechnegau Naratif yn y Mabinogion* (Cardiff, 1995), 169, although this is not comprehensive.

³⁹ F. Winward, 'Colour terms in early Welsh literature', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2003, 37–40. R. L. Valente has also studied the interpretations of gender in the fourth branch of the *Mabinogi*, see R. L. Valente 'Gwydion ac Aranrhod: Crossing the Borders of Gender in *Math*', *BBCS*, 35 (1988), 1–9.

language in Welsh medieval literature between c.700–c.1500.⁴⁰ Dylan Foster Evans in a valuable article examined the interpretation of the beard in the *cywyddau* (which shall be discussed in more detail later), noting some symbolic aspects of this bodily part and discussing some of the poems that take it as their very subject.⁴¹

In general, however, and in terms of the study of the Welsh material that deals with masculinity, we find that this is a field in need of further work, as the unquestioning acceptance of the androcentricity of the medieval period (in Wales as elsewhere) has tended to mean that though the focus of study has been men, it has omitted to consider their masculinity. This is a point Krista Kapphahn makes in her work on the constructions of gender and the portrayal of masculinity in the early heroic poetry, the four branches and *Culhwch ac Olwen*.⁴² In this respect, her work on the early poetry and her article focusing on gendered ideals in Guto'r Glyn's work are amongst a very small group of publications to have considered aspects of the male sex in the analysis of Welsh poetry.⁴³ Kapphahn makes a further valid point when she notes how in order to understand the role of men and women, they need to be considered side by side:

As medieval woman was considered a defective man, not quite fully formed into the ultimate male potential, so have women in literature either been studied and measured against the baseline of the genderless masculine... Meanwhile men have been considered within the field of gender history not

⁴⁰ L. Morgans, 'Ymdriniaeth ag ystum ac ymddygiad yn y Gymru ganoloesol c.700 – c.1500', PhD thesis, Aberystwyth University, 2014. See also L. Morgans, 'Iaith y corff a'r Mabinogion: Rhagolwg', *Dwned*, 18 (2012), 11–31.

⁴¹ D. Foster Evans, 'Y Bardd a'i Farf: Y Traddodiad Barfol', *Dwned*, 2 (1996), 11–29.

⁴² K. Kapphahn, 'Constructions of Gender in Medieval Welsh Literature', MA dissertation, Aberystwyth University, 2009.

⁴³ Another two examples of this rare breed is the pioneering work on masculinity and the Welsh texts undertaken by Kirstie Siân Chandler in her doctoral thesis, see K. Chandler, 'Masculinity and Medieval Welsh literature', PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2004 and E. Moras, 'Gwrywod, gwroldeb a gwrhydri yn y canu cynnar', *Llenyddiaeth Mewn Theori*, 2 (2007), 35–85. See also P. H. Cullum and K. J. Lewis (eds.), *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 2004).

merely for themselves, but as the dominant segment of society, despite the disparities of time, class, and vocation. As men and women have lived beside each other for the entire span of human existence, notions of masculine and feminine really must be considered together in order to be fully understood.⁴⁴

This note of caution should be heeded and is one reason why Parts Two and Three will examine the references in Welsh medieval literature to the hair of both men and women.

In the seminal works on the period, while women may be absent to a great extent, men are not necessarily present ‘as men’. The studies seem to take for granted that men should be the authors, sponsors and subject matter. In addition to Dafydd Johnston’s invaluable *Llên yr Uchelwyr* and Bleddyn Owen Huws’ work on the *Canu Gofyn a Diolch*, in more recent years, volumes have started to appear on the works of some of the individual male poets too.⁴⁵ Made possible through the work of The Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in collecting and editing the texts as part of the *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* project, many studies on the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym, and more recently on Guto’r Glyn, have seen the light of day.⁴⁶ As interesting and valuable as these may be, Kapphahn’s comment remains pertinent, and if more needs to be done in order to gain a better understanding of women in the texts, the same can be said of the role of men and the projection of their masculinity. With the carefully edited texts now readily available, scholars of medieval Welsh literature may seize the opportunity to examine them with new lenses, including the gender lens, to find what they can tell us about aspects of the old days. Hair, an important marker for both men and

⁴⁴ Kapphahn, ‘Constructions of Gender’, 2.

⁴⁵ *LIU* and B. O. Huws, *Y Canu Gofyn a Diolch c.1350–c.1630* (Cardiff, 1998).

⁴⁶ See *CDG* and ‘*Gwalch Cywyddau Gwŷr*’.

women, is an ideal body part to study as we start to fill the gaps and broaden our understanding of gender in the period.

This thesis thus builds on correcting the corrective, redressing the balance by incorporating a full discussion of both men and women's hair, which allows us to make illuminating comparisons between the genders. As regards women (but not of course men), we are also able to make fruitful comparisons between the treatment of hair in the *Canu Serch* (*love genre*) and *Canu Mawl* (*praise genre*).⁴⁷ The former genre is considered to be less 'formal' whilst the latter is taken to consist of a type of poetry that was commissioned. The scholars who have examined women in the corpus have done so almost exclusively in the light of the *Canu Serch*, thus missing important clues that can be gleaned from a consideration of the poems as belonging to the *Canu Mawl*. In Part Two, this study, by looking at the interpretation of hair, will briefly re-examine these genres.

⁴⁷ I will refer to these genres as *Canu Serch* and *Canu Mawl* throughout this thesis.

Chapter Two:

The Context in Medieval Christianity

As already noted, scholars of the social sciences and medieval literature and history who have taken an interest in hair have drawn attention to the importance of understanding the context in order to decipher the social codes and meanings this bodily part carries. This thesis has already explained how people read and interpret symbols through the lens provided to them by their society and its culture, and as outsiders we must try to pick up clues that help us understand this code. In order to contextualise the references to hair in the literature of the Middle Ages, some of the important ways in which the body and hair were viewed in medieval times shall now be explored, starting with the ideas about how the human body was created.

i) The Body, Hair and The Myth of Creation

The way in which the body was linked to the microcosmic model of the universe and its role in the myths of creation was of particular interest in the period.⁴⁸ In these myths, hair finds its macrocosmic counterpart in plants such as grass and trees. The morphological resemblance between hair and grass no doubt invites this comparison.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the positioning of hair on top of the body, just as plants and trees are found on the surface of the earth, is another resemblance, as is their

⁴⁸ M. Camille, 'The Image and the Self: Unwriting Late Medieval Bodies', in S. Kay and M. Rubin (eds.), *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester, 1994), 62–99 (p. 67).

⁴⁹ The addition of the nerves and veins to this homology can similarly be explained by this physical resemblance. See for example, *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*: 'His veins and hair from the grass of the earth' in *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, trans. W. R. Morfill (n.pl., 2014), 26. There is also a parallel in *Cath Maige Muccrama*, in which Cormac mac Airt makes a wise judgment about 'one shearing for another', making an analogy between wool and woad, see *The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt*, ed. and trans. T. Ó Cathasaigh (Dublin, 1977), p. 122, lines 91–94, translation p. 126.

continuous growth. The fact that hair can be cut and is more malleable deepens the meaning of this cosmic partnership.⁵⁰ Ovid's description of the transformation of Atlas in *Metamorphoses* is one example where we see this important homology:

Quantus erat, mons factus Atlas: nam barba comaeque
in silvas abeunt, iuga sunt umerique manusque,
quod caput ante fuit, summo est in monte cacumen,
ossa lapis fiunt... [4.657–660]⁵¹

The association between hair, plants and growth meant that hair became linked with fertility. This idea continued throughout the medieval period, as the popular *Sidrak and Bokkus* question-and-answer work demonstrates. Here the text connects parts of the body to corresponding planets. In this question-and-answer text the moon is associated with particular parts of the body.⁵² Since antiquity, this important satellite has been closely associated with conception, birth and life.⁵³ By linking the moon to hair and nails, (both parts of the body that increase and decrease, like the moon's waxing and waning), and through the association of this

⁵⁰ See B. Lincoln, 'The Treatment of Hair and Fingernails among the Indo-Europeans', *History of Religions*, 16: 4 (1977), 351–362 (pp. 358–359).

⁵¹ P. Ovidi Nasonis, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R. J. Tarrant, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford, 2004), p. 118. On the idea of a specific 'Celtic' myth, Pronisias Mac Cana echoed the findings of other scholars such as Alwyn and Brinley Rees when he said: 'The Celts have left no native myth of the world's creation, although it would be strange if they lacked one': See P. Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology* (London, 1970), 57; See also Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees: 'Celtic tradition has preserved no native story of the creation of the world and man' in A. Rees and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London 1961), 95. Sayers however challenges this, when he explains that in the Irish material, traces of such a myth can be found in the passages dealing with Fergus's oath. See W. Sayers, 'Fergus and the Cosmogonic Sword', *History of Religions*, 25: 1 (1985), 30–56 (p. 35) and J. Carey, 'Time, Space and the Otherworld', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 7 (1987), 1–27. See also J. Carey 'A British Myth of Origins?', *Journal of the History of Religions*, 31 (1991), 24–37 and J. Carey, *The Irish National Origin-Legend: Synthetic Pseudohistory* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁵² Kalof, *A Cultural History*, 100.

⁵³ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1976), 260.

satellite to the menstrual cycle along with the *hair : grass* homology, we can begin to see how hair was seen as a symbol for fertility.⁵⁴

ii) Body and Soul: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Another strong belief that was prevalent during the Middle Ages was that external appearances reflected inner virtues or lack of them. Medieval society saw the body as keeper of the soul, and throughout the Middle Ages questions and concerns about the nature of the relationship between these two aspects of human existence remained of great interest. In Welsh literature, we frequently see this as a theme in the religious poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd*, and subsequently in the works of the *Cywyddwyr*, so much so that a sub-genre of poetry dedicated to the dialogue between body and soul emerges.⁵⁵ This writing tends to focus on the body as decaying matter in contrast to the everlasting soul. In lengthy passages asking God for the salvation of the souls of both the poets and their patrons, the recovery of the body becomes a dominant theme, and a cry for long hair becomes a metaphor for a plea for long life (discussed further in Part Three).

Another prevalent body of work developed as a result of the growing popularity of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Wales, and many poets turned to Mary to ask for the salvation of their souls before Judgment Day.⁵⁶ Her cult was omnipresent in Wales during the Middle Ages and flourished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Churches and holy wells dedicated to her far outnumbered those to other saints with at least 143 churches and chapels honouring the Virgin

⁵⁴ Astrologically the moon is the planet of inconstancy and mutability.

⁵⁵ This is called 'ymddiddan/dadl y corff a'r enaid' (*the dialogue/debate of the body and the soul*): *LIU*, 440–441.

⁵⁶ See for example *GIG*, no. XXVII.111–122. Translation in *IGP*, no. 27. 111–122.

⁵⁷ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 8–66.

Mary's name.⁵⁸ Jane Cartwright explains that the fifteenth century saw the 'Golden Age' of Marian poetry in Welsh coinciding with the flourishing of poetry in general during this period. Not only did the poets focus on Mary's role as intercessor as already mentioned, they also paid attention to her life with Anna and Joachim, her relationship with Joseph, her perpetual virginity, the birth of her son, her death and assumption into heaven. A prominent feature of this poetry is the portrayal of the Virgin as the 'antithesis of Eve'.⁵⁹ Her perpetual virginity is praised by the poets and we find that they constantly exalt this distinctive quality.⁶⁰ Dafydd Nanmor, for example, describes her as 'Gorav oedd o'r gwerryddon' (*she was the best of the virgins*) and Iorwerth Fynglwyd also sings that she was 'feichiog heb ddim afiechyd' (*pregnant without sinfulness*).⁶¹ These ideas consistently expressed by the medieval society are things ordinary women could never achieve, for as Caelius Sedulius puts it, she was 'alone of all her sex'.⁶²

Despite her uniquely miraculous attributes, the Welsh poets went to some lengths to describe the Virgin as experiencing the same sensations and emotions as ordinary women (to enable women to relate to the Virgin, presumably her humanity

⁵⁸ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 9; G. Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff, 1976), 481; A. W. Wade-Evans 'Parochiale Wallicanum', *Y Cymmrodor*, 22 (1976), 22–124. On one of those churches, see C. James, 'Pen-rhys: Mecca'r Genedl', in H. T. Edwards (ed.), *Cwm Rhondda* (Llandysul, 1995), 27–71.

⁵⁹ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 11. See for example *GIG*, no. XXXI. 13–18. Translation in *IGP*, no. 31. 13–18

⁶⁰ Her virginity is amongst the attributes that she should be praised for according to *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, see. G. J. Williams and E. J. Jones (eds.), *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid* (Cardiff 1934), 15.

⁶¹ *PWDN*, no. 92; Iorwerth Fynglwyd, *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, ed. H. L. Jones and E. I. Rowlands (Cardiff, 1975), 96. Gwilym Tew also uses the same expression, see A. E. Jones, 'Gwilym Tew: Astudiaeth Destunol a Chymharol o'i Lawysgrif Peniarth 51, ynghyd ag Ymdriniaeth â'i Farddoniaeth', PhD thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1980), 448. It is also remarked upon that she had 'diwair waed' (*chaste blood*) see Gruffudd ap Maredudd, *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd II: Y Canu Crefyddol*, ed. B. J. Lewis, (Aberystwyth, 2005), no. 10. 41.

⁶² C. Sedulius, 'Pascal's Carmine Libri', II, line 70, *Opera Omnia* (Vienna, 1885).

needed to be expressed). Ieuan Deulwyn amongst other poets demonstrates this when he describes her as a breastfeeding mother:

Knawd oedd kynn y dioddef
os o gnawd y sugna ef
mair onn a vagai mhrynnwr
gwedi gael heb gyd a gwr.⁶³

(*He was flesh before the Passion / if from flesh he suckled / Mary nursed my Redeemer / having had him without intercourse with a man.*)

Furthermore, many of her ‘miracles’ in the Welsh translation of the *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (‘Gwyrtheu e Wynvuydedic Veir’) are associated with a similar theme, as the Virgin comes to the assistance of pregnant women.⁶⁴ This both elevates the role of the mother and suggests that the Virgin is a woman who can sympathize with ordinary people. She was also understood to be a ‘brenhines fro’ (*regional queen*), a particularly important concept in Wales where much emphasis was placed on regional saints.⁶⁵ Jane Cartwright explains the importance of the combination of being both locally and nationally praiseworthy:

This particularly potent combination ensured immense popularity in a country which placed particular importance on its local saints, of which there were many... in Wales sanctity was locally conferred. Mary’s humanity, her eagerness to intercede on behalf of all sinners, meant that she was particularly amenable and her local shrines, holy wells and images, helped reinforce the belief that Mary cared for ordinary folk.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ieuan Deulwyn, *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, ed. I. Williams (Bangor: Jarvis & Foster, 1909), no. LI. 10–12. According to medieval medical theory, milk was thought to derive from blood. Christ’s blood thus comes from the flesh fed on Mary’s milk/blood, he therefore derives his humanity from her alone. On this theory, see, for example, Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 47.

⁶⁴ L. H. Angell, ‘Gwyrtheu e Wynvuydedic Veir: Astudiaeth Gymharol ohonynt fel y’u ceir hwynt yn Llawysgrifau Peniarth 14, Peniarth 5 a Llanstephan 27’, MA thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1938, 49–50. See also J. Cartwright, *Feminine Spirituality and Sanctity*, 30–33.

⁶⁵ See E. W. O. Davies, ‘Testun Beirniadol o Waith Hywel Rheinallt ynghyd â Rhagymadrodd, Nodiadau a Geirfa’, MA thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1967, 2.

⁶⁶ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 66. Iolo Goch expresses this by saying ‘llaw Fair dros bob llafurwr’ (*the hand of Mary over every ploughman*). See *GIG*, no. XXVIII. 82 (Translation in *IGP*, 28. 82). Gwilym Tew also refers to a group of labourers who had visited the shrine at Pen-rhys. See Jones, ‘Gwilym Tew’, 434. See also G. J.

What is of particular interest to this study is the way in which the Virgin is continuously praised for her perfection and her beauty and the role her hair plays in the way she is portrayed. A Middle Welsh account of Mary is to be found in the Peniarth manuscript 5 (part of the White Book of Rhydderch) which demonstrates how Welsh women (and men) would have seen the Virgin as an emblem of physical perfection:

Na allei neb ryw dyn marvavl datgannv o'e tauot y decket. Tegach oed noc a vu o eiry na metal nac aryant nac eur yn echtwynnygu o eglurder diruaur.⁶⁷

*(Its beauty no mortal man could describe with his tongue. It was more beautiful than if it were snow or metal or silver or gold shining with intense brilliance.)*⁶⁸

Yet, although Mary's overall beauty is constantly stressed, Cartwright notes that 'her physical appearance is in fact rarely described in any detail'.⁶⁹ A poem by Hywel Dafi is an exception to this, where he praises the Virgin from head to toe, in a style similar to that of the love poems to lay women, which we shall discuss in Part Two.⁷⁰ Thirty-six lines are dedicated to this praise (lines 9–44), with a great deal of attention paid to her flowing and golden hair (lines 11–18).⁷¹ As gold is a dominant theme throughout, scholars have been led to believe that this was perhaps a poet praising a statue of the Virgin,⁷² and we should note that Hywel Dafi is also

Williams's appendix to T. Charles-Edwards, 'Pen-rhys: Y Cefndir Hanesyddol: 1179–1538', *Efrydiau Catholig*, 5 (1951), 24–45.

⁶⁷ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Transitus Beatae Mariae a Thestunau Cyffelyb', *BBCS*, 18 (1959), 131–157 (p.150).

⁶⁸ Translation in Cartwright, *Feminine Spirituality and Sanctity*, 27.

⁶⁹ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 44.

⁷⁰ See the notes in Hywel Dafi, *Gwaith Hywel Dafi*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake, 2 vols (Aberystwyth, 2015), ii, no. 96 (pp. 644–646).

⁷¹ See *Gwaith Hywel Dafi*, no. 96.

⁷² Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 45; E. I. Rowlands, 'Canu Serch 1450–1525', *BBCS*, 31 (1984), 31–47 and E. I. Rowlands, 'Religious Poetry in Late Medieval Wales', *BBCS*, 30 (1982–3), 1–19 (p. 8). For another poem in the genre of the Canu Serch

the author of a blasphemous reference to a statue of the Virgin in another poem where he notes:

Disgyn rhwng ei dwy esgair,
Addoli fyth i'r ddelw Fair.⁷³

(*Coming down between her legs / I would worship forever Mary's image.*)⁷⁴

Two further poems survive that praise another statue of the Virgin, this time in the Lady Chapel at St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire, one by Hywel Swrdwal and another by Dafydd Nanmor. But of significance to this thesis is the fact that the only detailed description of the statue itself in both instances is of the thin eyebrows and wealth of fine hair.⁷⁵

Gilbert Ruddock, in his article looking at the interpretations of women's beauty in the love poetry of the fifteenth century, argues that the imagery associated to the Virgin Mary influenced the way in which beauty was expressed in the *Canu Serch*, and we shall explore these images in Part Two where we examine in detail the portrayal of women's hair.⁷⁶ But for now, it is important to note that the long, flowing hair so often associated with Mary became symbolic of the virginal and by extension the unmarried (and thus available) woman. By contrast, married women

see Llawdden's poem to the Virgin Mary in Llawdden, *Gwaith Llawdden*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2006), no. 2.

⁷³ *Gwaith Hywel Dafydd*, ii, no. 106. 38–39.

⁷⁴ Translation in *Canu Maswedd yr Oesoedd Canol: Medieval Welsh Erotic Poetry*, ed. D. Johnston (rev. edn., Bridgend, 1998), no. 10. 37–38. Welsh poets often sing about their desire to corrupt the nun's virginity, often referring to her black dress and veil. See H. Fulton, 'Medieval Welsh Poems to Nuns', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 21 (1991), 87–112. Dafydd ap Gwilym, Dafydd ab Edmwnd and Hywel ap Dafydd ab Ieuan ap Rhys are amongst the poets who sing to nuns.

⁷⁵ Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'i Deulu*, ed. D. Foster Evans (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2000) no. 22. 62. Dafydd Nanmor's reference is in his poem *Gwallt Llio*, discussed in Part Two. See *PWYN*, no. XXIX. 18.

⁷⁶ G. Ruddock, 'Rhai Agweddau ar Gywyddau Serch y Bymthegfed Ganrif', in J. Rowlands (ed.), *Dafydd ap Gwilym a Chanu Serch yr Oesoedd Canol* (Cardiff, 1975), 95–119 (pp. 98–102).

and nuns would bind their hair to signal their social status and their unavailability. However, towards the end of the next section of this chapter, we will pause to consider what is to be made of the fact that the Virgin Mary, this ultimate example of the ‘good’ woman is portrayed with her locks in sight – long, blonde and flowing – while the very same imagery is used in the portrayal of ‘bad’ women such as Eve, Venus, mermaids and the personifications of Lust.⁷⁷

iii) The Hair of the Virgin Mary and other ‘Good’ Women

The portrayal of the Virgin with her hair flowing in the Welsh poetry is consistent with other interpretations of the Virgin within the wider medieval community.⁷⁸

This concept is studied in depth by Roberta Milliken in a chapter in her *Ambiguous Locks* where she examines the difference in the interpretations of the Virgin with her blue mantle (her ‘abiding signature’) and the imagery of the Virgin with her locks partially or fully on display.⁷⁹ Milliken noticed that those moments in which she is portrayed with her long, blonde, shiny tresses are often found in portraits of the assumption, the nativity and those of the mother and child. Portraying Mary with long, flowing hair at these key moments signals and reinforces the idea that displaying hair shows Mary’s fertility in addition to her virginity.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Milliken argues that emphasizing her beauty and portraying her as bareheaded was perhaps due to the ‘social currents of the times that strove to stress Mary’s humanity’.⁸¹

⁷⁷ See Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 89–159.

⁷⁸ D. J. Jones (Gwenallt), ‘Cerddi’r Saint a’r Bucheddau Cyfatebol’, MA thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1929, 39.

⁷⁹ Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 291.

⁸⁰ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 177.

⁸¹ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 177.

This was also true in terms of the other female saints where their humanity seems to be hinted at by making them beautiful. Again, we find that their long, blonde hair is inextricably connected to that quality. Cartwright argues that in Wales, this was because the saints needed to appeal to lay women as opposed to being role models for nuns. Although they were strongly encouraged to be devout Christians, it seems that Welsh women were not directed towards a life in the convent. There were only three long-standing establishments for women in Wales and they were exceptionally poor. Furthermore, women were needed as bearers of heirs:

It can be postulated that Welsh women were generally encouraged to worship within the confines of marriage, rather than in a community of religious females. Women of the upper echelons of society appear to have been too important in the political and economic life of Wales to be allowed to retire to a convent, since they were needed to form valuable marital alliances.⁸²

The importance of women as mothers is endorsed when we learn that one of the most popular female saints in Wales had also given birth, though the circumstances of her becoming pregnant were somewhat complicated. St Non's conception of St David, the patron saint of Wales, was the result of rape, and Thomas Charles-Edwards explains that '[w]hen she was raped, it was the only sexual contact of her life. In terms of voluntary action she remained a virgin.'⁸³ He notes that we need to turn to the patristic background of Jerome and Augustine's ideas about sexuality to understand this story:

Since sexual passion was critical, Jerome could argue that a virgin forced into intercourse lost physical virginity but not its moral essence; and the argument mattered, since if the physical change were taken as being crucial,

⁸² Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 207. See also K. J. Lewis, 'Model girls? Virgin-Martyrs and the Training of Young Medieval Women in Late Medieval England', in K. J. Lewis *et al.* (eds.), *Young Medieval Women* (Stroud, 1999), 25–46.

⁸³ T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Briton 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), 622.

the raped woman would lose her honour – and in most Mediterranean societies the loss of sexual honour destroyed a woman’s social standing.... but Nonnita (Non is simply *nonna* ‘nun’ made into a name, while Nonnita is derived from *nonna*) was holy throughout her life; no unregulated passion of hers transmitted original sin to her son.⁸⁴

This is how the *Cywyddwyr* can often praise Non’s virginity, while at the same time, her fertility. Dafydd Llwyd for example sings of Non as ‘diwair feichiog’ (*pregnant and chaste*), reminiscent of the descriptions of the Virgin Mary, and it is not surprising that the married noblewomen who are subjects of the Canu Mawl of the *Cywyddwyr* are thus compared to St Non more than any other except the Virgin Mary, as they can be used to emphasize the importance of motherhood in medieval Welsh society.⁸⁵ Lewys Glyn Cothi, for example, sings in the elegy to Gwenllïan, widow of Dafydd ap Tomos of Blaen Tren, Llanybydder, and mother to a son called Rhys, that she is united with Non after death:

i’r nef ac i gôr Non
ac i radd y gweryddon⁸⁶

(*to heaven and to Non’s choir / and to the rank of the virgins*)

By the fourteenth century other internationally popular saints, such as Mary Magdalene and Catherine of Alexandria were also fashionable in Wales and with both these saints, the portrayal of their hair is of importance. Mary Magdalene is often singled out for her flowing, long, blonde hair. It is never covered and plays a significant role in her story from prostitute to penitent. In Wales, her story is recalled in *Buched Meir Vadlen* and we know of her popularity due to the fact that thirteen churches are dedicated to her, four of these with medieval foundations.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 622.

⁸⁵ Cartwright notes that Lewys alone invokes Non forty-four times in his poetry, see Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 121.

⁸⁶ See *GLGC*, no. 44. 51–52.

⁸⁷ Those at Kenfig, Goldcliff, Cerrigydrudion and Pembroke. See Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 142.

Medieval Welsh texts focus on her role as the repentant sinner, and noblewomen are directly compared to her in association with hospitality and in particular, healing.⁸⁸

In Part Two, we shall find how she is invoked in poems that praise women's hair.

As with the representations of Mary Magdalene, St Catherine is also invoked in the poetry to noblewomen, where we find poets referring to her *vitae* and compare the oil flowing from her breasts to the copious amounts of drink provided by the noblewomen at their courts.⁸⁹ The many surviving visual representations of St Catherine in Wales, dating from the late fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, are a testimony to her popularity. They often depict her holding a sword and a wheel and, interestingly for this current discussion, her hair is constantly portrayed as long and flowing. One such example is the image found at the church of St Teilo, now at the Museum of Welsh Life in St Fagans. She is depicted as having a high forehead and long flowing hair, with no veil or wimple.⁹⁰ She wears a mantle over her pink dress with flared sleeves, suggesting a late fourteenth-century date.⁹¹ In a fifteenth-century stained-glass window at St Stephen's church in Old Radnor, we again find a fair-haired Catherine, with her locks flowing, free of a veil or a wimple, crowned as

⁸⁸ See, for example, Jones, 'Buchedd Mair Fadlen', 328. For a discussion on these 'healing poems' see B. O. Huws, 'Llawer dyn... / Â chywydd a iachawyd': Guto'r Glyn yr iachawr' in D. Foster Evans *et al.*, *Cywyddau Gwŷr: Ysgrifau ar Guto'r Glyn a Chymru'r Bymthegfed Ganrif*, 283–303. For an example, see gutorglyn.net, no. 81. 21–24. Mary Magdalene's association with healing is found outside the poetry too as can be seen on a fourteenth-century wall painting on the north wall of the chancel at Llantwit Major, and a leper hospital founded by Gilbert Marshal in 1236 in Tenby is also said to be dedicated to Mary Magdalene. On this, see Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 145.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Lewys Glyn Cothi's comparison between Siwan, Gwilym ap Gwallter's wife and St Catherine in *GLGC*, no. 25. 35–40, and also his poem asking for a bed covering from Elin daughter of Llywelyn in *GLGC*, no. 227. 13–14. *GLGC*, no. 234. 53 and Lewys Môn in an elegy to Catrin daughter of Morgan also draw this comparison, see Lewys Môn, *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, ed. E. I. Rowlands (Cardiff, 1975), no. XXXIX. 49–50.

⁹⁰ See Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, plate 21.

⁹¹ Cartwright notes that A. J. Parkinson has argued that the details of the eyes point towards a slightly later date. See Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 153 and A. J. Parkinson, 'Llandeilo Talybont Old Church and Wall-Paintings in Wales' (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Buildings of Wales, unpublished rept, 1986).

Christ's bride.⁹² Cartwright also points to a surviving clay-pipe figure of the saint, dating from roughly the same period, and notes that although the head is missing, the rest of the body demonstrates that once more she was portrayed with long, loose tresses.⁹³

Hair also played an important part in the lives of other, more 'local' female saints in Wales. According to William Worcester's work (c.1415–1485), whoever drinks from the water of the well that sprung on the site of St Eluned's decapitation or recites the Lord's Prayer there shall find one of her hairs on a nearby stone.⁹⁴ This bodily part also features in the texts related to one of Wales's most renowned saints, St Gwenfrewy, another virgin martyr, (decapitated at Holywell in Flintshire after refusing to have intercourse with prince Caradog). The story goes that St Beuno places Gwenfrewy's head back on her shoulders and she is thus resurrected and a holy well with powers to cure the sick erupts from her blood.⁹⁵ The *Vita Prima* also refers to the moss found at the well, which was called 'St Winefride's Hair' according to Baring-Gould and Fisher.⁹⁶

⁹² Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, plate 22.

⁹³ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 156. H. Harold Hughes includes illustrations of the figure in H. Harold Hughes, 'Miscellanea', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 12 (1866), 3, 544–549.

⁹⁴ Willaim Worcestre, *Itineraries*, ed. J. H. Harvey (Oxford, 1969), 155. See Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 71.

⁹⁵ It has often been remarked how the stones on the bottom of the well seem to be red, as if stained by blood. Tudur Aled for example sings of: 'Main ag ôl gwaed mwnwgl gwyn' (*blood stains from a white neck on stones*). See Tudur Aled, *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, ed. T. G. Jones, 2 vols (Cardiff, 1926), ii, no. CXXXIX. 44.

⁹⁶ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, 4 vols. (London, 1907–1913), iii, p. 191, no. 2.

Although we find these associations between the saints and hair, we often discover that they were portrayed ‘veiled as the bride of Christ’.⁹⁷ This is how Gwenfrewy, for example, is depicted on a fifteenth-century ecclesiastical seal.⁹⁸ However, the fact that these women along with the Virgin Mary, are also often portrayed with their hair uncovered demonstrates how integral this part of the body was to the image of women.

The symbolic importance of hair and its significance is further emphasized when we learn that it is by this part of the body the female saints are often tortured, as they are grabbed and dragged by their hair by the men they have ‘disobeyed’. St Julia and St Barbara are among the saints tortured in this way where grabbing the hair is seen as an attempt to control their sexuality.⁹⁹ The female saints wishing to avoid unwanted attention from male figures often turned to cutting their hair to make them appear unattractive. To purposely shave one’s own hair in this way would be a clear indicator of a woman turning her back on the rules placed on her by society. According to the rules and perceptions of the society, cutting or shaving their heads would make the women undesirable, unattractive and unappealing to the opposite sex. Raymond of Cupa in his fourteenth-century life of Saint Catherine of Siena is one of many examples that relates a story of a local priest advising the saint to cut off her long, blonde hair if she wishes to remain a virgin and become a nun. She in turn ‘cut[s] her hair off to the roots, hating it as the cause of her grievous sin’.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 74.

⁹⁸ See Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, plate 13.

⁹⁹ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 213–236.

¹⁰⁰ Raymond of Capua, *Life of St. Catherine of Sienna*, trans. George Lamb (New York, 1960), 41.

A shorn head however was also a sign of a 'bad' woman, as the shaving or cutting of the hair would often be the punishment for adultery and other sexual offences, leading to social humiliation. Shahr gives an example from the laws of London where the hair of women who had committed adultery was shaved before they were 'forced to walk through the streets of the city led by a band of musicians to the other side of London where they were incarcerated in another gaol'.¹⁰¹ Similarly throughout the Middle Ages, the prostitute who violated the rules of her trade would also risk having her locks cut off.¹⁰² Not only was she cast out of society, but she was also deprived of the privilege of being considered beautiful for a great length of time, as she would not be considered worthy until her locks would regrow:

Considering how essential a woman's long hair was to her identity as a woman, having a shorn head during these times would be nothing short of traumatic. That the cutting was often done as a public performance in front of an unruly crowd made it doubly so. Moreover, by having shorn locks, she is forced to "wear" her punishment for quite some time. The punishment transforms her visibly into an oddity that, in turn, would lead to further social marginalization. This attests again to how socially serious her transgressions were considered.¹⁰³

Hair features predominately too in the punishments associated with those considered to be 'witches'. Since ancient times, it was believed that the witch's

¹⁰¹ Shahr, *The Fourth Estate*, 108. See also M. H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia, 2001), 113, figure 50.

¹⁰² V. Bullough, "The Prostitute in the Early Middle Ages," in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, eds. J. Brundage and V. Bullough (Amherst, 1994), 36. See also Ruth Karras, *Common Women: Prostitutes and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1996), 15.

¹⁰³ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 155. See also B. Hanawalt, "Of Good and Ill Repute": *Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (New York, 1998), 27. It should also be noted that the public shaving of the heads was the punishment for female collaborators in France during World War Two. See, for example, British Pathé, 'Women Collaborators Get Heads Shaved, 1944' [video], British Pathé, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/women-collaborators-get-heads-shaved>, accessed 24 April 2017.

power lay within her tresses and her unbound hair was feared.¹⁰⁴ The notorious document by Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, demonstrates this mentality, and explains how cutting the hair of a ‘witch’ was thus of utmost importance.¹⁰⁵ Geoffrey de La Tour Landry also associates hair with punishment, as he recalls a tale where a holy hermit shares his visions of the fate of his nephew’s wives after their deaths. The nephew’s third wife, who had paid too much attention to her hair, is made to suffer by being punished by the devil:

And an angel shewed him the pain and the torment that she was made to suffer and endure, the cause why for he saw perfectly, how a devil held her by the tresses of the hair of her head, like as a lion holdeth his prey, in such wise as she might not with her head remove; and the same devil put and thrust in her brows, temples, and forehead, hot burning awls and needles, into the brain; and the poor woman cried at every time that he thrust in awl or needle, the which was burning. And the hermit asked the angel why the fiend did her suffer that pain. And the angel said, for because she had, when she was alive, plucked her brows, front and forehead, to have away the hair, to make herself the fairer to the pleasing of the world; wherefore, in every hole that her hair hath been plucked out, every day once the devil thrusteth in a burning awl, or a needle into the brain.¹⁰⁶

It is thus understandable why noblewomen would avoid getting their hair cut or damaged in any way as it was such a clear marker of a ‘bad’ woman’s punishment and an easy way of destroying her beauty and status within society, marking her as an individual who did not conform to the rules.

Shorn locks however were not the only image associated with both ‘bad’ and ‘good’ women. Long, blonde locks, which we have seen to be markers of

¹⁰⁴ For the relationship between a witch’s hair and magic in the ancient world, see, for example, V. Flint *et al.*, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (London, 1999) and R. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft* (2nd edn., New York, 1999), 148.

¹⁰⁵ H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. M. Summers (New York, 1971). See also K. Jolly *et al.*, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages* (London, 2002) and R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹⁰⁶ Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry*, ed. G. S. Taylor (London, 1930), 55.

beauty and even associated with the Virgin Mary, are consistently used in the medieval portrayals of Eve, mermaids, Sirens, Venus and the personifications of Lust, where she is always presented as a woman who tempts men and leads them towards their downfall. Was society able to disentangle the negative connotations that hair carried from the positive when it viewed 'good' and pious women, or were the multiple layers of meanings hidden in hair a subconscious reminder of the ever-present possibility that she too could become a temptress? Milliken explains that: 'Works that present Mary with her locks loose and uncovered are relying on the power of her lore to muffle the potential negativity.'¹⁰⁷ If 'good' and holy women could rely on this, it was far more difficult for ordinary women to achieve the correct balance between the conflicting messages that their own hair might inadvertently signal.

Men too faced these fears, and in an attempt to deal with this issue, a group of poems emerged that tried to purify the soul through confession in a dialogue between the body and the soul. In these poems of confession, found within the group of those to the *Corff ac Enaid* and through the use of the *ubi sunt?* theme, poets would dwell on the disgusting, decaying body, explaining in detail that it did not matter how brave or strong your body may be, it was doomed to end up in the grave.¹⁰⁸ Siôn Cent is perhaps the most noted poet in this genre, and his horror stories about death also tell us something of the social code of the body and its dress, as he goes to great lengths to unravel all outward appearances and reveal the

¹⁰⁷ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 183.

¹⁰⁸ It is worth mentioning here the cadaver (or 'transi') tombs, which became popular in the later medieval ages where effigies in the form of decomposing corpses were placed on tombs, reflecting this fear of death. See, for example, P. Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol* (Cardiff, 2003), 195.

threadbare skeleton in its grave.¹⁰⁹ The graphic portrayal of a decaying body was meant to terrify the audience into considering the transience of worldly success, and the skull played a particularly powerful role in this portrayal.

With the skull, we re-enter the realm of hair, as a poem attributed to Ieuan Ddu ap Dafydd ab Owain testifies. Here, the poet shocks the audience with this *memento mori*.¹¹⁰ In what Dafydd Johnston describes as a ‘*uchafbwynt erotig fffiaidd*’ (*disgusting erotic climax*) the skull laments the life it once had, and line by line the poet evokes the transformation of the skull, reverting it into a human face before our very eyes.¹¹¹ Each part is carefully chosen to strike an undeniable comparison with the well-worn formulae used to describe beautiful women in the *Canu Serch*. As with those descriptions, the poet begins with reference to the hair:

Yn lle gwelsid mal sidan
Gwallt gwinau modrwyau mân.¹¹²

(*Where there had been seen, silklike, / auburn hair in delicate ringlets*)

The concern expressed in this poem manifests a common obsession of the period with what happens to the whole body after death, including those parts that are customarily cut away. Samantha Riches and Bettina Bildhauer have examined this obsession, explaining that:

There was considerable concern expressed about corporeal integrity at the Day of Judgement: Would bodies that had been dismembered, or had limbs

¹⁰⁹ For Siôn Cent’s work, see *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, ed. H. Lewis, T. Roberts and I. Williams (Cardiff, 1937) 253–297 and Siôn Cent, *Apocryffa Siôn Cent*, ed. M. P. Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2004).

¹¹⁰ On the authorship, see Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen, *Gwaith Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen*, ed. D. Johnston (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 1998), p. 10.

¹¹¹ *LIU*, 228.

¹¹² *Cywyddau Dafydd ap Gwilym a’i Gyfoeswyr*, ed. I. Williams (Cardiff, 1935) no. LXXXVII. 41–42.

amputated during life, be restored to fullness? What of cut hair and fingernails, or indeed of aborted fetuses?¹¹³

In this respect, the Welsh medieval material chimes with other literatures of the period, such as the popular old French question-and-answer text *Sidrak and Bokkus*, already alluded to above. This text gives each and every part of the body an important role, but it concludes by emphasizing the supremacy of the soul over the body:

The body has no power
Of itself, that is certain
[no power] to speak, nor go, nor do anything
Except for that which the soul tells it to do.¹¹⁴

While the body is said to be nothing but a ‘foul carcass’, it was nevertheless the external and very visible encasement of the precious soul. We can therefore begin to appreciate why people strove to make it as beautiful as possible. This brings us to the final section of Part One where we will briefly reflect on the perceptions of beauty and ugliness in the medieval period, where we will find in the most basic terms that beauty was synonymous with ‘good’, while ugliness was synonymous with ‘bad’. Nevertheless, as we have seen with the portrayal of the Virgin Mary and other holy women, the symbolic role of hair in making this distinction is not always easy to interpret.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ S. Riches and B. Bildhauer, ‘Cultural Representations of the Body’, in L. Kaolf (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Human Body*, 182–202, (p. 187). See also C. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1991), 239–297 and also her fuller study: C. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995).

¹¹⁴ *Sidrak and Bokkus*, ed. T. L. Burton, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998), i, pp. 155–157, lines 2637–2640. On the genre, see R. W. Ackerman, ‘The Debate of the Body and the Soul and Parochial Christianity,’ *Speculum* 37 (1962), 541–565. See also A. Bernau, ‘Bodies and the Supernatural: Humans, Demons, and Angels’, in L. Kaolf (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Human Body*, 99–120.

¹¹⁵ See M. Cabré, ‘Beautiful Bodies’ in L. Kalof (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Human Body*, 121–139.

iv) Hair and the Ideas of Medieval Beauty

Beauty was undoubtedly seen as a quality of youth, and this important idea is manifested through the multiple guides about how to slow down the ageing process, where great attention was given to the preserving of skin and the removing of white hair.¹¹⁶ Although ‘beauty’ was important to men as well as women, men were measured by their words and actions too, where it seems that women were measured almost exclusively by their beauty, and moreover, their beauty added value to the men with whom they were associated:

Beautiful male bodies were more dependent on moral features, whereas female beauty was physically embodied: Men were culturally visible through their use of the public word, women through their appearance. Moreover, women’s looks were deemed to represent male dignity and honor rather than to epitomize the women themselves.¹¹⁷

The influential French medieval text, *Roman de la Rose*, shows clearly the vital link between a woman and her beauty, where the personified Beauty attracts the God of Love. Similar descriptions of ideal female beauty are found throughout the literary corpus of the medieval period, and consistently appear with the following traits:

Fair hair; pink and white face; tender and soft flesh, free from spots or sores; radiant forehead; arched brows; eyes widely and properly spaced; straight and well-formed nose; bright eyes; full-lipped mouth; sweetly scented breath; red lips and gums; well-proportioned neck; and small, round, and firm breasts; and a well-formed and slender body; a woman would also appear nicer if elegantly well dressed.¹¹⁸

Conduct books and didactic literature of the period demonstrate how women were taught that being desired by a man was the key to her self worth, as the early-

¹¹⁶ M. T. Lorcin, ‘Rides et cheveux gris dans les ouvrages de Roger Bacon,’ in D. Menjot (ed.), *Les soins de beauté: Moyen âge, début des temps modernes; Actes du IIIe Colloque International Grasse (26–28 avril 1985)*, (Nice, 1987), 253–59.

¹¹⁷ M. Cabré, ‘Beautiful Bodies,’ 138. See also R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago, 1991).

¹¹⁸ M. Cabré, ‘Beautiful Bodies,’ 126. See also D. S. Brewer, ‘The Ideal of Feminine Beauty in Medieval Literature, Especially “Harley Lyrics,” Chaucer and Some Elizabethans,’ *Modern Language Review*, 50: 3 (1955), 257–69 and F. A. Marcos-Marín, ‘Masculine Beauty vs. Feminine Beauty in Medieval Iberia,’ in D. Dougherty and M. Azevedo (eds.), *Multicultural Iberia: Language, Literature and Music* (Berkeley, 1999), 22–39.

thirteenth-century German didactic poem where a mother giving advice to her daughter testifies: 'If men often think of you and desire you, then you are worthy.'¹¹⁹

What then of male beauty in terms of body and hair? Apart from the Irish material and the Icelandic family sagas, which praise the male body and demonstrate a clear preference for fair skin and short hair, the ideas regarding men and beauty are much less well attested, but interestingly, considerations of the hair in particular give evidence that there is a clear male/female division.¹²⁰ Montserrat Cabré makes this point in some detail, and in her commentary on what we may call the 'sexualisation' of hair, she endorses the notion that masculine beauty is somehow an exaggerated or enhanced manifestation of those characteristics considered to be in harmony with nature:

Male ability to grow hair was understood as the psychological result of men's higher stage of completion, and it was considered a mark of masculinity; on the contrary, the absence of hair signalled femininity... Medieval physicians and natural philosophers understood the distribution of the hair on the body as an expression of a basic physiological distinction between male and female complexions, explaining hair in males as a result of their specific way of concocting naturally the superfluous bodily substances that women processed through menstruation... If there was a lack of harmony with nature and men had too little and women too much hair, as was often the case, beauty was legitimately pursued with the help of human artifice.¹²¹

With 41 volumes edited in the *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* series, in addition to the edited works of Dafydd ab Edmwnd, Dafydd Nanmor, Iolo Goch and Lewys Glyn

¹¹⁹ Quoted in A. M. Rasmussen, *Mothers and Daughters in Medieval German Literature* (Syracuse, 1997), 143.

¹²⁰ See, for example, D. McManus, 'Good-Looking and Irresistible: The Hero from Early Irish Saga to Classical Poetry', *Ériu*, 59 (2009), 57–109.

¹²¹ M. Cabré, 'Beautiful Bodies', 127. See also J. Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge, 1993), 181–183.

Cothi (amongst others), as well as the newly edited works of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Guto'r Glyn, a rich and varied corpus is now readily accessible for study and analysis. In this thesis, I shall examine the examples of hair in these works and try to interpret their symbolic meanings. I shall also draw upon the earlier poetry and the *Mabinogion* in order to place the references within the literary tradition and demonstrate a change or a continuation of ideas. While the treatment of women and men has been divided into two separate sections (Parts Two and Three), it is hoped that placing the 'hairstylist' next door to the 'barber shop' so to speak, will mean that insightful comparisons can be drawn across the traditional gender divide.

Part Two:

The Portrayal of Women and Their Hair

She sits facing sideways in the corner of the National Gallery of Art in Washington. A net of golden threaded flowers marks the beginning of the headdress that lies neatly half way between the front and back of her head. A long braid, comfortably resting between the twisted gold threads, trails beyond the limits of the frame. The artist's use of light reveals shiny, dark reddish-gold and beautifully combed hair covering her ears but pulled back from her face. A headband of gold and ruby jewels sits on the top of her bare forehead.¹ We are immediately drawn to the cluster of pearls that clings perfectly to the side of her head, and despite their weight, they seem to leave the hairs undisturbed. It is believed to be a portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza by the artist Giovanni Ambrogio de Predis, painted around 1493. The fine jewellery and threaded gold shows that she was a wealthy woman. The way in which her hair is so carefully braided and treated indicates that she had maidens to assist with her grooming, and if the headdress conforms to the rules of a society which wanted women to demonstrate their chastity by hiding their hair, then surely the uncovered part of her hair suggests an attempt to challenge these rules.

The tension in the portrait between the overtly ornate headdress and the covert hair demonstrates the paradox facing women in the androcentric society of the time: they were expected to have beautiful, long hair on the one hand, but on the other, were expected to keep the hair tame, controlled and hidden. As we saw in

¹ For the decorations in the headdress, see M. Campbell, *Medieval Jewellery in Europe 1100-1500* (London, 2009).

Part One, untamed, unkempt, wild and loose hair was the hallmark of ‘bad’ women, and the portrayal of mermaids, witches, Eve and Venus often included hair of this nature.² By contrast, ‘good’ women kept their hair under control and often out of sight. Yet, while the headdress served to keep hair hidden, its decoration sometimes became a substitute for the beautiful thing it was meant to hide. In short, how women dressed their hair was an efficient, visible way of demonstrating how they interacted with society’s value system, and how they conformed to, or disobeyed, the code of behaviour expected of women. Changing their hairstyle thus could demonstrate shifts in social status.

One of the most significant changes for women was the transformation from maiden to wife. As already discussed, the unmarried (and thus virginal) woman wore her hair loose and flowing, and the transition into married life was often marked by the symbolic role of the veil and by covering the hair, the part of the body that signalled her sexual availability. Molly Myerowitz Levine in her work on the history of the marriage rituals of the Jews, Greeks and Romans explains how the covering of hair is inextricably linked to the change in a woman’s status:

Roman marriage ceremonies also seem to privilege head covering. Indeed, the Latin word *nubere* “to marry” literally means “to veil oneself,” and according to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (s.v. *nubo*) is probably cognate with *nubes* (cloud). For a woman to become married (*nubere*) is for her ritually to cover/cloud her head.³

² It is also interesting to note the relationship between the female ascetic saints and their hair, such as St Mary of Egypt whose hair grew all over their body to cover her nakedness. Mary Magdalene is also often depicted with her long hair as a cloak, an example of which is Donatello’s sculpture of the penitent Magdalene. See Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 185–212.

³ M. M. Levine, ‘The Gendered Grammar of Ancient Mediterranean Hair,’ in H. Eilberg-Schwartz and W. Doniger (eds.), *Off with Her Head! The Denial of Women’s Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (Berkeley, 1995), 76–130 (p. 100). See also Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 70–71. It is worth noting here that the Greek cognate is νύμφη, ‘bride’ (hence *nymph*) from the Indo-European root **sneubh-*.

The bound hair of the married woman was the visual signifier of her marital status.

As we turn to Wales, we see that the paucity of painted portraits of Welsh medieval women is compensated to an extent by a wealth of images drawn in words, and in the next three chapters we shall explore these verbal images. By keeping the focus on the head and the hair and concentrating on what is said (and not said) about this part of the body, it is hoped that this study will be able to add to our understanding of how women led their lives in this period in Wales. The main source will be the poems of the period, in particular those that belong to two genres, praise poetry and love poetry, *Canu Mawl* and *Canu Serch*. We will find that hair is treated differently in both these genres (and indeed in the *Canu Mawl* from one century to the next), and we shall probe the reasons for this. Before the poems are examined however, a cursory glance at the role hair plays in the prose that would have entertained the personae of our enquiry (i.e. the poets and the subjects of the poems) will help set the scene. From tales told at the court to the folkloric material, we will find resonance with the associations outlined in Part One.

Chapter Three: Prose Narrative

Nameless characters of the *Mabinogion* are all made recognisable through their association with hair and hair alone.⁴ Both men and women are identified by the distinguishing characteristics of hair colour or style. In Part One, it was discussed how blonde hair was viewed as the ideal for women in the period, but in *Peredur* we also learn that beauty is not always confined to hair that is ‘aur’ (*gold*) and ‘melyn’ (*yellow*). Here, we find an anonymous female character who is described as beautiful, singled out by her auburn hair and a frontlet of gold with sparkling stones on her forehead. In the same tale, dark hair is also associated with beauty as Peredur is said to be sure that ‘he had never seen such a beautiful sight’ as the ‘principal maiden’ who has dark hair:⁵

Henwisc o bali twll ymdanei a uuassei da. Yn y gwelit y chnawt trwyddaw,
gwynach oed no blawt y croissant gwynhaf; y gwallt hitheu a’e dwyael,
duach oedynt no’r muchyd;⁶

*(She wore an old dress of tattered brocaded silk that had once been good;
where her flesh could be seen through it, it was whiter than the flowers of
the whitest crystal; her hair and her eyebrows were blacker than jet.)⁷*

The association with black, however, is not always favourable, and below in the same tale, black hair that is unkempt becomes synonymous with the undesirable:

Ac ar hynny wynt a welynt yn dyfot y mywn morwyn bengrych du ar gefyn
mul melyn, a charreieu anuanawl yn y llaw yn gyrru y mul, a phryt
anuanawl agharueid arnei. Duach oed y hywneb a’e dwylaw no’r hayarn
duhaf a darffei y bygu, ac nyt y lliw hacraf, namyn y llun. Grudyeu aruchel,
ac wyneb kyccir y waeret, a thrwyn byr ffroenuoll, a’r neill lygat yn vrithlas
tratheryll, a’r llall yn du val y muchyd ygheuhynt y phen. Danhed hirion

⁴ The *Mabinogion* is the collective name given to eleven medieval Welsh tales; *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, *Historia Peredur vab Efrawc*, *Owein: Chwedl Iarlles y Ffynawn*, *Ystorya Gereint uab Erbin*, *Breudwyt Maxen Wledic*, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, *Breudwyt Ronabwy* and *Culhwch ac Olwen*.

⁵ See *Peredur*, 23. 13–16. For the translation see *The Mabinogion*, trans. S. Davies (Oxford, 2008), 75.

⁶ *Peredur*, 23. 17–20.

⁷ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 75.

melynion, melynach no blodeu y banadyl, a’ e chroth yn kychwynnu o gledyr y dwyvion yn uch no’ e helgeth. Ascwrn y chefyn oed ar weith bagyl. Y dwy glun oed yn llydan yscyrnic, ac yn vein oll o hynny y waeret, eithyr y traet a’ r glinyeu oed vras. Kyfarch gwell y Arthur a’ e teulu oll eithyr y Peredur a oruc, ac wrth Peredur y dywawt geireu dic anhygar.⁸

Suddenly they saw a black, curly-haired maiden come in on a yellow mule, with rough reins in her hand urging the mule forward, and a rough, unfriendly look about her. Blacker was her face and her hands than the blackest iron daubed with pitch; and the colour was not the ugliest thing about her, but her shape – high cheeks and a sagging, baggy face, and a snub nose with flaring nostrils, and one eye mottled-green and piercing, and the other black, like jet, sunk deep in her head. Long yellow teeth, yellower than the flowers of the broom, and her belly rising from her breastbone higher than her chin. Her backbone was shaped like a crutch; her hips were broad and bony, but everything from there down was scrawny, except her feet and knees, which were stout. She greeted Arthur and all his retinue except Peredur; for him she had angry, insolent words.⁹

The dramatic entrance of the maiden is enhanced by the way the text focuses attention on the hair, and soon we find that the reference to ‘y forwyn bengrych’ (*the curly-haired maiden*) becomes shorthand for the un-feminine, the wild and animal-like woman in Welsh medieval material. This character has been identified as the ‘hideous’ side of sovereignty.¹⁰ Glenys Goetinck notes the ambiguity associated with this woman while commenting on the significance of the colour black, explaining here its negative connotations:

The Black Maiden on the other hand, is the inner earth with its power, its mysteries and difficulties, the thick forests and the wild animals, all of which may be either threatening or helpful to humanity. She is black, as is

⁸ *Peredur*, 56. 21–57. 9.

⁹ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 94.

¹⁰ The sovereignty theme was often portrayed through the sovereignty goddess who was usually depicted as an exceptionally beautiful, young woman who married the king, and her beauty was believed to reflect the state of his realm. As Ralph O’Connor notes, the origins of the figure is a ‘matter for continuing debate’, see R. O’Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel: Kingship and Narrative Artistry in a Medieval Irish Saga* (Oxford, 2013), 147–152, and her role is also questioned, see, for example, M. Bhreathnach, ‘The Sovereignty Goddess as Goddess of Death?’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 39 (1982), 243–260. While much work has been done on this figure in the Irish context (see, for example, M. Herbert, ‘Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland’, in *Women & Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992) and M. Herbert, ‘Transmutations of an Irish Goddess’, in S. Billington and M. Green, *The Concept of the Goddess* (London, 1996), 141–151), it seems that it is an area ripe for research with regards to the Welsh material.

the earth itself in some regions, the colour therefore of fertility and also that of the storm clouds and of the night, challenging and potentially dangerous. Her hair is crinkled and fuzzy, like thickets and undergrowth.¹¹

In the extract quoted from *Peredur*, this wild woman with ‘crinkled and fuzzy’ hair is said to have teeth that are ‘melynach no blodeu y banadyl’ (*yellower than the flower of the broom*), and here too, one finds an oblique evocation of hair, for this description carries ironic overtones as it echoes the very phrase used in the tales of the *Mabinogion* to flatter a woman’s hair.¹² By transferring the comparison to teeth, we move from compliment to insult.

The audience, well familiar with the motif, would no doubt have enjoyed this witty contrast and would have been reminded, for example, of the description of beautiful Olwen’s hair in *Culhwch ac Olwen* which is compared to the same flower, and is perhaps one of the most famous descriptions of hair in medieval Welsh literature:

Y chennatau a orucpwyd. A’e dyuot hitheu a chamse sidan flamgoch
amdanei, a gordorch rudeur am y mynwgyl y uorwyn, a mererit gwerthuawr
yndi a rud gemmeu. Oed melynach y fenn no blodeu y banadyl.¹³

(*She was sent for. And she comes – with a robe of flame-red silk about her,
and a torque of red gold about the maiden’s neck, with precious pearls and
red jewels. Yellower was her hair than the flowers of the broom.*)¹⁴

It is worth noting that in this medieval love story, the eponymous heroine, even before her hair is described in detail, becomes inextricably associated with it, as it plays a key part in the scene where she enters the story. Indeed we first learn about

¹¹ G. Goetinck, ‘*Y Forwyn Bengrych* and her background’, *BBCS*, 40 (1993), 83–94 (p. 83). See S. Davies, ‘Horses in the *Mabinogion*’ in S. Davies and N. Jones (eds.), *The Horse in Celtic Culture* (Cardiff, 1997), 121–140.

¹² *Peredur*, 57. 1–2.

¹³ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 18. 487–490.

¹⁴ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 192.

her existence when Custennin's wife explains that: 'Hi a daw yma pob dyw Sadwrn y olchi y fenn' (*She comes here every Saturday to wash her hair*).¹⁵

The contrast conveyed here between Olwen's toilette detailing the ritual needed to keep her long, blonde tresses beautiful and the image of the wild, curly-haired woman is characteristic of the ideology of the Middle Ages, where a basic distinction was often made between a 'good' and 'bad' woman by the way her hair is dressed. As already discussed, it is thought that a *morwyn* (virgin) was free to wear her hair long and loose without attracting negative connotations, but that women who were not virgins and still wore their hair loose were considered wicked. Uncontrollable hair was thought to be the domain of 'bad' women, unchaste and unwilling to obey the rules. However, as Part One briefly demonstrated, even when portraying a 'good' woman the very mention of her hair seems to warn of inherent 'dangers', and there are no doubt sexual undertones to the description of the 'good' and beautiful Olwen as she washes and grooms her long locks.

The notion of a link between a woman grooming her hair and its sexual undertones has been highlighted in studies that consider the personification of Lust in the Middle Ages,¹⁶ and Milliken argues that it was this part of the body that signalled to society not only a woman's lustful nature but also her sexual appetite, her idleness and her vanity.¹⁷ In an illustration from the fourteenth-century manuscript of *Le Roman de la Rose* (depicting the seven deadly sins), Lust is portrayed as a woman actively combing her loose hair whilst holding a mirror in her

¹⁵ [lit: 'head']. Bromwich and Evans, *Culhwch and Olwen*, 18. 480–481. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 192.

¹⁶ S. Shahar, *The Fourth Estate*, 278. See also D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962), 190.

¹⁷ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 112–122.

hand.¹⁸ Then in this famous allegory, the first thing noted about Idleness is her hair, described as being ‘as blond as a copper basin’.¹⁹ The Lover declares:

Above the chaplet of gold embroidery was one of the fresh roses, and in her hand she held a mirror, and she arranged her hair with a rich head-band... By the time that she had combed her hair carefully and prepared and adorned herself well, she had finished her day’s work.²⁰

Idleness describes herself, explaining that she is:

A rich and powerful lady, and I have a very good time, for I have no other purpose than to enjoy myself and make myself comfortable, to comb and braid my hair.²¹

When Geoffrey de la Tour gives advice to his daughters in *The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry*, eager to express the dangers of idleness, lust and vanity, he too gives hair some prominence. He relates the story of a woman who made the other parishioners of the church wait for her whilst she finished combing her long locks.²² They curse her in anger until suddenly the devil appears in her hand-mirror and instead of seeing the reflection of her beautiful tresses, she is confronted with the devil’s backside.²³ This is indeed a clear warning for women how vanity and lust will ruin their social status, and a reminder of the intrinsic link between hair and each of these sins.

¹⁸ *Le Roman de la Rose* is an allegorical love poem, composed by Guillaume de Lorris between 1225 and 1245 and completed by Jean de Meun between 1268 and 1285. It appears in almost 300 extant manuscripts and is described as ‘the most admired, influential, and controversial literary work of the French Middle Ages’, see N. D. Guynn, ‘*Le Roman de la Rose*’ in S. Gaunt and S. Kay (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge, 2008), 35–47 (p. 35).

¹⁹ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Charles Dahlberg (3rd edn., Princeton, 1995), 37–38.

²⁰ *The Romance of the Rose*, 38.

²¹ *The Romance of the Rose*, 38.

²² Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry, Compiled for the Instructions of his Daughters*, trans. T. Wright (London, 1868), 45.

²³ *The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry*, 45

Somewhat confusingly, the comb and mirror, the same tools used to convey messages about idleness and vanity, were also symbolic gestures of love and a man's desire towards the beauty of a woman. These combs, often containing words such as '*je le done*' ('I give you this'), clearly state that these were meant as love tokens where the lover could think of the woman in an intimate and private setting as she combed and arranged her hair.²⁴ When we are first introduced to a woman or when she is preparing to meet a lover, or when her lover sees her without her knowledge, she is often found washing, combing or arranging her tresses. This is the case with Olwen but also, for example, of the otherworld woman, Étaín, at the beginning of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*. Eochaid Feidlech, king of Ireland, first sees her as she is untying her hair (which had been in two plaits) in order to wash it with her arms out of her dress and bare. The king is filled with lust for her and he promptly propositions her.²⁵ Thus there is a tension between making well-groomed hair a symbol of beauty and virtue, and making the grooming itself a symbol that sparks feelings of lust.²⁶

In the wider folklore, more of this important relationship between women, their hair and water is seen, and grooming the hair is seen as a symbol of vanity,

²⁴ See Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 48. See also the collection of Medieval Combs available to view on the V&A museum website. One comb is engraved, for example, with 'de boen / amore,' see Victoria & Albert Museum, 'Comb Case and Lid' [image], Victoria & Albert Collection, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O128018/comb-case-and-unknown/>, accessed 10 January 2016.

²⁵ *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, ed. E. Knott (Dublin, 1936), pp. 1–2. He sees her in lines 1–6, loosening her hair with her arms out of the opening of her dress in lines 18–19, is seized with lust in line 45, and propositions her in line 48. The text in lines 6 to 17 is taken up with detailed description of, first, her clothes and, secondly her hair (golden, of course, reflecting the gold ornament in her tunic, and arranged in two tresses). In lines 19 to 34 we get the detailed description of her body from head to toe, finished off, in lines 34 to 40 with such extras as the way she walked and the twinkle in her eyes. Lines 40 to 44 explain how she was quite the loveliest of the women of the world, and they supposed she was from the *side*.

²⁶ For an important close reading of this scene, see O'Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel: Kingship and Narrative Artistry in a Medieval Irish Saga*, 53–60.

idleness and other vices. This is clearly expressed in the many mermaid tales of the period.²⁷ Not only are the long, flowing tresses of mermaids a consistent feature of these lust-filled, feminine creatures and a cause for concern and caution, but their very dwelling place, the sea, evokes similar feelings of uncertainty and danger, as Meri Lao explains:

Water has a dual action. It can be a blessing as it slakes the thirst of man [sic], irrigates the earth, and becomes a source of life and abundance, the primordial soup; it represents purification, regeneration, and perpetuity. However, it can also be destructive, causing inundation, shipwreck, drowning and annihilation.²⁸

Brunetto Latini's thirteenth century *The Book of the Treasure* compares mermaids to prostitutes and explains that they 'remain in the water because lust was made of moisture.'²⁹ Women in the period were believed to be cold and moist beings and thus in a consistent state of need and unfulfilment, associating them with this kind of temptress who lived in the water would be a convenient way to emphasize the 'bad' nature not only of mermaids but of their sex as a whole.³⁰ *Mari-morgan*, the Breton mermaid, and the mermaids of the Isle-of-Man, *Ben-Varrey*, are characteristic of the kind of mermaid that tempts sailors to the bottom of the ocean with their beauty.³¹ Significantly, the seduction repeatedly takes place when the

²⁷ For the development and relationship between sirens and mermaids and further studies on their perception see Meri Lao, *Sirens: Symbols of Seduction*, trans. John Oliphant of Rossie (Rochester, 1998); M. South (ed.), *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures* (New York, 1987); G. Benwell and A. Waugh, *Sea Enchantress: A Tale of the Mermaid and Her Kin* (London, 1961); S. Rachewiltz, *De Sirenibus: An Inquiry into Sirens from Homer to Shakespeare* (New York, 1987).

²⁸ Meri Lao, *Sirens: Symbols of Seduction*, 20.

²⁹ Brunetto Latini, *The Book of the Treasure (Li Livres dou Tresor)*, trans. P. Barrette and S. Baldwin (New York, 1993), 107; bk. 1, ch. 136, sec. 2.

³⁰ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 127.

³¹ Another example is the mermaid of Zennor, in Cornwall. See W. Bottrell, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall* (Penzance, 1873), 288–289. It should also be noted that as always there are exceptions, such as the short-haired mermaid found in a folklore story from Aberystwyth. See J. C. Davies, *Folk-lore of West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911), 146–147.

men see the mermaids combing their long hair while gazing into a mirror.³² It is telling that numerous medieval church carvings depict a mermaid holding these objects to serve not only as a warning against the fate of falling into temptation but also as a reinforcement of the ideas we saw expressed in the images of Lust where the same tools were used.³³

From these introductory remarks, we already gather two important associations: firstly, the connection between the beauty of a kempt woman's hair as a hallmark of her beauty in general (contradicting the images of the 'bad' woman with her wild, loose tresses), and secondly, the tension that arises between making well-groomed hair a symbol of beauty and making the grooming itself become a symbol of vanity, idleness and other vices.³⁴

The important role hair played in demonstrating the change in a woman's status from unmarried to married has been noted, but we find that it is also used to signify another turning point in her status. If on the one hand it was customary for the unmarried maiden to wear her hair long and uncovered, on the other it was also a marker of the mourning wife. Bartlett explains that the letting down of hair 'was a form of mourning exclusively the preserve of wives and widows' and goes on to explain that when married women let their hair down, they expressed a suspension

³² See B. G. Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects* (London, 1995), 129 and 263.

³³ Siegfried de Rachewiltz traces the association between the comb and sexuality back to antiquity and to the ancient sorceresses Circe and Kalypso 'of the beautiful hair' see Rachewiltz, *De Sirenibus: An Inquiry into Sirens from Homer to Shakespeare* (New York, 1987), 111.

³⁴ See S. Davies, 'Y Ferch yng Nghymru yn yr Oesoedd Canol', 7.

of the normal social code, a transgression he finds deliberate since ‘long flowing hair was a sign of maidenhood’.³⁵

Note that all the women mentioned in the material above are, at the point when we are first introduced to them, almost certainly unmarried. For an example of a widow as described by Bartlett above, we must turn to the tale of *Owein*. Here a woman in mourning finds herself in great distress after the loss of her husband. The tips of her fingers are described as being almost worn away, and her torn clothes show signs of extreme grief, and in line with Bartlett’s analysis, the grieving woman wears her hair loose:

Ac ar ol y llu hwnnw y gwelei ef gwreic velen a’ e gwallt dros y dwy ysgwyd, ac a gwaet briw amyl yn y brigeu, a gwisg o bali melyn ymdanei gwedy y rwygaw, a dwy wintas i gordwal brith am y thraet. A ryued oed na bei yssic penneu y bysed rac dyckynet y maedei y dwylaw y gyt.³⁶

(And following that crowd he could see a lady, her yellow hair let down over her shoulders and covered with the blood of many wounds, and she was wearing a dress of yellow brocaded silk, which was torn, and boots of speckled leather on her feet. And it was surprising that the tips of her fingers were not worn away, so violently did she wring her hands together.)³⁷

Our overview thus far shows that while we can find examples of the loose hair of maidens, mermaids and widows in the prose, the search for women who wear their hair tucked away and covered is almost futile, and we can explain this by the fact that the role of married women in the prose is limited. A rare example of a woman with her hair perhaps covered is Rhiannon. This is an interesting exception that suggests that she crosses into the territory of the married woman (though she is, when we first meet her, unmarried), perhaps due to a desire to appear ‘good’.

³⁵ Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings’, 54.

³⁶ *Owein or Chwedyl Iarlles y Ffynawn*, ed. R. L. Thomson (Dublin, 1968), 14. 353–6.

³⁷ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 125.

Following Sioned Davies, who has shown how the briefest of descriptions must be of significance in the *Mabinogion*, we cannot ignore the importance of the fleeting depiction of Rhiannon and the headdress that we are told is attached to her garment of shining gold brocaded silk. She wears this garment in order to prevent Pwyll from seeing her completely and removes it when he calls for her to wait:

Sewyll, ac arhos a oruc y uorwyn, a gwaret y ran a dylyei uot am y hwyneb o wisc y phen, ac attal y golwc arnaw, a dechreu ymdidan ac ef.³⁸

*(The maiden stopped and waited, and drew back the part of her headdress which should cover her face, and fixed her gaze on him, and began to talk to him.)*³⁹

Yet, note how it is her face that is revealed during this encounter, and we are left assuming that Rhiannon's hair remains hidden.

These few references suffice to serve as examples of some of the recurring symbolic meanings attached to hair that appear in Welsh medieval prose, and suggest that they largely concur with the points made in Part One. We find that we are presented with a somewhat ambiguous set of messages and a hairstyling guide that offers, at times, conflicting advice to the medieval woman, but one that suggests that there was a shared cultural understanding of the symbolic nature of hair dressing. A distinction is made between 'good' women and 'bad' women through the way they dress their hair, yet even the 'good' women cannot completely avoid the negative connotations associated with her tresses. After all, how different is the portrayal of Eve mentioned in Part One from the description of Olwen or that of the beautiful maiden in Peredur? In order to explore further the significance and meanings of hair for women in medieval Wales, Chapter Four will offer an analysis

³⁸ PKM, 12.

³⁹ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 10.

of hair in the poems of the *Cywyddwyr*, in particular in the area in which it is most prominent, namely in a sub-genre of the Canu Serch and the poems specifically to women's hair.

Chapter Four: Hair and the Canu Serch

i) Introduction

As this thesis embarks on a study of the poems specifically in praise of hair (of which there are fourteen), it should be noted that they have been categorised as belonging to the Canu Serch, a body of work usually distinguished from the more prominent Canu Mawl by the way Canu Serch focuses on the woman's beauty, while the Canu Mawl sings of other praiseworthy virtues, and by the assumption that while the latter was the result of formal commissions, the former was a more spontaneous body of work composed by the poet of his own accord. Attention will be turned to the Canu Mawl in the next chapter, and later reasons will be found to ask whether the boundaries between the two genres should perhaps be challenged. In the Canu Serch, the poets often start by praising the hair on the head before working their way down the female body. This was in keeping with other European traditions. Matthew of Vendôme and his twelfth-century guide-book for writers, for example, champions this technique as the favoured way to go about praising the beauty of a desired woman.⁴⁰ The images used by the Welsh poets are also in keeping with the courtly European literature of the period, where prominent among the features praised were golden hair and a pale forehead. We need not dwell on this here as there are studies that have already focused on the way in which the European romances have influenced the Welsh material in this respect.⁴¹ One

⁴⁰ Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars Versificatoria*, trans. R. P. Parr (Milwaukee, 1981).

⁴¹ See, for example, H. M. Edwards, *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Influences and Analogues* (Oxford, 1996) and H. Fulton, *Dafydd ap Gwilym and the European Context* (Cardiff, 1989). See also D. S. Brewer, 'The Ideal of Feminine Beauty in Medieval Literature, Especially "Harley Lyrics", Chaucer, and Some Elizabethans', *Modern Language Review*, 50: 3 (1955), 257–269.

example where the sequence starts from the head will suffice for our purposes, as this extract from Dafydd Nanmor's work testifies:

Y vun hoywdlos vanhadlwallt,
Eglur wenn o gil yr allt.
Luned wyt, oleuni dydd,
Liw'r gloywdec loer y gwledydd.
Moliant, ddisoriant seren,
O'th liw a wnafl, a'th lun, Wen.
Ar dy friger, hanner haf,
Wych riain, i dechreuaf.
Eurllyn, dof i orllwyn dydd,
Yw dy benwisc di beunydd.
Dwy yscub yn dy wiscad
A roed o aur ar dy iad.
Mae'n gaeroc, mwy no [gwryd],
Mal yn gŵyr melyn i gyd.⁴²

(The truly beautiful woman with hair like the flower of the broom / clear white coming from the corner of the hillside. / You are like Luned, O light of day, / Colour of the shiny, fine moon of the world / I shall praise you, o serene star / your colour and your appearance, Gwen. / With your head (half of the summer) / I shall start, beautiful maiden. / Threads of gold (I shall come to wait a day), / is your headdress every day. / Two golden wheatsheaves, by way of covering / are set upon your head. / It is brocaded, more than the length covered by the outstretched arms / like yellow candlewax all over.)

The poet begins with the hair and focuses on it for almost a third of the total length of the poem. All of the other parts of the body (eyes, cheeks, nose, lips, teeth, neck and so forth) are placed together in the remaining two thirds. The attention paid to hair is thus significant. His comparison with the flowers of the broom again recalls the famous description of Olwen mentioned earlier. He describes how the golden hair is braided in two plaits and applies an image of the wheat sheaf to describe its inter-weaving pattern. Further insight into her hairstyle can perhaps be gained in the line where the poet states: 'dof i orllwyn dydd,' translated above as '*I shall come to wait a day.*' This translation is based on the explanatory notes in the standard edition, but there could also be some ambiguity here through a play on 'dof'

⁴² PWDN, no. XXXIII. 1–14.

meaning ‘*tame*’ with the idea that the hair remains groomed and in place for an entire day.⁴³ The word ‘penwisg’ (*headdress*) could also refer to two things: literally to the ‘headdress’ or figuratively to the hair as the clothing of the head. The very use of the word is an opportunity to suggest other ideal virtues as it evokes the idea of the chaste woman. Even more interesting is the use of the word ‘eurllyn’ which might either refer to a golden thread in her hair or the golden threads of her headdress, or indeed to her noble lineage.⁴⁴

On account of this latter possibility, we find an example of how the boundaries between the twin genres of the Canu Mawl and Canu Serch become less than clear. Praising the calibre of a woman’s family was an important aspect of the Canu Mawl and the clever play on words in this instance seems to fuse both genres. By contrast, however, when Dafydd ap Gwilym uses the same word in his poem, ‘Canu’n Iach’, his treatment of ‘eurllyn’ is more explicitly sexual, even sinister, in tone:

Tost na allaf, rymaf rin
Dy orlludd dan do eurllyn.⁴⁵

*(It’s dire that I am unable (most potent magic) / to detain you beneath a covering of golden fabric.)*⁴⁶

Here ‘eurllyn’ could never be mistaken for a reference to the lineage and is far from the genteel tones of the Canu Mawl. This is desire not praise. The casting of this one word in two different ways leading to two possible interpretations suggests how these two genres are distinguished, and the fusion of the boundaries between the Canu Mawl and Canu Serch will be a focus of our consideration later in Part Two,

⁴³ See *PWDN* no. XXXIII. 9n. (p. 193). See under *dof* in *GPC*.

⁴⁴ See *eurllyn*¹ and *eurllyn*² in *GPC*.

⁴⁵ *CDG*, no. 104. 17–18.

⁴⁶ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 104. 17–18.

where I shall demonstrate how the fourteenth-century praise poems to women include many words and images that, in the fifteenth century, are confined to love poetry. Why these genres become firmer with clearer signals regarding what belonged where by the fifteenth century will be explored. But for now, we will concentrate on the Canu Serch and consider who might be the subject of these poems, who was the audience, what kind of reaction did they intend to stir, and wonder whether they might have been considered poems worthy of payment (as it is believed was the custom for the poems of the praise genre)?

More often than not, the poems of the Canu Serch are addressed to unnamed women with very few biographical facts available to link the subject in the poem to real people. Because of this, their validity is often questioned. Barry Lewis, for example, argues that:

I ddarllenwyr heddiw, y mae'r canu serch yn achosi penbleth. Yr oedd bwlch mawr rhyngddo a realiti cymdeithasol y cyfnod, yn sicr, a hefyd y mae ei dôn yn anodd iawn i ni ei ddirnad. Pa mor ddifrifol yn union yw'r cerddi hyn? Y mae'n amlwg, i ddechrau, nad cerddi 'preifat' mohonynt. Sôn yr ydym yma am adloniant cyhoeddus.⁴⁷

(For today's readers, the Love Genre causes confusion. There was certainly a great divide between it and the social reality of the period and its tone is very difficult to understand. How serious are these poems in reality? It is clear that they were not 'private' poems. What we have here is public entertainment.)

To claim that because the poems were composed as public entertainment they should not be legitimate reflections of the social reality of the period appears problematic. Why should we be able to rely only on privately commissioned poetry to be an accurate portrayal of the day? Surely in order to paint a full picture of any period, we should study the poems of all genres and consider them as equally

⁴⁷ *Gwaith Madog Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, eds. B. J. Lewis and T. Morys (Aberystwyth, 2007), p. 18.

important sources in a quest to gain insight into the ways in which the society of the time operated. More valid than questions about the distinction between the private and public nature of the composition it seems is the one about the presence of women during the readings and performances of the Canu Serch poetry.⁴⁸ Barry Lewis also explains how evidence can be collected from the poems themselves that suggest that women were expected to hear and enjoy these types of poems, such as these examples from ‘Marwnad Dafydd ap Gwilym’ ‘Mawr annudd clod morynion’ (*A large shelter for the praise of women*) and ‘Dafydd degan rhianned’ (*Dafydd, women’s loved one*).⁴⁹ He also notes how Dafydd ap Gwilym by using the plural form of the noun ‘rhiannedd’ (*young women*) shows that poems of the Canu Serch were targeted as entertainment not only for one woman, but for all women:

Cerdd a genir ymhob gwledd
I ddiddanu rhiannedd.⁵⁰

(*Song is sung in every feast / to entertain young girls.*)⁵¹

Be that as it may, if there were women present at the point of delivery, they were almost certainly absent at the point of composition; with the exception of the one lonely female voice of the period. Gwerful Mechain’s work is the only extant example of poems authored by a woman and, in a well-known poem, where she challenges the tradition of praising a woman’s beauty by starting at her head and working to the feet, she scorns those poets who were ready to praise hair and all

⁴⁸ *Gwaith Madog Benfras*, p. 18: ‘Rhaid gofyn hefyd a fyddai merched wedi bod yn bresennol, a beth fyddai eu hagwedd hwy at yr adloniant hwn’ (*We must also ask if women would have been present, and what would their attitude have been towards this entertainment.*)

⁴⁹ See *Gwaith Madog Benfras*, p. 18 for the discussion. For the quotations, see no. 4. 32 and 55.

⁵⁰ *CDG*, no. 158. 67–68.

⁵¹ dafyddapgwilym.net, translation of no. 158. 67–68.

aspects of a woman's body, but who left the part in which they were truly interested without mention:

Moli gwallt, cwnsallt ceinserch
A phob cyfryw fyw o ferch.⁵²

(Praising hair, loveable cloak / And every such living part of a girl.)

Gado'r canol heb foliant,
A'r plas lle'r enillir plant.⁵³

(Leaving the middle without praise, / And the place where children are conceived.)

(Her mocking is even more effective as her list reflects the same order as seen in the work of the likes of Iolo Goch and Gruffudd Gryg.)⁵⁴

Often overlooked as poems that merely fixate on the 'ideal' woman as being beautiful, these poems as they inform the reader about important details of, for example, the hairstyling fashion of the period, can reveal much about attitudes towards women, their role and status in society, and the relationship between hair, femininity and sexuality.

This thesis has already referred to poems that identify a woman's beauty by describing the whole body starting at the hair, but such was the importance of this part of the body that it became the sole focus of many poems, so much so that fourteen of them are categorized today as a sub-genre within the wider Canu Serch corpus. It is possible to imagine how these poems to hair developed from those that praised the whole body. It might have been perhaps too much effort to praise the

⁵² Gwerful Mechain, *Gwaith Gwerful Mechain*, ed. N. A. Howells (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2001), no. 9. 9–10.

⁵³ *Gwaith Gwerful Mechain*, no. 9. 21–22.

⁵⁴ See *GIG*, no. XXIV and Gruffudd Gryg, *Gwaith Gruffudd Gryg*, eds. B. J. Lewis and E. Salisbury (Aberystwyth, 2010), no. 9.

whole body, and having lavished so much attention on the first part, the hair, the poets would opt to allow the hair to become representative of the perfection and beauty of the whole body. Hair, after all, offers many possibilities for innovative metaphors, and it is significant that no poems to any other single part of the female body have survived.

This group of poems has to date not been properly defined and the following study seeks to make good this omission. The sub-genre consists of one poem by Dafydd ap Gwilym and Ieuan ap Rhydderch, two by Dafydd Nanmor and Ieuan Deulwyn, five by Dafydd ab Edmwnd and one each by Bedo Aeddren, Mastr Harri and Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog. Given that they represent almost a century of singing to hair, it is surely worth examining them carefully to find out what they tell us in terms of the role of women in the society of the period, and what we can learn from a focus on this significant part of their body. Below is a list of the poems in the chronological order in which they will be discussed:

Poet	Title	First Line	Edition
Dafydd ap Gwilym <i>fl.</i> 1325–50 Ceredigion	Gwallt Morfudd	‘Dodes Duw, da a dyst wyf’	<i>CDG</i> , no. 114 <i>GDG</i> , no. 73.
Ieuan ap Rhydderch, Probably long-lived, <i>c.</i> 1390– <i>c.</i> 1470 Glyn Aeron ⁵⁵	I Wallt Merch	‘Doe gwelwn (carwn pei caid)’	<i>Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch</i> , ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2003), no. 1.
Dafydd Nanmor, <i>fl.</i> 1445–90 Nanmor, Ardudwy	Gwallt Llio (<i>OBWV</i>) I Wallt Llio (<i>PWDN</i>)	‘Llio eurwallt lliw arian’ (<i>OBWV</i>) ‘Llio eurwallt lliw arian’ (<i>PWDN</i>)	<i>OBWV</i> , no. 81. <i>PWDN</i> , no. XXIX
	I Fun Felynwallt	‘Mi a welais, mav alar’	<i>PWDN</i> , no. XXXII

⁵⁵ For the arguments regarding this location and its connections to the poet, see *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, 3–4.

Ieuan Deulwyn, <i>fl.</i> 3 rd quarter of the fifteenth century, Cydweli	I Wallt Merch	‘Mae gair imi o garv’	<i>Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn</i> , ed. I. Williams (Bangor, 1909), no. V
	I Ferch ai gwallt	‘Y ferch yr af yw herchi’	<i>Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn</i> , no. XIII
Dafydd ab Edmwnd, <i>fl.</i> 1450–90 Hanmer, Maelor Saesneg	Kowydd Moliant i Wallt Merch	‘A gae r ferc a garaf i’	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd</i> , ed. T. Roberts (Bangor, 1914), no. XIV
	Kowydd ir gwalld	‘Y forwyn gwae fron fais’	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd</i> , no. XXI
	Llyma gowydd y gwallt melyn	‘Y mae arwydd ym auraw’	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd</i> , no. XXII
	Kowydd Merch	‘Mae vn Iarlles mewn evrllin’	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd</i> , no. XXIII
	Kowydd Merch	‘Doe gwelais dyn lednais lan’	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd</i> , no. XXV
Bedo Aeddren, The third of <i>Y Tri Bedo</i> : Bedo Brwynllys, <i>fl.</i> c. 1460, Bedo Phylip Bach c. 1480, Bedo Aeddren c. 1500. The first two from Brycheiniog, Bedo Aeddren from Aeddren in Llangwm Dinmael, Denbighshire	No title	‘Y dyn â’r iad yn we rudd’	<i>Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo</i> , ed. P. Donovan (Cardiff, 1982), no. V
Mastr Harri ap Hywel, <i>d.</i> before 28 May 1509, Cydweli	Gwallt Aur Merch	‘Y fun hoywddoaeth fonheddig’	<i>Gwaith Syr Phylip Emlyn, Syr Lewys Meudwy a Mastr Harri ap Hywel</i> , ed. M. Paul Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2001), no. 10
Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog, <i>Fl.</i> 1520–40, Nantglyn, Rhufoniog Is Aled	Gwallt Merch	‘Y dyn a’r gwallt dan aur gwiw’	<i>Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog</i> , ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth, 1995), no. 23

To judge by the dates, we find that Ieuan ap Rhydderch may be the link
between Dafydd ap Gwilym and the group of three contemporaries, namely Dafydd

Nanmor, Ieuan Deulwyn and Dafydd ab Edmwnd.⁵⁶ Ieuan ap Rhydderch is likely to have known, even if he did not possess, the Hendregadredd MS, which belonged to his grandfather, which contains the earliest copy of any of Dafydd's poems.⁵⁷ We also note that there is a geographical connection between Ieuan Deulwyn and Mastr Harri ap Hywel with both poets coming from Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire. Huw ap Dafydd is a late outlier but it is not a huge distance from Nantglyn to Bedo Aeddren's home in Aeddren in Dinmael (about twelve and a half miles as the crow flies, but over Mynydd Hiraethog) and hence there may have been a link between them too.

The relative sparsity of the secondary literature on the poems to hair might be due to the recognition that long hair, often blonde, is so well attributed to femininity that it is ignored and taken for granted. This seems to have been the case when considering the Welsh poems that use hair as their main subject. Scholars seem not to have questioned how they share the common notion that the ideal woman should have long, blonde locks. Many scholars have noted but not questioned the importance and presence of this feature. Gilbert Ruddock, for example, summarizes the main characteristics of women's hair by explaining the common features seen in the poems: 'lliw melyn neu euraid neu ruddaur, disgleirdeb, hyd a chyfoeth, meinder, llyfnder, plethiadau, cudynnau, ysblander' (*the colour yellow, golden or red gold, brightness, length and richness, fineness, smoothness, plaiting, locks, splendour*).⁵⁸ He also further categorizes these ideals into the nine main images used: 'Aur; Llwyn; Tidau; Sidan; To, Toi; Brig; Twf,

⁵⁶ On their contemporaneity see *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, i, no. LXX, 9–12.

⁵⁷ D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000), 84–103.

⁵⁸ G. Ruddock, 'Prydferthwch Merch yng Nghywyddau Serch y Bymthegfed Ganrif', *Llên Cymru*, 11 (1970–71), 140–175 (p. 146).

Tyfu; Plethu; Cwyr' (*Gold; Thicket; Chains; Silk; Roof; To roof; Summit; Growth; To grow; Plait; Wax*). But in terms of research, while categorization such as this is useful, nothing has been written specifically about this corpus in its entirety that looks beyond the headings.⁵⁹ While one must acknowledge one's debt to scholars such as Ruddock for having paid attention to these poems at all, it is time to throw light on them, not merely as a homogeneous sub-genre of the Canu Serch, but as individual poems in their own right. Through close examination of hair, much can be learnt about commerce, architecture, agriculture, the social pyramid as well as exploring a woman's place within society. When exploring the fourteen poems, I shall draw reference to other examples from the Canu Serch corpus where appropriate. The discussion will start with the earliest of the fourteen, namely Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem to Morfudd's hair.⁶⁰

ii) The Fourteen Poems to Hair

Ask any sixth-former who is studying Dafydd ap Gwilym to tell you something about the great poet, and you are sure to learn that he loved two women, Morfudd and Dyddgu. Ask them about these twin muses and you will be told that one was fair-haired the other dark-haired. It is their hair that defines them to a great extent.⁶¹ Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem to Morfudd's hair is the first in this tradition of *cywyddau* to women's hair, and is known today as 'Gwallt Morfudd' ('*Morfudd's*

⁵⁹ Alaw Mai Edwards refers to some of the poems in her article that looks at the development of the headdress in the period, see Edwards, "Pen un wisg â'r paun o'r ne'!", 39–58.

⁶⁰ T. M. Chotzen collected some of the references to women's hair in Dafydd ap Gwilym's work in T. M. Chotzen, *Recherches sur la Poésie de Dafydd ab Gwilym: Barde Gallois du XIV^e Siècle* (Amsterdam, 1927), 208–210.

⁶¹ Coincidentally, in the only surviving description of Dafydd's physique, his hair is the most prominent characteristic, which will be discussed in greater detail in Part Three.

Hair').⁶² Unlike the majority of the Welsh poems to women's hair where the woman remains anonymous throughout, the subject of this poem is named and is a familiar feature of the poet's work. We shall first of all look at the form of the poem in order to explore the points of significance that the shape highlights.

The poem divides into three sections, lines 1–14, 15–24, and 25–36. The first section opens by expressing an idea found throughout this corpus, namely that of God granting beauty to a woman and the poet himself as a witness to this act. This whole section is written as a single sentence. After the initial 'dodes' in the past tense, the only verbs in this section are present tense, for example 'wyf' and 'ydyn', introducing firstly the observer, Dafydd as the good witness, and secondly the objects of his gaze, namely the two plaits of Morfudd's hair. This first section of the poem is further marked out by the *cymeriad* 'll' in lines 7–14.⁶³ The section presents beauty observed in the present but given by God in the past. There is a change in the second section at line 15 where the new *cymeriad* 'b' is introduced for the first couplet and a new sentence runs from 15 to 23. The 'hudo' in line 23 recalls the 'hudo' of the second line but now it refers to the 'penceirddiaid' and not the 'deu blwyf' (*two parishes*). The verb 'dwg' in line 15 is still present tense. After the first two long sentences (lines 1–14 and 15–23), the single-line sentence in line 24 is abrupt: 'Oedd hyfryd i'r byd ei byw' (*Her existence was a joy to the world.*)⁶⁴ 'Oedd' is in the past; and the syntax is archaic ('Bod' + predicate + subject; normal word-order would be 'hyfryd oedd ei byw i'r byd' or 'hyfryd i'r byd oedd ei byw').

⁶² CDG, no. 114.

⁶³ *Cymeriad* (or *cymeriad llythrennol*) is where the same letter of a sentence is used again at the beginning of the next.

⁶⁴ CDG, no. 114. 24. Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 114. 24.

A single-line sentence also opens the third section where the verb is again in the past tense but since its object is ‘urddasreg’, it looks back to God’s gift and the past verb at the beginning, ‘dodes’, and its object ‘dwybleth... o radau serch’. There is a couplet of *cymeriad* in ‘b’ in lines 25–6 which echoes the couplet at the beginning of the second section (lines 15–16). But within this couplet, there is a change of direction with the ‘ragor... rhag Cynwrig’ which it maintains through a third, relatively long sentence of 7 lines in 26–32 with the final four lines 33–36 forming the conclusion to an argument. Within this satire on Cynwrig, there is a further *cymeriad* in ‘ll’ echoing lines 7–14 in the first section. There are two verbs in the satire, ‘yw’ in the present tense and ‘oedd’ in the past. Perhaps here we should remember the other ‘oedd’ in the abrupt closure to the second section: ‘Oedd hyfryd i’r byd ei byw.’ This second ‘oedd’ is the verb of the final concluding sentence: ‘Annhebig oedd ei foelwallt ef ... I’r llwyn ar ben Morfudd Llwyd.’ (*His scant hair was quite different... to the grove on Morfudd Llwyd’s head.*)⁶⁵ But why is the verb here in the past tense? And why was it in the past tense in line 24? The use of this tense in ‘dodes’ and ‘a gafas’ is easy to explain, as God’s gift and Morfudd’s reception of that gift took place at her birth. In line 24, the past tense of ‘oedd’ may indicate the time before she married Cynwrig, y Bwa Bach. The same may be said of the past of the final ‘oedd’ referring to the time up to her marriage. Cynwrig even then, as suitor and not yet husband, was a quite unworthy match for Morfudd’s beauty.

Much of the content is implied by the form. With both the praise of Morfudd and the satire on Cynwrig, hair and head go together. In Morfudd’s case it is the

⁶⁵ CDG, no. 114. 33–36. Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 114. 33–36.

lovely contrast of colour between the braids of golden hair and the pale-skinned, wax-like forehead, ‘aur ydyn... ar iad dyn’ (*they are gold... on a girl’s head*) and the contrast is pursued down to line 9, ‘Llathr a raff uwch llethr yr iad, / Llwyd ei gŵyr’ (*a shining rope above the head’s slope, / fully waxed*).⁶⁶ With Cynwrig, hair and head are equally repulsive: not only ‘llwm yw ei iad lle mae iach’ (*his head is bare where it is healthy*) but he is ‘gwegilgrach’ (*with scabby nape*).⁶⁷ The proportions between hair and head in the praise and the satire are, however, different: Morfudd’s head plays second fiddle to her hair and the only part of the head to be introduced is the forehead; but with Cynwrig much more attention is given to the head and the description goes further down, to the ‘gwegilgrach’ at the back of the neck, and down to the side of the head (‘lletben’) including cheek and jowl, dripping with sour sweat.⁶⁸ The repulsiveness of his head is far worse than the repulsiveness of his hair, for the latter is merely scanty: ‘ei foelwallt ef’ (*his scant hair*) and speckled with grey: ‘blawrfrych’ (*speckled grey*).⁶⁹

In the first section two images seem to be in competition: the braiding of Morfudd’s hair, which is like rope or flax, and the gold upon her head. This is resolved first by mere assertion, ‘dwybleth...aur ydyn’ (*two plaits... they are gold*), but then more satisfyingly by the image of two torcs (which may be of twisted gold), the ‘aerwyau teg’ (*fair torcs*) of line 4, which are also the ‘eurdyrch’ (*golden torcs*) of line 6.⁷⁰ This image is taken up again in the second section, but now the plaits of golden hair appear to circle her head so that she wears them like a crown; and the image of the crown justifies the pride with which she carries the ‘banadl

⁶⁶ CDG, no. 114. 3–4; 8–9. Translations on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 114. 3–4; 8–9.

⁶⁷ CDG, no. 30. 29. Translations on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 114. 30. 29.

⁶⁸ CDG, no. 114. 28–34.

⁶⁹ CDG, no. 114. 34; 28.

⁷⁰ CDG, no. 114. 2–3; 4; 6.

ysgub' (*the sheaf of the broom*) for it is a 'coron wiw' (*a fine crown*).⁷¹ Here we are presented with a notably sharp juxtaposition of 'banadl ysgub,' an ornament that any country girl might carry, with a crown, such as only a queen might wear. In another way her pride is justified, for she carries the red gold of her crown 'i hudo beirdd penceirddryw' (*to enchant master poets*) to bewitch poets of the status of a 'pencerdd' (*master poet*); the poem is itself proof that she has succeeded; and ruling queens were fittingly praised by 'penceirddiaid.'⁷²

There are two main players in this poem, Morfudd and Cynwrig, and two others, less prominent, God and Dafydd. God is the giver of the golden crown that Morfudd wears with pride (and perhaps her pride should have been tempered by the knowledge that it was a gift). Though in lines 1–2 it is part of God's purpose that Morfudd's 'dwybleth' should 'hudo deublwyf,' it seems to be her purpose in line 23 to 'hudo beirdd penceirddryw.'⁷³ Her target is of higher status than God's. Dafydd's condition, however, is not merely one of bewitchment: the golden torcs that Morfudd carries are a man's burden ('llwyth gŵr').⁷⁴ This could be understood merely as a reference to her hair's luxuriance and therefore weight, a man's burden being what it would take a man to carry; but it could also be more pointed, signifying that it brings a burden to a man; and, if it is a particular man, the man in question in the first section must be Dafydd rather than Cynwrig. Here it should be added that the interpretation of line 12 in *CDG*, that the 'dyn' in 'Llaes dwf yn lleasu dyn' is Morfudd herself and that 'lleasu' means no more than 'burden', seems unduly weak for 'lleasu' (which can also mean 'to kill'), especially when we may

⁷¹ *CDG*, no. 114. 16–17.

⁷² *CDG*, no. 114. 23.

⁷³ *CDG*, no. 114. 1–2; 23.

⁷⁴ *CDG*, no. 114. 7.

have been warned by ‘llwyth gŵr’ (*a man’s load*) in line 7 that a man is to suffer as a result of all this red gold.⁷⁵ If an ‘oed’ with Morfudd in her ‘llys yn y llwyn’ (*court in the grove*) was heaven for Dafydd, seeing Cynwrig boasting of his possession of that red gold was hell.⁷⁶

In another *cywydd*, not classified here as one of the fourteen poems to hair, we are nevertheless invited to behold Morfudd’s hair, and this time find that it has become a symbol of her old age. The poem, ‘Morfudd yn Hen’ includes a retelling of a sermon by a Dominican friar about the transient nature of a woman’s beauty.⁷⁷ (It is worth noting that the friar is also recognized by reference to his hair, as he is said to be ‘foel-llwyd ddeheuawd frawd ddyn’ (*the bald, grey slick-talking friar-man*) and having hair that is like a nest of briars.⁷⁸ Interestingly, these references to the friar’s hair are the only ones to his physical appearance and through this unflattering simile we detect Dafydd’s scornful attitude to the Church.) Dafydd grieves over how Morfudd has lost her beauty and makes her hair, and only her hair, the symbol of this loss.⁷⁹ There is no reference to skin, lips or cheeks, features much praised in the *Canu Serch*, only a sense of anger that her locks are now grey. They are no longer symbols of splendour and beauty and do not stir feelings of passion as before. In this transformed hair colour, Dafydd accuses Morfudd of having tricked him and the lack of reference to the passing of any other virtue demonstrates how intrinsic a woman’s beauty was to her worth:

⁷⁵ *CDG*, no. 114. 12. See *Ileasu* in *GPC*.

⁷⁶ *CDG*, no. 148. 2.

⁷⁷ For a discussion on this poem see D. J. Bowen, ‘Morfudd yn Hen’, *Llên Cymru*, 8 (1965), 231–4. For the poem itself see dafyddapgwilym.net, poem 150.

⁷⁸ *CDG*, no. 150. 23. For the translation, see dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 150. 23.

⁷⁹ In *CDG*, no. 132, Dafydd’s own hair is given a treatment only a bit less savage than his treatment of Morfudd’s. We shall discuss this in Part Three.

Foel-llwyd ddeheuawd frawd-ddyn,
 Felly'r brawd du am bryd dyn.
 Ni pheidiwn, pe byddwn Bab,
 Â Morfudd tra fûm oerfab.
 Weithion, cyhuddeidion cawdd,
 Y Creawdr a'i hacraawdd,
 Hyd nad oes o iawnfoes iach
 Un lyweth las anloywach,
 Nid â fal aur da liw'r dyn,
 Brad arlwy, ar bryd erlyn.

Brenhines bro anhunedd,
 Brad y gwŷr o bryd a gwedd,
 Braisg oedd, un anun einioes,
 Breuddwyd yw; ebrwydded oes!
 Ysgubell ar briddell brag,
 Ysgawen lwydwen ledwag.
 Hudolaidd y'i hadeilwyd,
 Hudoles ladrones lwyd.
 Henllath mangnel Gwyddeleg,
 Hafod oer; hi a fu deg.⁸⁰

(The bald grey slick-talking friar-man, / So spoke the black friar about a girl's beauty. / I would not give up Morfudd, / Were I the Pope himself, as long as I was a cold lad. / Now, angry accusations, The Creator himself has made her ugly / So that in all truth there is no / Duller grey tress, / A girl's hue does not last like good gold, / Treacherous provision, on the head of a slattern.

Queen of the land of sleeplessness, / One whose beauty was the ruination of men, / She was so strong – a lifetime is one brief waking, / It is a dream; how soon life passes! / A brush on a brewery floor, / An eldertree, grey and half-barren. / She was created bewitchingly, / Thieving grey witch. / The old beam of an Irish mangonel, / A cold summer-house; she was once fair.)⁸¹

In a similar poem by Dafydd, and again not one of the fourteen core 'hair poems', we find the beauty of another woman to be the main focus and find that hair still plays a key role. 'Dyddgu' opens by addressing the subject's father. On account of this formal tone it has often been remarked how the poem sits on the border between the Canu Mawl and Canu Serch genres. However, the main themes are Dyddgu's appearance and Dafydd's physical pain because of his great love

⁸⁰ CDG, no. 150. 23–42.

⁸¹ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 150. 23–42.

towards her, which nudges it into the Canu Serch category. The poet does indeed praise the striking paleness of Dyddgu's skin (a prominent feature of the Canu Mawl as we shall see later), but what interests us is the fact that what lends her complexion its fair tone is the way it is contrasted by the brightness and brilliance of her shiny black hair. This is of particular relevance to this thesis as it represents a rare example of hair that is not golden and yet exalted:

Mewn eiry gogyfuwch lluwch llwyth
 Modd ei thâl, medd ei thylwyth.
 Asgell y fwyalch esgud
 Megis ei hael. Megais hud.
 Gwaed yr edn gwedy r'odi,
 Gradd haul, mal ei gruddiau hi.
 Felly mae, eurgae organ,
 Dyddgu a'r gwallt gloywddu glân.⁸²

(Her forehead is as bright as a deep snowdrift, / According to her family. / The wing of the swift blackbird / Is like her brow. I am enchanted. / The bird's blood after it had snowed, / Sun's intensity, is like her cheeks. / Just so, gold-adorned organ, / Is Dyddgu with the shining pure-black hair)⁸³

Another prominent example of such rare praise to black hair is Dafydd ab Edmwnd's 'Dan Bared' which expands the repertoire of comparisons from the blackbird in the poem to Dyddgu to huckleberries and the black robes of the Dominican friars:

Dy laeswallt fal dy lusael,
 Dy ddrem fal duedd yr ael.
 Dy bryd fal dillad brodyr,
 Du a gwyn i hudo gwŷr.⁸⁴

(Your hair like your eyebrows of huckleberries, / The pupil of your eye like the blackness of your eyebrow. / Your appearance like the clothes of the brothers, / Black and white to enchant men.)

⁸² CDG, no. 86. 47–54. In the poem 'Gwahodd Dyddgu' (CDG, no. 88) he also describes her in the second line as: 'Dyddgu â'r gwallt lliwddu lleddf' (*Dyddgu with the black-coloured smooth hair*).

⁸³ English translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 86. 47–54.

⁸⁴ Dafydd ab Edmwnd, *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, ed. T. Roberts (Bangor: Bangor Welsh Manuscripts Society, 1914), no. I. 19–22.

Returning to ‘Dyddgu’, we note that a mark of the rarity of beautiful black hair is found in the suggestion that even the Seven Sages of Rome would be astonished to see such a thing:

Rhyfedd gan Ddoethion Rhufain
Rhyfedd pryd fy mynd main.
Gwynnach yw nog eiry gwanwyn.
Gweddw wyf o serch y ferch fwyn.
Gwyn yw’r tâl dan wialen,
Du yw’r gwallt, diwair yw gwen.
Duach yw’r gwallt, diochr gwŷdd,
No mwyalch neu gae mywydd.
Gwynder disathr ar lathrgnawd
Yn duo’r gwallt, iawnder gwawd.⁸⁵

*(The wonder of my slim darling’s face / would be wondrous to the Sages of Rome. / Whiter than the snow of spring. / I am bereft for love of the gentle girl. / Her forehead is white below woven strand, / Black her hair, the girl is pure. / The hair is blacker, straight the strands, / Than a blackbird or a brooch of jet. / Stainless whiteness on bright flesh / makes the hair more black, fitting praise.)*⁸⁶

In the extract above, the reference to ‘gwialen’ merits some attention. It might refer to the wire that would hold a headdress or band in its place. This type of wire would often be decorated with silk thread, adding to the shiny appearance of the hair.⁸⁷ However it is also plausible that the wire is a metaphor for the headdress itself, thus suggesting that the hair is in fact covered, which would be in keeping with how a nun would wear her hair, Dafydd after all praises Dyddgu’s virginity.⁸⁸ Indeed the contrast between pale complexion and her striking black hair has led scholars such as D. J. Bowen to remark that Dafydd is comparing Dyddgu to a nun with the associated purity.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ CDG, no. 86. 23–24. See also G. Egan and F. Pritchard, *Dress Accessories 1150–1450* (Woodbridge, 2002), 294.

⁸⁶ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 86. 23–24.

⁸⁷ Egan and Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 292.

⁸⁸ See Edwards, ‘‘Pen un wisg â’r paun o’r nê!’’, 47.

⁸⁹ D. J. Bowen, ‘Nodiadau ar Waith y Cywyddwyr,’ *Llên Cymru*, 10 (1968–9), 113–118 (p.118).

Returning to the fourteen poems of the sub-genre, scholars have argued that the second poem in this discussion, Ieuan ap Rhydderch's poem to the hair of an unnamed girl, is an example of a poetic exercise, appropriate for a student who was learning the craft of *cynghanedd*:

The bardic novitiates were probably required by their teachers to compose poems containing words of this kind, and it has been suggested that... [this] poem... may well provide us with an instructive example of such an exercise.⁹⁰

Others, however, such as Thomas Parry, has commented that it should be considered as a work of an accomplished fine poet on account of its brilliance: 'Nid cywyddau ymarfer prentisiaid mohonynt, ond campau rhyfeddol meistri'r greft' (*They are not practice cywyddau of the apprentices, but the wondrous achievements of the masters of the craft*).⁹¹ Every single one of the 48 lines cleverly begins with *cymeriad* 'd' and as such is unique in terms of this sub-genre of poems. This clever technique drew the attention of the scribes hence its popularity in the manuscripts, and some of the prefaces call it 'Ystordyn Meddwod' (*The limit of drunkenness*) as it would be impossible for a drunk man to sing it.⁹²

The poem broadly falls into four sections although these are not easily defined due to the 'd' *cymeriad* that ties them together and runs through the poem. The first section (lines 1–12) is in the imperfect ('gwelwn', 'carwn' and 'dygai') with 'yw' in line 10 being the only verb in the present, describing the hair of an unnamed woman. It explains how the poet had seen the two plaits of the woman 'doe' (*yesterday*) and focuses entirely on the style of the hair. The second section (13–26)

⁹⁰ A. O. H Jarman and G. Rees Hughes, *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282 – c. 1550* (rev. edn. by D. Johnston., Cardiff, 1997), 65.

⁹¹ *GDG*, p. lxxxvii.

⁹² See Ieuan ap Rhydderch, *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2003), p. 42 and p. 135.

shifts to the present with the poet stating that he is going to go to stare at the girl ('af i'w hedrych') and continues with soaring praise in his description of the beautiful hair. Section three (28–36) explains how the poet 'takes her' to the hills, and within this section in line 30, the poem shifts to the past tense explaining how 'Diseml oedd' (*she was gentle*). The final section (37–48) stays in the past tense ('gwybu', 'lliwiodd', 'oedd') as the poet expresses how God had granted her beautifully golden coloured hair.

Many of the images used are in keeping with the kind of praise seen in Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem to Morfudd, such as the gold colour of the hair and its brightness. One of the remarkable features of Ieuan's poem is the way in which it focuses on the woman's plaits. This offers additional insight into the hairstyling practices of the day as well as demonstrating the poet's creative ability through the use of the innovative vocabulary employed to express the brilliance of the tresses. The *cymeriad* 'd' helps the poet to achieve this as he turns often to the words 'dwy' (*two*), 'dwbl' (*double*) and 'dwf' (*growth*) to express the multitude and complexity of plaits as well as the volume of hair.⁹³ Ieuan ap Rhydderch plays upon these words not only to describe the hair itself but the girl's other characteristics too. For example, playing upon the word 'dwy' (*two*), he turns to the form 'dwywes' of 'duwies' (*goddess*) to explain her faultless beauty.⁹⁴ Next, the poet admires the intricate craftsmanship and complexity of the hairstyle (which might be a metapoetic element, given that these are the principles on which his own art is founded). He takes great care to explain how there are two main plaits to the hair and how these two plaits are plaited again:

⁹³ *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, no. 1. 2; 8; 12; 17; 18; 21; 23; 24; 2635; 36; 42; 46.

⁹⁴ *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, no. 1. 46.

Dwybleth o wallt merch dewblaid

Dwbl dwys glaergwbl disgleirgyrs

Dwf eurllythrblyg Dyfr lathrbleth

Dwy lyweth dda wiwbleth ddwbl
Dwysgwbl aur sinddwbl yw'r sofl
Dwf o eurgamp, da fyrgofl.

Dwy bleth ddwbl merch o gwbl o gamp,
Dwy nobl fanwallt dyn abl-lamp

Dwbl gerlont, dyblyg eurlwybr.⁹⁵

(Two thick plaits of a woman's hair interwoven / A beautiful pair, thick and shimmering stems / A thick growth, golden decorative work, Dyfr brilliant her plait / Two good locks, amazingly plaited and twofold / Gold twofold its sign and the stems are solid / A growth that has excellence, a small burden and good / Two double plaits of a girl perfect her form / Two nobles of the fair-hair of a girl deserving her brilliance / Two garlands, the golden path is twofold.)

This 'gerlont' (*garland*) in the final example could either be referring to the way the hair is placed on top of the head or it could equally be a description of a band of gold placed in the head or on the forehead. There is another hint of ambiguity concerning whether the poet is praising the hair or the headdress when he refers to the temple of the head ('arlais'), suggesting that a braid or a piece of gold is placed near it. We are able to glean further information about the type of headdress or hair decoration this woman would wear through yet another ambiguous reference, this time to the expensive linen from Cheapside, the famous market place in London.

Helen Fulton explains that:

It was the name given to an area of East London where the main markets and shops of medieval London were located. Stretching from St Paul's eastward to the Royal Exchange and south to the river, Cheap (later Cheapside) was the commercial centre of London, dominated by mercers, drapers and goldsmiths, but with every type of guild and trade represented.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, no. 1. 2; 1.8; 1.18; 1.21; 1.23–24; 1.35–36; 1.42.

⁹⁶ *Dafydd ap Gwilym Apocrypha*, ed. Helen Fulton (Llandysul, 1996), p. 157.

By comparing her hair to the material of Cheapside, the poet is able to hint towards the woman's wealth: she was able to afford material from this metropolitan centre.

We are told how the material is left 'digiprys' (*untussled*):

Dioer yw'r llathrwalld dihareb
Digiprys gold seiprys Sieb⁹⁷

*True is the most excellent shining hair,
Unruffled gold, [?under] fine Cheapside linen*

Playing on this negative form 'di-' as seen above ('digiprys') is another way this poet is able to sustain the 'd' *cymeriad* throughout the poem, as he states a number of things that the woman is not: her hair is not hidden ('digudd'), it is undamaged ('dilwgr'), it is not untidy ('heb ddiddestl'), has not been trodden on ('di-sathr'), and is not ugly ('diagr').⁹⁸ The main features praised throughout are the faultlessness and tidiness of the hair, its shiny appearance and gold colour. It is this brightness and the golden tones that the poet refers to in the closing section when he thanks God for granting this woman her beautiful hair, echoing the statement made by Dafydd ap Gwilym in his poem to Morfudd (although Dafydd ap Gwilym's praise to God was in the opening section).

The third of the fourteen poems in this discussion is 'Gwallt Llio' by Dafydd Nanmor. Along with 'Gwallt Morfudd', the poem to Llio is the only other poem where the subject is specifically named. Interestingly, this Llio (or Gwenllian) was the daughter of Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd of Glyn Aeron by his second wife Mawd, making her the sister to the poet of another of the fourteen poems discussed

⁹⁷ *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, no. 1. 8–9.

⁹⁸ *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, no. 1. 4, 5, 12, 15 and 27.

above, Ieuan ap Rhydderch.⁹⁹ This genealogical fact draws a direct link between Ieuan's poem and Dafydd Nanmor's work. Thus far, we have only seen one poem each by Dafydd ap Gwilym and Ieuan ap Rhydderch, yet with Dafydd Nanmor we come across the first of the poets with two surviving poems to hair.

As already stated in the table above, I will be discussing the version as it stands in the *OBWV* where the divisions of the poem by Parry seem justified (there are none in *The Poetical Works of Dafydd Nanmor*).¹⁰⁰ The poem opens with the *cymeriad* 'll' and the use of this technique is repeated at the beginning of the second, third, and fourth sections (vowel + semi-vowel in the case of the final section). In terms of the form, these divisions are much less sharp than in Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem to Morfudd and this is mainly because of the absence of long sentences. As was the fashion in the fifteenth century, Dafydd Nanmor's syntax is based on couplet-sentences. This means that the abrupt contrast between sentences running over several lines and a sentence confined to a single-line and thus one half of a couplet, a device which Dafydd ap Gwilym used so effectively, does not appear in *Gwallt Llio*. It also means that there are many more verbs than there were in *Gwallt Morfudd* with 'mae' making up most of those in the present tense (9 in total) and 'cribo' also recurs in lines 14, 43 and 50.¹⁰¹

Llio is greeted in the first line of the opening couplet where attention is drawn immediately to the contrasting colours of her hair and skin. The hair is gold, her skin silver, and between the glow of her hair and silver-like skin we are told that

⁹⁹ *PWDN*, no. XXIX. See also the notes on the poem in *PWDN*, p. 189.

¹⁰⁰ See *OBWV*, no. 81 and *PWDN*, no. XXIX.

¹⁰¹ For 'mae' see *OBWV*, 81. 2, 3, 8, 17, 19, 35, 37, 47 and 51. For 'cribo' see *OBWV*, 14, 43 and 51.

she shimmers like snowdrift. She is portrayed as a glowing angel. The use of this type of imagery, frequently used to describe a woman's beauty, evokes not only the beauty of snow but also its transience; like snow a woman's beauty is not everlasting:

Llio eurwallt, lliw arian,
Llewychu mae fal lluwch mân.¹⁰²

(Llio of the golden hair, silver in colour, / She glistens like fine snowdrift.)

After this, the poem concentrates solely on the hair. We learn that it is in three plaits, largely covered by a 'moled' (*hood*) and worthy of only a superior comb of bone, not a cheap one of wood. The poet names Llio three times in the first section, giving her full name in the second couplet, ensuring that the audience understands that all of these beautiful descriptions are aimed solely at her:

Mae ar ei phen, seren serch,
Lliw rhuddaur, Llio Rhydderch.¹⁰³

(There is on her head, the star of love, / A red-gold colour, Llio Rhydderch.)

The gold of Llio's hair is also tinged with red (as implied by the term 'rhuddaur') and Dafydd Nanmor enjoys finding innovative ways to conjure the precise shade of Llio's hair, calling Nature to the rescue. He compares her locks to a certain type of apple for example:

Ni bu ar wŷdd, un bêr iach,
Afal Anna felynach.¹⁰⁴

(There has not been on a branch, one so sweet (and) wholesome, / A yellower Anna's apple.)

St Anna's apple, a golden-hued red coloured fruit is an appropriate object for a comparison with hair, not only because of its similarities of colour but also because

¹⁰² *OBWV*, no. 81. 1–2.

¹⁰³ *OBWV*, no. 81. 17–18.

¹⁰⁴ *OBWV*, no. 81. 5–6.

of the innuendo of its well-known sweetness.¹⁰⁵ However, if we cast our minds back to Part One and to the association between Eve and her golden, long hair and then consider the fateful consequences of her taking a bite from the forbidden fruit, we cannot ignore possible undertones in this comparison that remind us of the society's prejudice about woman's deceitful nature. On the other hand, Dafydd Nanmor also goes to great lengths to tell us that Llio's hair concurs with the society's beliefs about how a 'good' woman should keep her hair, as he describes how it is placed within a 'moled' (*hood*). Drawing inspiration from the surrounding natural landscape, he explains that the hood hides hair of the same colour as the stone in Llŷn, known locally to this day as 'Maen Llio'.

While Part One noted the importance of understanding the contemporary context in order to understand the full force of a symbol or image, the advantage here is that the context of this particular image is as relevant today as it was 600 years ago; the geographical characteristic has remained unchanged and the stone still stands glistening in yellow hues. The gold hidden in the crevices of the stone is just as the hair hidden under a headdress, or the strands of gold needlework glistening in it. The stone's shape could also be interpreted as that of a headdress.

¹⁰⁵ In Roberts and Williams' edition, they explain this couplet by quoting Iolo Morganwg noting how '*St. Anna's apple*, a fine golden-hued summer apple; hence also called Afal yr aur', see *PWDN*, p. 189. St Anne's feast day falls within the Summer, on July 26th.



Pictured: ‘Maen Llio’

As well as drawing upon the landscape to describe the hair, the poet also turns to agriculture and draws upon a ‘tid’ (*chain*) to give us information about her plaits:

Dwy did lle y dodid awdl
Dau dasel hyd ei dwysawdl.¹⁰⁶

(Two chains where an awdl was placed / Two tassels down to her heels.)

Francis Payne in his article ‘Cwysau o Foliant Cyson’ explains the appropriateness of this metaphor:

Canys o’r amserau bore hyd ddechrau’r ganrif ddiwethaf gwneid tid aredig ychen o wydyn neu wiail ir wedi’u plethu’n rhaff gref a oedd yn debyg iawn yr olwg a’r dull i bleth gwallt merch.¹⁰⁷

(Because from the earliest days until the beginning of the last century, an ox’s plough chain was made from ropes or fresh twigs plaited as a strong rope that was very similar in appearance to the way in which a girl’s hair was plaited.)

In his poem to Morfudd, Dafydd ap Gwilym used the word ‘llyweth’ figuratively to describe the ‘locks of love’, but in this *cywydd* to Llio, Dafydd Nanmor offers the same word to give precise details about Llio’s hairstyle. She is described as having a lock placed on the top of her head and the plait as being

¹⁰⁶ *OBVV*, no. 81. 33–34.

¹⁰⁷ F. Payne, ‘Cwysau o Foliant Cyson’, *Y Llenor*, 26 (1947), 3–24.

embellished by pieces of gold. These are compared with the monetary unit ‘nobl’ (*noble*), and by association, the gold decoration or thread in the plait symbolises the wealth and status of the woman. Thus a reader in the twenty-first century is able to learn something about the commerce of the period.¹⁰⁸ We see how the wealth and volume of the hair is praised rapturously when we understand that the plait looks as if it has been woven a hundred times into three long plaits. As it reaches her breasts we have a hint of the erotic:

Ar iad Llio rhoed llyweth
 A noblau aur yn y bleth.
 Gwnaed o’r bleth ganbleth i’w gwau,
 Tair brwynen tua’r bronnau.¹⁰⁹

(On Llio’s head, a lock was placed, / And golden nobles in the plait. / From this plait, let her make a hundred more and weave them, / Three rushes towards the breasts.)

In the above section, we have two imperatives and this is followed by a subjunctive ‘dycer’ that is imperative in function:

Ac na fynned gwen fanwallt
 Gribau gwŷdd i gribo’i gwallt;
 Dycer i wen er deg grod
 Gribau esgyrn geirw bysgod.¹¹⁰

(Let Gwen of the fine hair not want / wooden combs to comb her hair / may there be brought to Gwen for ten groats / Combs from the bones of tough fish.)

We must therefore ask who is, or are, the person(s) being given such instructions by the poet? It is almost as if Dafydd is taking over the function of Llio’s mother in giving instructions to servants, a further reference to her social status.

The imagery from the world of work and commerce is further exploited as Dafydd describes the tools that are needed to dress the hair. He explains that the

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Dafydd ap Gwilym using ‘ffloringod’ (*florins*) in *CDG*, no. 32. 13.

¹⁰⁹ *OBWW*, no. 81. 9–12.

¹¹⁰ *OBWW*, no. 81. 13–16.

comb used by Llio should be made from the bones of fish and stresses how it is superior to the wooden comb ('cribau gwŷdd').¹¹¹ Not only does this tell us about society's everyday objects, but further emphasizes Llio's wealth and status. Once again however, the association with the negative connotations attached to a woman's hair is unavoidable as we recall the portrayals of Lust as a noble woman.¹¹² The image might well be rebuking women for taking too much time over their appearance. On the other hand, women of the period would not be expected to appear in public with *uncombed* hair and Dafydd stresses that Llio is not to use a cheap comb. The ambiguity is extended further as we find that Llio's effort to adorn her hair appeals to the poet on a sexual level while confirming her status as a virgin.

If these references to combing and dressing the hair are supposed to draw attention subconsciously to Llio's vanity, the comparisons with the hair of other virtuous women shift the attention from chastisable vanity to praiseworthy virtue and returns the focus to her good nature as the poet subtly praises Llio's virginity through mentioning the Virgin Mary and St David's mother Non. (As discussed in Part One, these are two saints who also gave birth.¹¹³) This second section begins with 'manwallt' (*fine hair*), the fine hair found especially at the back of the neck, 'mal am war Non' (*like on the nape of Non's neck*).¹¹⁴ We learn that Llio has abundant hair like the famous statue of the Virgin Mary at the Cathedral in St David's ('Mair o Fynyw') and if we remember the discussion in Part One, we recall that the poets would often single out Mary's long blonde locks on the medieval

¹¹¹ *OBVV*, no. 81. 14.

¹¹² Roberta Milliken states that 'another testament to the alluring quality of a beautiful woman's hair can be seen in the consideration of the skilfully carved and handsomely decorated combs that were given to women presumably by their suitors', see Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 48.

¹¹³ See Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 129–130.

¹¹⁴ *OBVV*, no. 81. 19.

Welsh statues of this saint.¹¹⁵ But even in this section, the reference to the mermaid's hair reminds us of the belief that women were creatures of lust, as the comparison with Non is daringly, or jarringly, combined with the hair on the breasts of the mermaids, a much more erotic simile. The location of the hair and the focus of the poet's interest is significant. The change in location indicates a shift in meaning. The hair on the neck might perhaps refer to fair, fine, baby-like hair appearing from underneath a headdress, while the hair on the mermaids' breasts is displayed not only loosely but also overtly. Bearing in mind the long-standing idea of mermaids as vain and dangerous beings who tempt men, here again we cannot avoid recognizing society's complex demands on women and the task facing them to be both virtuous and beautiful, appealing to men with their virtues (including beauty) without drawing them into temptation.¹¹⁶ The imagery of mermaids and the associated symbolism of women who are out of reach might hint towards unrequited love in Dafydd Nanmor's poem to Llio's hair. This is, however, not to the same degree as the rejection suffered by Dafydd ap Gwilym at the hands of Morfudd and Dyddgu, and does not therefore reach the profound anguish of the 'Gwewyr Serch' theme found in the majority of the other poems belonging to this group. The comparison eventually shifts back to safer ground with Michael the Archangel:

Mae ar ei phen, mor hoff yw,
Mawr fanwallt Mair o Fynyw.
Mae'r un wallt, mal am war Non,
Ar fronnau'r môr forynion.
Mihangel sy walltfelyn,
Ag un wallt ag ef yw 'ryn.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Poets often refer to Mair o Fynyw in their work, see *LIU*, 217.

¹¹⁶ See Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 123–133.

¹¹⁷ *OBVV*, no. 81. 17–22. This fair and fine hair of the neck is praised by Siôn ap Hywel too, with the suggestion here that the woman's headdress in his poem is gold or that she is wearing a band of thick or heavy gold: 'Mae'r manwallt am war meinwen, / Mae aur ffyrf mawr ar ei phen' (*The fine hair is about the neck of the slender and white girl, / there is a*

(On her head, how loved it is, / A great abundance of Mary of Menevia's fine hair /
The same hair, like that of Non's neck, / is to be found on the mermaid's breasts. /
St Michael is yellow haired / and his hair is the same colour as that of my love.)

The section concludes with three questions that it is said a thousand will ask. The comparison in the first question is difficult to understand as the poet compares the hair to the 'chawgiau' of the knights. 'Cawgiau' is found in *Owein* meaning 'dish' or a 'bowl', although this explanation does not seem to throw any light on the comparison here.¹¹⁸ The other two comparisons are not period-specific as we are presented with the image of a storm ('ai mellt nef?'), as valid in the twenty-first century as it was in the fifteenth. There is also a comparison between the hair and the ripe nut, suggesting on the one hand fertility as well as praising the golden colour of the hair. (Dafydd Johnston explained in his note to Iolo Goch's poem 'I Ieuan, Esgob Llanelwy' that he believes that this is a conscious echo by Dafydd of the same phrase in Iolo's work: 'ym mhllisg y gneuen wisgi.')¹¹⁹ Setting these descriptions in an imaginary 'dialogue' between the poet and alleged a 'cast of thousands' brings an increased dramatic element to this section of the poem and once again the colour and brightness of the hair are the two main features of this section. The punctuation of the Welsh in the *OBVV*, however, raises some difficulty. It would make better sense if the question-mark were after 'efydd' (*bronze*), since 'efydd' can hardly refer to the thousand questioners:

large amount of gold on her head). See, Siôn ap Hywel, *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth, 1999), no. 24. 23–24. See also B. G. Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects* (London, 1995), 129 and 263.

¹¹⁸ *Owein*, 4. 76. It also appears in the Second Branch of the *Mabinogi*, see *PKM*, 56. 11. See under *cawg* in *GPC*.

¹¹⁹ *GIG*, no. XVII. 63.

On'd un lliw y fantell hon
 Â chawgiau y marchogion?
 Mal efydd, mil a ofyn,
 'Ai melltt nef?' am wallt fy nyn;
 'Ai plisg y gneuen wisgi,
 Ai dellt aur yw dy wallt di?'¹²⁰

*(Isn't this cloak the same colour / as the basins of the knights / like bronze?
 A thousand ask, / 'Is it heaven's lightning?' about the hair of my love / 'Is it
 the shell of the ripe nut, / Is your hair golden splinters?')*

The third section shifts into narrative mode with a verb in the past tense 'doeth'.¹²¹ Striking here is how the poet is surprised to see Llio 'bennoeth' (*bare-headed*) in the 'llan' (*church*). This would directly violate St Paul's instructions to women in I Cor. 11: 5–6:

But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

'Llwyn' and 'llan' are juxtaposed and in open conflict. The contrast (and indeed, by implication, a justification of St Paul's instruction) is emphasized by the next couplet, 31–32, in which the verb expresses a wish:

Llen gël a fo ei llwyn gwallt
 Am ein gwarau mewn gorallt.¹²²

(May her copse of hair be a veil of concealment / about our necks in the high land.)

The 'llen gël' is found in the poem to Ieuan, the Bishop of St Asaph by Iolo Goch already alluded to in this discussion (on the poem by Nanmor to Llio). The 'llen gël' in Iolo's poem to the Bishop was to conceal him if he went to Scotland:

¹²⁰ *OBVV*, no. 81. 23–28. A similar use of dialogue for dramatic effect is seen in another hair-related poem, where Siôn ap Hywel too turns to a similar technique when he remarks: 'Pwy lathreiddiach? Pleth rhuddaur' (*Who is more bright? A red-gold plait*) see *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel*, 23. 23.

¹²¹ *OBVV*, no. 81.

¹²² *OBVV*, no. 81. 31–32.

Adwy brwydr, od ei Brydyn;
Llen gël drosod a ddodaf¹²³

(*crisis of battle, if you go to Scotland; / I will put a concealing mantle over you*)¹²⁴

This echoes the ‘llen hut’ of the *Pedeir Keinc* which Caswallawn wore to enable him to kill Caradawc fab Bran and his companions.¹²⁵ Dafydd Johnston does not believe that the ‘llen gël’ in Nanmor’s work is an echo of Iolo’s poem but rather that both poems may be echoing the second branch of the *Mabinogi* independently.¹²⁶

Returning to Llio’s poem we find that the next couplet shifts back into the past with the verb ‘dodid,’ now in the imperfect rather than the preterite ‘doeth.’ The two plaits (‘dwy did’ and not the three as in line 12) are described as two tassels reaching to her heels: her hair is thus free, not bound and concealed under a ‘moled.’ In this section we find a reference to ‘llen’ (*mantle*), and later to ‘clog’ (*cloak*) and ‘sidan’ (*silk*) which show how the poet draws on textiles to heap praise on the texture and length of Llio’s hair:

Dwy did, lle i dodid awdl,
Dau dasel hyd ei dwysawdl.
Y mae’r ddwydid o sidan
Am Lio’n glog melyn glân.¹²⁷

(*Two ropes, a place to place an ode, / Two tassels as far as her two heels. / The two ropes of silk / Are around Llio like a pure, yellow cloak.*)

This section comes to a close with a continuation of the reference to the ‘padreuwau y padriarch,’ a description that coincides with the setting of the poem in a church and

¹²³ *GIG*, no. XVII. 60–61.

¹²⁴ *IGP*, no. 17. 60–61.

¹²⁵ *PKM*, 46. 5–6.

¹²⁶ See *GIG* no. XVII. 63n (p. 284).

¹²⁷ *PWDN*, no. XXIX. 33–36.

leads to the final section where the poet uses a remarkable repertoire of religious imagery, lending the section particularly rich descriptions of beauty.

The fourth section in continuing with the praise of Llio's golden hair perhaps recalls Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem to 'Mis Mai', where the second couplet notes that:

Dafydd Nanmor

Crwbyr o aur ban i cribai,
Pwn mawr o esgyll paun Mai.¹²⁸

Dafydd ap Gwilym

Paun asgellas dinastai,
Pa un o'r mil? Penna'r Mai.¹²⁹

The poem, painted throughout in golden hues, comes to an end with a dramatic reference to the contrasting colour of black, as the poet sets white against black in the penultimate line. While 'gwyn' (*white*) is here attributed to God in the sense of 'pure,' it resonates as a colour in the contrast with the 'black' of the second half of the line, and this in turn is in further contrast with the gold of the primrose we find in the final line. The poet rhymes the negative 'nid du i gwallt' with the compound noun 'frialluwallt' to emphasise the light shade of Llio's hair, and the 'briallu' (*primrose*) element in the coined word 'frialluwallt' (*hair of the primrose*) reminds the reader of the transience of a woman's beauty, as the spring flower will have disappeared by the summer. Importantly, the poem draws to a close pronouncing Llio's name once more and thus firmly associating these qualities with this particular woman:

Ni ad Duw gwyn (nid du i gwallt)
Farw Llio frialluwallt.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ *OBVV*, no. 81. 43–44.

¹²⁹ *CDG*, no. 32. 39–40. Translated on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 32. 39–40 as: 'Green-winged peacock of a court, / which one of a thousand? May is foremost'.

¹³⁰ *OBVV*, no. 81. 53–54. The evocation of death in these closing lines led Gilbert Ruddock to ask if the poem was a subtle protest against the 'canu angau' (*death poems*) although these comments could be seen as anachronistic, see G. Ruddock, 'Rhai Agweddau ar Gywyddau Serch y Bymthegfed Ganrif', 97: 'Tybed nad dyma lais rhywun cyfarwydd â'r

(God will not allow (her hair is not black) / the death of Llio of the primrose hair.)

Dafydd Nanmor's second poem to hair (and the fourth in the table) is to an unnamed girl, and in edited publications takes the title 'I Fun Felynwallt'.¹³¹ The poem opens with verbs in past tenses coupled with complaint between lines 1–8: 'Mi a welais... mawr yw kŵyn a'i kâr' (*I saw... great is the complaint of the one who loves her*); 'Oedd yn bennoeth' (*She was bareheaded*); 'Dyval i doeth... gwyllt haint' (*She came painstakingly... A raging fever*).¹³² It then shifts completely into descriptive mode, slightly relieved by 'rhoes' ('hrroes' in the edited text) at line 19.¹³³ It shifts back to complaint at line 29: 'Gweled... A wnaeth ym...' ¹³⁴ which echoes the initial 'Mi a welais' in line 1.¹³⁵ The heart of the complaint is in lines 35–36 with a feature of the other poems to hair already discussed: an address to God. The complaint is taken further in line 38 'Lleihav yr oes vav a vyn' before the final couplet expressing the poet's emotional state:

Nid oes hoydyl, dyn dwys ydwy,
Onis myn hi i mi mwy.¹³⁶

(There is no life, I'm a serious man, / Unless she wants me again.)

mynych rybuddio am ymweliad yr angau bach a'i allu i ddryllio pob ieuenctid a harddwch corfforol? ... Hoffwn awgrymu mai protest, ar un ystyr, oedd y blodeuo mawr ar y cywydd serch yn ail hanner y 15g, yn erbyn gwaith bardd o anianawd Siôn Cent, adwaith yn erbyn y morbidrwydd llethol... eithr cymerodd y brotest ffurf arbennig iawn, sef ymhyfrydu ac ymorchestu wrth ddisgrifio prydferthwch corff merch.' (*Is this not the voice of someone familiar with the constant warnings about the visit of death, and its ability to kill all youth and physical beauty? I would like to suggest that, on one level, the flourishing of the cywydd serch in the second half of the fifteenth century was a protest against the works of poets such as Siôn Cent, a reaction against a deadening over-religiousness and the frightening morality... but the protest adopted a very special form, namely delighting oneself and indulging in describing a woman's beauty.*)

¹³¹ PWDN, no. XXXII.

¹³² PWDN, no. XXXII. 1–8.

¹³³ PWDN, no. XXXII. 19.

¹³⁴ PWDN, no. XXXII. 29–31.

¹³⁵ PWDN, no. XXXII. 1.

¹³⁶ PWDN, no. XXXII. 39–40.

It is interesting to note that this poem broadly has the same form as the legal ‘cwynion’ where complaint is bound up with a narrative of the events that prompt the complaint.¹³⁷

The descriptive passage in the middle is almost entirely concerned with her hair. The key moment occurs when the poet is struck with wild fever when he sees this unnamed woman’s hair. The pain of the shock he feels upon seeing the hair bare and not covered is savage:

Y vun wen oedd yn bennoeth,
A’r evraid gyrs ar yr iad goeth,
Dyval i doeth i’m kalon
Gwyllt haint am weled gwallt hon.¹³⁸

(The pure woman’s head was naked, / And the golden stems on the fair forehead, / She came painstakingly to my heart / A raging fever for seeing this one’s hair.)

As in most of the fourteen poems including the one to Llio, here too the hair that causes the poet’s longing is of a golden colour with reddish over-tones, conjured by the reference in this poem to ‘sirian’ (*cherries*).¹³⁹ In order to emphasise the beauty of this colour, the poet draws upon a number of images already discussed in the other poems such as ‘evrllwyn’ (*thicket of gold*) and the ‘llyweth evraid’ (*golden lock*).¹⁴⁰ The poet might be suggesting an element of complaint in the section where he compares the particular shade of the hair to ‘avr Ffrainck’ (*the gold of France*) by using the past tense of ‘rhoi’ (*to give*).¹⁴¹ Perhaps there is a hint here that she arranged her hair to ensnare a man:

¹³⁷ See S. E. Roberts, ‘Plaints in Medieval Welsh Law’, *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 4 (2005), 219–261.

¹³⁸ *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 5–8.

¹³⁹ *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 4.

¹⁴⁰ *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 13 and 15.

¹⁴¹ *PWDN*, no. XXII. 20 and 19.

Hrroes dyn bengrech yn chwechainck
Lliw ar i ffrîw o avr Ffrainck.¹⁴²

*(The curly-headed woman gave in six branches / The colour on her head is
the gold of France)*

With this reference, we learn something of the commercial practice of the period and the international aspect of currency and exchange. The reference reminds us of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem to the headdress, where he mentions 'aur bwrw o gaer Baris' (*worked gold from the city of Paris*) where the 'avr Ffrainck' (*the gold of France*) was used to suggest that here we were dealing with the very finest material.¹⁴³ Beyond that which this reference tells us about the upper class medieval market and the colour of the hair, it could also be telling us something about the fashion of the period of wearing a gold net to cover the hair. Other poets too would revel in the opportunity to praise women by referring to their expensive head-coverings from the Continent, as Iolo Goch testifies in his poem 'I Ferch', where along with her fine eyebrows and pale skin, a girl's headdress too is praised:

Gwyn ei byd, gwen yw ei boch,
A wisg, fy nyn weisgoch,
Penwisg welw, ddyn ddiddelw ddoeth,
Penselgombr, peunes aelgoeth.¹⁴⁴

*(Happy is she, her cheek is white, / who wears, my red-lipped girl, / a pale
headdress, wise peerless girl, / a pennoncel of cambric, fine-browed
peacock.)¹⁴⁵*

The transparent nature of the headdress and the veil is carefully described in the section above as 'welw' (*pale*) and made from a piece of Cambric cloth, the delicate material made in Cambray in Flanders, and an indication of the international context in which this rank of society moved.

¹⁴² *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 19–20.

¹⁴³ See also dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 156. 22 and 24.

¹⁴⁴ *GIG*, no. XXIV. 53–56.

¹⁴⁵ *IGP*, no. 24. 53–56.

Returning to Dafydd Nanmor's poem we find that a similar headdress is mentioned, under which the hair is said to be kept, and here it is called 'lawnt', which is another example of fine French linen, resembling Cambric, but this time from Laon in France.¹⁴⁶ As well as describing the texture of the hair itself, the reference to silk, being an expensive commodity, would indicate to the audience that the poet considered the hair as highly valuable. The first reference happens in the descriptive section of the poem (lines 9–28):

Llwyn o sidan, a manavr,
Ar ben lloer wen, vn lliw â'r avr.
Evrl/wyn hir yw'r llwyn hoywryw,
Dyna lwyn tec dan lawnt yw!¹⁴⁷

(A shrub of silk and fine gold / On top of the pale moon, the same colour as the gold. / The beautiful shrub is a long golden shrub, / That is a fine shrub under fine linen!)

The second comes when the poem shifts back towards narrative and complaint in lines 29–32 where the poet's gaze may shift downwards momentarily to her 'mynwes.' This idea is strengthened if we turn to Ifor Williams's note with regard to 'kemyssav' as the plural of 'cwmpas' (*round, circle*) who thus believes it is referring to her breasts:

Gweled kemyssav galawnt
Is law i mynnwes o lawnt¹⁴⁸

(Seeing splendid circlets / of fine linen falling beneath her breasts)

Dafydd Nanmor's complaint is further expressed in the last three couplets of the poem with an address to God.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ *OED* 'A kind of fine linen, resembling cambric'.

¹⁴⁷ *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 11–14. Mathau Brwmffild in a love poem that praises the beauty of a woman named Sini also makes reference to this material as he describes Sini's fairness as being under the 'lien o lawnt' (*linen from Laon*), see Mathau Brwmffild, *Gwaith Mathau Brwmffild*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth, 2002), no. 19. 6n.

¹⁴⁸ *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 29–30.

Before leaving Dafydd Nanmor's 'I Fun Felynwallt', it is worth pausing to reflect on this idea of beautiful hair inspiring love on the one hand, and on the other not only complaint, but pain strong enough to bring about death. The way hair can be simultaneously associated with both 'good' and 'bad' qualities is often found in the Canu Serch in general (i.e. not only the fourteen poems that specifically deal with hair), almost as if the woman's hair causes confusion to the male beholder. But apart from the temptress/virgin duality, hair can evoke other conflicting qualities that cause consternation for the poets. In 'Merch Fileinaidd', Dafydd ap Gwilym, for example, scolded a golden-haired girl (presumably Morfudd), when he sang about her hateful nature:

Ni aned merch, dreiglserch draidd,
Felenwallt mor fileinaidd.¹⁵⁰

*(No yellow-haired girl (visitation of restless love) / was ever born so brutal)*¹⁵¹

Though we have seen golden hair as a quality worthy of praise, here we find the poet reproaching a woman with such hair (possibly for having hurt his pride), declaring that the woman should suffer because of the way she has caused him to suffer. Poignantly the punishment Dafydd ap Gwilym wishes on her is the destruction of her hair as he curses her with a plague upon her head. We shall see later in the chapter how in another poem, Gruffudd ap Maredudd delicately refers to Gwenhwyfar's skin after she had died from the plague, and from this we can gather how deeply hurtful Dafydd ap Gwilym's reference to the plague would have been

¹⁴⁹ *PWDN*, no. XXXII. 35–40.

¹⁵⁰ *CDG*, no. 144. 47–48.

¹⁵¹ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 144. 47–48.

for the society of the day and how the audience would have been shaken by the words:

Plwm a ffals, pla am ei phen!¹⁵²

*(Leaden and false, a plague upon her!)*¹⁵³

In another poem by Dafydd ap Gwilym known as ‘Disgwyl yn Ofer’ again we find the ‘golden-haired’ girl, despite the positive connotations of her colouring, accused of displaying negative traits as she leaves the poet waiting and alone:

O’r borau, ddyn goleuwefr,
Hyd anterth dan y berth befr.¹⁵⁴

*(From daybreak, bright-haired girl, / until mid-morning under the fair grove.)*¹⁵⁵

And in yet another *cywydd* where the poet is again engaged in dialogue with a fair-haired girl, we find how she is capable of expressing unkind words as she scolds the poet and rejects him in favour of a soldier:

Ystyr, Eigr, ystôr awgrym,
Is dail aur, a oes dâl ym
Ymliw glân o amlwg lais,
Em o bryd, am a brydais
I’th loywliw, iaith oleulawn,
A’th lun gwych, wyth liwne gwawn.¹⁵⁶

*(Consider, Eigr, a storehouse of meaningful looks, / beneath your golden hair, / whether there is any payment to me / (firm reproach in a clear voice) / face like a jewel, for what I sang / to your bright colour, brilliant language, / and to your fine form, eight times / brighter than the colour of gossamer.)*¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² CDG, no. 144. 54. With regards to the effect a plague has on one’s skin, Robert Henryson’s Middle Scots *The Testament of Cresseid* dwells on Cresseid’s leprous skin symptoms and contrasts them with her former beauty: ‘He luikit on hir uglye lipper face, / The quhylk befor was quhite as lillie flour’ see R. Henryson, *The Testament of Cresseid & Seven Fables*, ed. and trans. S. Heaney (London, 2009), 28.

¹⁵³ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 144. 54

¹⁵⁴ CDG, no. 146. 17–18.

¹⁵⁵ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 146. 17–18.

¹⁵⁶ CDG, no. 72. 3–8.

¹⁵⁷ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 72. 4–8.

We find Ieuan Deulwyn also singing to a golden-haired woman and reproaching her for ignoring him in his poem ‘I Ferch Sorredig’:

Gwen dawel ar gwallt melyn
Im hoes nim gwrendy am hyn.¹⁵⁸

(The quiet girl with the yellow hair / In my lifetime she will not listen to me about this.)

Ieuan Deulwyn is himself an author of two poems to hair (fifth and sixth on the table), namely ‘I Wallt Merch’ and ‘I Ferch ai Gwallt.’¹⁵⁹ ‘I Wallt Merch’ is unlike some of the other poems of this sub-genre in that it falls very clearly into two equal halves (lines 1–22 and 23–44). There is a strong suggestion that this is directed to a widow but only the second half praises the young widow’s hair and headdress. The first part is about the promise of an ‘oed’ she had made, the traditional conceit about its length, and the poet’s present penitential state – ‘poenwr’ (*sufferer*), ‘fy mhenyd’ (*my penance*) – with a final conclusion:¹⁶⁰

Ni bv finws neb fwynach
Nar rhiain ar ael fain fach.¹⁶¹

(Never was there a finer little lip on anyone / than the girl with the thin, small eyebrow)

The second part is notably unpenitential, not so much *gwewyr serch* as he describes himself as ‘llawen’ (*joyful*) and explains how ‘golud mawr yw gweled modd’ (to see (her) appearance is a great treasure).¹⁶² The final greeting and renunciation (41–44) matches the four lines at the beginning. Perhaps acceptance of his ‘penyd’ (*penance*) in the first part has led to joy at her loveliness even if no ‘oed’

¹⁵⁸ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIV.35–36.

¹⁵⁹ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, nos. IV and XIII.

¹⁶⁰ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 13 and 20.

¹⁶¹ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 21–22.

¹⁶² *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 25–30; 31.

(*appointment, tryst, assignation, 'date'*) is forthcoming, and the final courteous renunciation: 'Gan na chaf... hawddamor' (*Because I will not have it... farewell*).¹⁶³

We have already discussed how, in some cases, a widow would loosen her hair as a sign of her change in status. Ieuan Deulwyn does not make a direct connection between these things but opens his poem by describing the woman's clothing, suggesting that the subject of the words is a widow: 'y wraig wenn deg ar gown dv' (*the pure, fair woman and the black gown*) and then explicitly confirming this with 'weddw ddigon addwyn' (*a gentle widow*).¹⁶⁴ However, the evocation of the status of the widow might in fact be imagery for a nun. The subject of the poem is referred to as a 'ddwies' (*goddess*) and there is also mention of the 'cyffes santes y serch' (*the promise of the saint of lovers*).¹⁶⁵ This last remark is interesting as it could be referring to three things. Firstly, it could be a reference to the Welsh patron saint of lovers, Dwynwen. Secondly, it could be a description of the woman in the poem herself as a woman of religion. And thirdly, it could work as a description of a secular woman so beautiful as to evoke the image of a saint.¹⁶⁶

The first half of the poem focuses entirely on describing the amount of time the poet has had to wait for this woman whom he claims had promised to see him a second time. The reference to Guy of Warwick is interesting as the medieval audience would recall his unsuccessful quest for love, unsuccessful in that he is able to enter into the marriage he desired but becomes saddened due to the violent things he had to complete in order to achieve his quest in love:

¹⁶³ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 41–44. See *oed*^{2b} in *GPC*.

¹⁶⁴ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 2 and 4.

¹⁶⁵ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 6.

¹⁶⁶ For the poetry to Dwynwen, see Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 88–91.

addewis wen ddvwies iaith
 ymweled a mi eilwaith
 Os oed vn wythnos ydoedd
 blwyddyn am vn ddyn ym oedd
 pvm mlynedd pvm mil vnion
 pvm oes byd hefyd am hon
 poenwr wyf pa vn yw r ail
 ebwch Gai ar baich gwail
 ni chysgaf hun yn vn nos
 gan hiraeth gwn i haros.¹⁶⁷

(Gwen (the fair woman), a goddess among our race, promised / to visit me a second time / If it was the length of one week / For me, it was a year waiting for one woman / Five years, five thousand exactly / Five lifetimes also for this one / I am a worrier which one is the second / Cai's groan on the burden of rods / I will not sleep not one night / with such longing I know I wait for her.)

As mentioned, it is in the second half of the poem that we learn of the beauty of the woman's hair. It has already been noted how the poet refers to Guy of Warwick, and in the description of the hair itself he draws upon two other men associated with an unsuccessful, sad or violent love story, namely Tristan and Melwas. All three men fall in love with women who are wed or betrothed to others. The reference to Melwas in particular would evoke a more sinister tone where the audience would be reminded of how he kidnapped Guinevere. Here, the poet calls the hair '*Malevant's pavilion*' explaining how it stirs feelings of extreme love: 'pebyll melwas o draserch' (*Melwas's pavilion of great love.*)¹⁶⁸ The comparison evoking Tristan offers an insight into the dressing of the hair as he explains how the fine material 'lawnd' (already discussed in a poem to hair by Dafydd Nanmor) is placed over the beautiful hair, firmly suggesting that the woman is wearing a headdress: 'lwyn Tristan ar lawnd trosto' (*Tristan's thicket with the fine linen over*

¹⁶⁷ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 7–16.

¹⁶⁸ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 35.

it.)¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, this poet too draws upon the ‘gwiall’ (*wire*), suggesting that this piece of clothing is a heavy burden through the use of the word ‘baich’ (*burden*).¹⁷⁰ Drawing upon religious imagery and the setting of the sun, he describes the perfect way her hair is coloured, combed and dressed.¹⁷¹ Again, there is ambiguity where the poet might either be describing the crown of brocaded silk that she is physically wearing, or metaphorically describing the hair itself when he sings of crowns and craftsmanship: ‘Koron o bali kaerog’ (*a crown of brocaded silk*).¹⁷² He explains how the decoration placed on the headdress or the hair is graceful as he compares it to honeysuckle:

gweddaidd yw r tasel melyn
gwyddfid aur vwch gwddf y dyn¹⁷³

(The yellow tassel is modest / gold honeysuckle above the woman’s neck)

He then describes how if it were not for this snood, her hair would fall down to the floor:

oni bai fod ysnoden
ymhlith gwallt ymhlethav gwen
or iad tremyn avr tramawr
i doe y llwyn hyd y llawr¹⁷⁴

*(Were it not for a snood / amongst her hair, in the plaits of gwen
/ from the forehead the appearance of very great gold / the thicket would
come towards the floor)*

The poem comes to an end by playing on the common idea found in the poems of the century in question of wishing a long life to the object of the poem (‘hiroes’).

¹⁶⁹ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 24.

¹⁷⁰ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 14.

¹⁷¹ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 27–30

¹⁷² *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 27

¹⁷³ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 33–34.

¹⁷⁴ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 37–40.

Here this wish for long life is symbolically expressed by the notion of long hair:

‘Hirwallt ir neb ai harwain’ (*A wish of long hair to the one who carries it*).¹⁷⁵

The next poem for treatment, ‘I Ferch ai Gwallt’, is thoroughly humorous in tone.¹⁷⁶ According to the opening couplet, the poet is not going to greet the woman, though he later says that he had (line 49), but instead will ask for her for himself as a gift ‘rhodd’ and later ‘calennig’ (*New Year’s gift*). Due to its entertaining nature and the mention of ‘calennig’, we can suggest that this poem might have been designed as Christmas or New Year’s entertainment. The poem falls into two main sections with a four-line introduction. The concluding section is longer (lines 45–58) and effectively makes a third section. Only the first section (after the introductory 4 lines) consists of praise of her hair and headdress. Moreover, although most of it is focused on the head, at the end we have couplets on her neck (23–24), breasts (25–26), and hands and arms (27–28), thus echoing the ‘top to bottom’ scheme while gesturing more emphatically towards the ‘hair-poem’ tradition. The second major section (29–44) is devoted to the woman’s family: her father, mother, sisters and foster mother. The poet notes how even Prester John might have trouble getting their consent to a marriage with the girl. The final renunciation is mixed with playful abuse of the ‘siomgar Sais’ (*the deceitful Englishman*) and the poet also compares himself to Dafydd ap Gwilym.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 44.

¹⁷⁶ See for example, ‘ymgellwair’ (*to jest*), *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. IV. 47.

¹⁷⁷ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 50 and 57–58.

The first section describes how the golden plaits are placed on her head like two ropes: ‘aur ar ei phen ddwy raff hir’ (*gold on her head in two long ropes*).¹⁷⁸ By using the word ‘calennig’ (*present or new year’s present*), the poet expresses the idea of the girl (and her beautiful hair) given as a gift, and draws upon the folkloric material of the period in order to emphasize not only the beauty but the style of the woman’s hair:

Tebig yw r galenig lan
I edafedd gwlad Ifan.¹⁷⁹

(The fair gift is similar / to the thread of John’s country.)

The explanation of the ‘edafedd’ (*thread*) of John, the mythic Christian Priest-King who ruled over a vast empire in the East, is found in *Llyfr yr Ancr* where it is said that:

Y mywn brenhiniaeth arall yni ymae pryfet a elwir yn yn ieith ni
salamandre, ar pryfet hynny [ni] allan vot yn vyw namyn ymywn tan a
chrwyn a vyd yn ev kylch megis crwyn y pryfet awna ysydan, a nyddu yrei
hynny yw gweith arglwyddesseu yn llys ni, ac ohwnnw y gwneir pob ryw
aruer yn arderchogrwyd ni ar dillat hynny ny ellir eu golchi namyn ymywn
tan mawr kadarnn.¹⁸⁰

In another kingdom belonging to us there are animals that are called in our language salamander, and those insects cannot stay alive apart from in fire and skin that is around them like the skin of insects that will make silk, and spinning those ones is the work of the ladies of our court, and from that all kinds of custom are our magnificence and those clothes they cannot be washed apart from in a large, strong fire.

This ambiguous line perhaps referring to the wealth and brilliance of the hair itself on the one hand could also be offering another insight into the way women wore their hair. The reference to this expensive and exquisite thread would certainly lead

¹⁷⁸ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 14.

¹⁷⁹ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 15–16.

¹⁸⁰ J. Morris-Jones (ed.), *The Life of St David and other tracts in Medieval Welsh from the Book of the Anchorite of Llandewivrevi* (London, 1912), 168.

the audience to understand that the woman is wealthy and that great effort has been made in order to dress her hair with the finest material.

Once again we understand that the woman's hair is bound and, as in the other poems, Ieuan Deulwyn imagines how the hair would look if it were let loose. He explains how its brilliant colour would resemble that of the bonfire: 'perth fal y coelcerth' (*a thicket like the bonfire*).¹⁸¹ Unlike the other poems discussed above, Ieuan Deulwyn describes other bodily parts from the eyebrows to her arms and praises them as he contrasts her golden hair to her white, pure skin:

Vwch y feinael wych fenaïd
I hwyneb sydd yn debig
I iarllles fru aurlaes frig
Mwnwgl hir mewn golau ha
Mor ganaïd ar mur gwna
y ddwy fron nid oedd afryw
pob pronn fal y papur yw
dwylo cain lle nid el cwl
deuvraich Eunïd verch Yniwl.¹⁸²

(Above her brilliant fine eyebrow, my darling, / Her face is similar / to that of a noblewoman yonder, her hair long and gold / A long neck in summer's light / As white as the whitest wall / The two breasts were not degenerate / each breast is like paper / fine hands a place where a fault does not go / the two arms of Enid daughter of Yniwl.)

The praise to the woman's wealth becomes more evident in the next section as the poet moves on to describe her family. We learn that it would not be appropriate for even a king to ask for this girl and, as mentioned, it is said that Prester John would have trouble gaining the consent of the family for them to give this girl to Ieuan. We learn that she is of a noble lineage in Gwynedd, and her father

¹⁸¹ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 19.

¹⁸² *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 20–28.

is compared to the legendary figure Hu Gadarn, which draws an image of power.¹⁸³

The poet mentions his fear not only of her father, but also of her mother, her sisters and her foster mothers as he explains how he will need to make do with the mead: 'bo i mi r medd.'¹⁸⁴ He says how he will not attempt to ask for this girl on account of her protective family and that he will view her from 'hirbell' (*far-distant*):

Nid af i att fy rhiaïn
Iw gofyn rhag ofyn y rhain¹⁸⁵

(I won't go to my girl / To ask for her for fear of them)

A close reading of Dafydd ab Edmwnd's work, considered the expert in the field with five of the fourteen poems to hair in his name, offers further insight into this fascinating sub-genre.¹⁸⁶ 'Kowydd Moliant i Wallt Merch', the first in the edition of his work, is pure praise to an unnamed woman's hair and is the longest of Dafydd ab Edmwnd's poems to hair (and the longest in the sub-genre). The poem, for by far the most part, is set in the present and is to an unnamed girl, although we can gather that she was from Maelor.¹⁸⁷ We can group the poem in five sections. Lines 1–8 form the opening section with an extended image of the hair as flames and different forms of light and a focus on the brightness of the hair. The second section (9–28) consists of the main description of the hair where comparisons are predominately drawn with nature and set in the present (apart from lines 17–18 where the poem shifts momentarily to the subjunctive conditional). Section three (29–42) opens in the past tense with a description of the bees at work but then moves back to the description of the beautiful hair in the present. This section concludes with a wish ('o gawn' in line 41). The fourth section opens with a

¹⁸³ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 43.

¹⁸⁴ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 44.

¹⁸⁵ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XIII. 45–46.

¹⁸⁶ *LIU*, 333.

¹⁸⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 10

question and five more follow (similar to the technique used by Dafydd Nanmor in his poem to Llio) in lines 43–54.¹⁸⁸ There is a change in imagery in the opening couplet of the final section (55–64) where the poet turns to the battlefield to draw comparisons with the hair before closing the poem by explaining there is no other hair under the sun as beautiful as the hair of this girl.

The poem opens with a reference to the brightness of the hair by calling it ‘llwyn y goleuni’ (*the shrub of the light*) and the lustrous appearance of the hair is the focus of the opening remarks as the poet interweaves images of fire and astronomy together.¹⁸⁹ Both these images grow in grandeur as the poem develops. The hair is compared to a flame and this grows into a blazing bonfire. It is also compared to a ‘seren’ (*star*) before expanding the comparison to the Seven Sisters (Pleiades).¹⁹⁰ It opens with a description of the abundant hair as ‘pyst aur’ (*posts of gold*), which could be defined as a comparison to an erupting jet or to sunbeams.¹⁹¹ The latter would be an appropriate interpretation given that it coincides with the idea of the hair being so bright that it becomes a source of light:

A bric siric fal seren
 Awyr a pyst aur o’i phen
 Tan draic yn tywynnu drws
 Tair tid fel y Twr Tewdws
 Ennynnu bydd union berth
 O nenn gwallt yn un goelcerth.¹⁹²

(*And hair of silk like a star / in the sky and sunbeams from her head / the fire of a dragon shining over / Three chains like the Seven Sisters / They will be ablaze a straight thicket / from the top of the locks like one bonfire.*)

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *OBWV*, no. 81. 23–28.

¹⁸⁹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 1–8.

¹⁹⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 6.

¹⁹¹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 4.

¹⁹² *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 3–8. Mark Williams also discusses the imagery used in this passage in M. Williams, *Fiery Shapes: Celestial Portents and Astrology in Ireland and Wales 700–1700* (Oxford, 2010), 138.

In this opening section, the use of the metaphor of ‘tid’ (*chain*) is also seen, found too (as discussed above) in Dafydd Nanmor’s poem to Llio. Dafydd ab Edmwnd uses this image twice in this poem to hair.¹⁹³ The first appears in line 6 and again in line 28.¹⁹⁴

A sense of holiness is conjured in the second section as he compares the hair to a ‘leng’ (*host, multitude of persons*) of angels and this religious imagery is extended with the reference to the ‘port euraid’ three lines later:

Pen yw o blu paun un blaid
Perth hir fal y porth euraid¹⁹⁵

(*A head of the peacock’s feathers all interwoven / A long hedge like the golden gates*)

This reference to the ‘port euraid’ (*golden gates*), found elsewhere in these poems to women’s hair is twofold, either referring to the gates of heaven or to the legend of the Virgin Mary’s parents meeting by the gates of Jerusalem.¹⁹⁶ This religious imagery is strengthened in the fourth section with a reference to the ‘maen bedyd’ (*baptismal font*) and to the ‘oleu r ffydd’ (*the light of the faith*) he sees on her head.¹⁹⁷

Returning to the second section, we find that the poet reveals that a goldsmith would be able to tell who owns this beautiful golden hair, implying its fame and quality:

¹⁹³ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 22.

¹⁹⁴ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 6 and 28.

¹⁹⁵ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 13–14.

¹⁹⁶ *Gwaith Syr Phylip Emlyn, Syr Lewys Meudwy a Mastr Harri ap Hywel*, ed. M. P. Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth: Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2001), p. 147.

¹⁹⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, XIV.49–50.

Pawb a wyr pe bai eurych
Pwy biau'r gwallt pybyr gwych¹⁹⁸

*(Everyone would know if he were a goldsmith / who owns the splendid,
brilliant hair)*

The reference to the goldsmith would evoke the idea that this woman was of noble descent and this is strengthened through the image of another expensive item, the 'bron belau', which *GPC* notes to be an ornament worn on breasts or a breast-shaped jewel.¹⁹⁹ Calling the woman a 'pennes' (*noblewoman*) would further add to the idea of wealth and nobility. Moreover, referring to expensive objects such as saffron would again conjure the image of the high status of the woman. Higher praise is given to the hair as it is compared not only to saffron, but to saffron placed on euphrasy, a plant renowned for its powers in healing the eyes and thus a further indication of how pleasant the hair is to view:

Saffrwm ar lyssau effroes
Sirian yw fal ser y nos²⁰⁰

(Saffron on euphrasy / It is bright like the stars of the night)

In this section too we find many references to a crown, perhaps suggesting that the woman was wearing a decoration or a headdress. This idea is strengthened if we turn to the references to 'gwiall' (*wire*), a wire that was placed in a woman's hair to keep it in place. This certainly suggests that it was occasionally bound. Note again the 'tid' metaphor:

Gwdyn gwefr i gyd yn gwau
golt yd fal gwiall tidiau²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 17–18.

¹⁹⁹ See *bronbel* in *GPC*.

²⁰⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 33–34. A similar comparison is made in a poem of unknown authorship in the *OBVV*, no. 64. 48 (p. 114): 'Sêr i ni, sirian y nos' (*Stars to us, cherries (or light) of the sky*).

²⁰¹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 32.

(A coil of amber, all enwoven / [with] wheaten gold like threads of wire)

and:

koron wiail kuyr newyd²⁰²

(A withy-crown [the colour of] fresh beeswax)

and:

koron o walt kuyr ne aur²⁰³

(A crown of hair like wax or gold)

The idea of the hair being bound and decorated becomes clearer if we turn to line 40 where we find the word ‘ruymo’. *GPC* notes that it can specifically mean ‘to encircle with a band’ which would coincide with the possibility that the ‘gwiall’ and ‘koron’ are a reference to a decoration in the hair, a band of gold.²⁰⁴ The section comes to an end with the poet expressing what would be seen if this hair were to be let loose:

ysgub fanadl mair fadlen
yw r imp aur i ruymo r pen
Ac yn ryd o gaun ruydwalt
yn aur i gyd own or gwalt²⁰⁵

*(the shoot of gold to bind the head is (like) Mary Magdalen’s sheaf of broom
/ And free, from the reeds of flowing hair, / It would be all golden, a gown of
hair)*

Recalling the discussion in Part One with regards to Mary Magdalene’s hair, it is of interest that the poet draws attention to this Biblical character in his poem. We learnt how Mary Magdalene’s hair became inextricably linked to any portrait of her and how it was a strong presence throughout the period. Although her hair is a marker of her beauty, it is also what reminds us that she once was a prostitute.

²⁰² *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 60.

²⁰³ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 42.

²⁰⁴ See *ruymo* in *GPC*.

²⁰⁵ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 39–42.

The fourth section consists of a list of questions, a technique we saw in Nanmor's poem to Llio. But here the number of questions has nearly doubled:

Ai dwy gofl ydyw y gyd?

(Is it two embraces?)

Ai dau wryd?

(Is it two outstretched arms?)

A fu lwyn cyn felyned?

(Has there been a hedge as yellow as this one?)

Ar pryd ymarn y prydidd
Yw'r aur ar hwnn pan fai yn rhydd?
Ai lewych noswyl Ieuan,
A'i frig yn debig i dân?²⁰⁶

And the beauty, so deems the poet, / is the gold[en hair] on the head when it is unbound, / is it a bonfire on midsummer's eve, / with its crest like flame?

In Dafydd ab Edmwnd's work, we find how the genre becomes self-referential, as further evidence of Nanmor's influence can be seen in the next and final section where there are strong echoes of the poem to Llio's hair, with the following couplet offering almost the exact same wording:

Dafydd ab Edmwnd

Krwybr aur ban i kribai
pwn maur o ysgub paun mai²⁰⁷

Dafydd Nanmor

Crwybr aur, ban i cribai,
Pwn mawr o esgyll paun Mai²⁰⁸

Similarly, as already noted, Dafydd ap Gwilym's words in 'Mis Mai' relates:

Paun asgellas dinastrai,
Pa un o'r mil? Penna'r Mai²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 43; 44; 48; 51–54.

²⁰⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 57–58. Translated as: 'Gold honeycomb when she combed it / a large load of a sheaf of May's peacocks'.

²⁰⁸ *PWDN*, no. XXIX. 43–44. Translated as: 'Gold honeycomb, when she combed it, / A large load of the wings of May's peacocks'.

²⁰⁹ *CDG*, no. 32. 39–40.

*(Green-winged peacock of a court, / which one of a thousand? May is foremost)*²¹⁰

The poem comes to an end with the poet wishing that the beauty of this hair will never be lost:

A ro i lwyn reol einioes
Ryw lwyn dan yr haul nid oes²¹¹

(And give to the thicket the rule of a lifetime / There is no other thicket like this one under the sun)

The second poem by Dafydd ab Edmwnd, ‘Kowydd ir Gwalld’ is again lengthy and consists of 62 lines. Similar to Ieuan Deulwyn’s poem, it is humorous in its tone as the poet plays upon the *gwewyr serch* theme. It falls into two categories, with the first section (1–16) dedicated to the poet’s pain and the second section (17–62) dedicated to praising the hair. Within the second section, a number of smaller groups can be identified through the use of *cymeriad*, for example the *cymeriad* ‘ll’ in lines 21–28, ‘m’ in 33–39 (apart from line 36), ‘k’ in 49–52 (with the *cymeriad geiriol* ‘kwriiad’ in lines 50–52).²¹² The first section moves from past to present tense as the poet explained how he had loved a girl but that she still causes him pain.²¹³ The second section is entirely in the present, praising the girl’s beauty, apart from line 47 which is in the past (‘edrychais ni fynais fwyd’) before returning to the poet’s present state in the final couplet.

²¹⁰ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 32. 39–40.

²¹¹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XIV. 63–64.

²¹² *Cymeriad geiriol* is where the same word is used at the beginning of each line.

²¹³ ‘a gerais’ (*I loved*) in *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 2; ‘a ffa raid oedd lladd i ffrydydd’ (*and what need was there to kill her poet*), *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 10.

The poem opens with reference to the poet's deep pain, having been rejected by this girl, and how he is going to 'farw oi chariad' (*die from loving her*).²¹⁴ He thus explains that she not only holds his fate in her hands but goes as far to say that she has killed him, and one cannot escape the self-deprecation and comical tone here reminiscent of Dafydd ap Gwilym, as we imagine the poet reciting the poem perhaps in the presence of the said woman:

Fy lladd heb ymladd i bydd
A ffa raid oedd lladd i ffrydydd²¹⁵

(*She will kill me without a fight / And what need was there to kill her poet?*)

The unmistakably humorous tone of the question at the end of the above quotation suggests that this was a highly amusing poem as the poet describes how the woman changed her mind and left him bereft.

Throughout the poem, Dafydd ab Edmwnd is careful to mix his exuberant praise of the woman's hair with subtle references to virginity and religion. Here too, comparisons are drawn with Non 'dann lwyn aur dyn o liw non' (*under the copse of a golden woman, the colour of Non*) and there is also a direct reference to a nun:²¹⁶

llen o des a lleian yw dwyn
llirig yw lliw r gadwyn²¹⁷

(*a mantle of sunshine, and a nun to carry it, / The colour of a chain [of ringlets] is a mailcoat*)

As seen in other cases, here too there are hints here that seeing the woman without her headdress and with her hair let loose is exceptional. This idea of releasing something that should be covered is the catalyst for the feelings of love and of lust,

²¹⁴ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 4.

²¹⁵ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 9–10.

²¹⁶ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 15.

²¹⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 27–28.

and it is what enables Dafydd to praise both the hair when it is bound and to explain how it looks ‘pan ollynger’ (*when it is released*).²¹⁸ Throughout this section, the ambiguous metaphors could either be referring to the hair or to the decorations on the headdress. The ‘llwyn sidan’ (*silk thicket*) for example could be both referring to the shiny, transparent and delicate material of the veil or headdress and to the hair itself, and the ‘cadwyn’ (*chain*) also could be referring to the hair or to a thread or chain attached to it. References to the ‘tes’ (*sunshine*) could either be a way of describing the colour of the hair or the material with its transparent appearance, or both. Either way, drawing attention to the imagery of the transparent delicate veil, possibly covering her face as well as her hair along with the mention of an angel paints a picture of a virtuous, virginal woman. We remember too the direct reference to the nun, mentioned above:

llen yw ai ffen hyd i ffer
 lliw angel pan ollynger
 lliw gobled dan foled fan
 llinos ydyw r llwyn sidan²¹⁹

(It is a cloak from her head to her ankles / the colour of an angel when it is released / the colour of a goblet under a fine hood / the silk thicket is a linnet)

Furthermore, the reference to the medieval ‘snoden’ (*snood*) offers a picture as detailed as any modern day fashion photograph of the hairstyles of the Middle Ages, as he describes how the hair, resembling wheels of gold, is placed inside this fashionable net. The ribbons in the hair and the reference to the net made by specialist craftsmen suggests that she was not a genuine nun, as these decorations would certainly be inappropriate for a woman of any such religious status.²²⁰

²¹⁸ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 24.

²¹⁹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 23–26.

²²⁰ These special craftsmen are noted in the French *Livres des Métiers*. See M. Scott, *Medieval Clothing and Costumes: Displaying Wealth and Class in Medieval Times* (New

Instead, it reminds us that she is a noble woman, wealthy enough to be able to acquire the services of such craftsmen. These craftsmen would use silk and a special needle to create rows of knots to be placed over the plaits.

mae snoden i wenn o aur
am olwynion melynaur²²¹

(There is a snood of gold for the fair one / around yellow-gold wheels)

Dafydd then praises it for appearing as a ‘garlwm aur a gwrlwyd’ (*A gold stoat having been curled*).²²² This is a careful choice of words as ‘carlwm’, a predatory creature from the weasel family, is known to have reddish toned hairs in the summer, turning white in the winter. Thus, the poet might well be suggesting that these red-hued curled hairs will not be this colour forever and so expresses the transient nature of a woman’s beauty. By using the word ‘cwrlwyd’ (*curled*) as a catalyst, he turns to the stylistic feature of the *cymeriad geiriol* to praise other parts of the body, brushing past them in a condensed version of the tradition of praising a woman in detail from head to toe:

Kwrliad ywch dau lygad lan
Kwrliad ar dal gwasdad gwyn
Kwrliad nis mwynha kerlyn
Hardd ywr to n kiddio lliw r kann
Hyd dwy sowdl het o sidan²²³

(A curl above two bright eyes / A curl on a flat white forehead / A curl that a churl does not enjoy / The roof that hides the colour of a white-skinned girl is beautiful / A hat of silk down to two ankles)

As the poet develops this imagery of beauty, we face ambiguity with a number of references such as the ‘het o sidan’ (*hat of silk*) quoted above, either referring to the

York, 2004), 26 and E. Dixon, ‘Craftswomen in the ‘Livres des Métiers’’, *The Economic Journal*, 5 (1895), 209–228.

²²¹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 39–40.

²²² *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 50.

²²³ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 50–54. Towards the end of the poem, hair as a cloak to hide something is expressed again ‘knwd gwallt yn kiddio knawd gwyn’ (*a crop of hair covering white flesh*) *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 58.

hair itself or the headdress. In this section we learn too something of the hairstyle of the hair with the word ‘to’ (*roof*) suggesting how the hair framed the face. This is also an opportunity for the poet to praise the woman’s virginity as we learn how her hairstyle covers her pure, white skin.²²⁴ It is by referring to her white skin and golden hair that the poem comes to an end with another remark about the poet’s pain:

Gwenn am hon gwn ymhenyd
Ag ond i ffen gwenn i gyd²²⁵

(*Pure for this one, I know my pain / And apart from her hair, she is entirely white*)

The third poem of Dafydd ab Edmwnd’s five, known in the edited version as ‘Llyma Gowydd y Gwallt Melyn’ is shorter than the two already discussed and consists of 40 lines.²²⁶ It is mostly in the present tense in terms of describing the beauty of the hair with only the last line belonging to the *gwewyr serch* theme as it closes by explaining that the poet, having seen the woman with the beautiful hair, was not able to have her.²²⁷ In praising the woman’s hair, it focuses on three things, namely her beauty, her nobility and her fertility, and it relies heavily on the agricultural image of ploughing and preparing the land in the second section to convey this last attribute (lines 17–34).²²⁸ The first section (lines 1–16) introduces the subject and her beautiful hair, and the poet praises both her hair and her pale skin (a symbol of virginity). He also calls her a ‘merch hardd ddiwair fain’ (*a slender, beautiful, virginal girl*). There are hints in the first section that perhaps her hair is bound, as the poet explains that:

²²⁴ For another example, see *PWDN*, no. XXXIII.

²²⁵ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXI. 59–60.

²²⁶ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII.

²²⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 39–40.

²²⁸ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 17–34. See also Payne, ‘Cwysau o Foliant Cyson’, 17.

A mwyn yr aur mewn yr iad
Au lliw megis y llauad
Mae gwalld a gudd deurydd dyn²²⁹

(And the gold at the crown of the head is fair / (and the colour of her skin is like the moon) / there is hair that can hide a girl's cheeks)

Yet the following couplet could be describing the hair being covered by a headdress or used metaphorically to describe the hair itself. The reference to the summer also offers an opportunity for the poet to play upon different seasons and the use of the image of snow probably refers to her skin:

Krefft o aur rydd kreftwyr haf
Au gweawdd val eiry gaeaf²³⁰

(The skill of (working) red gold by summer's craftsmen / who wove it like the snow of winter)²³¹

The ambiguity in terms of whether the poet is referring to hair or headdress continues into the second section where we are faced with an extended comparison of a ploughman preparing the field to the fertile, arable land. The second section opens with a description of the handmaiden who painstakingly creates a gold covering for her hair is preparing the style of the hair itself. With this section we are introduced to the theme of ploughing, starting with the 'llafur' (*the work*) and the 'cyfair' (*an acre, a day's ploughing*). Next comes the 'brynar' (*fallow land*) that links back to the 'gwe o frwyn' (*web of rushes*) in the previous couplet. The hair (or headdress), however, is not fallow land but a hill of red gold:

Llavuriawdd y llaw vorwyn
Gyvair aur, nid gwe o vrwyn
Yn gwysau, bei dangoswn.
Bryn aur rudd yw brynar hwn.
Naw radd wrth ei frynaru

²²⁹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 7–10.

²³⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 11–12.

²³¹ In order to get this translation, the orthography has been modernized to: 'Crefft o aur rydd kreftwyr haf / A'i gweawdd fal eiry gaeaf'.

Ar iad y ferch euraidd fu.²³²

(The hand-maiden laboured / an acre (or a day's ploughing) of gold (not a web of rushes) / in furrows, If I showed it. / A red-gold hill is this fallow land. / There had been nine degrees as it was prepared / on the crown of the head of the golden girl.)

After the hard work in preparing the field (or the hair in this case), then comes the planting. The poet explains how on this 'ar' (*arable land*), gold has been planted:

Tir ar tew i oraurad
Ar yr ar hwn aur yw'r had
Hewyd molwyd aur melyn
Garddaidd o wallt ywch grudd dyn²³³

(Arable thick its gliding / On this ploughed land, the crop is gold / Yellow gold was planted, was praised. / A gardenful of hair above a woman's cheek)

The theme of planting and growth could be seen as a metaphor for the importance of the woman's fertility. We have already discussed how the hair was seen as a symbol of the ability to provide heirs and this is explicitly stated in the next section where the poet wishes that she should provide offspring ('etifeddiaeth'), playing on the growth of the hair and the growth of the family: 'O tyf iddi etifeddiaeth' (*Oh let offspring grow in her.*)²³⁴

The final section (35–40) turns to the poet himself and how he has not succeeded in having this girl. He turns to other parts of her body in these final three couplets such as her thin, fine eyebrows. Furthermore, the reference to 'lliw mil o ganwyllau mair' (*the colour of a thousand of Mary's candles*) would not only emphasise the beauty of the colour of the hair through the golden colour of the flame of the candles, but by the very mention of the Virgin Mary, it would also hint

²³² *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 17–18.

²³³ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 23–26.

²³⁴ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 27.

towards her good and pure nature (the whiteness of her skin praised through the mentioning of the wax of the candles).²³⁵ Alas, the poet ends his poem in this sorry state:

Gwae a welas dyn gulael
A baich o aur heb i chael²³⁶

(Woe that I saw a lady with thin eyebrows / And a load of gold, without having her)

The fourth poem in this sub-genre by Dafydd ab Edmwnd, ‘Kowydd Merch’ is the shortest yet of his work and consists of 36 lines of praise to an unnamed woman’s hair, though we can assume that she is a woman of high status as the poet calls her a ‘iarlles’ (*noblewoman*) in the first line.²³⁷ Like Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem, it opens in the past by explaining how Jesus has given this unnamed woman beauty in abundance:

Iessv hael a roes i hon
o degwch mwy no digon²³⁸

(Generous Jesus gave this one / more than enough fairness)

The rest of the poem is in the present tense with one line in the imperfect subjunctive as the poet expresses his wish that she should be for one hour without her headdress: ‘o bai unawr yn benoeth’²³⁹ (*oh were she for one hour without her headdress*), and he is saddened that a thing of such beauty is hidden away from the poet’s sight. The restrictive words of ‘caets’ (*cage*) and ‘baich’ (*burden*) demonstrate this as does the use of the word ‘cuddiaw’ (*to hide*), all of which echo earlier examples where the fact that the hair is not flowing and free acts as a barrier between the poet and the woman. But here too we may also raise further questions

²³⁵ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 39.

²³⁶ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXII. 39–40.

²³⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 1.

²³⁸ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 5–6.

²³⁹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 28.

about the style of the hair. Let us consider ‘ai roi yn faich ar y ddyn fwyn’ (*and placing it like a burden on a gentle woman*). This could indeed be referring directly to the weight of the hair and the physical burden it placed on the woman herself.²⁴⁰ There is a clearer reference here perhaps to hair being placed on the woman, and we can interpret this to be some kind of false hair extension. In the case of the image portrayed through the word ‘cuddiaw’ (*to hide*), we are presented with a woman whose hair is so abundant that it covers her cheeks:

dros i devrvdd iw chvddiaw
lloweth yn ddwybleth a ddaw²⁴¹

(*Over her two cheeks to hide her / comes a lock in two plaits*)

This could also be a reference to the popular style where the hair would be plaited and form two clusters on each side of the face, covering the ears, and therefore overlapping on to the cheeks. This in turn would then be covered with the decorated net that we have already come across, known as the snood:

Ai osod mewn ysnoden
Fal i doeth o foled wen²⁴²

(*And placing it in a snood / As it came from a white hood*)

The poem comes to a close with the poet expressing his love for the woman:

Mewn gwisg nefol im Golwg
Fenaid yw y fvn ai dwg.²⁴³

(*In clothing heavenly to my sight / The girl who possesses them is my soul.*)

The final and shortest poem to hair by Dafydd ab Edmwnd (only 28 lines) is attributed to Dafydd ap Gwilym in numerous manuscripts (fifteen in total, with only four attributing it to Dafydd ab Edmwnd) and it is included in the *Dafydd ap*

²⁴⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 10.

²⁴¹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 15–16.

²⁴² *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 27–32.

²⁴³ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXIII. 35–36.

Gwilym: Apocrypha.²⁴⁴ The poet says that he is composing his verse a day after the feast of St John where he had seen a beautiful, pure and modest girl.²⁴⁵ Lines 1–6 serve as the opening section with general praise of the woman’s overall beauty, then the praise of the yellow hair comes in lines 7–24, and the remarks in lines 25–28 are the closing section which includes a question to the highest rank of poet, the ‘penceirddiaid.’²⁴⁶

The woman’s skin and beauty are praised in the first section as she is described as ‘deg o liw’ (*fair of colour*). Comparisons are drawn with nature and wine as her mouth and cheeks are praised:

Ai min klaerwin chwerthinog
Ai grvdd fel rossyn y grog²⁴⁷

(*With her laughing mouth like claret / and her cheek like the rose of the Cross*)

As Helen Fulton explained in her notes to this poem in *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, mentioning the peony (‘rossyn y grog’) would be an opportunity to describe both the woman’s pale complexion and rosy cheeks, comparing them to the white petals tinged with red.²⁴⁸ This first section sets the tone and offers an insight to this woman’s beauty before focusing the praise solely on the gold, abundant hair.

²⁴⁴ *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, no. 2 and for a brief discussion on authorship, see *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, p. 155.

²⁴⁵ Helen Fulton notes that this is referring to 6 May, see *Dafydd ap Gwilym Apocrypha*, no. 2. 2n, although she does not note which John (John the Evangelist or John the Baptist). According to Cheney, 6 May is the feast of St John *ante portam latinam*, and the suggestion is that it is John the Evangelist, see C. R. Cheney, *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History* (new edn., rev. by M. Jones, Cambridge, 2000), 76. Another of his feasts that was important was 29 August, after which the pigs went into the woods.

²⁴⁶ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 27–28.

²⁴⁷ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 5–6.

²⁴⁸ *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, p. 155.

She is compared first of all to a ‘iarlles’ and, as seen in Dafydd ab Edmwnd’s second poem, a comparison is drawn with ‘tes’ (*sunshine*).²⁴⁹ We then learn a little more about the hairstyle of this woman: her hair is in two plaits and they are described as ‘y dabl aur’ (*the gold ingot*).²⁵⁰ The poem then shifts to the imperfect tense as the poet expresses a desire featured in many of these poems for the hair to become undone:

O datodir hir yw hwn
Yr eilfed avr a welwn
Plethiad ar yr iad o rydd
Or gwydn avr egwydydd.²⁵¹

*(If it were undone – it is so long – / the gold plaiting which I could see, / a red plaiting on the crown of the head, / from the coil will come golden fetlocks.)*²⁵²

Fulton explains that ‘egwydydd,’ interpreted above as ‘fetlocks’ (i.e. the hair behind the pastern-joint on a horse), could also be a reference to a ‘fetter,’ and thus the poet is comparing the hair to the links of a chain.²⁵³

In the second section, in lines 15–18, the woman’s hair and her pure, pale skin are coupled together in praise:

Asgell arch angel felyn,
Aerwy o gwys ar eiry gwyn,
Gweled ei gwalld fal gold gwiw,
Gwail unllath ar gofl unlli.²⁵⁴

*(Yellow wing of an archangel, / a torque-shaped furrow on white snow, / to see her hair is a fitting wealth, / twigs of the same length on a breast of the same colour.)*²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 8.

²⁵⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 10.

²⁵¹ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 11–14.

²⁵² This translation comes from *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, no. 2. 11–14.

²⁵³ See *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, p. 156.

²⁵⁴ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 15–18.

²⁵⁵ *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, no. 2. 15–18.

Here we are told how the hair, like the ‘banhadlen,’ (the singular for the flower of the broom so frequently referred to in these poems) frames the woman’s face. This is followed by describing the hair as covering her breasts by using the description ‘bronbelau’ (already seen in the second of Dafydd ab Edmwnd’s poems to hair), and coupling it with a description of her hair, which is ‘lliw siopau Sieb’ (*the colour of Cheapside stalls*). The importance of this market place has already been discussed in the section on Ieuan ap Rhydderch and here too we find that the poet is able to imply ‘a flattering hint of metropolitan consumer sophistication.’²⁵⁶ By placing the woman’s golden hair in a description of this famous market place that accommodates craftsmen of the highest standard, he is able to evoke how well-groomed the woman’s hair is.

The third and final, shorter section opens with a question to the ‘penceirddryw’ (*the highest rank of poets*) in a variant of the forms ‘pony, pany’ used to ‘introduce a question which assumes an affirmative answer’.²⁵⁷

Pan na wyr y beirdd penceirddryw
Pwy biau’r gwallt pybyr gwiw?

(*Do poets of the penceirdd kind not know / who owns the fitting bright hair?*)

The second half of the final section is placed in the subjunctive with a wish on the poet’s behalf. The last line can be read in two ways. The version in the edited work of his poems reads:

Bid arnaf i yn ddiwg
Arddel dyn ir ddôl ai dwg.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, p.157.

²⁵⁷ See *GMW* § 196 (p. 175). See also *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, p, 157.

²⁵⁸ *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, no. XXV. 27–28.

This suggests a more aggressive meaning: he does not want to praise the woman's beauty for love but rather for sexual pleasure as he avows he will 'take' the woman in the meadow:

*Let it be for me gladly
To acknowledge a relationship with the woman and take her in the meadow.*

However, Fulton's version is more in keeping with the tone of the rest of the poem and reads as follows with 'dôl' being understood as a loop or a ring:

Bid arnaf i yn ddiwg
Arddel dyn o'r ddôl a'i dwg.²⁵⁹

*(Let it be for me gladly / to acknowledge the girl of the coil who bears it.)*²⁶⁰

The next poem takes us into the trio that belongs to the *cywyddau* of the late fifteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Bedo Aeddren's poem of 60 lines can be grouped into four sections. The opening section (lines 1–8) explains how the poet has suffered because of the love he feels for the woman with long blonde hair introduced in the first couplet. The next section makes up most of the poem (lines 9–38) and the sub-section with the *cymeriad* 'g' in 29–32 breaks it up a little. This second section shifts between past and present. It begins in the past ('oedd') but then moves to the present in line 19 ('mae') before shifting back again in line 24. Lines 26–32 are in the present and the poet turns to the subjunctive in line 36 to state his wish before closing this section with a further description of her hair. Section three (39–46) shifts to the past as the poet explains how, many times at mass, he has been as wicked as to keep an eye on the fair girl, wishing to have the girl and her beautiful hair:

Bûm ar llawer offeren
Mor ddiriaid â gwyliaid gwen²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, no. 2. 27–28.

²⁶⁰ Translation also in *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Apocrypha*, no. 2. 27–28.

But in line 43 we understand that when he had time to spend at leisure with the girl, though he promised her gold (and gave it to her), it was to no avail and he was left in a sorry state ('Pan gefais... laeser ar fy nyn... oferwaith fu').²⁶² The final section (49–60) focuses on the poet's pitiful condition and he finishes his poem explaining how he is grieving and without hope. Four places are mentioned in the poem: Gwynedd in the first section, Llanwynnog (Clodock in Herefordshire) and Llangwm in Conwy in the second, and St Davids in the final section. It appears that the subject of the poem has been in both Llanwynnog and Llangwm as the poet describes her hair as being 'yn Llanwynnog' and then 'yn Llangwm'.²⁶³ The reference to St Davids comes in the final section when the poet says that he would go there twice were it fitting (to seek the girl).²⁶⁴

The *cywydd* is exuberant in its description of the appearance of the subject's hair when it is released.²⁶⁵ We are told how it is carefully plaited together first thing in the morning before the cuckoo sings and the style he could be describing seems to be the popular fashion of the day where two plaits were braided, covering the sides of the face, with one plait placed across the forehead. Unexpectedly, this tells us about the architecture of the day as we find that we can simultaneously learn something about the vernacular buildings of the period and the hairstyles that were in vogue. We have already noted that Gilbert Ruddock lists 'roof' as one of the nine stock images in the poems to hair, and Alaw Mai Edwards draws attention to the poet's use of the verb 'toi' (*to roof*) in this poem, suggesting that it could be

²⁶¹ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, ed. P. J. Donovan (Cardiff, 1982), no. V. 39–40.

²⁶² *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 43–46.

²⁶³ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 26 and 34.

²⁶⁴ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 56.

²⁶⁵ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 13–14.

referring to a hair style ‘a oedd yn ymdebygu i do ar adeilad yn yr Oesoedd Canol’ (*that similar to a roof on a building in the Middle Ages*).²⁶⁶ Alaw Mai Edwards suggests that the ‘bariau cyriog’ (*bordered bars*) refers to an angular hairstyle, restricted in movement.²⁶⁷ Furthermore, the use of ‘bariau’ as something rigid, blocking the full picture, almost certainly implies some kind of sexual tension:

Addwyn oedd y winwydden,
A’r tair rhaff aur yn toi’i phen;
Eu plethu, cyn canu cog,
Frig cwyr yn fariau cyriog.²⁶⁸

(*The honeysuckle was gentle / With the three gold ropes roofing her head; /
They are plaited before the cuckoo sings, / In angular bars, hair of wax.*)

However, ‘angular’ is only one sense of ‘cyriog’ and we find that this word is problematic.²⁶⁹ Similarly, ‘bar’ can also mean either ‘head’ or ‘summit’.²⁷⁰ ‘Cwyr’ is problematic too as we know that it is often used as the simile for skin (especially the forehead). Although ‘brig’ is often used with the meaning ‘hair’ in these poems, the most likely translation would be to return to the proper meaning of ‘brig’ as ‘summit, top.’²⁷¹ In this example, perhaps it is best to repunctuate as follows:

Addwyn oedd y winwydden,
A’r tair rhaff aur yn toi’i phen,
Eu plethu, cyn canu cog,

²⁶⁶ Edwards, “Pen un wisg â’r paun o’r ne’!”, 46–47. See also Ruddock, ‘Prydferthwch Merch’, 148. In a shorter poem, Bedo Brwynllys makes a more explicit reference to the roof when he notes that ‘Duw a roddes do rhuddaur / Dy wallt fel newydd-do aur’ (*God gave you a red-gold roof, / Your hair like a new, golden roof*) see *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. XXIV. 7–8.

²⁶⁷ Edwards, “Pen un wisg â’r paun o’r ne’!”, 47.

²⁶⁸ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 9–12.

²⁶⁹ See Ifor Williams’s note on *Canu Aneirin*, l. 610n: ‘kwr e vankeirw am gwr e vanncarw’ in *Aneirin, Canu Aneirin*, ed. I. Williams (Cardiff, 1978), which Jarman modernizes as ‘Cwr ei fanceirw am gwr Bancarw’ and translates as ‘*Sharp are his spears around (am gwr) Bancarw.*’ See *Y Gododdin: Britain’s Oldest Heroic Poem*, ed. A. O. H. Jarman (Llandysul, 1988), p. 35 for the modernized version and p. 34 for the translation. See also *Llyfr Iorwerth: A Critical Text of the Venedotian Code of Medieval Welsh Law*, ed. A. Rh. Wiliam (Cardiff, 1960), §141 where among the implements of a smith are 1) ‘eynnyaun uaur’ (*a large anvil*) and ‘eynnyaun kyrrauc’, where ‘cyriog’ appears to mean ‘with horns’.

²⁷⁰ See *bar*² in *GPC*.

²⁷¹ See *brig* in *GPC*.

Frig cwyr yn fariau cyriog.²⁷²

This allows us to interpret the lines as if the poet is interweaving the head and the hair, so that ‘frig cwyr’ goes with ‘ei phen’ and ‘yn fariau cyriog’ goes with ‘tair rhaff aur.’ ‘Bariau cyriog’ is still difficult to translate, but perhaps the best attempt is as follows:

*The honeysuckle was gentle,
With the three golden ropes circling her head,
Plaiting them before the cuckoo sings
(her head the colour of wax) in projecting tufts.*

This different interpretation can be undermined but is offered here to illustrate the challenge of decoding the imagery in this body of work.

Because of the confined tone of the descriptions of the plaits, so much more is the sense of release when we are presented with the exuberant description of the moment when the hair is let loose in the next couplet:

Pan ollyngid y did aur
Oll yn rhydd fal llwyn rhuddaur.²⁷³

*(When the gold rope is released / they all become free like a red-gold
thicket)*

It falls down to her waist and here the emphasis on its long length coincides with the ideas of female beauty of which long hair was seen as the ultimate ideal. This is followed by a couplet with a reference to the peacock, often found in these poems to hair: ‘Pen un wisg â’r paun o ne!’ (*The head has the same clothing as the peacock from heaven!*). Drawing a comparison with the peacock would be a clear way of indicating a wondrous and magical appearance, but Alaw Mai Edwards interprets a deeper meaning:

²⁷² Here, I have changed the punctuation in line 10 from ‘toi’i phen;’ to ‘toi’i phen,’ in my attempt to translate the words.

²⁷³ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo* no. V. 13–14.

Tybed a wêl y beirdd debygrwydd rhwng y paun yn agor ei gynffon â merched yn eu harwisgo eu hunain â phenwisgoedd addurniadol ac yn trawsnewid eu gwedd? Ar yr wyneb mae'r trosiadau hyn yn ymddangos fel eu bod yn clodfori pryd a gwedd y ferch dan sylw, ond a ddefnyddir yr aderyn hwn, sy'n cael ei gysylltu'n gyson â balchder, i gyfleu'r union neges honno a glywir hefyd gan foesolwyr?²⁷⁴

(I wonder if the poets saw a similarity between the peacock opening its feathers and women dressing up with fancy headdresses and transform their appearance? On the surface, these metaphors appear as if they praise the appearance of the women in question, but was this bird, that is often associated with pride, used to convey exactly the same message that was also heard by the moralists?)

However, it is the male peacock that demonstrates its feathers in this way and based on the evidence of this thesis, it seems clear that these poets did not have such intentions and that the purpose of these poems was to celebrate a woman's beauty. Perhaps her wealth was also referred to when mentioning the peacock as its feathers would be sought-after to decorate garments. Furthermore, Bedo Aeddren was hardly in a position to moralize if we turn to the later sections of the poem when he explains how he has been looking at the girl many a times at mass:

Dymuno, dan do manaur,
Gael y fun â'r ddwy gofl aur!

(To wish, under a fine gold roof / to have the girl and the two golden bosoms!)

To praise the hair's reddish-gold colour, the poet draws upon exotic imagery with references to oranges and coral. These in turn remind us of the commerce of the day, where such goods would have been considered highly desirable amongst the upper echelons of society and out of reach of the peasants, thus stirring excitement no doubt amongst the audience. This is in keeping with the praise given to women in the Canu Mawl where the exotic contents of their kitchens and thus

²⁷⁴ Edwards, "Pen un wisg â'r paun or ne'!", 56.

their hospitality are often mentioned.²⁷⁵ It can also be claimed perhaps that such wondrous objects would add an element of mystery and enhance the perception of women as ‘other’. The element of surprise and wonder continues to the ‘goldwir’ (a wire placed in a woman’s hair to keep it in place), as it is so well hidden in the hair that it appears to create a magical illusion:

Gwisged aur, i’w gwasg y dêl,
Gwe o orins neu gwrel.
Goldwir a welir ar wen,
Gwawn hud ar ddyn ganheidwen.²⁷⁶

(A wisket (basket) of gold, it can reach to her waist, / A web of orange or coral. / A goldwire is seen on the girl / A magical gossamer on a white, white person.)

The final section turns to the poet’s sadness as he explains how he did not succeed in persuading this girl to be with him: ‘dibwyth im, diobeth wy’ (*I am without reward, I am hopeless*).²⁷⁷

The next poem is by Mastr Harri ap Hywel who differs from the other poets of the group in terms of his background. He was an important man of the church within the diocese of St Davids in the second half of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth.²⁷⁸ It was not uncommon for men of the clergy to sing to women, although as Bryant-Quinn explains, it is difficult to understand the motives behind this:

O feddwl bod gordderchaeth yn rhemp yn y bymthegfed ganrif, y mae posibilrwydd naill ai fod Harri, ac yntau â gradd yng nghyfraith yr Eglwys, yn esgeulus o safbwynt swyddogol yr Eglwys ynghylch dibriodrwydd y

²⁷⁵ See, for example, Huws, ‘‘Llawer dyn... / Â chywydd a iachawyd’’: Guto’r Glyn yr iachawr’ in D. Foster Evans *et al.*, *Cywyddau Gwŷr: Ysgrifau ar Guto’r Glyn a Chymru’r Bymthegfed Ganrif*, 283–303.

²⁷⁶ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 29–32. See also *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd* no. XXIX. 18: ‘lowri dan wyal irion’ and *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo* no. XII. 33: ‘Mae ar dâl ôl y wialen / Fal part o flewyn y pen.’

²⁷⁷ *Cywyddau Serch y Tri Bedo*, no. V. 60.

²⁷⁸ See *Gwaith Syr Phylip Emlyn*, p. 113–114.

glerigaeth, neu mai confensiwn yw'r cyfan, a bod y gerdd wedi ei chanu ar gyfer rhyw achlysur ffurfiol i anrhydeddu gwraig neu ferch noddwr, neu'r ferch ei hun, os hi oedd y noddwraig; y mae hefyd yn ddichonadwy fod Mastr Harri wedi canu'r gerdd hon dros rywun arall.²⁷⁹

(Considering that concubinage was out of control in the fifteenth century, it is possible that either Harri, with a degree in canon law, was negligent in terms of the official viewpoint of the Church with regards to celibacy of the clergy, or that the whole thing is a convention, and that the poem was sung at some formal occasion to honour a wife or daughter of the patron, or the girl herself, if she was the patron; it is also possible that Mastr Harri sang this poem on behalf of someone else)

The poem, however, does share some similarities with other poems of the corpus and attention has been drawn to the way in which Mastr Harri's poem to hair resembles that of Dafydd ap Gwilym's *cywydd* to Morfudd's hair, in particular the lines:²⁸⁰

Mastr Harri

Yn walc aur, annwyl y caid,
Yn goron, yn gae euraid,
Yn oldwir ar feinir fwyn²⁸²

Dafydd ap Gwilym

Yn grwn walc, yn goron wiw
Wyldlos, blethedig oldliw.²⁸¹

There is, however, plenty of innovative and original imagery in Mastr Harri's work as he plays upon the theme of giving and receiving. He opens by praising her fairness and beauty in sweeping terms, comparing her to legendary women such as Eigr and stating that there is no other woman who has even a third of her beauty. Here, another piece to our understanding of the society's value system can be added when we see that the poet places the subject of his poem above the women of France, suggesting that it was customary to believe French women to be of the highest rank. Her wealth and status are further praised in the description of her being 'dan gerrig araul' (*under precious stones*), which could refer to a crown or

²⁷⁹ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, p. 144.

²⁸⁰ See *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, 144.

²⁸¹ CDG, no. 114. 17–18. Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net: 'A rounded bush of hair, a fine crown, / graceful and pretty, pleated marigold colour'.

²⁸² *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 33–35. Translated as: 'A thicket of hair, dear it was found (to be), / A crown, a golden clasp, / A goldwire on a gentle girl'.

some sort of expensive jewels in her hair.²⁸³ He then explains how he has set about composing this poem to praise her, suggesting that he is greeting her in the form of a letter:

Gweddus a hoenus yw hi:
Gweddeiddais gywydd iddi.
Gwneuthum, tra fŷm mewn tref fawr,
Lythyr iddi, lathreiddwawr.
Ac yn hwnnw gan hannerch
A chomisiwn sesiwn serch.²⁸⁴

(She is fitting and joyous / I composed a cywydd suitable for her / I composed, when I was in a large town / A letter to her, brilliant dawn. / And in that I addressed her / with a commission of a love session.)

He then moves on to describe the hair itself. The precious jewels have already been noted, and in this next section we learn that the hair is covered in a ‘moled’ (*hood*) and once again the use of ‘goldwir’ (*gold wire*) suggests that the wire is used to hold the hair in its place. We understand that what is hidden under this headdress is beautiful, golden hair which is described as being ‘trinawtawdd’ (*thrice-nine-times refined*) and her pale forehead is also praised.²⁸⁵ Once more, the idea of beautiful hair as a divine gift is expressed, this time by saying that it was given to her from Christ’s holy heart:

Iesu Grist, o’i asgre wen,
A roes aur ar y seren.²⁸⁶

(Jesus Christ, from his holy heart / bestowed gold upon the star)

The mentioning of Christ prompts us to turn to the religious material in the next section of the poem where we hear talk of candle wax and crowns and angels, all giving an impression of the richness, wealth and abundance of hair on the one hand, whilst reminding us of Master Harri’s position as a clergyman on the other:

²⁸³ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 3.

²⁸⁴ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 11–20.

²⁸⁵ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 30.

²⁸⁶ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 23–32.

Yn llwyn o gŵyr, yn llen gêl,
Yn ysgáing, yn wisg angel.²⁸⁷

(A thicket of wax, a hidden covering, / A thread, an angel's clothing)

But unlike so many of the other poets, Mastr Harri is full of confidence at the end of his poem. Perhaps what makes him so confident is the fact that he has received a 'lyweth o aur' (*lock of gold*).²⁸⁸ Through the repeated use of the singular first person of the verb 'cael' (*to have*), we gather that Mastr Harri is sure that he will be embracing the woman in question and that he is confident that he will be greeted with a warm welcome, with the variant of 'croeso' ('reso', *welcome*) being used to denote this.²⁸⁹

Caf reso, caf air isel,
Caf win ar ei min a mêl;
Caf ddwyn ym llwyn melynaur,
Cael ym berchen coel o aur.²⁹⁰

(I will have a welcome, I will have soft words, / I will have wine on her mouth and honey; I will have for myself a yellow-golden shrub / And own a golden embrace.)

In the section to which the above quotation belongs, there are many references to Christianity. The Pope, the golden gates, Sunday, the earlier reference to Christ, angels, candle wax and the crown all hint to a religious setting. Perhaps this is not surprising when we recall Mastr Harri's vocation.

M. Paul Bryan-Quinn also notes that it is possible that the poem belongs to the corpus composed for nuns, and he bases this on the references to candle wax, the 'llen gêl' (*mantle of concealment*) and the 'gwisg angel' (*the angel's clothing*).

²⁸⁷ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 37–38.

²⁸⁸ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 46.

²⁸⁹ The variant is 'greso' and has undergone lenition here. See *greso* in GPC.

²⁹⁰ *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn*, no. 10. 52–56.

He believes that a poem to a nun by Mastr Harri would have been of interest to the scribe.²⁹¹ Under ‘llen gël’, he notes that:

Nid yw ergyd y ddelwedd yn eglur, ond os lleian oedd gwrthrych y cywydd, efallai mai cyfeirio’n gynnil at ei buchedd grefyddol a wna’r bardd drwy sôn am ei habid wen, y cuddir ei harddwch odani.²⁹²

(The point of the image is not clear, but if it were a nun who was the subject of the cywydd then perhaps he is subtly referring to her religious way of life through mentioning the white habit that conceals her beauty.)

However, if we turn to the other poems to hair, we see that we need not necessarily presume that the subject belongs to a religious context on account of such imagery as we know that ‘llen gël’ is often used to describe how the hair covers the face or cheeks of the woman, or how a headdress covers the hair, or indeed how the hair itself is so long that it can cover the lovers. The same can be said for candle wax, which no doubt has its roots in religion, but does not necessarily imply a religious setting for the poems themselves. Rather it may be simply a metaphor for the gold colour and shimmering beauty of the hair. In addition, we know from research by Jane Cartwright and Helen Fulton that it was not popular or usual in the period to sing poems to nuns.²⁹³

The last poem in this discussion is by Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog and, as the *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* edition demonstrates, it divides into four sections.²⁹⁴ The first section (1–10) addresses the woman herself (through the use of the second person) as do the third and fourth sections (29–40; 41–46). The second section (11–28) refers to her in the third person and is set in the imperfect tense as the poet concentrates solely on the praise of the hair. This is also the content of the

²⁹¹ *Gwaith Syr Phylip Emlyn*, p. 144.

²⁹² *Gwaith Syr Phylip Emlyn*, p. 147.

²⁹³ See Fulton, ‘Medieval Welsh Poems to Nuns’ and Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality*, 176–208.

²⁹⁴ See *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23.

third section (although back in the second person) whilst the final section focuses on the poet's pain as he realises that he cannot have this girl.

Huw ap Dafydd's poem opens by praising the colour of the woman's skin, and, as with the poem to Llio, it is described as the colour of the snow.²⁹⁵ The idea of woman being created or selected to be beautiful by God is once more expressed as he describes how she has been painted with gold before he places her in line with many other famously beautiful women along with the reference to Oswallt and his fair hair (discussed further in Part Three). The use of 'pentis' ('lean-to' or 'shed') could be used to describe the hairstyle itself similar to the image of 'to' (*roof*) already discussed, as the poet describes the way the hair would frame the head. Note also the mention of the mermaid and the provocative contradiction between the holy women and those who tempt men:

Wrth bentis aur y'th beintiwyd,
Dyn un wallt â Dwynwen wyd;
Chwaer i Wen, gymen gemaur,
Frewy, a'i gwallt o frig aur,
Neu bryd Oswallt manwallt mwyn,
O nef fry ne'r fôr-forwyn.²⁹⁶

(By a golden roof you were painted / You are a woman with the same hair as Dwynwen / Sister to Gwenfrewy, elegant golden gem / and her golden hair / Or the appearance of fair headed and gentle Oswallt / From the heaven's above or the mermaid.)

Language associated with clothing and textiles is evident throughout this poem. He tells how the hair has dressed him, probably referring to the same kind of idea expressed in the poem to Llio's hair when it was said that the hair was so long that it could hide the lovers: 'Gwisg addfwyn yw, gwisgodd fi' (*It's a gentle*

²⁹⁵ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 4.

²⁹⁶ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 5–10.

clothing, it clothed me).²⁹⁷ As the hair becomes a mantle of glowing threads of gold, the poet says that the gold, imported from no less a town than ‘Sandwig’ (*Sandwich*), is placed on the fine silk cloth, not only emphasizing the richness and wealth of the hair or the headdress but also indirectly praising the woman’s financial status. Once more, we are able to piece together an image of the wider society through learning about what they considered to be locations of importance.²⁹⁸ The poet extends the imagery of clothing and textiles further by cleverly playing upon the words ‘llurig’ (*coat of mail*), ‘mantell’ (*mantle*), and ‘aur edafedd’ (*gold thread*), again leading us to wonder whether these really are descriptions of the hair itself since they are more appropriately used to praise the headdress. The description of the ‘trwsiad gwallt’ (*hair clothing*) covering the ‘gwedd’ (*face*) more explicitly refers to a garment for the hair, perhaps some sort of veil covering the face. The imaginative use of the adjective ‘gwisgi’ (*light, lively, fair*) to describe its colour conveys not only its shiny, shimmering appearance but also hints at its light and fine texture. As he develops the use of textile imagery, the hair, or the headdress, is described as a ‘pais’ (*petticoat*) for the forehead that is holding the weight of a head-band or crown or some kind of decorated garland: ‘pais tâl yn dwyn pwys talaith’ (*a petticoat for the forehead bearing the weight of a crown*).²⁹⁹ The reference to ‘pais’ leads to the description of the famous virgin Tegau Eurfron and would immediately lead the audience to the idea of a virginal woman:

²⁹⁷ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 19.

²⁹⁸ See also: ‘a’r ail o Sandwis ar ael Syndal’, *GLGC*, 12.50. Translated as: ‘*and the second (sound/burst of song is heard) from Sandwich to the brow of Sandal (Castle, near Wakefield)*’. For the importance of the port in the period see T. H. Parry-Williams, *The English Element in Welsh* (London, 1923), 245.

²⁹⁹ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 24.

Tew gyrs o aur, Tegau'r sir,
Llathraidd o'r iad y llithrir.³⁰⁰

(Thick reeds of gold, the county's Tegau, / It glitters from the crown of the head as it glides.)

It is interesting that by the second half of this poem, the poet has turned back to greet the woman directly: 'Llyfnu dy wallt, aur llafnawg' (*to harrow your hair, blade-like gold*).³⁰¹ This raises questions about the way in which these poems were delivered, strongly suggesting that the subject of the poem was indeed present at its performance. After wishing a long life to the woman's hair earlier in the poem 'hoedl i wallt' (*a lifetime to hair*) a motive used in Ieuan Deulwyn's poem discussed above, the poet contrasts it to his woeful state as the poem comes to a climax when Huw ap Dafydd describes how he will die because of the pain he is suffering:

Yma fyth, gwen, am na'th gaid,
Wyf ym mhoen, nef i'm henaid!³⁰²

(Here forever, Gwen, because you were not to be had / I am in pain, heaven to my soul!)

Having examined the fourteen poems, what then do we learn from a study of women's hair within the Canu Serch? Most clearly amongst the findings is the central importance of a woman's hair in determining her beauty and that the praise of this bodily part also becomes a way of expressing many of the other virtues held as the ideal within medieval society. Firstly, time and again we see the woman's wealth and noble upbringing demanding a clear place within the designated praise. This is done in different ways, for example by subtly mentioning the practice of hairdressing whilst alluding to the woman's handmaidens and other members of

³⁰⁰ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 27–28. On Tegau see *TYP*, 503–506.

³⁰¹ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 35.

³⁰² *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 45–46.

staff at work, or by explaining the fine and expensive jewellery placed in her hair. The way in which the poets describe the headdress, albeit occasionally ambiguous, on the whole indicates that these women were 'good' women who covered their hair, the emblem of their sexuality, and furthermore noble and wealthy women who could afford fine materials. Despite the fact that the poets enjoy praising the women's locks, it is often unclear whether these women wore their hair loose or if it is just the poet's wishful thinking, but bearing in mind how long, blonde hair corresponded with the ideal of beauty, we can understand how the poet would be drawn to it. If the poet was using his imagination, and the women in fact had their hair bound (as the subtle references to the headdresses suggest), then this was a clever way of praising the woman's beauty as well as the other ideal virtues of the period, namely her virginity, chastity, wealth, and appropriate behaviour.

Similarly, evoking images of the Virgin Mary and other female saints such as Non, Dwywnwen and Gwenfrewy would emphasize the woman's beauty whilst also praising these other ideals. We recall the sometimes conflicting imagery associated with saints as discussed in Part One where we noted how these women were indeed usually portrayed with their hair covered but were also often depicted with long, blonde tresses. Recalling these famous, holy women would also be a way of praising the woman as devout, and this is further emphasized through suggesting that a number of the poems are set in a religious context, where reference to candles and candle wax are common. We remember too the purposeful comparisons with the Virgin Mary and Non, both saints who were mothers, thus strengthening the idea that hair is a symbol of a woman's fertility. This is emphasized with the constant praise of her ability to provide heirs or with the pleas of continuation of her

lineage and is expressed by playing upon the theme of seeds growing and flowering, offering ample opportunity to revel in the comparisons of hair to aspects of nature such as flowers, wheat sheaves, a blooming garden and so forth.

In this summary, a further aspect that merits attention is the audience for these poems and whether the poems had been commissioned or composed as ‘mere’ entertainment. This is an important distinction as it has been used as a method of identifying which poems belong to the formal Canu Mawl genre and which to the Canu Serch. A commissioned poem, it is believed, would have been recited in the presence of the patron, and we have found in the poems to hair a number of instances where the woman praised is directly addressed, suggesting that she is indeed present, and furthermore, instances of how her family members also feature in the praise of the poems, suggesting that they too were part of the audience.

A further marker of the difference between the two genres has been the very subject of hair, generally taken to be not entirely in keeping with the praiseworthy characteristics of the Canu Mawl. However, questions can be raised with regards to the validity of this perception, given that the ideal medieval woman did indeed need to be held as beautiful, and as we have seen, the quality of her hair was a measure of this beauty. In addition, the way these poems often portray the woman rejecting the poet’s request for love would have pleased the virtuous audience of the day, as this behaviour would have been a credit to the woman’s family, endorsing the image of the daughter, through and beyond the hair, as not only beautiful, but also pure even virginal, and thus certainly a ‘good’ woman.

In the next chapter, the focus will be on the role of hair in those poems that have been widely accepted as ‘true’ praise poems, i.e. poems that are believed to have been requested and listened to in a formal context, and because of this, poems that are assumed to include all the ideal virtues of the day and are thus the acceptable representation of society’s values.

Chapter Five: Hair and the Canu Mawl

i) Introduction

The poems collectively known as the Canu Mawl set out primarily to offer formal praise to their subjects. In these, the patrons would find direct praise of the ideal virtues of the day. Although the Canu Mawl poems to women may have been more formally acceptable, they are by far outnumbered by the poems to women in the Canu Serch. Nevertheless, despite being small in number the poems in the Canu Mawl are an important source for any study wishing to assess the way in which society viewed women. My M.Phil. thesis demonstrated a shift in content between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in this genre suggesting that this was a transition period where boundaries defining what was and was not appropriate were drawn.³⁰³ The main argument of the thesis was that it is possible to claim that women were themselves patrons of poetry. In this section, I will build upon aspects of that research and assess the role of hair within both genres.

A century before the main period of this enquiry, in the earliest court poetry, neither headdress nor hair is mentioned, despite many references to the woman's dress, its texture and its colour.³⁰⁴ Elisa Moras suggests that this is because the fashion in the thirteenth century was to cover the hair completely, and it was therefore nearly impossible for it to be praised even by the power of poetic imagination. Jones too offers an explanation for the lack of attention to the headdress itself:

³⁰³ See H. Hopwood, 'Uchelwagedd y Beirdd: Astudiaeth o'r Canu Mawl i Uchelwagedd (1300–1500)', MPhil thesis, Cardiff University, 2013.

³⁰⁴ See A. M. Jones, 'Pen un wisg â'r paun o'r ne!': Penwisgoed Merched yn y Canu Serch', *Dwned*, 19 (2013), 39–58.

Tybed a edrychid arni o hyd fel math o ddilledyn defodol yn hytrach na gwisg addurniadol a ffasiynol? Mewn gwirionedd, lliwiau a thecstiliau cain, ac nid y gwahanol eitemau o ddillad, a ddisgrifir fwyaf yn y canu hwn. At hynny, nid oes amheuaeth nad disgrifio harddwch naturiol mewn modd delwedol a chonfensiynol yw prif bwyslais y disgrifiadau o ferched yn y canu serch cynnar ac nid nodi'r datblygiad diweddaraf o ran eu gwisgoeddd.³⁰⁵

(Was it still looked at as some kind of customary clothing, rather than a fashionable and decorative item? Indeed, it is the delicate and rich textiles and colours that are described in these poems, and not the different kinds of clothing items. Additionally, there is no doubt that the main emphasis on the descriptions of women in the early Canu Serch is praise of their natural beauty in an idealized and conventional mode rather than noting the latest developments in terms of their dress.)

We have already seen how the poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth century understood the importance of hair in terms of a woman's beauty, and they were also aware of its role as a symbol of status in praise poems of a more general nature, (i.e. not taking their patrons as subject). Guto'r Glyn, for example, draws attention to the fashionable hairstyles of women in Oswestry in his poem of praise to that town, where he associates the fashionable hair with the town's wealth. This poem, entitled 'Moliant i Groesoswallt' (*In praise of Oswestry*), explains how the best women have beautiful, well-dressed hair:

Gorau gwragedd, gwedd eu gwallt
A'u trwsiad, yw tre Oswallt.³⁰⁶

(The town of St Oswald is the best as regards to her women, / in terms of the appearance of their hair and attire.)³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ Edwards, "Pen un wisg â'r paun o'r ne'!", 42.

³⁰⁶ gutorglyn.net, no. 102. 33–34.

³⁰⁷ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 102. 33–34.

ii) The ideal virtues of the noblewoman

In general terms, the Canu Mawl portrays the ideal woman as beautiful, chaste but fertile, rich, from good lineage and with good morals. This corresponds to the list of praiseworthy attributes of women summarised as instructions in the *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, where the first set applies to the married woman of high status:

Gwreicda a uolir o doethineb, a chymhendawt, a diweirdeb, a haelyoni, a thegwch pryt a gwed a ffuryf, a dysymylder ymadrodyon a gweithredoed.³⁰⁸

(A noblewoman is praised for her wisdom, discreet nature, virginity and generosity and fairness of face and appearance and form, and of humble words and actions.)

The second list is for the younger girl:

Riein a uolir o bryt, a thegwch, a chymhendawt, a dysymylder, ac eglurder mod a deuodeu, a haelyoni, a diweirdeb, a molyanrwyd, a boned, a lletneisrwyd, a charedicrwyd, ac idi y perthyn serch a charyat.³⁰⁹

(A girl is praised for her appearance and loveliness and discreet nature, and humility and the excellence of her manner and actions, and generosity and virginity and praiseworthiness and nobility and modesty and kindness and to her love and desire belong.)

How might hair play a part in casting the woman favourably in the light of the above virtues? In terms of the 'gwreigdda' (*lady or noblewoman*), it is noted how she should be portrayed as a wise, discreet, and proper wife. From the discussion thus far, we have gleaned that she would be expected to keep her hair bound or perhaps covered. Yet in order to demonstrate 'tegwch pryt a gwedd' (*the loveliness of personal appearance*) we have seen how this hair would need to be healthy, long, voluminous and preferably blonde. As a 'rhiein' (*young girl*), some of the virtues noted overlap but it is not insignificant that in this list the very first quality mentioned is her appearance. This important feature manifests itself in the

³⁰⁸ *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, eds. G. J. Williams and E. J. Jones (Cardiff, 1934), 16.

³⁰⁹ *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, 16.

praise poetry of the fourteenth century through the many references to the dark eyebrows of the woman along with her pale face and white teeth, where imagery from nature is often drawn upon to describe the woman's fairness. By the fifteenth century, however, these virtues are rare in the Canu Mawl classification and are seen instead in the poems known as Canu Serch, discussed in the previous chapter, and this absence is one of the markers of the shifting boundaries.

It could be argued that the way the woman wore her hair, more than any other body part or visible marker, was the strongest and clearest symbol of virginity and chastity. The woman praised in the Canu Mawl was usually a married woman, often compared to the saints in order to commend her chastity and faithfulness to her husband. As already discussed, being likened to the saints would evoke both images of women with loose as well as covered hair, symbolic of their virginal qualities and also their femininity. Previously mentioned too is how abundant hair was not only a symbol of beauty but also of fertility, and comparisons with the saints would often be balanced by references to the offspring. This reminds us of why more complex role models such as Mary and Non, women at once virgin and mothers, were favoured:

Yn un Mair a Non a'i mab
a dyfant hoedl i'w deufab;³¹⁰

(Mary and Non and her son together / will assure a long life to her two sons)

Evidently it was no mean feat for a woman to succeed in maintaining the balance between chastity and fertility, devoutness and womanly beauty, and as we have

³¹⁰ GLGC, no. 168. 39–40. Saint Non was 'ddiwair feichiog' (*a pregnant virgin*) according to Dafydd Llwyd from Mathafarn, see Dafydd Llwyd, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn*, ed. W. L. Richards (Cardiff, 1964), no. 13. 5.

discovered, these conflicting roles can be seen in the complex symbolism implied by hairdressing.

Other virtues of the ideal woman include generosity and wealth, both of which were demonstrated by the ability to host feasts and give to the poor. Indeed, to hail from a wealthy family was in itself considered a virtue. Noble pedigree is important not only in terms of material inheritance, but also in terms of moral and educational superiority, including the ability to converse well, and it is often emphasised that noble women have practised these virtues ‘*er yn ferch*’ (*since she was a girl*).³¹¹ As an adult, her headdress offered her an ideal opportunity to demonstrate how she embodied many of the sought-after qualities, and it has been shown how this garment can indicate adherence to the appropriate moral code as well as serving as a marker of wealth. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a great increase in the range of headdresses for noblewomen as they became a fashion staple and a decorative symbol of status. Women would attach precious jewels, pearls and gemstones to their headdresses, fine needlework would also be used as decoration, all of which drew attention to this highly symbolic piece of clothing. The hennin became extremely popular in the fifteenth century, a hat in the shape of a cylinder that sat far back on the head, with a translucent veil placed over it. As noble women of the time plucked their brow and forehead to ensure a wide, plain and pure appearance, hardly any hair at all was visible. It is remarkable how different this image is from that of the woman with beautiful, long, flowing hair. Yet even for the woman careful to apply a suitable headdress, there was a fine line

³¹¹ See, for example, gutorglyn.net, no. 53. 2; no. 87. 33–4. See also *GLGC* no. 25. 39–40.

between what was acceptable and what would provoke scorn. Theodore Child explains that:

Even the veil, the emblem of modesty, destined to conceal, is made a flag and banner of coquetry, and in its various innumerable transformations it becomes wimple, turban, coif, or bonnet, and in the end mere pretext for ornamentation.³¹²

By trying to add a stamp of individuality to her head gear, the woman risked fuelling the same kind of reaction as if she wore her hair loose, and Church officials were deeply concerned as they saw the decorated headdress in the same light as the hair itself.³¹³ There was no easy way for the medieval woman to convey all of the ideals expected of her. An overtly individualised headdress could transgress the moral code and lead to distain and demotion in the important social pyramid. John Lydgate's ballad for example condemns an overly elaborate headdress and insists that the Virgin Mary would have worn a simple mantle. He connects the highly adorned headdress with vanity and pride.³¹⁴ Others compared the pointy nature of some headdresses to the horns of the devil, and Robert Mannyng de Brunne in 'Handlyng Synne' expresses how decorating the body with accessories such as this was inappropriate for a woman.³¹⁵ Scholars have also commented on the way Alisoun, Chaucer's Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales*, is manifested through the description of her headdress, which in turn becomes a mirror for her 'bad' nature:

The wife's coverchiefs then, are a highly charged costume sign: they are literally a gesture of submission to her married and legal status... economically the proclamation of a cloth-maker's community status and wealth; aesthetically the beautiful veiling of an attractive, seductive woman; and morally the announcement of a woman's pride ... and by extension her

³¹² T. Child, *Wimples and Crisping Pins* (New York, 1895), 75.

³¹³ See Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 53.

³¹⁴ See A. Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (London, 1986), 47 and 53.

³¹⁵ See E. Treharne (ed.), *Old and Middle English c.890–1450: An Anthology* (3rd edn., Chichester 2010), 534–4.

unchastity, her sexual manipulation confessed so blatantly in the Prologue.³¹⁶

A similar idea is expressed in the works of the *Cywyddwyr*, though not in the poems that belong to the strict definition of Canu Mawl. For example, this idea is found in Dafydd ap Gwilym's 'Merch yn Ymbincio' (which is no doubt a poem of praise to the woman of the title, but is clearly outside the Canu Mawl genre as it is a far more private and intimate poem than this classification allows). Here the poet observes the noblewoman at her toilette.³¹⁷ Alaw Mai Edwards in her article on headdresses in the poetry has remarked how Dafydd associates the headdress with vanity in this poem.³¹⁸ Of particular interest is how he flips the phrase to compliment the subject of his gaze as he claims that she does not need to use pearls and bands of gold to emphasize her beauty; she is beautiful without any of these additional accessories: '[Rhai o ferched...yn] / Rhoi perls a rhubi purloyw / Ar eu tâl yn euraid hoyw' (*[Some of the girls...] put pearls and gleaming rubies / on their foreheads, golden and glistening*).³¹⁹

There are a handful of examples in the Canu Mawl of the fourteenth century that provide us with information about these hair accessories, and in the work of some we see how these very pearls and jewellery on the forehead attract the poets' favourable attention, as these lines by Gruffudd Gryg testify:

Paentiwyd uwchben gem Gymru,
Pwynt sêr, sidan friger fry;

³¹⁶ L. F. Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* (Woodbridge, 2004), 172.

³¹⁷ CDG, no. 38.

³¹⁸ Edwards, 'Pen un wisg â'r paun o'r ne!', 54–55.

³¹⁹ dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 138. 1–4. Translation of the English version of the poem also on the dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 138. 1–4. See too Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem 'Garlant o Blu Paun' (*A Garland of Peacock Feathers*) where Dafydd describes receiving a garland made of peacock's feathers from a girl, see CDG, no. 134. Compare this with the poem 'Yr Het Fedw' (*The Birch Hat*) where he received a garland from Morfudd made from the leaves and branches of the birch tree, CDG, no. 113.

Mererid dâl mawr araul,
Meillion, calch hoelion, cylch haul.³²⁰

(Above Wales's gem the point of the stars / Was painted, hair of silk high above / Large shining pearls on forehead / Clovers, colour of nails, the shape of the sun.)

The only poem dedicated entirely to the headdress, 'Penwisd Merch', has been attributed to Dafydd ap Gwilym, (though Dafydd Johnston argues that it is more likely to be by Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen, and therefore to belong to the second half of the fourteenth century).³²¹ Despite the uncertainty about its authorship, it gives us clear information about the headdress, and instead of criticizing the woman for wearing an elaborate piece of clothing or for trying to emphasize her beauty, it celebrates the finery of the adornment. It also allows us to gather information about the way in which some women would dress on special occasions. In this case, as Alaw Mai Edwards explained, the greeting in the opening couplet suggests that it is a wedding day, where 'Dafydd' is the father, or the groom.³²²

Heddiw y gwelaf, Ddafydd,
Hawdd fydd i heddiw a fydd,
Rhwyng gwallt a'm gwylltiai yn chwyrn,
A dwyael, merch i dēyrn
Rhoi gwerth canpunt ar untal
O gaeau main ac aur mâl.³²³

*(Today I see, O Dafydd, / (there will be a blessing on this day) / a hundred pounds worth of jewelled ornaments / and burnished gold put on one forehead / between hair that excited me madly / and eyebrows, a lord's daughter.)*³²⁴

³²⁰ Gruffudd Gryg, *Gwaith Gruffudd Gryg*, ed. B. J. Lewis and E. Salisbury (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2010), no. 9. 11–14.

³²¹ See the notes to poem 156 on dafyddapgwilym.net and Dafydd Johnston's essay 'Awduraeth' again on dafyddapgwilym.net, where he argues that Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen is the author.

³²² Edwards, "Pen un wisg â'r paun o'r ne!", 50.

³²³ dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 156. 1–6.

³²⁴ English translation of the poem is found on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 156. 1–6.

The image portrayed is one of grandeur: a large headdress with blue stones, including material from Cambrai, and pieces of gold from Paris foreshadowing the poems to hair by Dafydd Nanmor and Ieuan Deulwyn. It is possible that a crown is also described as being placed on top of the woman's head, with fleur-de-lis woven through it. Overall, it is an image of splendour and of wealth:

Mau lwyr gwyn, Maelor gannwyll,
 Mae ar ei thâl, mawr ei thwyll
 Fflwch ractal, mau benial boen,
 Fflwring aur, ffloyw reng oroen.
 Da lun ar ddail fflŵr-dy-lis
 Ac aur bwrw o gaer Baris.
 Gem yw ar y ddau gymwd,
 Ac aur Ffrainc, unne geirw ffrwd,
 Awr loywbrim, eiry oleubryd,
 Anrhydedd beilch wragedd byd.
 Gwae fi, Fab Mair ddiwair dda
 Ei theced, ac na thycia!³²⁵

*(Candle of Maelor, my entire complaint, / There is on her forehead, her deceit is enormous, / a huge diadem (that head-band is my pain), / a golden florin, a beautiful glittering string. / A fine shape of fleur-de-lis leaves / and cast gold from the city of Paris. / It is a jewel on the two commotes, / and gold of France, of the colour / of a foaming torrent, hour of bright dawn, snow's white complexion, / honour of the world's proud women. / Ah me, Oh Son of good chaste Mary, / that she is so fair and [yet] will not avail [me]!)*³²⁶

We will remember how the hairstyles or the headdress were compared to a roof in a number of the Canu Serch poems. In Guto'r Glyn's 'Gofyn teils gan Risiart Cyffin ab Ieuan Llwyd, deon Bangor, ar ran Syr Gruffudd ab Einion o Henllan' ('Request for slates from Rhisiart Cyffin ab Ieuan Llwyd, dean of Bangor, on behalf of Sir Gruffudd ab Einion of Henllan'), the imagery is inverted and this time the roof itself is compared to a headdress.³²⁷ This is the roof of a fine building for which the poet is asking for tiles. Here we catch a glimpse of the discomfort a noblewoman would

³²⁵ dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 156. 17–28.

³²⁶ English translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 156. 17–28.

³²⁷ See gutorglyn.net, no. 61.

endure in order to wear such headgear, as Guto reminds us of the pins that pinch as they hold the garment in place:

Gwe a rof uwch y gaer fau,
Gwisg ei phen gwasg â phinnau.³²⁸

*(I'll place a web above my fort, / its headdress, a squeezing with pins.)*³²⁹

Hints of a large headdress is perhaps subtly referred to in a poem by Sypyn

Cyfeiliog, where he praises the woman's forehead which supports her headdress:

Fy lloer a'i gwallt fal lliw'r gwin
A'i phryd fal ffrwd y felin,
A'r tâl a gynnal ei gwisg,
Mold hyfryd, mal ôd difrisg.³³⁰

(My moon, with her hair like the colour of the wine / And her appearance like the mill stream / And the forehead that supports her dress / A beautiful hood, like untrodden snow.)

It is possible that during this period, women of high status would have a wimple covering their hair with plain but expensive textiles and a barrette surrounding the face, hooked underneath the chin. The memorial to Siwan, Llywelyn Fawr's wife, in the church in Beaumaris shows that this type of plain headdress is in contrast to the rest of her dress, which is covered in expensive jewels and ornamental detail.³³¹ This type of covering would have carried a great deal of symbolism according to the laws of the day, as there were different types of headdresses depending on the woman's status within the community. The 'penlliain' would be the preserve of the wife of an 'uchelwr' (*nobleman*) whilst the 'penguwch' would be worn by the wife of a 'taeog' (*peasant*).³³² The stone

³²⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 61. 49–51. See also under 'Penwisgoedd' on gutorglyn.net.

³²⁹ English translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 61. 49–51.

³³⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd 'Sypyn Cyfeiliog' a Llywelyn ab y Moel*, ed. R. I. Daniel (Aberystwyth: Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 1998), no. 4. 1–4.

³³¹ Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol*, 116.

³³² Jenkins and Owen, *The Welsh Law of Women*, 19; 43.

memorial in Beaumaris is, however, a rare visual depiction of courtly life in Wales in the Middle Ages, and such evidence from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is similarly scant.

The tomb of Myfanwy, the subject of Rhisierdyn's eulogy (the second poem in the discussion below of the poems of the fourteenth century) survives in Saint Gredifael's church in Penmynydd, and includes a depiction of her headdress.³³³ Though it was made almost a hundred years after the death of her husband, experts believe that it is a fair representation of her time.³³⁴ However, for Gwenhwyfar, the subject of the first work in this discussion, there is no such description. The poem nonetheless is an exquisite representative of the Canu Mawl genre and as such will serve as an excellent example to begin the analysis in the next section.³³⁵

iii) The Elegies of the Fourteenth Century

We know very little about Gwenhwyfar from Pentraeth and in this lament to her, despite the fact that her nobility is highly praised throughout, we are not given enough clues to piece together an accurate picture of her lineage. We learn that she is '(g)orwyr deg traws Eraint' (*beautiful great-grandchild of strong Geraint*),³³⁶ and P. C. Bartrum's notes point to a Geraint who lived between the period 985 to 1215, and suggest that this is Geraint ap Tegwared ap Cynfor, also associated with the Pentraeth area.³³⁷ Ann Parry Owen endorses this, and accepting this argument it is plausible that Gwenhwyfar was born around 1335, and that she married Hywel ap

³³³ Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol*, 275.

³³⁴ Ibid., 274.

³³⁵ See D. Myrddin Lloyd's comments on this poem in A. O. H. Jarman and G. Rees Huws (eds.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature* (Llandybïe, 1979), 52–53.

³³⁶ Gruffudd ap Maredudd, *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III: Canu Amrywiol*, ed. A. Parry Owen (Aberystwyth, 2007), no. 5. 19.

³³⁷ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, p. 167.

Gruffudd and had one son.³³⁸ This goes against J. E. Caerwyn Williams' suggestion, which focuses on the descriptions 'bun', 'rhiain' and 'meinir' and concludes that they suggest that she was a young and unmarried woman. However, as Ann Parry Owen has demonstrated, these terms are used in other elegies to married women:

... heb fod gennym ar y naill law gorff o gerddi marwnad i ferched ifanc
dibriod ac ar y llaw arall i wragedd priod, a bod modd adnabod tueddiadau a
gwahaniaethau clir rhyngddynt, ni ellir gwneud mwy nag awgrymu yn
betrusgar mai gwraig briod ifanc oedd Gwenhwyfar pan fu farw.³³⁹

(...without having, on the one hand, a corpus of elegies to young, unmarried girls and on the other, a corpus of poems to married women, with means of identifying the tendencies and clear differences between them, we cannot do more than suggest, hesitantly, that Gwenhwyfar was a young, unmarried girl when she died.)

Key to this study is that we find that her hair is covered, which as we have already seen, lends weight to the argument that this is indeed a poem for a married woman, albeit young.

Her beauty is consistently praised by Gruffudd ap Maredudd, the most striking aspect of which is the pale tone of her skin, which becomes a symbol of her purity, and imagery from the natural landscape is used to great effect to conjure this. We learn how she is the same colour as the bright snow of the mountains: 'deg ei llun lliw nyf gorthir' (*beautiful in her appearance of the brilliance of the snow on the mountain tops*), and 'bryd eiry celli' (*of the same appearance as snow on the grove*).³⁴⁰ But the body part that attracts the most attention is the face, where the hairs of the eyebrows do not go unnoticed. They are described as 'mwyalchliw ddwyael' (*two brows the colour of the blackbird*),³⁴¹ reminiscent of Dafydd ap

³³⁸ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, pp. 167–168.

³³⁹ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, p. 169

³⁴⁰ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 5. 102 and 155.

³⁴¹ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 5. 6.

Gwilym's elegy to Angharad and his reference to 'duon ddwyael' (*black eyebrows*) and 'Gwrm ael yn urael' (*Dark eyebrow like fine, expensive cloth*).³⁴² The darkness of the eyebrow hair is more prominent because of the emphasis given to the pale skin. This reminds us of how, in another poem, Sypyn Cyfeiliog contrasts the darkness of his subject's eyebrows to a similarly pale skin when he says: 'A'r ael uchel... / Asgell mwyalch ar galch gwyn' (*And the high brow... the wing of a blackbird on white chalk*).³⁴³

Special mention is also given to the forehead, which serves to give another glimpse of the hidden hair. Gwenhwyfar's forehead is presented as being beneath refined gold: 'Y tâl dan aur mâl am ael feinir' (*The forehead under pure gold surrounding the beautiful woman's brow*).³⁴⁴ Could this 'aur mâl' be a reference to the hair? Perhaps. It is more likely, however, to refer to the headdress, for if the hair was indeed exposed, one imagines that the poet would have dwelt longer on it, given that so much attention is paid to each of the facial features in sight. And as we know, mentioning the headdress would be a way of indirectly praising the woman's chastity.

What is striking here is that while the reference to the headdress is rare, any mention of the hair itself is more or less non-existent. This is particularly curious given that in this period amongst the poets' most favoured images were bright elements such as the sun, moon, light, candles, indeed anything that can draw attention to brightness and shiny qualities, and the hair would have provided a

³⁴² CDG, no. 9. 4; CDG, no. 9. 51.

³⁴³ *Gwaith Dafydd Bach*, no. 4. 5–6.

³⁴⁴ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III* no. 5. 106. Translation: *The forehead under pure gold surrounding the beautiful woman's brow*.

legitimate object for these comparisons. In Gruffudd ap Maredudd's poem scattered throughout are numerous comparisons to Gwenhwyfar as the 'haul' (*sun*), and she is indeed described to be twice as bright as this star: 'Deune haul wedd' (*twice as fair as the appearance of the sun*).³⁴⁵ Similarly, we see the same imagery in Mab Clochyddyn and Gronw Gyriog's poems; 'Lliw lloer pan ddwyre bre a bröydd' (*the colour of the moon when it rises over hills and dales*); and 'gannwyll gain, / Gwenhwyfar haul daear hoen' (*magnificent candle of light, Gwenhwyfar was the generosity of world's joy*).³⁴⁶ Another example is Dafydd ap Gwilym's aforementioned elegy to Angharad, where we find references such as 'cain gannwyll yn urael' (*beautiful candle wearing fine cloth*) and 'huan wybr' (*the sun in the sky*) that add to the vivid portrayal of her beauty.³⁴⁷ But at no time do the poets take advantage of the opportunity to use these images with reference to hair. Indeed, in these fourteenth-century elegies, with all their careful attention to the woman's appearance, from the features of the face to the clothing and textiles that cover her body, it is remarkable that the poets do not take the opportunity to lament neither the headdress nor the hair.

iv) The Eulogies of the Fourteenth Century

As the first example of the eulogies of this century, we will examine 'Moliant Myfanwy wraig Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (*The praise of Myfanwy wife of Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur from Penmynydd*) by Rhiserdyn which

³⁴⁵ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 5. 8. See also, for example: 'hoen lloer', 'eurgannwyll Bentraeth' and 'haul Wynedd in *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 5. 14, 26 and 135.

³⁴⁶ See, for example, *Gwaith Gronw Gyriog, Iorwerth ab y Cyriog ac eraill*, ed. Rh. Ifans (Aberystwyth, 1997), no. 2. 25–26 and no. 6. 70.

³⁴⁷ *CDG*, no. 9. 26; *CDG*, no. 9. 32.

is believed to date from the end of the fourteenth century, around 1382.³⁴⁸ As was the case with Gwenhwyfar of Pentraeth, we know very little about her lineage although time and time again it is highlighted in the poem that her noble upbringing was key to her virtuous ways: ‘Enwog falch fynog o feilch fonedd’ (*Famous proud and noble from honourable nobility*).³⁴⁹ Turning our attention to the aspect of her beauty deemed worthy of praise, we see that her tall and graceful body is one of her most prominent features ‘Uniawn bill hirddawn’ (*graceful, upright, generous in her giving*),³⁵⁰ allegedly leading the poets to become drunk on her appearance: ‘Claer aur freisg-gorff llathr / clêr ar frwysgedd’ (*A fine golden and polished luxuriant body, / poets become drunk on it*).³⁵¹ Again, her beauty is credited to her pedigree, as the poet directly links it to her upbringing: ‘Anwylgain firain o fawredd – didwyll’ (*Beautiful and gentle from true greatness*).³⁵² Next to her tall and strong body, her forehead is another part of the body deemed worthy of praise:

Mawl i hirwen ddoeth, mil a’i harwedd
Manon aur hoywdal mywn enrhydedd.³⁵³

(*Praise to the wise one, tall and fair, a thousand spread her praise / The golden girl with a beautiful forehead in honour.*)

³⁴⁸ It is suggested that Rhisiardyn’s poem to Myfanwy dates sometime before the death of her husband in 1382, see *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisiardyn, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch*, ed. N. A. Jones and E. H. Rheinallt (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh Studies, 1995), p. 95. For the poem see *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5.

³⁴⁹ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 2. Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur in his poem to the ‘Ferch Fud’ also praises her pride: ‘Mud a balch, hil gwalch gweilch nwyf’, (*I see you as proud and mute, a desenant of a hero with the zest of heroes*) see *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur, Gwilym Ddu o Arfon, Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr ac Iorwerth Beli*, ed. N. G. Costigan, R. Iestyn Daniel and D. Johnston (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 1995), no. 4. 5.

³⁵⁰ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 1.

³⁵¹ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 24.

³⁵² *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 3.

³⁵³ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 5–6.

But the most striking aspect in terms of her beauty are the references made to the brilliance of her skin. In one line, the poet uses two different adjectives all meaning ‘fair’ to convey Myfanwy’s purity: ‘Myfanwy, lywy oleuwedd – briflys’³⁵⁴ (*Myfanwy, beautiful of fair complexion—from the chief court*). The consistent use of imagery such as ‘haul’ (*sun*), ‘lamp’ (*the sun or moon*), ‘gem’ (*gem*) and the popular imagery of snowdrift, ‘Lliw difrisg lluwchwisg eiry llechwedd – maenawl’ (*The colour of untrodden snow, clothing of snow drift, the snow on the vale’s slope*), would all point towards her beauty as well as her purity.³⁵⁵ These are similar to the imagery used in the elegies of the period, but again there is no mention of the woman’s hairstyle. Intriguing in terms of this thesis’ focus of interest is how the poet admits that this imagery suggests that he desires this woman’s body while insisting that he is praising her because of her good manners and her nobility: ‘Cerir ei mawrdwf nid er caredd’ (*I love her graceful body but not to commit a sin*).³⁵⁶ Yet there is still no mention of her hair, suggesting that while it was acceptable to refer to these women as objects of desire, referring to her locks was off limits (and this was clearly the case in both the eulogies and the elegies). Ann Parry Owen, whilst discussing another poem of the genre by Gruffudd ap Maredudd, explains that although the framework of the poem is that of the Canu Serch, it is more formal ‘praise’ which is intended, arguing that this was a literary convention of the time:

Er gwaethaf y pwyslais ar serch y bardd tuag at y ferch a’i wewyr calon o gael ei wrthod ganddi, gellir bod yn sicr mai dilyn confensiwn a wna: moli’r ferch yn ei llys yw gwir ddiben y canu hwn yn hytrach na mynegi profiad go iawn. Cerdd fawl wedi ei chyflwyno o fewn fframwaith cerdd serch ydyw.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 7.

³⁵⁵ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, 5. 15.

³⁵⁶ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 17. See also Casnodyn’s poem to Gwenllïant where we find similar imagery with the poet saying that he cannot sleep because of her beauty. See Casnodyn, *Gwaith Casnodyn*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 1999), no. 5.

³⁵⁷ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, p. 149. For the poem ‘Moliant Gwenhwyfar’ (In Praise of Gwenhwyfar), see *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 3.

(Despite the emphasis on the poet's love towards the woman and his heartache of being rejected by her, he is certainly following a convention: praising the woman in her court is the true purpose of this singing rather than emphasizing or expressing a genuine experience. It is a praise poem presented within a framework of a love poem.)

Sefnyn too, in his poem in praise of Angharad, the wife of Dafydd Fychan, refrains from praising Angharad's locks and adheres to praising the features of the face. The poet focuses on the eyes and on her white teeth; she is described as 'merch wynddaint' (*white-toothed girl*), and her 'tremwalch' (*hawk-like eyes*) are also heralded. Yet there is not a word regarding her hair.³⁵⁸

We find exactly the same focus on beauty in another eulogy, this time by Gruffudd ap Maredudd. In the opening lines he expresses his desire to praise yet another Gwenhwyfar, a woman of noble lineage (certainly not the Gwenhwyfar lamented in the elegy discussed earlier) and throughout the text there are numerous references to her clothing and expensive accessories. The poet refers to the 'syndal' (*sandal*) and 'pali' (*brocaded silk*) and the 'arian' (*sliver*) and 'awmael' (*enamel*), 'asur' (*azure*), 'aur' (*gold*), that she wears.³⁵⁹ But of most interest to this study is the verse:

Teg o'm pwyll ofeg (ym pall afael – hun)
Oedd wenfun hoywlun hael
A gerais dan frig urael
Ac aur mâl uwch ei gwrn ael.³⁶⁰

(This bright, beautiful-faced and generous girl was / Beautiful because of my wise words (sleep can't get hold of me) / I loved her under a headdress of delicate cloth / With pure gold above her dark eyebrows)

³⁵⁸ *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 1. 27, 31, 32

³⁵⁹ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 3. 27, 29, 30 and 31.

³⁶⁰ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 3. 21–4.

This reference to the headdress is a distinctive feature in Maredudd's work, as it is a rare example in the *Canu Mawl* of the period and serves as the exception that proves the rule. Here, the textile 'urael' (*fine cloth*) is combined with 'brig' (*top* but often *hair of the head*) of 'aur mâl' (*pure gold*), which could refer to her hair above her dark eyebrows.³⁶¹ It is telling that this piece of clothing is mentioned when praising not only her beauty but also her generous nature and purity, confirming that covering the hair was a visual symbol of each of these virtues.

The contrast between this rare reference to the headdress and the numerous references to various other parts of the face and body within the elegies lead us to believe that there was indeed a deliberate effort amongst the poets of the fourteenth century not to praise women's hair. Once more, we see that the elegies follow the guidance of the *Gramadegau* list praising all the aspects noted above. Hair was not on the list.

Another striking aspect missing from these poems are the references to the woman as a mother. We do not hear of the need to produce heirs and the importance of securing the continuation of the lineage. It seems curious that the evidence from the poetry demonstrates that what makes you a good partner for your husband includes qualities such as the ability to converse well, give generously, know the importance of moderation, be a good hostess of feasts, appreciate good poetry, possess wisdom, beauty, virginity before marriage, chastity afterwards and fidelity, and yet there is no reference to the ability to continue the lineage that has bestowed

³⁶¹ For the arguments regarding the various interpretations of 'urael', see the note to *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 3. 23n. See also Egan and Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 294–5 and N. Bradfield, *Historical Costumes of England 1066–1956* (2nd edn., London, 1958), 41 and 45.

so many of these qualities upon you. Myfanwy, as already mentioned, is described as ‘goludog gymar... Goronwy Fychan, gwron fuchedd’ (*wealthy partner... to Goronwy Fychan, from a worthy noble lineage*) and ‘gymar hy ener’ (*a partner to a brave lord*),³⁶² but there is no reference to her as mother of Goronwy’s children.³⁶³

Is the lack of reference to hair, the bodily part most often associated with fertility, linked to this omission in some way? Is it because chastity was held in higher esteem than fertility? These thoughts shall be returned to towards the end of the chapter, but next we move to the fifteenth century and while in some cases we are able to gain a clearer picture of the background to poems, on the whole the biographical facts regarding the women portrayed remain few and far between. Due to the historical context of a number of these poems, we can identify some of the subjects as wives of influential noblemen who are participating in the important battles and tribulations of the time, and we are able, to some extent to decipher the status of the woman involved as married, widowed, mother etc. This information offers us the opportunity to place any references to hair in their wider context. In addition to this, sometimes there is also visual evidence depicting these women covering their hair. This is the case with both the poems discussed below. I shall be focusing on poems to two women namely an elegy to Gwladus daughter of Dafydd Gam and mother of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, by Lewys Glyn Cothi and a eulogy to Anne Herbert, William’s wife, by Guto’r Glyn.

³⁶² *Gwaith Sefnyn*, no. 5. 33–4 and no. 5. 12.

³⁶³ In the elegy to Gwenhwyfar in *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 5. 2, the poet states that they are left ‘Heb ennill ei chyfryw’ (*Without gaining one similar to her*), perhaps referring to the lack of heir, but most probably trying to emphasize that they will not see another woman as virtuous as Gwenhwyfar.

v) The Fifteenth-Century Elegies

The fifteenth-century elegy to Gwladus, is worthy of consideration for two reasons. Firstly, her grave, which offers the visual comparison, depicts Gwladus in a high horned headdress, a clear indicator of her wealth.³⁶⁴ Secondly, because of the historical facts we have at our disposal, we can to some extent compare the description given by the poet with the biographical details. The eulogy by Guto'r Glyn to Lady Anne Devereux (who was the widow of Gwladus's son, William Herbert), will also be discussed (in section vi) as it gives us the opportunity to explore how hair is treated in a poem addressed to a widow. Furthermore, we have a surviving image of Lady Anne in *Llyfr Caerdroea* (c. 1462), which offers us a rare opportunity to compare the text to a visual depiction.³⁶⁵

Gwladus' tomb is to be found in the church in Abergavenny where she is depicted wearing a horned headdress, rising in two high rounded points on either side of the head. The hair and ears are neatly covered with a net, and a thick decorated embroidered band frames the face, pulling the hairline back so that the forehead is exposed. On the net, needlework can be seen crossing in diamond shapes with jewels attached. A long veil stemming from the top of the raised horns hangs down well past her shoulders, presumably to the floor. She wears two rows of chain around her neck with a cruciform locket.³⁶⁶ We can interpret from her expensive clothing that she was a woman of high status, and the genealogies demonstrates that she certainly came from noble lineage. Her father was the head of one of the wealthiest families in Brycheiniog, despite paying heavily for his stance

³⁶⁴ Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol*, 259.

³⁶⁵ Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol*, 260.

³⁶⁶ Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol*, 259. See also O. Morgan, *Some Account of the Ancient Monuments in the Priory Church, Abergavenny* (Newport, 1872), 41–56.

during the Glyndŵr revolts. Gwladus married his friend and another influential nobleman, Rhosier Fychan, and they had three sons, Watcyn, Tomas and Rhosier. Her first husband and father were both killed in the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Gwladus remarried Sir Wiliam ap Tomas, and Wiliam and Rhisiart Herbert were their sons. Though Rhosier Fychan was a Lancastrian, his sons and their half brothers were fiercely supportive of the House of York.

It has already been noted that Gwladus died in 1454, but, as Johnston notes, due to the nature of this poem: ‘Ni cheir yr argraff fod y bardd yn ymateb i farwolaeth a oedd newydd ddigwydd’ (*One does not get the impression that the poet is reacting to a recent death*).³⁶⁷ Indeed the importance placed on the grave itself suggests that the poem may have been declaimed at its unveiling. There is no excessive mourning for the loss of Gwladus, and a large part of the poem is dedicated to describing the grave. It is a ‘bedd i’r holl fonedd’ (*a grave for all nobility*) and Lewys pays attention to its material: ‘main beril’ (*stone of beryl*); ‘marmor a mwyr o ermyn’ (*marble and more ermine*) and ‘oedd fedd gwyn merch Ddafydd Gam’ (*it was the white grave of Dafydd Gam’s daughter*).³⁶⁸ This focus on its whiteness conveys the image of purity, while reference to the masculine objects, such as the sword of Pandrasus and Brutus’s father-in-law, would evoke the idea of William Herbert being worthy of ruling the country. Similarly, the image of the lion again reminds the audience of the power and strength of the male, and it is interesting that the only reference to clothing or textiles is this description of the

³⁶⁷ *GLGC*, p. 577. Because of the family connection between Edward IV and Gwladus, Dafydd Johnston suggests that 1461 would be an appropriate date for this poem, after Edward IV came to power in March 1461 and after Wiliam Herbert’s promotion to Head Justice and Chamberlain for South Wales in May 1461. See the notes to the poem *GLGC*, no. 110.

³⁶⁸ *GLGC*, no. 110. 39; 37 and 59.

black lion (seen on the shield above the *cywydd* in Peniarth MS 109).³⁶⁹ Here the poet refers to ‘lir’, a kind of black cloth, to emphasize the colour of this distinguished symbol of strength: ‘llew lir â’r lliw o lus’ (*and the black lion with the colour of bilberries*).³⁷⁰

What then of the role of hair in this poem? As already remarked, the poet does not make any reference to the items of clothing other than the ‘lir’ on the lion, and on one level makes no direct association between the headdress and Gwladus’s other virtues. The poet does mention ‘Mair’ (*Mary*) and calls Gwladus a ‘santes’ (*saint*), which might possibly be referring to the way these women covered their heads, and this along with the reference to Gwladus as being someone who ‘anrhydeddu’r gwir’ (*honours the truth*) could be seen as ways of praising her chastity. These links however are tenuous at best and we see that the poet prefers to keep to the description of the stone and the masculine imagery when describing the grave itself. In Hywel Dafî’s elegy to her, a more direct association between Gwladus’s clothing and her chastity is found, when he remarks that:

Duwiol ar ôl Syr Wiliam
Oedd gorff merch Syr Dafydd Gam.
Medru mantell a modrwy,
Arbed merch heb wŷr byd mwy.³⁷¹

(*Godly after Sir Wiliam / Was the body of Sir Dafydd Gam’s daughter / She can with mantle and ring / preserve (herself as) an unmarried woman without men of the world any more*)

To take the ‘ring and mantle’ would mean that you would live chaste. Although her chastity is praised in the elegy by Hywel Dafî, the most important feature in Lewys’s poem to her was her fertility and her role as a mother, which is in stark

³⁶⁹ See M. P. Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry I* (Aberystwyth, 1991), 81.

³⁷⁰ *GLGC*, no. 110. 46.

³⁷¹ *Gwaith Hywel Dafî*, i, no. 19. 17–20.

contrast to that seen in the works of Rhisiertdyn and Gruffudd ap Maredudd a century before:

ac o’u rhyw’n benáig yrhawg
y dewiswn dywysawg.³⁷²

(and from her nature, a leader for a long time / we will choose a leader.)

There is however still no reference to her hair despite its ready connections to fertility. This point will be returned to towards the end of the chapter.

The tone of the next poem is rather different from Lewys Glyn Cothi’s poem (which was in parts joyous despite it being an elegy). In Guto’r Glyn’s eulogy to Anne, the praise is designed to comfort. It is addressed to her following the death of her husband, William Herbert in 1469 and it is believed to have been composed sometime between 1471 and 1475.

vi) The Fifteenth-Century Eulogies

As in Gwladus’ case, it is possible that we also have surviving visual evidence of Anne’s hairstyle in an image of her and her husband kneeling next to Edward IV found in *Llyfr Caerdroea*. Her hair is depicted as being drawn back away from her face, revealing a wide and tall forehead, with a transparent silk cloth covering the headdress.³⁷³

Guto’r Glyn refers to Anne’s appearance as he praises her appropriate demeanour in mourning. Her faithfulness to her husband is manifested as she visibly demonstrates her widowhood through wearing a ring and a mantle. Her

³⁷² *GLGC*, no. 110. 63–64. See also the references in *GLGC*, no. 110. 13–14 and 21–22.

³⁷³ Lord, *Gweledigaeth yr Oesoedd Canol*, 260.

husband encouraged her in his will to ‘take the mantle and the ring and live a widow’, and he repeated this in his plea to her in the note he wrote the morning of his execution: ‘that ye remember your promise to take ye order of wydowhod’.³⁷⁴ We can gather from the following lines that Anne wore a black cloth around her head which covered her hair:³⁷⁵

Mae i Went fodrwy a mantell
Mewn du ni bu wyneb well.³⁷⁶

*(Gwent has a ring and mantle, / never was there a fairer face in black.)*³⁷⁷

Furthermore, in Guto’s poem we learn that this black material is expensive and in one couplet we find how by covering her hair in this way, the woman becomes an object worthy of praise on three counts; her wisdom, chastity and wealth:

Merch weddw yn ymorchuddiaw
Mewn du drud, o’r maendy draw³⁷⁸

*(A widowed woman covering herself / in expensive black, from the stone house yonder)*³⁷⁹

Anne, the embodiment of the virtues of the period is generous, rich, wise, of noble descent and most importantly, a mother. Reference to hair in this poem are oblique if at all where naming the saints might evoke the free flowing hair with which they were often portrayed. The only overt reference to hair is to the hair of a

³⁷⁴ See D. H. Thomas, *The Herberts of Raglan and the Battle of Edgecote 1469* (Enfield, 1994), 107–109.

³⁷⁵ This is in contrast to the evidence we saw earlier of the widow letting her hair loose.

³⁷⁶ gutorglynn.net, no. 26. 45–46. Hywel Swrdwal praises Gruffudd ab Ieuan’s wife in his elegy to him by commending precisely the same custom. From these examples we gather that the wearing of black around the face was the expected behaviour for a widow in this period: ‘Ni roes chwant ond ar fantell / A modrwy’n wir, ymdoi’n well, / A bwrw du ar bryd ewyn’ (*She did not want anything apart from a mantle / and a ring, to cover her better, / And to place black on a white complexion*) see *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal*, no. 8. 49–51. In *Dafydd ap Gwilym Apocrypha*, no 19. 21–22 there is mention of the ring and mantle in terms of a nun’s virginity.

³⁷⁷ English translation of the poem on gutorglynn.net, no. 26. 45–46.

³⁷⁸ gutorglynn.net, no. 26. 17–18.

³⁷⁹ English translation on gutorglynn.net, no. 26. 17–18.

man.³⁸⁰ As Guto expresses his wish to see Anne's sons leading a long life, he uses the image of grey hair to suggest longevity: 'Iarll yw dy fab, gŵr llwyd fo!' (*your son is an earl, may he live to be a grey-haired man!*).³⁸¹ A long life to the son would mean a long life to the Herbert family, ensuring that his lineage lived on. This example, typical of the fifteenth century eulogies to women, confirms the absence of hair in the genre.

vii) Conclusion

In summary, what can be learnt from the portrayal of hair in the *Canu Mawl*? We are able to conclude that the poets of the fourteenth century do not shy away from praising a woman's beauty, especially her face and her pale skin, in keeping with the rules set out in the *Gramadegau* of praising a woman's 'pryt a gwed'. The poets' interpretation of this term clearly does not include the hair. This omission is striking, given the hair's long-standing connection with a woman's beauty. The fact that so much attention is placed on the features of the face and other parts of the body, and the use of imagery such as the sun, the moon and candles, all of which would be ideal comparisons to draw upon when praising the hair, leads us to believe that the hair was covered. Yet can this explain the absence of reference to it?

Probing further, we find that on the whole the poets do not refer to the headdresses either, though one could imagine how they might well have praised this garment in order to extol a woman's chastity. Further we observe that the lack of reference to hair in the fourteenth-century corpus, given that hair is traditionally such a powerful symbol of a woman's fertility, also coincides with the lack of reference to the woman's role as a mother. There is hardly any praise to her ability to provide heirs,

³⁸⁰ gutorglyn.net, no. 26. 34 and 49, for example.

³⁸¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 26.12. English translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 26. 12.

which, as noted, is again surprising considering the importance placed on the continuation of lineage in the period. Do these omissions suggest that hair carried such potent messages about sexuality and temptation that staying away from it was the only sure way of presenting the ‘ideal’ woman in this genre?

Turning to the fifteenth century Canu Mawl, less importance is placed on women’s facial features, and more on her other virtues: nobility, generosity, faithfulness and, in contrast to the poetry of the previous century, her role as a mother. This time the poems do tell us how the woman’s fertility was of utmost importance, and her ability to provide a male heir is praised time and time again. Dafydd Johnston has explained how this work was composed ‘mewn cyfnod pan oedd y teulu cnewyllol yn dechrau ymffurfio fel uned ar wahân’ (*in a period when the nuclear family was starting to form as a separate unit*).³⁸² The trials and tribulations of the time meant that many of the husbands were killed, and producing children, especially sons, was vital to carry the family forward into the next generation. Despite this shift in term of the contents from one century to the next, there is still no direct reference to hair, the traditional marker of fertility. Again is this absence because the poets in both centuries were primarily concerned with presenting the woman’s purity and were thus bound to avoid any associations with the possible negative connotations of hair?

In the Canu Serch the hair becomes a powerful metaphor for a woman’s overall beauty and the prime symbol of her femininity. Here however there is a tendency to paint all the women with the same brush, and Roberta Milliken’s words

³⁸² *LIU*, 245.

when she discusses women, individualism and their hair, ring true when summarizing the women of the Canu Serch:

Distinctive characteristics are overlooked in favor of the common formulaic ingredients: the square peg is made to fit the round hole. It is a testament to the strength of traditional cultural lore that these notions of femininity seem to so permeate the imaginations of artists as to shape their perceptions of women both fictional and real.³⁸³

What is seen and presented to the audience is a personification of society's stock value system and a recognition of the ambiguous nature of the messages associated with a woman's hair, (while 'good' hair was shorthand for beauty and fertility, it was not necessarily always synonymous with 'good' character).

Yet, on the whole, in these poems, the tone is one of admiration and praise. This is in keeping with the poems classified as Canu Mawl, and this is where the boundaries between the two genres become blurred. Given that beauty was such an integral part of a woman's worth and that her long, soft tresses were key to that image, why should women not want to be praised for possessing these qualities? Therefore what is the reason to believe that the Canu Serch, so often considered less worthy than the Canu Mawl, should not be seen as an expression of formal praise? A further reason to question the traditional classification is on account of the references found in the examples discussed which directly address the woman in question or her family. From this it can be inferred that the poet, as was the case with the formal Canu Mawl poems, composed the lines in full knowledge of the target audience. Could this audience therefore have been commissioning patrons? These considerations suggest that more work needs to be done to explore the path Ann Parry Owen opens in the comments on the poem by Gruffudd ap Maredudd

³⁸³ Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks*, 7.

when she describes it as being a ‘cerdd fawl wedi ei chyflwyno o fewn fframwaith cerdd serch’ (*a praise poem presented within a framework of a love poem*).³⁸⁴

In the next chapter, a strikingly different portrayal of hair will be found when the poems and reference in the literature of the time that offer an insight into the importance of hair on a man’s body are decoded.

³⁸⁴ *Gwiath Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, p. 149. For the poem ‘Moliant Gwenhwyfar’ (In Praise of Gwenhwyfar), see *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, no. 3.

Part Three:

The Portrayal of Men and Their Hair

Ieuan Goch Benllwyd ap Bedo Benllwyd ap Gruffudd ap Maredudd Ddu was a man who was defined through his name by the colour of his hair, his father's hair and the hair of his great-grandfather. It was hair that also distinguished his father from his uncle too, as the latter's name, Bedo Benwyn, testifies. In a *cywydd* by Siôn Ceri (c.1520 – c.1540) to this very Ieuan, hair again is a prominent feature as the poet praises his patron by referring to his hair and that of his forefathers as he talks of manliness and bravery on the battlefield:

Mawr ydoedd gorff Mredudd gynt,
At Adda y tueddynt.
Gŵr lluosog o'r llysoedd,
Gwyllt o lew dewr, gwalltlwyd oedd.
Mawr ydoedd awch Mredudd Ddu;
Mewn ei 'tiffedd mae'n tyfu:
Gŵr du eglur gwridoglwyl,
Gwyn a choch, ac un awch wyd.
Carw oeddych cwyreiddwallt
A graen aur i'w groen a'i wallt.¹

(Maredudd before was a large bodied man, / They went back [i.e. their pedigree went back] to Adda. / A man with a large retinue from the courts / A wild, brave lion, he was grey-haired / Black-haired Maredudd had a great zest / In his lineage, he's growing / Clear black hair, his complexion pale and rosy-cheeked / White and red, you have the same zest / You were a stag, with waxy-hair / (A stag) with a gold tint to its skin and to its hair.)

Siôn Ceri praises each of the hair colours here, claiming that they are all colours that one should be proud of, with the last line suggesting that Ieuan Goch's hair has a golden tint to it, probably the same as the 'rhuddaur' (*reddish-gold*) that the *Cywyddwyr* so often use when praising women's hair. This golden tint seems to be of particular importance, especially with regards to the image of the brave soldier.

¹ Siôn Ceri, *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth, 1996), no. 10. 5–14.

In another poem by the same poet, this time to a different Ieuan (Ieuan Gwyn), this same image is seen. The golden colour of Ieuan's hair is associated with the successful warrior when the *cywydd* draws to a close with a message to his patron to become enraged and to go to the battlefield:

Gwylltia, filwr gwalltfelyn,
Canol y ffair, cawn alw ffyn.
Ewyrth dewrion wrth daraw
A'u meist'r wyd ym Mhowys draw.²

(Become angry, yellow-haired soldier / To the middle of the fair, we'll be able to call sticks / You are the uncle of brave fighting men / and their master in yonder Powys.)

These poems from the very beginning of the sixteenth century are by one of the last of the *Cywyddwyr*, but the custom of praising the hair of men features in much earlier Welsh literature and we see that certain hair colours and styles have different symbolic roles and become a telling feature of an individual's character and place within society.

Indeed using hair for symbolic effect can be found in the very earliest example of Welsh literature where hair is used as a marker of age. Here Taliesin uses the reference to Urien's white hair as a metaphor for old age. The poet's concern that his patron is no longer young and would not be able to fight as well as he used to, is vividly described when he conjures an image of Urien coming home with his white hair soaked in blood: 'a briger wen olchet' (*and white hair soaked*).³ In *Armes Prydein*, long hair is associated with the warrior, as the men from Ireland are praised for being 'Gwyr gwydyr gwallt hirion' (*violent long-haired men*).⁴ Examples from *Canu Llywarch Hen* again portray hair in connection with the

² *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, no. 15. 55–58.

³ *Canu Taliesin*, ed. I. Williams (Cardiff, 2000), 5. 12.

⁴ *Armes Prydein*, ed. I. Williams (Cardiff, 1955), p. 5, line 147.

battlefield. This is done, for example, by referring to the beard as a sign of manhood and of the status of a warrior:

ny mat wisc barf am y drwyn.
gwr ny bo gwell no morwyn.⁵

(A man who is no better than a girl / Does not happily wear a beard and moustache around the nose.)

Here too we find the graphic image of blood spilt on hair, which demonstrates that the warrior fought bravely in battle:

Pan las [vy mab] Pyll, oed teuyll briw,
A gwaet ar wallt hyll.⁶

(When my son Pyll was killed, shield-plates were shattered / and there was blood on ugly hair.)

Although these examples are scant, they are telling because in them we already see the ideas associated with hair which later become important symbolic markers in the Poetry of the Princes and more so in the work of the *Cywyddwyr*.

Krista Kappahn, in her article on the gendered ideals in the poetry of Guto'r Glyn, discusses what she calls the 'excessively masculine' tone of the poetry of the period.⁷ The 'masculine' nature of the poems not only refers to the way in which the poets focused their attention on the male patrons, and filled their poems with images of the battlefield, wealth, generosity, and famous and noble lineages, but also in terms of the poets' knowledge of their historical past, and how the poets are fully aware of the tradition of famous male poets to which they belong. In terms of the content, Kappahn notes that:

⁵ *Canu Llywarch Hen*, ed. I. Williams (Cardiff, 1935), no. 11, stanza 13.

⁶ *Canu Llywarch Hen*, no. 1, stanza 29.

⁷ K. Kappahn, "'Gorau Merch, Gorau Marchawg': Gendered Ideals in the Poetry of Guto'r Glyn" in Foster Evans *et al.* (eds.), *'Gwalch Cywyddau Gwŷr': Ysgrifau ar Guto'r Glyn a Chymru'r Bymthegfed Ganrif* (Aberystwyth, 2013), 375–391 (p. 380).

Praise poetry, whether courtly or heroic, relies on certain conventions which, when read one after another by a modern eye, will inevitably seem repetitive. The tradition requires adherence in both form and subject, resulting in countless lists of brave, golden, generous, popular and well-armed heroes descended from the greats of history.⁸

The seemingly repetitive nature of these aspects of the poems is precisely why, despite the recognition of their importance, they have been overlooked by scholars for decades, with the contents grouped together under general headings such as ‘masculine imagery’. Through ignoring the details found in the texts to the male patrons, an opportunity to deepen our understanding of this period and of what it meant to be male in it, is missed. In these details, as we shall see below, there are ample references to hair, and the variety of different categories to which it belongs demonstrates that it carried different meanings depending on the contexts in which it was placed. In this chapter, the following factors shall be considered: the symbolic importance of the colour and richness of the hair, the role of facial hair, the relationship between hair and the battlefield, and the customs of shaving and losing hair against your will.

⁸ Kapphahn, ‘Gorau Merch, Gorau Marchawg’, 375.

Chapter Six: Prose Narrative

i) Introduction

Turning to medieval Welsh prose we see that the ways in which these texts describe their characters is one of the factors that unify them, as Sioned Davies explains:

‘Mae’r un math o ddisgrifiadau ‘syml’ i’w gweld trwy holl chwedlau’r *Mabinogion*, gyda’r pwyslais ar liw y gwallt, maintioli, a disgrifiad o wisg’ (*The same kind of ‘simple’ descriptions are to be seen throughout all the tales of the Mabinogion, with emphasis on the colour of the hair, size and dress*).⁹ If we look at the male characters of the *Mabinogion*, we see how hair is an important marker of their identity as they are constantly referred to solely by their head or facial hair. This is rarely the case for the women of these legends. Gwri Gwallt Euryn in the *Pedeir Keinc* is given his name precisely because of his yellow hair, Cynwrig Frychgoch’s name in *Breudwyd Rhonabwy* is inextricably linked with his red hair, and another hair-related feature, this time the beard, is attached to Rinnon Ri Baruawc in *Culhwch ac Olwen*.¹⁰ These are all characters (assumed to be fictional) whose hair, beard and hair-colour are attributed to them in their very name. The same is found in Irish literature as W. Sayers notes:

a list could be drawn up from the genealogical, topographical and other lore of the names of individuals that incorporate a reference to hair or beard, e.g., Fiacha Foltsnáithech ‘thread-hair’, Tuirenn Beggrian ‘short-beard’ and Tuathal Máelgarb ‘rough shorn’, Domhnall Dúalbhuide ‘of the yellow locks’ or Cathal Caircheach ‘the tufted’ or ‘hairy’.¹¹

⁹ S. Davies, ‘Pryd a Gwedd yn y Mabinogion’, 116.

¹⁰ PKM, 23. 16; *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, 2. 6; *Culhwch and Olwen*, 25. 663.

¹¹ W. Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards, Baldness and Tonsure’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 44 (1991), 154–189 (p. 162).

But hair, and hair alone, is also frequently used to describe and denote nameless characters; indeed, sometimes it is the only thing we learn about them.

Take this example from *Historia Peredur Vab Efrawc*:

Ac ar lan y llyn yd oed gwr gwynllwyt yn eisted ar obennyd o bali a gwisg o bali ymdanaw, a gweisson yn pyscotta y mywn kafyn ar y llyn.¹²

*(And on the shore of the lake there was a grey-haired man sitting on a cushion of brocaded silk and wearing a garment of brocaded silk, and young lads fishing in a small boat on the lake.)*¹³

We never learn this man's name, he is always referred to as 'gwr gwynllwyt' (*the man with the white-grey hair*). There are numerous examples such as this one, and it is interesting that the texts hardly ever refer to people by any other physical characteristics. While we do not hear of 'the blue-eyed man' or 'the man with a big nose' for example (although 'y gwr hir' (*the tall man*) is used in *Peredur*), we always hear about hair.¹⁴ Certain descriptions of hair become shorthand for certain qualities, for example, through the use of the compound adjective 'gwynllwyt' (*white-grey*), we understand that the man is old. Red hair is also used symbolically, for example, to introduce an element of humour, as can be seen in this description from *Breudwyt Ronabwy*:

Ac ar hynny y clywynt galw ar Eiryn Wych Amheibyn, gwas Arthur, gwr garwgoch anhegar, a thrawsswch goch idaw a blew seuedlawc arnei.¹⁵

*(Then they heard Eiryn Wych Amheibyn, Arthur's servant, being summoned, a rough, ugly, red-haired man, with a red moustache full of bristling hairs.)*¹⁶

No further information is given regarding his appearance. It seems the audience should be able to derive the character's other features from the reference to the hair

¹² *Peredur*, 16. 30–17. 1–3.

¹³ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 71.

¹⁴ *Peredur*, 13. 24.

¹⁵ *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, 11. 8–10.

¹⁶ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 220.

and that the author is satisfied that the reference to this red hair and red bushy moustache will suffice to conjure the necessary profile of this character, and in this instance, create a humorous scene.¹⁷

We also know that a description of hair was attached to the names of non-fictional people. The medieval society in Wales used a patronymic naming-system where at times the word ‘mab’ (*son*) or ‘ab / ap’ was used to separate the name of the father and his son. Before surnames became normalized, epithets and cognomens were used to identify and distinguish between people and were particularly useful when both father and son shared the same name. These became the ‘precursors of surnames,’¹⁸ and after the patronymic names, words derived from personal characteristics were the ‘second most numerous’ category of naming, and the descriptive words that formed the majority of this category were ones relating to hair or complexion.¹⁹ We opened this chapter by mentioning a poem of praise to Ieuan Goch Benllwyd, and as we glance at the names of the patrons and of the poets themselves in the period, we see that Ieuan was not alone in the way his name was linked to hair colour. Amongst many others were Gruffudd Felyn (*Yellow Gruffudd*), Harri Ddu (*Black Harry*), Mathau Goch (*Red Matthew*), and Dafydd Llwyd (*Grey Dafydd*). Amongst the poets we have, for example, Iolo Goch (*Red Iolo*), Llywelyn Goch ab Meurig Hen (*Red Llywelyn son of Old Meurig*), Rhys Goch Eryri (*Red Rhys from Eryri*), Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn (*Grey Dafydd from*

¹⁷ Chaucer’s description of the Miller’s red hair and beard should be mentioned here. For a discussion see, for example, G. F. Jones, ‘Chaucer and the Medieval Miller’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 16: 1 (1955), 3–15.

¹⁸ J. Rowlands and S. Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales* (Llandysul, 2013), 19. See also T. J. Morgan and P. Morgan, *Welsh Surnames* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985), 26: ‘The kind of description which developed into regular labels and sometimes surnames was the description of appearance, especially colour of hair.’

¹⁹ Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales*, 19.

Mathafarn), all with hair colour in their name. Sometimes we need to search for the colour, as is the case with Ieuan Gethin where ‘cethin’ is not as first sight an obvious colour adjective. If we glance back at his lineage, we see that ‘Cethin’ was not a common epithet in the family, and it is suggested that in attaching it to Ieuan, so as not to confuse him with his father, it was done so as a descriptor of Ieuan’s hair:

Cyfeirio at liw coch tywyll ei wallt a wna yn ôl pob tebyg, a chyfeiria Ieuan ato’i hun ddwywaith fel *bardd cethin*, gan chwarae, o bosibl, ar ail ystyr *cethin*, sef ‘gwyllt’.²⁰

(It most probably is referring to the dark red colour of his hair, and Ieuan on two occasions calls himself the dark brown poet, possibly playing on the second meaning of cethin, which is ‘wild’.)

We have seen already that distinction was drawn between Ieuan Goch’s father and uncle by the use of the colour of their hair, Bedo Benwyn and Bedo Benllwyd.

However, Ann Parry Owen is careful to point out the problems of assigning a relationship between surnames and hair to all of the names involving a colour:

...ond gan fod lliw gwallt yn nodwedd deuluol a etifeddir, y cwestiwn i’w ofyn mewn gwirionedd (ac un sy’n anodd iawn ei ateb oherwydd diffyg tystiolaeth) yw a fyddai rhywun yn y cyfnod hwn yn arddel y cyfenw ‘Llwyd’ neu ‘Goch’, dyweder, petai gwallt lliw gwahanol ganddo?²¹

(...but because hair colour is a family characteristic that is inherited, the question to ask (and one that is very difficult to answer because of the lack of evidence) is would someone in this period adopt the surname ‘Llwyd’ or ‘Coch’, for example, if they had a different hair colour?)

This is a valid note of caution, and while the descriptive accuracy of each epithet cannot be established for sure, it seems noteworthy that *The Survey of the Honour of*

²⁰ Ieuan Gethin, *Gwaith Ieuan Gethin*, ed. A. Parry Owen (Aberystwyth, 2013), p. 1.

²¹ A. Parry Owen, ‘Englynion Bardd i’w Wallt’, *Dwned* 13 (2007), 47–76 (p. 62).

Denbigh, for example, dating from 1334, provides examples that such epithets were very commonly used of living contemporaries.²²

P. C. Bartrum in his article on ‘Cognomens in Wales in the Fifteenth Century’ demonstrates that out of the 176 cognomens listed in the indexes to *Welsh Genealogies, A.D. 1400–1500*, 120 of these are ‘descriptive’ cognomens, with the majority of them referring to hair colour.²³ He also draws attention to those colours that are more problematic due to their other symbolic meanings and associations with character traits, and he cites ‘cethin’ (*dark brown*), which as we already seen can refer to hair (in the case of Ieuan Gethin) but not always, as its meaning as ‘wild, fierce, rough’ or ‘hideous, ugly’ could also refer to the character’s personality.²⁴ This is the case in Madog Dwygraig’s poem ‘Dychan i’r Wrach’ where he describes the witch as ‘gwrach gethin’ (*hideous witch*).²⁵ Black can also refer to hair or to a ‘bad’ character as this example from *The Black Book of Carmarthen* testifies:

Dv dy uarch du dy capan
Du dy pen du du hunan²⁶

Black your horse, black your cloak / black your hair, yourself black)

White can conversely mean ‘pure’ and ‘blessed’ and we find plentiful examples of white being used in this way, such as ‘Llu guirin gunion’ (*a host of holy, good ones*)

²² See, for example, ‘Ior’ Loit ap Ior’’ in *Survey of the Honour of Denbigh*, eds. P. Vinogradoff and F. Morgan (London, 1914), 102 and 105.

²³ P. C. Bartrum, ‘Cognomens in Wales in the Fifteenth Century’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, 30: 2 (1997), 133–136 (p. 134). See also P. C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies, A.D. 1400–1500* (Aberystwyth, 1983).

²⁴ Bartrum, ‘Cognomens in Wales in the Fifteenth Century’, 134.

²⁵ Madog Dwygraig, *Gwaith Madog Dwygraig*, ed. H. M. Edwards (Aberystwyth, 2006), no. 15. 21.

²⁶ *The Black Book of Carmarthen*, p. 81. 1–2.

and ‘Rac Crist guin, nid oes inialet’ (*because of pure Christ, nowhere is desolate*).²⁷

Another example of ‘white’ in this sense is seen when Cynddelw Brydydd mawr in his *awdl* in praise of God sings:

Rhychyrchant un Pair, tair trydar,
Cynaddled ceneddloedd amhar,
Llu brithion, brodorion brwydr gar,
Ail, gwythlu, gorddu gorddyar,
Trydydd, llu nyw lludd cyfarwar,
Llu Gwynion, gwynfydig a gâr.²⁸

(They make for one Chief, in three noisy hosts, / A meeting of dissimilar tribes, / A tribe of speckled ones, men eager for battle, / The second, a cruel host, very black and noisy, / And the third, a host whom he (Christ) does not prevent (enjoying) bliss / holy and blessed ones who love one another.)

Llwyd is by far the most common epithet associated with a colour, but it is also the most problematic as it has a range of meanings beyond the apparently obvious one of the colour ‘grey’. O. H. Fynes-Clinton in *The Welsh Vocabulary of the Bangor District*, for example, distinguished six, only one of which is ‘grey’.²⁹ Others include ‘brown’ as in *papur llwyd* ‘brown paper’ and ‘pale’. It can thus be presumed that ‘Ior’ Loit ap Ior’’ (i.e. Iorwerth Lwyd ap Iorwerth) from the *Survey of Denbigh*, for example, had pale brown hair from his childhood and that ‘llwyd’ could then distinguish him from his father, and we see how not everyone designated as ‘llwyd’ need be old and grey-haired.³⁰ Another problem with ‘llwyd’ is that it can take the meaning ‘holy’.³¹ This is usually signified with a soft mutation when it follows a personal name, for example, ‘Iesu lwyd’ and ‘Dewi lwyd’.³² It is difficult to source the starting-point for this usage, especially since ‘gwyn’ was already

²⁷ *Blodeugerdd Barddas o Ganu Crefyddol Cynnar*, ed. M. Haycock (Llandybïe, 1994).

²⁸ Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, ii, eds. N. A. Jones and A. Parry Owen (Cardiff, 1995), no. 16. 15–20.

²⁹ O. H. Fynes-Clinton, *The Welsh Vocabulary of the Bangor District* (London, 1913), 354. See also *llwyd* in *GPC*.

³⁰ *Survey of the Honour of Denbigh*, 102 and 105

³¹ T. J. Morgan and P. Morgan, *Welsh Surnames* (Cardiff, 1985), 25.

³² *CDG*, no. 4. 11 and *GIG*, XXIV. 20.

available. Unfortunately, there is no evidence, for example, that in Wales the Cistercians were known as ‘grey monks’ as they were in Ireland rather than ‘white monks’ as in England. It could be suggested that it came to be used because of a contrast it offered: ‘cethin’ (*dark brown*) versus ‘llwyd’ (*light brown*), and also ‘surly, savage, hard’ versus ‘holy’, perhaps with a strong element of gentleness in ‘llwyd’ to make the contrast with ‘cethin’. In that case, there would be two opposing pairs: ‘gwyn’ versus ‘du’ as in Cynddelw’s poem quoted above (with ‘brith’ meaning ‘*marked with different colours*’ in the middle) and ‘llwyd’ versus ‘cethin’.³³ We shall return to the way in which hair colours are used in the poetry later in Part Three, but first of all, we shall examine bodily hair, starting with the beard.

ii) Beards and Body Hair in the Prose

We have already discussed the way in which hair is used in the *Mabinogion* texts as an important feature of a character’s identity, and in Part Two, we have also discussed its symbolic role as a marker for the female characters. It could be argued, however, that hair plays an even more important role in the context of the male characters of these texts, not only through the associations with their names but also through the social codes it signifies. A study of the tales reveals the significance both of the beard and of the symbolic force of body hair in general, but first, some examples of reference to hair in context beyond the prose and poetry will serve us well.

The Welsh medieval laws interpret the beard as a symbol of maturity stating that when a man’s facial hair grows it is possible to make him a magistrate on

³³ See *brith* in *GPC*.

account of the growth of his beard. Here we find virtuous masculine qualities associated specifically with hair:

Canys ena y byt baryf arnau ef ac y byt guastat y puyll ac y byt tec barnu ohonau ar paub en gyffredyn, ar denyon hen a'r rey yeueyng.³⁴

*(For it is then that he will have a beard and that his discretion will be steady, and that it will be fair for him to judge everybody in general, both the old persons and the young ones.)*³⁵

Not only was the beard and body hair a sign of adulthood and good morals, but it was also a potent symbol of a man's virility. Also in the laws, we see that wishing a shame on the beard of one's husband is listed amongst the three offences a wife could commit that would allow her husband to beat her. Society equated casting aspersions on her husband's beard with satirizing his sexual abilities and manhood:

Sef y6 tri pheth hynny y dyly y maedu: am rodi peth ny dylyho y rodi, ac am y chaffel gan 6r, ac am una6 meuel ar y uarf.³⁶

*(These are the three for which he is entitled to beat her: for giving away a thing which she is not entitled to give; and for her being found with a man under deception; and for wishing a shame on his beard.)*³⁷

The interjections found in the literature are also telling of society's attitude towards the beard. In the second branch of the *Mabinogi*, for example, Heilyn expresses: 'Meuyl ar uy maryf i' ('*Shame upon my beard*') and Peredur in his tale also states: 'meuyl ar varyf vym porthawr' ('*shame on my porter's beard*').³⁸ We find the close association between this facial marker and masculinity in the proverbs of the day and in one example from a thirteenth-century manuscript the beard is used as a

³⁴ D. Jenkins (ed.), *Damweiniau Colan* (Aberystwyth, 1974), 45. 2–4.

³⁵ *The Law of Hywel Dda: Law Texts from Medieval Wales*, ed. and trans., D. Jenkins (Llandysul, 1986), 142.

³⁶ Jenkins and Owen (eds.), *The Welsh Law of Women*, 170.

³⁷ Jenkins, *The Law of Hywel Dda*, 53.

³⁸ *PKM*, 47. 10–11; *Peredur*, 37. 5.

synonym for man: ‘Baryf ny ard ny chward y glas’ (‘a beard (i.e. a man) who does not plough his own field, his people will not be happy’).³⁹

Anglo-Saxon society too placed a great deal of significance on the beard as a symbol of a man’s honour and pride. This symbolic feature of the body is portrayed as the visual signifier of the society’s morals and virtues as we learn that grasping or holding one’s beard was understood to be a testament of honesty. Dating from sometime between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the *Chronicle of Evesham Abbey* relates the tale of a peasant who grabbed his own beard while swearing a false oath. This in turn caused his beard to fall off:

The countryman was an elderly man, who had a very long beard. He stood up, laid his cloak down on the ground, and grasped his beard with his hand, saying, “I swear by this beard of mine, I will remove the saint, because it is my land, and I will possess it by right of inheritance.”... Scarcely had these words been uttered, when, see! he [sic] pulled out his own beard so that it fell to the ground as if it belonged there, and had not grown naturally.⁴⁰

If grabbing one’s own beard was a sign of honesty we find that grabbing another man’s beard or hair caused utmost offence. One of Æthelberht’s laws for example notes that: ‘for seizing a man by the hair, 50 sceattas shall be paid as compensation.’⁴¹ Cutting or pulling another man’s hair was also seen as a serious insult. The *Hywel Dda* laws explain the details of the punishments for a hair-related offence:

³⁹ H. Lewis, ‘Diarhebbion ym Mheniarth 17,’ *BBCS*, 4 (1927–9), 1–17 (p. 5, no. 136). It is also in *Diarhebbion Llyfr Coch Hergest*, ed. Richard Glyn Roberts (Aberystwyth, 2013), 13, 108. Peniarth MS 17 is the older MS. See also the notes to poem 16 in *Gruffudd Llwyd, Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd a’r Llygliwiaid Eraill*, ed. Rh. Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2000), 290–291, no. 16.

⁴⁰ Thomas of Marlborough, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, ed. and trans. J. Sayers and L. Watkiss (Oxford, 2003), 81.

⁴¹ F. L. Attenborough (ed. and trans.), *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922), 8–9.

Achenawc yg kyueir pop bys a el yny pen a dwy yg kyueir yuawt.
Achenawc yg kyueir pop blewyn bonwyn a tynher oe pen. A phedeir ar
hugeint dros y gualt taldrwch.⁴²

*(And a penny for every finger which shall touch the head and two for the
thumb. And a penny for every white hair pulled out from his head. And
twenty-four for hair pulled out by the roots.)*

As if to emphasize this, in Peniarth 28 we find an illustration of such a crime where
a man is seen pulling another's hair as an example of insult or injury.⁴³

In Alfred's laws, the compensation for the cutting of the hair is higher than
compensation for damage to other parts of the body such as wounds an inch long on
the skull or the loss of the little finger. Cutting a man's beard demanded twice the
compensation given for the cutting of hair, higher than piercing the throat, severing
the first, second or middle finger and removing a rib or a bone from the shoulder. It
seemed that being seen without a beard was more socially disabling than receiving
one of these life-threatening injuries:

3. If he cuts his hair to insult him, in such a way as to spoil his appearance,
he shall pay 10 shillings compensation.
4. If he cuts his hair after the fashion of a priest's without binding him, he
shall pay 30 shillings compensation.
5. If he cuts off his beard, he shall pay 20 shillings compensation.
6. If he lays bonds on him, and then cuts his hair after the fashion of a
priest's, he shall pay 60 shillings compensation.⁴⁴

With the above examples, we find a parallel society which can be used, with
caution, as compranda for the Welsh evidence. Similar evidence is found in the Irish
material, and here too, they should be approached with caution.⁴⁵ For example, we
see the social effects of being beardless when Cú Chulainn in the medieval Irish

⁴² *Welsh Medieval Law*, ed. A. W. Wade-Evans, (Oxford, 1979), p. 65, lines 7–11.

⁴³ Huws, *Peniarth 28: Illustrations from a Welsh Lawbook* (2nd edn., Aberystwyth, 2008)
no. 21.

⁴⁴ Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, 79.

⁴⁵ The note of caution in terms of drawing comparisons between the Anglo-Saxon, Irish and
Welsh material remains.

epic, *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, is mocked by his society when it is said that he is not suitable to have the status of a warrior due his lack of facial hair.⁴⁶ Cú Chulainn then paints his face with berry juice and places grass onto it in order to make the Connachtmen think that he has a beard.⁴⁷ Beardlessness was socially disabling and would prevent you from climbing the social ladder to higher positions, as Sayers reminds us when he says that ‘a beardless man cannot function as *ollam*’.⁴⁸

It is interesting to note that the Irish have the story of the first barbering that tells how Fobarr Foltchain was the first man to be shaved by the barber Moen Mórghnámach, who was awarded a land grant for his work.⁴⁹ Indeed *The Triads of Ireland* list as the three accomplishments of Ireland ‘a witty stave, a tune on the harp, and shaving a face (*berrad aigthe*)’.⁵⁰ As already noted, comparisons can be drawn between the way characterizations are made by referring to the hair and the beard in Irish and Welsh prose.⁵¹ It is common to find descriptions of the epic warriors of Ireland as heavily bearded and attention is given to the colour too. We know that Fergus’ beard, for example, was so long that it could protect fifty warriors from atrocious weather conditions.⁵² As Sayers explains, the beard clearly is the metonym of the adult warrior and this is demonstrated in the *Geisi ulchai* (*Proscriptions of the Beard*) that gives a list of twelve activities or actions that are

⁴⁶ C. O’Rahilly (ed.), *Táin bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. Cecile O’Rahilly (Dublin, 1967), 27.735 and O’Rahilly, *Táin bó Cúailnge: Recension I*, 45; 58.

⁴⁷ Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards,’ 166. The prodigy poet Néde in *Immacallam in dá Thúarad* also turns to grass in order to trick people into thinking he has a beard, see *The Colloquy of the Two Sages*, ed. and trans. W. Stokes (Paris, 1905), 13.

⁴⁸ Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards,’ 167.

⁴⁹ W. Stokes, ‘Mag Main’ from ‘The Bodleian Dinnsenchas’, *Folk-lore*, 3: 25 (1892), 491. This could also be part of the ‘hair: vegetation’ equation.

⁵⁰ Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards,’ 165 and *The Triads of Ireland*, ed. and trans. K. Meyer (Dublin, 1906), no. 89.

⁵¹ Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards,’ 162.

⁵² *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension I*, ed. O’Rahilly, 2712 – 14, trans. P. 199. See also W. Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards,’ 165.

forbidden to the ‘beard’ (here a synonym for a man), for example, to be in bed when the sun rises or to perform menial tasks.⁵³ Here, different classes of men are categorized by the way their beard is shaved or dressed. Craftsmen and physicians on the one hand must shave every month but on the other the warrior’s beard is given the highest status:

The reason given is because of their fatigue. One may speculate that the strength that would have gone into beard growth is thereby diverted into their weapons, artefacts and cures, while at the same time they pose no threat, in terms of identity, to the warriors. According to the text, farmers with beards look foolish.⁵⁴

At the end of the twelfth century, Gerald of Wales noted that the Welsh once had their own, independent tradition of styling facial hair (as well as head and other body hair) as this section testifies:

The men shave their beards, leaving only their moustaches. This is not a new habit, but one which goes back to time immemorial... Sometimes they shave their heads, too, so that they can move more freely, for, when they run through the forest groves, they want to avoid the fate of Absalom. Of all the people I have seen the Welsh are the most particular in shaving the lower parts of the body.⁵⁵

Other evidence of this type of styling is scarce, although the mention of the beard covering the nose in *Canu Llywarch Hen*, already mentioned above, could be a reference to this type of styling.

The medieval Arthurian tale, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, encapsulates the symbolic role of the beard in medieval Wales where we find a strong and consistent association between facial hair, head hair and status. As another example of how hair is taken for granted and overlooked, it is interesting to note that despite much

⁵³ Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards’, 166. See also B. O’Looney (ed. and trans.), ‘Coneigius duib geissi ulchai’ in *RIA Irish Manuscript Series* 1, Part 1 (Dublin, 1870), 190–193.

⁵⁴ Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards’, 166.

⁵⁵ Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. L. Thorpe (London, 2004), 238.

research on all aspects of this tale, the role of hair has not been singled out for study. Reading the codes attributed to hair in this tale will serve as a rich context for the rest of the analysis.

Culhwch ac Olwen begins and ends with a male character having his hair cut though in very different circumstances, and throughout the tale there are constant references to hair and grooming. The first of these scenes occurs after Culhwch has deeply offended his step-mother having rejected her offer to pair him with her daughter. This prompts her to place a curse on him that he will ‘never strike against a woman’ until he gets Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr.⁵⁶ Subsequently, Culhwch goes to Arthur’s Court after his father had said that Arthur will help Culhwch get Olwen. In this early exchange, Culhwch’s father tells him to get his hair trimmed by Arthur as a gift: ‘Dos titheu at Arthur y diwyn dy wallt, ac erchych hynny idaw yn gyuarws it.’ (*Go to Arthur to have your hair trimmed, and ask him for that as your gift*).⁵⁷

When Culhwch is received at the court, Arthur agrees to the request that he should trim his hair, and he uses a gold comb and a scissors with silver handles to do this, thus signalling the elevated status of the ritual. As he treats Culhwch’s hair, Arthur asks him who he is:

Kymryt crip eur o Arthur, a gwelliu a doleu aryant itaw, a chribaw y benn a oruc. A gouyn pwy oet a oruc. Amkawd Arthur, ‘Mae uyg kallon yn tirioni vrthyt. Mi a wn dy hanuot o’ m gvaet.’⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 180.

⁵⁷ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 3. 58. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 180.

⁵⁸ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 7. 166–167.

(Arthur took a golden comb, and shears with loops of silver, and combed his hair, and asked who he was. Arthur said, 'My heart warms towards you. I know you are of my blood.')⁵⁹

We learn that they are cousins through Culhwch's mother. In this sequence, a Welsh example of the rite of passage where the grooming of hair signifies acceptance is found. Grooming and trimming hair as a rite of passage was a widespread ritual across Europe in the medieval period and was inherited from Roman custom, as this example from *Cena Trimalchionis* demonstrates:

In one corner was a large cabinet, which served as a shrine for some silver statues of the household deities with a marble figure of Venus and an impressive gold casket in which, they told me, the master's first beard was preserved.⁶⁰

The first shaving of the emperor Nero is similarly described by Suetonius:

At an athletic competition held in the Saepta, oxen were sacrificed on a lavish sacle; that was when he shaved his chin for the first time, put the hair in a pearl-studded gold box, and dedicated it to Jupiter Capitolinus.⁶¹

Discussing evidence of this ritual in his *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, Thomas Charles-Edwards explains that it suggests:

that there were two distinct rites, *capillatoria*, the first cutting of the hair of a young child, and *barbatoria*, the first cutting of the beard of an adolescent boy on the threshold of *iuventus*, youth or young manhood. Such rites were probably normally performed by the father; but they were also used to create ritual fatherhood, and in such secondary uses the connection with a rite of passage was sometimes broken.⁶²

A Welsh example from the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* testifies that these rituals were known at the time. Here Vortigern has fathered a son by his own daughter and the boy is placed in the care of St Germanus where the ritual here is used to cause shame. St Germanus arranged a synod to condemn the king but

⁵⁹ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 183.

⁶⁰ Petronius, *The Satyricon*, trans. J. P. Sullivan (rev. edn., London, 1986), 53.

⁶¹ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. R. Graves (rev. edn., London, 2007), 213–214.

⁶² T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Welsh and Irish Kinship* (Oxford, 1993), 180. Bartlett also argues that cutting the hair was normally used to mark the transmission 'to the age group beyond infants and the very young' see Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings', 47.

Vortigern persuades his daughter to place the child in the lap of St Germanus, and to claim that he was the father, and here St Germanus cleverly plays on the biblical pattern of placing a child in the adult's lap to signify the rite of adoption. Thomas Charles-Edwards explains that, although there is mention of the razor along with the scissors and the comb, the 'apparent age of the child suggests that the rite of *capillatoria* was envisaged.'⁶³ St Germanus says:

'I will be your father, and will not send you away, unless a razor and scissors and comb are given to me, and you are permitted to give them to your father after the flesh.' The boy heard him, and turned to his grandfather Vortigern, his father after the flesh, and said to him 'You are my father. Crop my head, and the hair of my head.' But he was silent, and said nothing, and refused to answer the boy. He got up in great anger, and fled from the face of saint Germanus, and was accursed, and was condemned by saint Germanus and the whole council of the British.'⁶⁴

Returning to the scene at Arthur's court, we find a form of *capillatoria*, as Charles-Edwards explains that: 'The European parallels suggest that although Arthur remains Culhwch's maternal cousin, he has taken over the effective role of a father.'⁶⁵ He also however suggests that although *capillatoria* usually meant cutting the hair of young children, it could occasionally be used in a loose sense to include *barbatoria*. Culhwch is of an age old enough to get married and we would therefore assume that he has already crossed into adulthood. Was Culhwch perhaps going to Arthur's court to get his beard trimmed? Would the audience have understood 'gwallt' in this context to include the beard as well?

After all, throughout the tale, there is a constant emphasis on the beard, its significance and its role as a symbol of masculinity. For example, in the hair-cutting

⁶³ Charles-Edwards, *Early Welsh and Irish Kinship*, 181.

⁶⁴ Translation in *Nennius, British History, and The Welsh Annals*, ed. and trans. J. Morris (London, 1980) p. 29, no. 39. Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that: 'The presence of the razor may even suggest that Germanus would later have performed the rite of *barbatoria* when the boy reached the appropriate age' in *Early Welsh and Irish Kinship*, 181.

⁶⁵ Charles-Edwards, *Early Welsh and Irish Kinship*, 181.

scene Culhwch calls on the warriors of Arthur's court and in an extensive list describing the warriors and their attributes, of the many references to hair, there are only two references to head hair, Gwrfan Gwallt Afwyn and Gwarae Gwallt Eurin.⁶⁶ The main focus is on the hair of the body and on the beard, as in the case of Moruran eil Tegit, of whom it is said that the hair of this particular character protected him from any wounds at war: 'ny dodes dyn y araf yndaw y Ghamlan rac y haccred, pawb a tybygynt y uod yn gythreul canhorthwy; blew a oed arnaw mal blew hyd' (*no man laid his weapon in him at Camlan because he was so ugly, everyone thought he was an attendant demon; he had hair on him like a stag*).⁶⁷ Other references to the beard include Vchdryt Uaryf Draws 'a uyrrei y uaraf goch seuydlawc a oed arnaw dros dec trawst a deugeint oed yn neuad Arthur' (*who would fling his bushy red beard across fifty rafters in Arthur's hall*),⁶⁸ Llawurodet Uaruawc, Nodawl Uaryf Trwch, and Cai's father, Kynyr Keinuaruawc.⁶⁹

As the tale progresses, Culhwch and Arthur's men, on their second attempt to hold discussions with Ysbaddaden, go to his court 'gan uawred a gyrru gwiw grip y mywn gwallt' (*with fine combs set in their hair*), and finally receive the list of tasks that need to be completed before Culhwch can claim Ysbaddaden's daughter.⁷⁰ One of these is to shave Ysbaddaden's beard before he dies, leaving Olwen free to marry Culhwch. The shaving of Ysbaddaden's beard will lead to the loss of his manliness and his ability to protect. The enormous significance of this is conveyed in the way the task seems impossible, extending to include forty other 'hair-related' challenges that need to be completed before Caw of Prydyn is able to

⁶⁶ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 11. 293 and 12. 315.

⁶⁷ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 8. 225–9. 228. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 185.

⁶⁸ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 12. 327. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 188.

⁶⁹ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 8. 223; 8. 223–224; 10. 264.

⁷⁰ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 20. 530–531. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 193.

attempt to execute the shaving of the beard. Setting these obstacles are Ysbaddaden's attempt to prevent the loss of his beard.

The giant demands to be shaved with the tusk of Ysgithrwyn Pen Baedd, and notes that 'ny hanwyf well ohonaw onyt yn vyw y tynnir o'e pen' (*it will be of no use to me unless it is pulled from his head while he's alive*).⁷¹ Then he adds that 'nyt oes yn y byt a'e tynho o'e penn namyn Odgar mab Aed brenhin Iwerdon' (*there is no one in the world who can pull it from his head except Odgar son of Aedd, king of Ireland*), and explains that he would not entrust the keeping of the tusk to anyone except Caw of Prydyn, who will not leave his kingdom willingly, nor can he be forced.⁷² In this, the first attempt by Ysbaddaden to keep his beard is seen. After Culhwch has noted that it is 'hawd' (*easy*) for him to obtain all of these things, Ysbaddaden further attempts to halt the shaving of his beard by stating that it must be dressed before it be shaved, and that for this, nothing will do save for the blood of the Gwidon Ordu, adding for good measure that 'ny mwynha y gwaet onyt yn dwym y keffir' (*the blood will be useless unless it is obtained while warm*), which needs to be kept in the bottles of Gwyddolwyn Gorr.⁷³ Finally, the most famous task of all is explained, namely the hunting of the Twrch Trwyth, which is yet another challenge that specifically deals with the shaving of Ysbaddaden's beard. The giant states that:

Nyt oes yn y byt crib a guelleu y galler gwrteith vyg uallt ac wy, rac y rynhet, namyn y grib a'r guelleu yssyd kyfrwg deu yskyuarn Twrch Trwyth mab Tared Wledic.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 197.

⁷² *Culhwch and Olwen*, 24. 640–649. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 197.

⁷³ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 24. 651–660. Translation in Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 197.

⁷⁴ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 25. 667–670.

*(There is no comb and shears in the world which can dress my beard, because of its stiffness, except the comb and shears that lie between the ears of Twrch Trwyth son of Taredd Wledig.)*⁷⁵

In order to capture the Twrch Trwyth, one of the tasks they need to complete is to pay attention to yet another beard. This time, they must take Dillus Farfog's beard to create a leash that will restrain the wild boar. Alas, there is yet further complication:

Ac ni ellir mwyniant a hi onyt ac ef yn vyw y tynnir o'e varyf, a'e gnithyaw a chyllellprenneu. Ny at neb o'e vywyf gwneuthur hynny idaw. Ny mwynha hitheu yn uarw canys breu vyd.⁷⁶

*(And it will be of no use unless it's taken from his beard while he's alive, and plucked with wooden tweezers. He will not allow anyone to do that to him while he's alive. But it will be useless if he's dead, because it will be brittle.)*⁷⁷

And so when Cai and Bedwyr set out to accomplish this task, they *pluck* out the *whole* beard and then kill Dillus Farfog. We wince as we are presented with the painful image of the beard being plucked by tweezers.⁷⁸ We must also sympathize with Dillus Farfog for the humiliation suffered as we know already how being shaved against one's will was an insult to one's manhood. The tale reaches its climax when, unlike in the rites of passage where cutting and grooming was seen as an act of acceptance, Ysbaddaden is shaven in a caricature of *barbatoria*, and an act of mockery and insult. It marks the end of his power over Olwen and indeed the end of his life.⁷⁹

The graphic account of the shaving shows a great lack of respect towards Ysbaddaden. Here it is Culhwch who has the upper hand, as Ysbaddaden's loss of

⁷⁵ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 198.

⁷⁶ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 26. 701–705.

⁷⁷ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 199.

⁷⁸ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 34. 953–984.

⁷⁹ Another example of hair as a symbol for masculinity is of course Samson in the Bible, which shows how far reaching these motifs are.

masculinity is demonstrated in the short answers he gives to Culhwch's questions. These are in stark contrast to the elaborate requests and commands he articulated in his opening scenes:

A dyuot Kaw o Brydein y eillaw y uaryf, kic a chroen hyt asgwrn, a'r deu glus yn llwyr. Ac y dywawt Kulhwch, 'A eillwyt itti, wr?' 'Eillwyt,' heb ynteu.⁸⁰

*(And Caw of Prydyn came to shave off Ysbaddaden's beard, flesh and skin to the bone, and both ears completely. And Culhwch said, 'Have you been shaved, man?' 'I have,' he replied.)*⁸¹

To the end, hair continues to play a role in Ysbaddaden's demise and death, as we see how he is dragged by his hair before cutting his head. This brings the tale to its close with a full turn of events; from a young man's request to have his hair cut at the beginning and a sign of acceptance to an old man being unwillingly shaved, thus emasculated and finally killed:

Ac yna yd ymauaelawd Goreu mab Custennin yndaw herwyd gwallt y penn, a'e luscaw yn ol y'r dom, a llad y penn a'e dodi ar bawl y gatlys.⁸²

(And then Gorau son of Custennin grabbed him by the hair and dragged him to the mound and cut off his head and stuck it on the bailey post.)

Furthermore, in succeeding to shave Ysbaddaden's beard, despite all his efforts to prevent this from happening, Culhwch and Arthur's men also succeed to form a bond between Culhwch and Ysbaddaden as father- and son-in-law, contrary to the giant's wishes.

In the *Life of St Cadog* by Lifris of Llancafarn, setting the enforced shaving of a man's beard in the same context as mutilating the heads of horses suggest how

⁸⁰ *Culhwch and Olwen*, 42. 1232–34.

⁸¹ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 213.

⁸² *Culhwch and Olwen*, 42. 1238–1240.

violent this act was considered to be.⁸³ In this text an association is drawn between the beard as a symbol of man's virility and the appearance of his horses. St Cadog advises his monks on how to deal with a troublesome band of brigands in the district by shaving half of their beards and hair as well as the lips and ears of their horses. It is clear from the passage that being seen with an improper beard would be a socially disabling punishment and that the state of the horse would add insult to injury. It would cause more dishonour to be seen in this way than it would to die a non-heroic death:

Have patience... Suffer them to steep their hearts in debauchery and drunkenness, so that being drunk they will fall into heavy sleep together. Then, when they are oppressed with sleep, shave off with sharpest razors the half part of their beards and hair as an eternal disgrace against them, and also cut off the lips of their horses and their ears as well. And they did as he had bidden them. Then the wretched brigands, having somewhat digested in their sleep the superfluity of what they had consumed, and at length having waked, being stupid with excessive drinking, mount their steeds, and begin their journey immediately.⁸⁴

We know from the Second Branch of the Mabinogi, how the mutilation of Matholwch's horses by Efnysien is carried out as an act of 'sarhad' (*insult*).⁸⁵ Jenny Rowlands in her study of this phenomenon describes it as 'one of the most striking incidents in *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*', and explains how this scene has often been remarked as a psychopathic episode, an angry character lashing out on a whim. In her article, she argues that this type of mutilation is planned, noting that

⁸³ P. Mac Cana in *Branwen Daughter of Llŷr* (Cardiff, 1958), 158–59 argues that this motif in *Branwen* is 'borrowed directly from this text and clumsily inserted in the story.' But Jenny Rowland argues that 'the maiming is well integrated in the story as we have it' see 'The Maiming of Horses in 'Branwen'', p. 55 n. 20.

⁸⁴ *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae*, ed. and trans. A. W. Wade-Evans (Cardiff, 1944), p. 59. See also D. Jenkins, 'The Horse in the Welsh Law Texts', in S. Davies (ed.), *The Horse in Celtic Culture: Medieval Welsh Perspectives* (Cardiff, 1997), 73–75.

⁸⁵ See PKM, 31–37.

‘Historical sources... suggest that mutilations were often rational rather than psychopathic, being an indirect way of attacking the animal’s owner.’⁸⁶

Ac yn hynny guan y dan y meirych, a thorri y guefleu wrth y danned udunt, a’r clusteu wrth y penneu, a’r rawn wrth y keuyn: ac ny caei graf ar yr amranneu, eu llad wrth yr ascwrn. A gwneuthur an furyf ar y meirych yuelly, hyd nat oed rym a ellit a’r meirych.⁸⁷

*(Then he went for the horses, and cut their lips to the teeth, and their ears down to their heads, and their tails to their backs; and where he could get a grip on the eyelids, he cut them to the bone. And in that way he maimed the horses, so that they were no good for anything.)*⁸⁸

Although acquiring facial hair was important in terms of demonstrating masculinity, being too hairy in turn was also seen as improper. The importance of grooming and appearing well-groomed is explored in *Owein*, where in the descriptions of the tools used by Luned for grooming Owain, the bowl is said to be ‘ivory’, a basin of ‘silver’, and the towel ‘of fine white linen.’ Just like the tools used to comb Culhwch’s hair when he visited Arthur’s court, these are made of the finest material. The tale guides us through each step of the process, emphasizing the great care the maiden takes as she prepares to wash Owain’s head. There is a feeling that we are on-lookers, taking a sneak-peek at a very private moment, in complete contrast to the scenes that precede it, which are set on the battlefield and in the very public sphere of courtly life:

Ac ar hynny kyuodi a oruc y vorwyn a chynneu tan glo, a llanw crochan o dwfyr a’e dodi y dwymaw, a chymryt twel o vliant gwynn a’e dodi am vyngwyl Owein, a chymryt gorflwch o ascwrn elephant, a chawc aryant, a’e lanw o’r dwfyr twym, a golchi penn Owein.⁸⁹

(And with that the maiden got up and lit a charcoal fire, and filled a pot with water and heated it; and took a towel of fine white linen and placed it round

⁸⁶ J. Rowland, ‘The Maiming of Horses in ‘Branwen’’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 63 (2012), 51–70 (p. 53).

⁸⁷ *PKM*, 32. 1–6.

⁸⁸ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 24.

⁸⁹ *Owein*, 14. 370–374.

*Owain's neck, and took a bowl of ivory, and a silver basin, and filled it with the hot water, and washed Owain's head.)*⁹⁰

The next development in keeping with the calm tone of the extract above, demonstrates the respect that was given to hair. The razor is kept safely in its box, only to be brought out on these special moments, its importance enhanced by the fact that it is of ivory and gold; precious materials for a special moment:

Ac odynd agori prenuol a thynnu ellyn a'e charn o asgwrn elephant a deu ganawl eureit ar yr ellyn, ac eillaw y uaraf a oruc, a sychu y benn a'e vynwgyl a'r twel.⁹¹

*(And then she opened a wooden box and took out a razor with an ivory handle and two grooves of gold in the blade, and she shaved his beard, and dried his head and neck with a towel.)*⁹²

Later in the tale we learn of the decline of Owain's good character through the portrayal of his hair. The image of an un-groomed, beastly man is very different from the one that paid careful attention to his appearance in the scene where he is shaved by the maiden. Hitherto we have found that hair equals strength and manhood, but here we find that too much hair, too beast-like an appearance by contrast was certainly not viewed as the 'ideal'. Owain's weakness here is symbolised in his wild, animal demeanour. This is reminiscent of the theme of 'the Wild Man of the Woods':⁹³

Ac ef a vu y velly ar dro hyny daruu y dillat oll, ac hyny daruu y gorff hayach, ac yny dyuawd blew hir trwydyaw oll; a chytgerdet a bwystuilet gwyllt a wnai, a chytymborth ac wynt yny oedynt gynefin ac ef. Ac ar hynny gwanhau a oruc ef hyt na allei eu kanhymdeith.⁹⁴

(And he wandered about like this until all his clothes disintegrated and his body all but gave out and long hair grew all over him; and he would keep

⁹⁰ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 125.

⁹¹ *Owein*, 14. 374–376.

⁹² Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 125.

⁹³ See, for example, Myrddin Wyllt (*Wild Merlin*) in *GLGC*, 90. 17–20.

⁹⁴ *Owein*, 21. 575–579.

*company with the wild animals and feed with them until they were used to him. And with that he grew so weak that he could not keep up with them.)*⁹⁵

After receiving doses of the special ointment from the maiden, his hair drops off in ‘scaly tufts’ and ‘his flesh was whiter than before’. It is only then as a well-groomed man that he is restored to the appropriate social order.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 131.

⁹⁶ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 132.

Chapter Seven: Poems on Beards

Masculinity and virility are two key themes in the poems to the male figures of the period, and when the poets ridicule one another as is often the case, or when they wish to satirize others, they turn time and again to hair as a target for their scorn. Guto'r Glyn and Dafydd ab Edmwnd for example, had a poetic exchange which used each other's genitalia as the subject of satire, and both poets turn to the bodily hair to mock each other with phrases such as 'Blwch eli blew a choludd' (*ointment box of pubes and gut*) and 'Pil blew ynghylch pêl o blwm' (*hairy skin around a ball of lead*).⁹⁷ Guto also attacks the hair of a fellow poet in an exchange between himself and Tudur Penllyn, where singing of Tudur's white and long hair is intended to cause hurt:

Nid mawr gan Dudr flawrwyn,
Â'r gwallt hir, y golled hyn.⁹⁸

(*Little does greyish-white Tudur / with the long hair care about this loss*)⁹⁹

Ieuan Brydydd Hir also insults Tudur through describing him as 'flawrwyn faeleraidd' (*whitish-grey hair, like a huckster*).¹⁰⁰ Dafydd ap Gwilym's famous poem of satire to Rhys Meigen, a poem which supposedly caused the death of the latter, also draws attention to the unkempt nature of his hair, comparing him with an ape:

Gwryd ateth gardotai,
Garw blu, ni bu gwrab lai.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ gutorglyn.net, no. 68a. 28 and no. 68a. 31. English translations on gutorglyn.net, no. 68a. 28 and no. 68a. 31

⁹⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 45. 13–14.

⁹⁹ English translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 45. 13–14.

¹⁰⁰ Ieuan Brydydd Hir, *Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir*, ed. M. P. Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2000), no. 2. 1–3.

¹⁰¹ *CDG*, no. 31. 59–60.

*(Stature of a fat-bellied beggar / coarse hair, no male ape was ever smaller.)*¹⁰²

The hair of an Irish man is satirized by Iolo Goch when he is described as:

Cwcwallt moel, ci ceilltew mud
Cocylltwn cicai alltud¹⁰³

*(Bald cuckold, a dumb fat-balled mutt, / tattered hood of a foreigner who has to beg for his meat.)*¹⁰⁴

Further insult is intended by the description of the hair of the Irish man's mother when he is described as being: 'fab i wrach foel-llwyd'.¹⁰⁵ A poet called Ieuan is also satirized for not having abundant hair in a poem by an unknown author in the *Red Book of Hergest* where he is described as:

Ffroga gwylltbla, nid gwalltbleth
Ffriw arth gasgl, moelrhasgl milrhith.¹⁰⁶

(Frog of a raging plague, it is not [even] the matted hair / of the snout of a festering bear, a glabrous monster.)

Direidi gwylltgi gwalltgoll,
Dyrnod cilhoel, darn foel fall.¹⁰⁷

(The mischief of a wild dog who is losing his hair / the heavy blow of a nail in the back, a bald, pestilential lump.)

The nape of his neck is described as a 'gwêr arfer oerfall benguch' (*grease/blubber is usual as a cold, unsavoury covering of his head*),¹⁰⁸ and the hairs on his cheek are said to be:

Gwern ddiern letgern lwytgoch,
Gwarn carn cornwydwasg basgwch.¹⁰⁹

(A red-grey cheek like a wild swamp, / The stubble of the hoof of a fat pig, squeezing abscesses [on her way]).

¹⁰² dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 31. 59–60.

¹⁰³ *GIG*, no. XXXVII. 21–22.

¹⁰⁴ *IGP*, no. 37. 21–22.

¹⁰⁵ *GIG*, no. XXVII. 82.

¹⁰⁶ *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan a Cherddi Dychan Eraill o Lyfr Coch Hergest*, no. 9. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan*, no. 9. 66–67.

¹⁰⁸ *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan*, no. 9. 106.

¹⁰⁹ *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan*, no. 9. 107–108.

From these examples of insults, we can gather how well-kept hair must have been important and desirable. A hint to this is seen when Mab y Cryg condemns a thief for breaking into his house and he notes the loss of his comb amongst the belongings he mourns: ‘crib ffyrddling nidding, neddwallt gymanfa’ (*a comb worth a farthing, hair like a gathering of nits*).¹¹⁰

If the hair on the head is mocked, so too is the beard. So much so that a group of poems to the beard has emerged forming a sub-genre. It consists of six poems in total, five in which the poets sing to their own beards and one which is a poem of praise to a patron’s beard. Dylan Foster Evans categorized and discussed most of these poems in an invaluable article ‘Y Traddodiad Barfol’, but before turning our attention to expand on his article and include a discussion on all the poems in this sub-genre, we shall first glance briefly at the fashion of the beard in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹¹¹

The styling of this part of the body has a long and complex history. It has been curated to adopt different symbolic forces according to the trends in society, and has been the subject of great debate within the Church. Across Europe, the beard’s role differed from country to country. During the thirteenth century we see the craft of the barber developed, and note that barbers were hired in 1266 to shave the monks of St Augustine’s Canterbury, where previously it had been customary for them to shave one another.¹¹² It was an acknowledged and sought-after service

¹¹⁰ Dafydd y Coed, *Gwaith Dafydd y Coed*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2002), no. 15. 19.

¹¹¹ Foster Evans, ‘Y Bardd a’i Farf: Y Traddodiad Barfol’, 11–29.

¹¹² Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 103.

throughout the Middle Ages, and in a time where it proved difficult to keep a clean shaven appearance, as Corson explains:

Of course, to say that a man was ever clean shaven in those days is somewhat misleading since even at the best there was usually some stubble left. And until soap became generally available, daily shaving was almost unknown. Once a fortnight seemed to be about the average. So even those who did not technically wear a beard were well on their way toward one for most of the time.¹¹³

The Kings of Britain used their facial hair to create their own identity and to differentiate themselves from their predecessors. Henry III wore a short beard, as did Edward I, whilst Edward II wore a curled beard and a moustache, with long curly hair. Edward III decided to wear his hair and beard even longer. In Spain by the middle of the fourteenth century it had become popular to wear false beards with different colours and styles that could be worn for various occasions. In Aragon, King Peter had to ban these due to the way in which they could so easily be used as a disguise. In Britain, by the end of this century, long hair and beards had fallen out of favour, as Richard II replaced the curly locks of Edward III with two tiny points of hair on the chin and a thin moustache.¹¹⁴

During the fifteenth century, beards were not as fashionable as they had been, and were almost never seen on young men. Some older men, however, still wore a beard, as did important officials with their particular beard being full and long, demonstrating their role and status. Again, the beard's symbolic importance in relations between the nations of late medieval Ireland is to be seen in an act passed by Henry VI in 1447, which stated that:

No manner of a man that will be taken for an Englishman shall have no beard above his mouth; that is to say, that he have no hairs on his upper lip

¹¹³ Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 97.

¹¹⁴ Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 104.

so that the said lip be once at least shaven every fortnight or of equal growth with the nether lip; and if any man be found amongst the English contrary hereunto, that then it shall be lawful to every man to take them and their goods as Irish enemies.¹¹⁵

By the time of Edward IV, it was the law that certain Irishmen were required to ‘wear beards after the English manner’.¹¹⁶

This is the context to which the group of poems which give prominence to the beard as their subject belongs. Dating from the end of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the fifteenth, they are by six different poets: Iolo Goch, Rhys Goch Eryri, Llywelyn ab y Moel, Llywelyn Goch, Lewys Glyn Cothi and Gruffudd Llwyd. The first thing to note in terms of ‘hair’ is the interesting fact that Iolo Goch, Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen and Rhys Goch Eryri all share a similar feature in their names, and bearing in mind Ann Parry Owen’s warning quoted in Chapter Six, one ventures to assume that they were all redheads or had red beards. Gruffudd Llwyd (*grey*) and Llywelyn ab y Moel (*bald*) also have hair related traits forming part of their name.

The poems, in their chronological order are as follows:

Poet	Title	First Line	Edition
Iolo Goch, <i>fl. c. 1345–1403</i> NE Wales	‘I’r Farf’	‘‘Ai dydy, farf, a darfodd’’	<i>Gwaith Iolo Goch</i> , no. XXV
Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen, <i>fl. 1345–1390</i> Ardudwy	‘Y Farf’	‘Mawr afael am oreuferch’	<i>Gawith Llywelyn Goch</i> , no. 10

¹¹⁵ Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 137–138.

¹¹⁶ Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 138. Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings of Hair’, 43–60 and W. Sayers, ‘Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards, Baldness and Tonsure’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 44 (1991), 154–189.

Gruffudd Llwyd, <i>fl.</i> 1380–1410? Powys Wenwynwyn	‘Moliant i farf Owain ap Maredudd o’r Neuadd-wen’	‘Gŵr litgawdd, agarw letgynt’	<i>Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd</i> , no. 16
Llywelyn ab y Moel, d. 1440 Llanwnnog, Arwystli and the borderland of S. Powys with Shropshire	‘I’r Farf’	‘Doe’r pryd hwn yr oeddwn i’	<i>Gwaith Sypyn Cyfeiliog</i> , no. 13.
Rhys Goch Eryri, <i>fl.</i> 1390–1440. Hafodgaregog, Nanmor, Eifionydd	‘I’r Farf’	‘ <i>Bardd</i> : ‘Rho Duw, farf, rhydew foresg’	<i>Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri</i> , no. 15
Lewys Glyn Cothi, 1440–1490	‘Cywydd y Farf’	‘Fy mryd a fu ym Mhrydyn’	<i>Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi</i> , no. 90

In the discussion on the fourteen poems to women’s hair, we found that even though the poems influenced one another, it is not always easy to establish a common pattern. However, in the sub-genre of the poems to a man’s beard, this is less difficult. The four poets that Dylan Foster Evans focused on in his article on this sub-genre (Iolo Goch, Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen, Rhys Goch Eryri and Llywelyn ab y Moel) are grouped together due to the fact that they have many commonalities. They were all poets from the North (namely Gwynedd and Powys) and they also exchanged poems between one another, which to some extent explains the similarities in these poems which leads Dylan Foster Evans to rightly note that the correlations in their poems to the beard are not simply coincidental.¹¹⁷

We can be fairly certain that the poem by Iolo Goch (believed to form a part of the earliest corpus of his work, around 1345) was the first of its kind. As Dylan Foster Evans notes, this claim is on account of its simple structure and the way the other poems seem to have developed and expanded on its themes, but still keeping

¹¹⁷ Foster Evans, ‘Y Bardd a’i Farf’, 11.

many of the images and sometimes exactly the same words used in this poem.¹¹⁸ In Iolo Goch's mid-fourteenth-century poem there are two passages addressing the personified beard with descriptive *dychan* (satire) slotted between them as if addressed to a general audience, and justifying the accusations made in the two addresses. The beard does not answer back. The second poem in the table, Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen was a contemporary and friend of Iolo Goch but not as long-lived (see Iolo's *marwnad* on Llywelyn).¹¹⁹ There is some narrative introduction to a considerably long dialogue with a girl in his poem. Gruffudd Llwyd's work, the next on the table, is distinct from the poems by Rhys Goch and Llywelyn ab y Moel (and the rest of the sub-genre) because it is a poem of praise of a patron's beard. (Rhys Goch Eryri, Gruffudd Llwyd and Llywelyn ab y Moel are linked on account of Rhys's *marwnad* composed to Gruffudd Llwyd, which evoked the criticism of Llywelyn ab y Moel and provoked a series of *ymryson* between the poets.¹²⁰ Furthermore, Rhys also composed a *marwnad* for Llywelyn ab y Moel.) Llywelyn ab y Moel's poem to the beard has a narrative introduction followed by a brief utterance by the girl and a long, further development of the narrative. Rhys Goch Eryri's poem however enters into a dialogue with the beard and, unlike Iolo's poem where the beard was silent, this time the beard answers back. Lewys Glyn Cothi (1440–90) belongs to a slightly later period than the others and, like Gruffudd Llwyd's poem, his *cywydd* is also addressed to a patron (in this case, William Fychan ap Gwatgyn of Bredwardine and Rhydhelyg). Unlike Gruffudd's poem

¹¹⁸ Foster Evans, 'Y Bardd a'i Farf', 15. See also *GIG*, p. xxi: '...yn debyg iawn mai gwaith cynnar yw'r cerddi digrif (XXII, XXV, XXVI) o leiaf' (*it seems very likely that the comedy poems are from his early work*).

¹¹⁹ *GIG* no. XX.

¹²⁰ For the *marwnad* see *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri*, no. 6. And for Llywelyn ab y Moel's criticism of Rhys over the *marwnad* see *Gwaith Sypyn Cyfeiliog*, no. 14. For the *ymrysonau*, see the three answers by Llywelyn in *Gwaith Sypyn Cyfeiliog*, nos. 14, 15 and 16 and for Rhys's answers, see *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri*, nos. 7 and 8.

where the focus was on his patron's beard, Lewys discusses his own beard which is the result of a pilgrimage to Rome. We can sum up the structures of the poems as follows:

A. Explicit narrative introduction or frame (as opposed to an incident just presupposed)

With narrative

Without

Llywelyn Goch (intro)

Iolo Goch

Llywelyn ab y Moel (the majority of poem)

Rhys Goch Eryri

Gruffudd Llwyd (apologue, i.e. traditional tale given contemporary application)

Lewys Glyn Cothi (the frame of the poet is with narrative)

B. Dialogue

Dialogue

Monologue

No direct speech

Llywelyn Goch (with girl)

Iolo Goch (to beard)

Lewys Glyn Cothi

Rhys Coch Eryri (with beard, whole poem)

Llywelyn ab y Moel (just girl, briefly)

Gruffudd Llwyd

(Arthur to Rhita Gawr, briefly)

No poems include direct speech by all three; man, girl and beard.

C. *Dychan*

Praise

Iolo Goch (by poet)

Gruffudd Llwyd

Llywelyn Goch (by girl)

Llywelyn ab y Moel (by poet)

Rhys Goch Eryri (by poet to beard)

Lewys Glyn Cothi (by poet in poem

addressed to William asking for the services
of his barber)

Sections A and B above support the argument that Rhys Goch Eryri's work followed Iolo Goch's poem, if the device of the beard answering back is a development from Iolo Goch denouncing his beard. Perhaps the primary influences in terms of shape and construction are as follows: Iolo Goch influenced Rhys Goch Eryri, whilst Llywelyn Goch with his narrative influenced Llywelyn ab y Moel, with Gruffudd Llwyd and Lewys Glyn Cothi out on a limb although there are clear *verbal* links in Lewys's poem.

As mentioned, Dylan Foster Evans discussed in great detail the four poems that use the poets' own beard as their subject. He drew attention to their thematic correspondence as each is set in the pursuit of love. He demonstrated how they used similar imagery and drew attention to how the beard's rough texture was compared, for example, to the prickly brambles making it a hinderance to love-making.¹²¹ He also discussed Lewys Glyn Cothi's poem and found evidence to suggest that it is a *cywydd gofyn*, where the poet is asking for his patron to arrange that his beard may

¹²¹ Foster Evans, 'Y Bardd a'i Farf', 21.

be shaved. In light of this theory, he asks if all these poems to beards are in fact requesting the shaving of the poets' facial hair.

Lewys Glyn Cothi opens his work by expressing his wish to undertake a pilgrimage, and a reference to hair can be found in the first few lines. We are told that his heart is set on becoming a hermit and that he wants to wear the clothing associated with St Anthony, namely sackcloth which has the roughness of the hair on the inside and the smoothness of the skin on the outer layer. Lewys revels in describing his willingness to live like a hermit, calling himself a penitent and explaining how he walked from Anglesey to Rome, the valley of the Rhine, Burgundy, Italy, Lombardy and Brabant, all of Germany, Swabia and Flanders:

Fy mryd a fu ym Mhrydyn
fod i gyd yn feudwy gwyn,
a gwisgo cob ar bob lau
fal Antwn a'i flew yntau.
Ermid, meddid ym, oeddwn,
neu flaidd yn ei flew a'i ŵn.
Siôn o Befrlai y'm galwai gant,
neu ddanas blaen y ddeunant.
Un ydwyf sy benydiawl
o dair ffordd i Bedr a Phawl.
Mi a gerddais i'w ceisiaw
o Fôn i dref Rhufain draw,
Glyn Rhin a gwlad Forgwin faith,
Italia, Lwmbart eilwaith,
Breban ac Alman i gyd,
Suafia, Fflandras hefyd.¹²²

(In Britain, my heart was set on / becoming a complete, pure hermit, / and to wear a robe every Thursday / like Anthony and the hairs on his sackcloth. / I was a hermit, I was told, / Or a wolf in his hair and robe. / I was called John of Beverley / Or a deer at the summit of two valleys / I am the one who is a penitent / of three ways to Peter and Paul. / I walked to (try and) seek them / From Anglesey to far Rome, / Traversing the valley of the Rhine and the country of Burgundy / Italy and Lombardy again, / Brabant and all of Germany / Swabia, and also Flanders.)

¹²² GLGC, no. 90. 1–16.

After explaining his dedication to the pilgrimage, he turns to focus on his sorry state by emphasizing his wild appearance. He draws on nature to describe his appearance with comparisons usually kept for the description of a woman's beauty, such as the rushes for example. In one line, he makes a direct comparison to a woman's locks. An audience which was familiar with this type of poetry would know that a woman's hair was usually long and flowing and would thus understand the significance of the image. Lewys also turns to the legends and the image of Merlin as a wild man, using the wizard's speckled beard to convey the ugliness of the poet's facial hair:

Brawd gwâr â bwriad gorwyllt
oeddwn i Ferddin Wyllt
a'i wledd yn Ffridd Gelyddon
a'i farf fraith ef ar ei fron.
Gwyllt yw 'marf fal gwallt morwyn,
a gwen a braith fal gwyn brwyn,
ac yr oedd dros gwr yr ên
llwyn o goed oll yn geden.¹²³

(I was a civilized brother with a very fierce intention / To Wild Merlin / And his feast in the Forest of Celyddon / And his speckled beard on his chest. / My beard is not tied back like a maiden's hair, / And white and speckled like the tufty flower of bulrushes / and over the edge of the chin / there was a grove of trees, all shaggy.)

Lewys was evidently familiar with the other poems to the beard as he continues to draw upon the rehearsed imagery such as the hedgehog, the idea of weaning, holly, shearing, the beard being a burden, as well as drawing attention to the whiteness around the mouth:

Dyn wyf, fal na'm edwyn neb,
a draenog drwy ei wyneb
a gên ofid a gneifir,
a'i gwlân oll o gelyn ir;
llyn dur yn llenwi deurudd,
llwynau o'r grug yn llanw'r grudd,
pennau nodwyddau i'm diddwyn,

¹²³ GLGC, no. 90. 17–24.

penfar o aith, pwn o frwyn,
 bargod o garth brigdew gwyn,
 bochau arth a'u baich wrthyn',
 nīwl o gylch canol gên,
 nyth anadl yn eithinen.¹²⁴

(I am a man, such that no-one knows me, / With a hedgehog all over his face, / and a painful chin that is shorn, / And all of its wool is like fresh holly; / Flax of steel covering two cheeks, / Bushes of heather covering the cheeks, / The tips of needles to wean me / A muzzle of furze, a load of rushes, / ?Icicles on thick white-tipped hemp, / The cheeks of a bear with their burden [of hair] upon them, / A fog around the centre of the chin, / The nest of breath is a sprig of gorse.)

But this section is followed by a change of direction as the poet echoes the opening lines but this time expressing expressing a different wish and a desire to run to his patron.¹²⁵ With this second wish, we are led into a passage of praise to William. In accordance with the customs of other poems of the Canu Mawl genre, William's territory is defined, his strength is praised as is his noble lineage:

Fy mryd fu yma redeg
 i'm gwneuthur â dur yn deg:
 Wiliam Fychan ryfelwr
 ap Gwatgyn, terfyn Tre'rtŵr,
 capten caer wen – pwy carw well? –
 ucho Ystwyth a'i chastell.
 O ddwyais Gwallter Sais hen
 yr hanwyd hir ei onnen,
 o waed iarll Henffordd dy daid,
 o waed Wgon, hil dugiaid.¹²⁶

(My heart was set on running here / To make me fair by the aid of steel: / Wiliam Fychan, the warrior / Ap Gwatgyn, at the boundary of Tre'rtŵr, / The captain of the white fort – is there a better stag? – / above the Ystwyth and her castle. / You are descended from the two ribs of Gwallter Sais / long his ash-spear descended, / from the blood of the earl of Hereford, was your grandfather / from the blood of Gwgawn (Gledyfrudd), a lineage of dukes.)

In the same way as Lewys described his efforts to undertake the pilgrimage, he now talks of the personal sacrifices he made to see William:

¹²⁴ GLGC, no. 90. 25–36.

¹²⁵ GLGC, no. 90. 37–38.

¹²⁶ GLGC, no. 90. 37–46.

Fy swydd fal arglwydd o'i lys
 o'r blaen yn nhre Bawlinys,
 coffáu Pedr rhag cwmpau cam,
 a Phawl, a choffáu Wiliam;
 cerdded trosod, bod heb ŵn,
 tros dwy ais, y tri stasiwn;
 dymunaw a'm llaw ar lled,
 ym Duw, Wiliam dy weled.¹²⁷

(My job as a lord from his court / from the front in Paulinus' town, / To remember Peter in order to prevent foolish failings, / and Paul, and remember William; / walk for you, to be without a cloak, / over two ribs, the three stational churches (of Rome); wishing with my hand spread out, / to my God, to see you William.)

After setting the scene and ensuring that the audience understands the lengths to which Lewys has gone in order to ensure his patron's happiness and to fulfil his wishes, the fourth and final section sees Lewys expressing the true purpose of the poem as he calls upon William to help improve his appearance and to cut his facial hair. He promises that if William will grant him this favour, he will never again let his beard grow upon his lips like the hair of the mermaid Gwenhidwy:

Mor fwbach bach wyf lle bo
 ag anifail heb gneifio.
 Maestr Wiliam pâr dan amod
 eillio'r ên sydd fal lliw'r ôd.
 Pan ddarffo i'th farbwr gŵraidd,
 ni bydd tri o'r saith nie
 heb eilliau ym ym mhob lle;
 ni adaf fal Gwenhidwy
 ar fy min dyfu barf mwy.¹²⁸

(What a little scarecrow I am, where it may be / As an animal that has not been sheared. / Master William, give to me under a promise / To shave the chin that's the colour of the snow. / When your brave barber finishes / cutting the thick hedge by the root, / there won't be three from the seven days / without shaving me in every place; / I'll no longer let, like Gwenhidwy, / A beard grow upon my lips.)

¹²⁷ GLGC, no. 90. 47–54.

¹²⁸ GLGC, no. 10. 55–64. For other references to Gwenhidwy, see J. Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* (Cardiff, 1931–63), 746.

The sixth and final poem is by a poet who bridged the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Gruffudd Llwyd. His work is typical of the poetry of the period, but as Rhiannon Ifans notes, what sets him apart from the other poets is his detailed knowledge of the Welsh literary tradition, especially the indigenous legends and folklore as well as the better-known literary canon.¹²⁹ This knowledge is what also separates his poem to facial hair from the other poems to the beard, where it becomes apparent that he has a detailed knowledge of the Welsh version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, and possibly *Brut Dingestow*.¹³⁰ The tale, involving King Arthur, the giant Rhita and beards explains how the giant sent a message to Arthur requesting him to shave his beard and send it to him, an act that would acknowledge that Arthur was willing to accept the giant's supremacy.¹³¹ We learn that Rhita's aim is to make a cloak from his collection of the beards of the rulers that he has killed or emasculated by shaving their faces.¹³² Given the important symbolic nature of the beard, the medieval audience would understand that if Arthur were to become clean shaven and send his beard to the giant, he would have lost his own manliness and power, and added to the giant's virility. Gruffudd cleverly weaves this into the poem by retelling this story:

Gŵr litgawdd, agarw letgynt,
 Gŵr mawr oedd Rhita Gawr gynt
 Gŵr cryf nid o gôr crefydd,
 Gŵr ffôl heb un gair o ffydd.
 Anfon anfad air ynfyd
 At Arthur, benadur byd;
 Hyn a roes hwn, yn ei raid,
 Yn y llythr yn anllathraid

¹²⁹ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, 85. See also *LIU*, 191.

¹³⁰ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of De Gestis Britonum*, ed. M. D. Reeve and trans. N. Wright (Woodbridge, 2007), 226; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Brut Dingestow*, ed. H. Lewis (Cardiff, 1942).

¹³¹ See C. Grooms, *The Giants of Wales: Cewri Cymru* (Lampeter, 1993), 214–218.

¹³² Grooms, *Cewri Cymru*, 214–215

Bod iddo, nis bedyddiais,
Beth yn anorffen o'i bais
Nes caffael barf, ruddarf ri,
Arthur i'w gwnïo wrthi.¹³³

(A wrathful man, fierce in anger, / Rhita the Giant was a large man, / a strong man, not from a choir of religion, / a foolish man without a word of faith. / He sent a rash, harsh word / to Arthur, the king of the world; / This is what he placed, in his anger, / in the letter in an unrefined manner, / that a part of his cloak (I have not baptized him) would be unfinished / until he would have the beard (king of a blood-stained weapon) / of Arthur to sew onto it.)

Gruffudd explains how Rhita and Arthur meet to fight and how the giant is unsuccessful in his attempt to take Arthur's beard. There are many references to Rhita being without faith ('heb un gair o ffydd'), not baptized ('nis bedyddiais') and a pagan ('began gwladaidd').¹³⁴ After setting the scene with this story, Gruffudd starts to praise his patron's beard and here we find that it is praised as a symbol of manhood, military strength, force and even fertility. From the very beginning of the poem the idea of being clean-shaven is evidently not what the poet considers praiseworthy, and the idea that being shaved against your will as a sign of subordination is clearly expressed. This idea is reinforced when we remember Ysbaddaden's death and how it was associated with his beard being shaved against his wishes.

The second section is dedicated entirely to the praise of Owain's beard, which from the beginning is linked to his military strength, and which Gruffudd then uses it as a catalyst to praise his estate, lineage and generosity:

Mae mab teg ei gynrabad
Ymysg gwŷr y maes a gad
A ŵyr dwyn, air diannod,
Barf glaer i gael berf y glod.

¹³³ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 9–12.

¹³⁴ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 4; 9 and 17.

Un ni chël pan ddêl yn ddig,
 Owain ydyw'n enwedig,
 Mab mawrglod, pair wybod pwy,
 Maredudd, mur ar adwy,
 Bro freiniawl, lle mae'r mawl mau,
 Barwn Heiliarth, bron heiliau.¹³⁵

(There is a son, splendid his success / He was found among the men of the (battle-)field / who knows he possesses, a ready word, / A fine beard to receive a word of praise. / One who doesn't hide when he becomes angry, / He is by name of Owain / A lad great his praise, it causes me to want to know who, / Maredudd, a wall in an opening, / A privileged valley, where my praise is, / The Baron of Heiliarth, slope of feasts.)

The over-riding theme of this section is his power as a leader and that he, like Arthur, would not let anyone take even a single hair from his beard. The poet notes that it is impossible to grab Owain ap Maredudd's beard and if we remember the laws associated with grabbing another man's beard (or hair), Owain's manliness and strength is heightened by this imagery. The colour of the beard is also mentioned here and unlike the other white and grey beards, Owain's is described as 'rhuddfelyn' (*red-yellow*), a colour the audience would associate with beauty and perfection as we have already learnt from the discussions in Part Two:

Gwn nad haws cael, gafaél Gai,
 Ym marf y mab a'm eurai,
 Engyrth ei law a'i angad,
 Un blewyn rhuddfelyn rhad
 Gynt nag y cad, tyfiad hardd,
 O farf Arthur oferfardd.¹³⁶

(I know it is no easier (even with the grip of Cai, / whose hand and grasp were wondrous) / to get a single free golden-red beard-hair / belonging to the youth who would enrich me – / [I would get hold of a hair no] sooner than was got (noble growth) / a hair from the beard of Arthur, [the] scurrilous poet!)

We see here that Owain is placed among the best and bravest men, and the underlying suggestion is that these noble qualities are linked to the fact that Owain

¹³⁵ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 27–36.

¹³⁶ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 37–42. This last reference comes from the triad of the 'Three Scurrilous Poets', of whom Arthur is one, see *TYP*, no. 12.

has a praiseworthy beard. This association between his beard and these virtues is captured in the couplet:

Gŵr yw â barf, gwir ei bod,
Da i ddynion diddannod.¹³⁷

(He is a man with a beard, its existence is true, / Good to men who don't reproach.)

The third and final section of the poem opens in the style of the triads, by noting what Gruffudd deems to be the three most important beards, those of Adam and of Christ and Owain's. Owain ap Maredudd's beard allows him to be placed alongside these two men, who according to the poet also possessed great beards:

Barf i gynnal pybyroed
Gyntaf ar Addaf a roed,
A barf heb lid, heb orfynt,
Deg iawn a gymerth Duw gynt.
Y drydedd farf, gufarf gâr,
Ymysg arglwyddi moesgar,
Myn draul! y mae yn drylwyn
Owain yn deg yn ei dwyn.¹³⁸

(A beard to uphold a fine age (i.e. the age of a man) / Was firstly given to Adam / Long ago God received / a very fine beard without irritation, without envy. / As for the third beard, dear beard of a loved one, / amongst the courteous lords, / I swear! It is splendid / that Owain handsomely bears it.)

Rhiannon Ifans in her discussion in the notes in the edited volume of the poet's work explains that while there are no biblical references which specify that Christ had a beard, he is depicted as a bearded figure with loose hair in the visual art of the period and indeed since late antiquity.¹³⁹ She cites the image of Christ on the

¹³⁷ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 43–44.

¹³⁸ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 45–52.

¹³⁹ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, pp. 294–295. For a study of the history of the cultural image of Jesus between the first and the twentieth centuries, see J. Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, 1999). See also D. Ó Cróinín, 'Cummianus and the Iconography of Christ and the Apostles' in D. Ó Cróinín, L. Breatnach and K. McCone (eds.), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, 1989), 268–279.

Cross, the ‘Volto Santo’ in the St Martino Cathedral in Lucca as an example and notes that this work was an inspiration for many of the images of Christ in the Western World. Ifans also notes a Welsh example from the *Book of Llandaf* that depicts a bearded Christ and a short poem about Jesus and the Apostles in the Irish literary tradition which describes Christ possessing a long beard.¹⁴⁰

Gruffudd Llwyd moves on to praise the beard in more detail as he expresses its fullness, explaining that it surrounds the whole of the jaw. What is fascinating in the above section is the constant reference to its colour. We have already learnt that the beard is ‘rhuddfelyn’, but here the colour becomes a more prominent feature when the beard is described as a splendid ‘yellow’ prince (perhaps referring to the colour of the hair of his head). Once more, comparisons can be drawn here with the poems that praise a women’s hair, not only through the mention of the yellow colour but also through the image of the ‘llwyn’ (*thicket*). The lines referring to the ‘llwyn o sidan’ (*thicket of silk*) and the ‘llwyn aur gwiw’ (*thicket of true gold*) could easily be quotations from the poems that sing praises to women’s long, blonde locks.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, in the last line of this extract it is directly referred to as the ‘llwyth Iarlles llyweth eurlliw’ (*a noblewoman’s load, lock of golden colour*). The image with which we are presented could not be further from the one the other poets portray of their own beards:

Sud glwys ar osodiad glân,
Llyna sud, llwyn o sidan.
Addwyn o bensel melyn;
Egin teg yw o gnawd dyn.
Ni bu ymlaen llu Lleon
Ystondardd mor hardd â hon.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, p. 295.

¹⁴¹ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 54 and 61.

¹⁴² *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 53–58.

Cyrs nawdd, ai gwell yw cwrs neb?
 Cylchynodd oll cylch wyneb.
 Llawn yw o'r gwawd, llwyn aur gwiw,
 Llwyth iarllles llyweth eurlliw.¹⁴³

(A goodly sight [growing] upon pure ground – / that is how it looks, a silken thicket. / A fine yellow emblem; / It is a fair new crop put forth from a man's flesh. / There was not in the vanguard of the war band of Lleon / A standard as fine as this one.

A protective reedbed (is anyone's manner of life better?), / It encircles his entire countenance. / It is full of praise-poetry, a thicket of fine gold, / [such as] a gentle, golden-haired lady would bear.¹⁴⁴

In the final four couplets, the poet describes the welcome he will receive at a noble feast with fine wine from a man with a long beard reaching his breast, with its tip waxed or glossed.¹⁴⁵ Again, its beautiful reddish-brown, golden colour is praised as the poet explains that never did a beard grow on such a fair face. The colour white here has different connotations from the other five poems. Here it is used in terms of fair, light coloured hair rather than old age, and indeed if we remember the strong element of faith running throughout the poem, it may well have the overtone of 'holy, divine, blessedness':

Caf wrth gyfedd bonheddig
 Cyrraedd bron, cwyradd ei brig;
 Cyfles bryd cofl ysbrydawl;
 Gwin goelgae lle mae y mawl;
 Gwiwne aur, gwinau, arab,
 Gwyn ermoed, gwn i, yw'r mab,
 Na thyfawdd barf, gufarf ged,
 Ar wyneb cyn dirioned.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 59–62.

¹⁴⁴ The literal translation for the last line is: 'Load of a gentle, golden-hued noblewoman'.

¹⁴⁵ Sparrow's comments on the 'fantail' beard are of interest here as he describes it as 'a thing three inches long, in the shape of a fan, rounded, and set off with two long stiff whiskers, cat like in appearance. At night the fan-beard had a wadded bag to sleep in, and for the good reason that the scented wax with which the beard was coloured and stiffened took some time to manipulate, and was easily cracked.' This is quoted in Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 169.

¹⁴⁶ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd*, no. 16. 63–70.

(I shall find at a noble feast / (A beard) reaching the breast, glossy its tip; / A loved one's blessing, a spiritual embrace; / The certainty of wine where there is praise; / Beautiful its golden colour, reddish-brown, pleasant, / The youth is blessed for ever more, I know / In that never has a beard grown, a generous dear beard, / A face as amiable as his.)

The popularity of the beard and of these poems is reflected in the Welsh poetry of a later period too. Foster Evans notes that Sir Rhosier Davies composed a poem to the beard, and that Rhosier Cyffin composed a *cywydd* thanking for a brush for the beard.¹⁴⁷ In the same vein as the poems by Rhys Goch Eryri, Iolo Goch and Llywelyn ab y Moel, Goronwy Owen in 1752 also sang a poem to the beard.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ See Foster Evans, 'Y Bardd a'i Farf', 28 and for a list of the copies of Sir Rhosier's *cywyddau* see *MFGLL*, 3242 (Foster Evans notes that Rhosier Cyffin's *cywydd* only survives in the MS Llansteffan 155, 148 and he also notes that his poem is also assigned to Richard Gele y Prydydd Brith, see Foster Evans, 'Y Bardd a'i Farf', 28).

¹⁴⁸ Goronwy Owen, *Cywyddau Goronwy Owen*, ed. W. J. Gruffydd (Newport, 1907), 8–11.

Chapter Eight: Hair on the Male Head

i) Introduction

In Part Three thus far, this thesis has mainly discussed the significance of the beard and how it embodies the ideal virtues of the day through connecting it to manhood, virility and military strength. It has also been noted how the beard is used in poems about lovemaking and the way in which the poets draw upon stock images associated with nature (some of which are used in the descriptions of women's hair) to convey its appearance was considered. In the poems discussed below, the focus will be on references to the hair on the male head and some of the sexual undertones that hair can carry will be found. As we have seen elsewhere, hair is a clear symbol of growth and it will demonstrated how the poets often use it to express the continuation of lineages. Part One discussed how hair was often associated with vegetation and Part Two, how it was a symbol of fertility for women. In this next section, the same associations are found. The *hair : vegetation* equation is made through imagery using flowers, plants, leaves and trees to describe hairstyles, and inversely, hair is sometimes used to personify scenes of nature, as Bleddyn Owen Huws found in Dafydd ap Gwilym's work, for example:¹⁴⁹

Nid oes bren yn y Wennallt
Na bo'n wyrdd ei ben a'i wallt.¹⁵⁰

(*There's not a tree in the Wenallt / whose head and hair are not green.*)¹⁵¹

I dyfu, glasu glwysaf,
Dail ar goed y rhoed yr haf,
A gweled, modd y chwarddaf,
Gwallt ar ben hoywfedwen haf.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ B. O. Huws, '“Dros fy mhlau ar draws fy mhlwyf”: Golwg newydd ar ‘blu’ Dafydd ap Gwilym’, *Dwned*, 10 (2004), 33–56 (pp. 48–49).

¹⁵⁰ *CDG*, no. 15. 47–48.

¹⁵¹ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 15. 47–48.

¹⁵² *CDG*, no. 34. 11–14.

*(In order to grow (prettiest greening) / leaves on trees were summer given, / and to see, so that I laugh, / hair on the head of the fine summer birch.)*¹⁵³

Teg fedwen, to gyfoedwallt.¹⁵⁴

*(A fair birch-tree with a roof of hair of the same age.)*¹⁵⁵

When praising the ‘mwdl gwair’ (*the haycock*) and thanking it for offering shelter when he was left outside waiting for a girl, it is described as a pleasant lad with curly hair: ‘Digrifwas pengrychlas pŵl’ (*stubby green curly-headed clown*).¹⁵⁶ To these images, we could add Ieuan Deulwyn and Dafydd Llwyd of Mathafarn’s description of the birch tree:

Mae bedwen yniben allt
vric laswyrdd vwr i glwyswallt.¹⁵⁷

(There is a birch tree at the end of the wood / With green tips around its beautiful hair.)

Y fedwen fonwen, fanwallt
Eglur wyt o gil yr allt.¹⁵⁸

(The birch tree, white its stump, fair hair / You are clearly visible from the corner of the wood)

Further evidence of the role of hair as a symbol for fertility and growth is found when we learn that it was perceived as socially disabling to lose your hair and become bald. Poets would often draw comparisons with religious figures through referring to the tonsure in order to poke fun or provoke a reaction. This is seen in Iolo Goch’s two poems of satire to the ‘Brawd Llwyd’ (*Grey Brother*), where the friar is condemned for a sermon warning women of the dangers of lovemaking.

From the evidence in the poetry, it appears that the friar came to a place where

¹⁵³ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 34. 11–14.

¹⁵⁴ CDG, no. 38. 37.

¹⁵⁵ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 38. 37.

¹⁵⁶ CDG, no. 66. 10. Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 66. 10. For a similar theme, see ‘Y Cwt Gwyddau’ (*The Goose-shed*), CDG, no. 67.

¹⁵⁷ *Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. VIII.

¹⁵⁸ *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd*, no. 34. 1–2.

churchgoers and their lovers had congregated and that he scolded them for their lack of morals. Glanmor Williams says of these poems:

No thirteenth-century attacks by the bards on the friars are known to exist, but Iolo Goch may be the heir to a long tradition of mistrust and enmity. If he was also a secular cleric, as has been suggested, his attacks on the friars become doubly intelligible. They would convey much of the intense hatred and jealousy felt by the laxly disciplined seculars for what they regarded as meddlesome interlopers who condemned their morals, poached their fees, and undermined their parishioners' confidence.¹⁵⁹

One of the main ways in which Iolo attacks the friar is to focus on his hairstyle, a visible feature that would set the friar apart from the other members of society:

Ni bo well, hen gawell gŵyr,
Y darffo i'r Brawd oerffwyr
No'i ddal, leidr gwylltgal gwalltgyrch,
Un cas yn rhodio i'n cylch

Ysgrîn gwrach fraen afiach frau,
Ysgod hen felgod foelgau,

Ystelff dihir, myn Sirioel,
Ystyried, Myhumed moel.¹⁶⁰

(May no better fate, old crooked basket, / befall the dreadful Friar / than to be caught, circle-haired thief with a wild cock, / wicked one roaming around us

Shrine of a rotten sick frail hag, / shape of an old bald empty scrotum, /

Rascally idiot, by Gregory, / let him reflect, bald Mahound.)¹⁶¹

Perhaps the poem that most clearly demonstrates the attitude towards bald hair is this short poem by Llawdden. Here the poet is asked to foster an illegitimate child, as testified by the explanation that follows the poem:

Llawdden a'i gwnaeth pan (*B llowdhen pan*) enillasai ei feistr Meredudd o Faelienydd etifedd o forwyn o'r ty, ac a fagwyd yn enw Llawdden heb wybod o'r wraig.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ G. Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff, 1962), 189.

¹⁶⁰ *GIG*, no. XXXIV. 47–50; 57–58; 61–62.

¹⁶¹ *IGP*, no. 34. 47–50; 57–58; 62–62.

¹⁶² *Gwaith Llawdden*, no. 35.

(Llawdden composed it when his master Meredudd from Maelienydd had a child from a maid in the house, who was raised in Llawdden's name without the wife knowing.)

Llawdden stipulates that he is willing to accept the child on one condition, that the child should have hair in abundance, if he is bald, then he does not want to see him:

Os aml ei wallt, moes i mi,
Os moel, na ddangos i mi¹⁶³

(If he has hair in abundance, bring him to me / If he is bald, don't show him to me.)

This particular reference is intended as an insult, but baldness could also be an easy way of introducing an element of humour to a poem. Those who were suffering from love sickness often complained that their hair was falling out, no doubt adding a comical element to a reading of such a poem. For example, Ieuan Deulwyn sings how he has 'a golled oll om gwallt i' (*and I lost all of my hair*) due to a woman who ignored him.¹⁶⁴

Lewys Glyn Cothi plays on the portrayal of himself as a bald man in order to convey his sorry state in the hope that his patron would give him the object he requested:

Minnau yma mewn amarch
Â'i ben moel sy heb march¹⁶⁵

(I am here in disrespect / With his bald head, without a horse)

The desired hairstyle was one of abundant locks of fine texture, both qualities associated with nobility. Siôn Ceri expresses the idea of wavy hair being a necessary feature of a leader as we find in his praise to Morys ab Owain of

¹⁶³ *Gwaith Llawdden*, no. 35. 3–4.

¹⁶⁴ *Cywyddau Ieuan Deulwyn*, no. XXI.

¹⁶⁵ *GLGC*, no. 70. 49–50.

Rhiwsaeson where he explains that he is happy to follow a man with this style of hair:

Y mae'n eisiau, myn Oswallt,
Dilin gŵr dolennog wallt¹⁶⁶

(There is a need, Oswallt knows, / To follow a man with wavy hair)

Oswallt is often mentioned by the *Cywyddwyr* in relation to hair. According to these poems, he had wonderfully fine hair in abundance. Guto'r Glyn for example notes that:

Oswallt, fireinwallt frenin
Ysgar glwyf esgair a glin¹⁶⁷

(Oswald, fine-haired king, / will get rid of the wound in leg and knee.)¹⁶⁸

Tudur Aled also mentions him in relation to hair, as does Huw ap Dafydd who also praises him for his fine, fair locks:

Syr Risiart, os hir Oswallt,
Hwy yw dy gorff hyd y gwallt¹⁶⁹

(Sir Risiart, if Oswallt was tall / Your body is taller up to your hair)

Neu bryd Oswallt manwallt mwyn
O nef fry ne'r fôr forwyn¹⁷⁰

(Or Oswallt's appearance, fine, fair hair / From heaven above or the mermaid)

However, no evidence outside the poetry of the *Cywyddwyr* has survived supporting this image of Oswallt, and it is interesting that Lewys Glyn Cothi, notable for his knowledge of legends, and who mentions Oswallt ten times in his work, does so with no reference at all to his hair. It seems plausible when Cynfael Lake says that: 'ymddengys mai galwadau cynghanedd ac odl sy'n cyfrif am hyn yn hytrach na

¹⁶⁶ *Gwaith Sypyn Cyfeiliog*, no. 31. 19–20.

¹⁶⁷ gutorglynn.net, no. 92. 49–50.

¹⁶⁸ This is my translation.

¹⁶⁹ *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, i, no. XLIII. 5–6.

¹⁷⁰ *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd*, no. 23. 9–10.

thraddodiad arbennig am y cymeriad' (*it seems that the requirements of cynganedd and the rhyme is the reason for this rather than any particular tradition about the character*).¹⁷¹ It may on the other hand, derive from an image probably found in a church in Oswestry, close to Guto'r Glyn's stamping ground, and we note the early Welsh epithet of Oswald was *Lamnguin* (Llafn Gwyn) as we know from *Historia Brittonum*, and as a point of interest, his nephew, Ecgfrith, had a hairy epithet, *Ailguin*, 'white-browed'.¹⁷² Be that as it may, what is evident from the references to Oswallt is that having 'fine' hair was worthy of praise. The fact that you could afford to take care of your hair and take pride in your appearance showed that you were of a higher class, and did not possess the coarse and ugly hair associated with the lower class so often scorned in the *Canu Dychan*.

From these handful of examples, it can be gathered that different hairstyles and different hair colours signify different social constructs and meanings. The analysis of the hair in the Middle Ages shall be pursued by looking at the poet's pallet and studying the symbolic value of the various hair colourings, starting with yellow and ending with grey and white, pausing along the way to consider the role of hair in examples of Dafydd ap Gwilym's work.

ii) Yellow: 'Gruffudd Wallt Melynrhudd Mân'¹⁷³

Praise of the appearance of individuals is scarce in the works of the group of poets that came before the *Cywyddwyr*, known as *Beirdd y Tywysogion* (the Poets of the Princes). It is, however, significant that yellow hair merits mention in this work and

¹⁷¹ *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, p. 198.

¹⁷² *Historia Brittonum*, ed. E. Faral, *La Légende arthurienne*, 3 (Paris, 1929), p. 43 (c. 64) and p. 42 (c. 61). For the reprinted version with a translation see *Nennius, British History, and the Welsh Annals*, p. 79 (c. 64) and p. 78 (c. 61).

¹⁷³ *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, no. 24. 65–66.

that it is associated with the brave, courageous soldier. This is found in an elegy for Owain Gwynedd's war band where hair of this colour is said to provide strength in battle:

Dragonawl, gedawl gadfarchawg – melyn,
Llywelyn llawddeawg,
Aerdarf glyw, glew dywysawg,
Aergorf aerdorf eurdorchawg.¹⁷⁴

(Fierce as a dragon, a noble fair-haired horseman in the fray, / Llywelyn of the fierce hand, / A lord of the chaos of war, a valiant prince, / Pillar of battle to his gold-torced warband.)

Even though the evidence in the early poetry is scant, it has been well established that hair colour plays an important role in the descriptive formula of the prose. In the discussion of the *Mabinogion* thus far, we have noted how it can form a part of a person's name and how certain characteristics are frequently associated with colour. As in the work of the Poets of the Princes, a connection is made in the tales between the colour 'yellow' and strength. In *Branwen*, for example, the man associated with bringing the Cauldron of Rebirth, an extremely powerful object, is described as a huge man with yellow-red hair: 'gwr melyngoch mawr'.¹⁷⁵ Dylan Eil Ton, the sturdy, boy whom Arianrhod drops as she steps over Gwydion's wand in her virginity test in the Fourth Branch is also yellow-haired and his strength is further emphasized when he is described as being able to swim as well as the best fish in the sea.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, the boy described as the 'yellow-haired boy' in *Peredur* is said to be stronger than the one described as 'auburn-haired'.¹⁷⁷ Not only is this colour associated with power, but it is also a representation of youth and of nobility. Let us turn to *Peredur* again:

¹⁷⁴ *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, ii, no. 5. 5–8.

¹⁷⁵ *PKM*, 35.

¹⁷⁶ *PKM*, 77.

¹⁷⁷ *Peredur*, 17. 24–18. 2.

Deu was pengrych melyn a ractal eur am pen pob vn o nadunt. A ffeis o bali melyn am pen pob vn o nadunt.

(Two lads with curly yellow hair, and a band of gold on their heads and each wearing a tunic of yellow brocaded silk.)

Furthermore, another man described in *Owein* said to be in the prime of his life is also yellow-haired, his hair colour and his newly-trimmed beard symbolizing a vigorous and virile individual.¹⁷⁸

Turning to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the poets too often extol this hair colour. Lewys Môn's poem of praise to Rhys ap Dafydd Llwyd exalts him for being the soldier who throws spears and kills men by stabbing them in the heart and associates these qualities with his yellow hair:

Bwrw gwayw, filwr brigfelyn,
a marw neu dor ym mron dyn:
yfentria wayw fewn trywyr,
a gwaeda'i fin o ged fyr.¹⁷⁹

(Throw the spear, yellow-haired warrior / and kill or cut into the man's breast / attempt a spear(-throw) through three men / and make his lip bleed from lack of gift.)

Similarly, in a *cywydd brud* describing a battle-scene by Dafydd Llwyd of Mathafarn, the only body part referred to is the yellow hair of one of Owain's followers, noting that the 'brigfelyn' (*yellow-haired*) soldier deserves to be revered for his bravery and noble lineage.¹⁸⁰ The image of the warrior is also evoked by Guto'r Glyn. When asking for a helmet from William Rodn on behalf of Dafydd Bromffild, he describes himself explaining to Dafydd that he knows of a helmet he could have that is in the possession of a soldier with golden hair. Given that Guto

¹⁷⁸ *Owein*, 3. 51–59.

¹⁷⁹ Lewys Môn, *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, ed. E. I. Rowlands (Cardiff, 1975), no. LXXXII. 39–42.

¹⁸⁰ *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd*, no. 16. 3–4.

wants to flatter William, since his ultimate aim is to persuade him to give something to his patron, Dafydd Bromffild, it can be concluded that emphasizing the soldier's hair as being blonde would add weight to the compliment. We can further deduce that this reflected a set of values and associations prevalent in the society of the day so that the poet was playing on a common interpretation of hair colour:

Y milwr â'r gwallt melyn
Y sydd gâr a swyddog ynn.¹⁸¹

*(The soldier with the blond hair / who's our kinsman and officer.)*¹⁸²

As the object Guto is asking for is the part of the soldier's uniform that protects the head and indeed the hair, there is particular emphasis throughout the poem on the vivid metaphor of the helmet as a house on Dafydd's hair, offering protection:

Dafydd Bromffild a ofyn
Dŷ ar y gwallt o'r dur gwyn¹⁸³

*(It's Dafydd Bromffild who asks / for a house on the hair from the white steel)*¹⁸⁴

It is then described as a hall for his hair 'neuadd i wallt nai Owain' (*A hall for the hair of Owain's nephew*) and as a cubicle for an 'excellent quiff':

Cuddigl ar y gwalc addwyn
Cap gyda'r trap i gadw'r trwyn.¹⁸⁵

*(A cubicle on the excellent quiff, / a cap with the trap to protect the nose.)*¹⁸⁶

We have established the clear association between yellow hair and military strength and it becomes apparent that it also plays an important part in terms of nobility. This link between 'yellow' hair and nobility is subtly seen in the first branch of the *Pedeir Keinc* when Pryderi is given his first name:

¹⁸¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 73. 19–20.

¹⁸² English translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 73. 19–20.

¹⁸³ gutorglyn.net, no. 73. 37–38.

¹⁸⁴ English translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 73. 37–38.

¹⁸⁵ gutorglyn.net, no. 73. 37–38; 49–50; 57–58.

¹⁸⁶ English translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 73. 57–58.

Peri a wnaethont bedydyaw y mab, o'r bedyd a wneit yna. Sef enw a dodet arnaw, Gwri Wallt Euryr. Yr hynn a oed ar y ben o wallt, kyuelynet oed a'r eur.¹⁸⁷

(They had the boy baptized in the way it was done at the time. This was the name that they gave him, Gwri Wallt Euryr: all the hair on his head was as yellow as gold.)¹⁸⁸

If we turn to Gerald of Wales' work and his *Journey through Wales: Itinerarium Cambriae*, we see again the connection between light coloured hair and a noble lineage when he comes across Cynwrig ap Rhys, the third son of Lord Rhys. Gerald praises Cynwrig for his tall stature and his handsome looks and particular attention is drawn to his fair, curly hair.¹⁸⁹ Sir John Lloyd notes however that this nobleman is not remembered for his wild nature and bravery on the battlefield:

... the tall and handsome Cynwrig, singled out as a young man by Giraldus Cambrensis for special admiration, played no part in the political strife of his day and carried his goodly presence to the grave without having in any way disturbed the tenor of his long life of dignified inaction.¹⁹⁰

Turning to the *Cywyddau*, we find a clear association between yellow hair and a noble lineage, where yellow (or sometimes gold) hair equals high status. Dafydd Nanmor, for example, is careful to note the hair colour of the family into which Harri Tudur is born, as he explains in his poem to Harri shortly after his birth, when comparing him to Homer's proverbially handsome Paris:¹⁹¹

Mae'n impin gwallt melyn
O vab iarll a vv berllan.
O hwnn y magwn bob mis
Brenn pêr val brenin Paris.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ PKM, 23. 13–16.

¹⁸⁸ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 18. This association is seen in medieval Irish literature too. King Conchobar, for example, is described as: 'Folt findbuidi fair ossé cas deas tóbach druimneach co rrici áth a dá gúaland... ulcha dégablánach erchas óruidi occa.' *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension I*, ed. C. O'Rahilly (Dublin, 1976), 3593–4. Translated to: *He had yellow hair, curled, well arranged, trimmed and wavy, which reached to the hollow between his shoulders... he had a forked beard, very curly, golden-yellow.*

¹⁸⁹ Gerald of Wales: *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, 178–179.

¹⁹⁰ John Lloyd, *A History of Wales*, ii, pp. 577–578.

¹⁹¹ PWDN, p. 158.

¹⁹² PWDN, no. XVI. 45–48.

*(He is a yellow-haired bud / From a son of an earl that was an Orchard. /
From this we shall raise every month / A sweet (fruit-)tree like King Paris.)*

‘Rhydderch Hael, ffrwd fael wallt felyn’ (*Generous Rhydderch, a stream of profit with yellow hair*) is how Lewys Glyn Cothi demonstrates the noble lineage of Tomos ap Siôn, providing further evidence of this relationship between yellow hair and nobility. Again, in a *cywydd* asking for a sword from Dafydd ap Gutun, he opens the poem with the description: ‘eurlliw ei wallt’ (*gold his hair*).¹⁹³ Referring to gold antecedents is characteristic of Lewys Môn’s poetry, as is evident in his praise to Sion Aer y Conwy. ‘Dy wraidd sy’n aur’ (*Your roots are gold*) he says, referring to Sion’s own gold hair, before mentioning that flowing, golden locks have been in the family for generations:

Y Conwyaid cyn Owain,
A’r aur rhudd ar warrau’r rhain¹⁹⁴

*(The Conwyaid before Owain / With the red-gold on the nape of their
necks.)*

Lewys Daron wishes to see the continuation of this hair colour in Maredudd ab Ieuan ab Robert of Dolwyddelan’s family, as he asks his patron to ensure that he will have offspring with gold hair, a clear symbolic marker of good virtues in the poet’s opinion:

Dwg war aur, dug Eryri,
Deuwell y dêl d’allu di.¹⁹⁵

*(Bring a gold nape of the neck, duke of Eryri / And your ability will be twice
as good.)*

While inheriting one’s family hair colouring is a natural process, what emerges from these lines is the sense that one should prove oneself worthy of having locks of

¹⁹³ *GLGC*, no. 67. 59; 209. 1.

¹⁹⁴ *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, no. LXIII. 19–20; 25–26.

¹⁹⁵ Lewys Daron, *Gwaith Lewys Daron*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Cardiff, 1994), no. 20. 75–76.

this colour, and the implication is that those without the desirable qualities it symbolizes do not deserve it. In a poem to Sir Tomas Salbri, for example, Lewys Môn is careful to note that: ‘Dy war, haeddaist ei rhuddaw’ (*You have deserved the golden-red colouring of your neck*), and compares his flowing hair to that of his father: ‘Aur did oedd ar war dy dad’ (*Golden locks were on your father’s neck*).¹⁹⁶

Guto’r Glyn turns to use the symbolism of hair as a unifying factor between two generations in an attempt to raise the status of William Herbert, the illegitimate son of the first earl of Pembroke. He explains how this William, because of his famous father, has a powerful role in society, and one of the ways in which Guto elevates him is by drawing attention to similarities in appearance, suggesting that these reflect shared inner virtues too. Through this he suggests that William has the potential for greatness like his father, and should thus not be ignored or dismissed as unimportant simply because he was an illegitimate son:

Ni bu’n Ffrainc wyneb un ffrîw
 Ond un iarll yn dwyn eurlliw.
 Ni bu’n Lloegr ben a llygad
 Na brig mor debig i’w dad.
 Ni bu nes neb o’i nasiwn;
 Ni bo iarll Penfro heb hwn!¹⁹⁷

*(There was never a face in France / bearing the aspect of this one / except a single earl who wore the colour gold. / Never in England was there head nor eye / nor hair more like his father’s. / No one of his nation was ever closer [to his father]; / let there be no earl of Pembroke except this man!)*¹⁹⁸

On some occasions, the yellow hair described becomes more desirable as its fine texture is also deemed praiseworthy and a further symbol of nobility. A

¹⁹⁶ *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, no. LVIII. 7–14.

¹⁹⁷ gutorglyn.net, no. 28. 51–56.

¹⁹⁸ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 28. 51–56.

combination of yellow locks and fine hair would signify greatness, as Siôn Ceri demonstrates in a poem to Gruffudd ap Dafydd Llwyd:

Gŵr wyt, aeth gair yt weithian,
Gruffudd wallt melynrudd mân.¹⁹⁹

(You are a man, authority has passed to you now / Gruffudd of yellow-red and fine hair.)

A similar idea is expressed by Dafydd ap Gwilym in an elegy to Gruffudd ab Adda.

In this section, the poet describes how someone had killed Gruffudd by cutting through the yellow, fine hairs of a skilled and wonderful man:

Troi awch y cledd - pand truan? -
Trwy felynflew dyn glew glân,
Trawiad un lladdiad â llif,
Toriad hagr trwy iad digrif,
Trwy fanwallt gwalch o falchlin.²⁰⁰

(He turned the sword's edge – was it not pitiful? / Through the yellow hair of a pure brave man, / A blow like the stroke of a saw, / A horrible cut through a lovely skull / Through the fine hair of a hawk of proud lineage.)

This is the only reference to the hair of a male figure in Dafydd ap Gwilym's work apart from the poems which feature the poet's own locks. In Dafydd's work, he continuously draws attention to his own yellow hair. Having understood the symbolism of this colour in the period, we are now able to place the references to it in Dafydd's work in a wider context; and so before moving further along the spectrum of the poets' pallet, we shall pause to assess the use of hair in the work of this famous *cywyddwr*, starting with the well-known quotation about the poet's own appearance recorded by David Johns in 1572:

Mi fŷm yn siarad â hen wraig a welsai un arall a fysai'n ymddiddan a
Dafydd ap gwilym. Hirfain oedd ef a gwallt llaes melyngrych oedd iddo a
hwnnw yn llawn cayau a modrwyau arian meddai hi.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, no. 24. 65–66.

²⁰⁰ *CDG*, no. 21. 43–47.

²⁰¹ in G. Thomas, 'Trafferth Mewn Tafarn', in *50 o Gywyddau Dafydd ap Gwilym*, ed. A. Llwyd (Abertawe, 1980), 78–84 (p. 78).

(I spoke to an old woman who saw another who used to discuss with Dafydd ap Gwilym. She said that he was a tall slender man with long curly blonde hair full of silver ringlets and locks.)

iii) Dafydd ap Gwilym's Hair

Dafydd ap Gwilym was certainly not a poet to shy away from talking about himself, but as for what he imparts to the reader in terms of his own appearance, we find that more often than not, it concerns his hair. The description of Dafydd mentioned above portrays a tall, slender man with ample, yellow, curly hair, with some streaks of silver. It is a quotation which has attracted the attention of many scholars seeking to find the 'real' Dafydd. Some, like Gwyn Thomas, question how much emphasis should be put on something which was written in 1572, over two hundred years after Dafydd ap Gwilym's death: 'Mae tystiolaeth fel yna braidd yn yr un categori â phe bawn yn dweud fod y bardd hefyd yn gwisgo cilt ac yn smocio Capstan' *(Evidence such as that one is in the same category as if I were to say that the poet also wore a kilt and smoked Capstan).*²⁰² Others, such as Ann Parry Owen are more willing to accept the plausibility of this description. In an article persuasively arguing that a chain of *englynion* to a poet's hair belongs to Dafydd, she emphasizes the importance placed on memory in the period:

mae'n rhaid cofio... fod y cof llafar yn llawer mwy byw a chydnerth yn yr Oesoedd Canol Diweddar nag ydyw mewn oes pan ddibynnir yn helaeth ar y gair ysgrifenedig (ac electronig erbyn hyn) er mwyn trosglwyddo gwybodaeth o'r naill genhedlaeth i'r llall.²⁰³

(We must remember that the oral memory was much more alive and robust in the later medieval period than it is in an age when great dependency is placed on the written word (and by now, the electronic) in order to transfer information from one generation to the other.)

²⁰² G. Thomas, *Dafydd ap Gwilym: y Gŵr wrth Gerdd* (Aberystwyth, 2003), 4.

²⁰³ Owen, 'Englynion Bardd i'w Wallt', *Dwned*, 13 (2007), 47–75 (p. 53). See also E. Lewis, *Life and Poems of Dafydd ab Gwilym* (London, 1914), 31.

Bleddyn Owen Huws in an article which looks at the use of feathers as a metaphor in Dafydd's poetry, argues that in 'Merched Llanbadarn' when Dafydd says 'dros fy mhlw ar draws fy mhlwyf' (*over my feathers across my fellow parishioners*), he might well be describing his own beard or hair, and not the feathers of his hat as has been widely accepted.²⁰⁴ This image would then suggest a fluffy, fulsome coiffure.²⁰⁵

If we return to the chain of *englynion* believed to be composed by Dafydd and discussed by Ann Parry Owen, we see that the dominant theme is old age as the poet looks in a mirror and sees that his golden locks which were the source of such pride, are quickly becoming grey. To Dafydd, this grey colour represents ugliness and harshness as well as old age as he describes his woeful condition:

Heddiw y gwelais yn gwyliaw – gwydrin
 (A gwadraith heb dygiaw)
 Llwydwallt prudd yn cyhuddaw,
 Lledfryd dyn, lledrad y daw.²⁰⁶

(*Today, as I spied in a mirror, I saw / (This is the order of things which is useless to deny) / Accusing sad grey hair, / The cause of man's anguish, it arrives furtively.*)²⁰⁷

He is angry that his hair has betrayed him, and yearns for the day when he had a mop of golden, attractive, curly hair:

Melen a orllen mal eurlliw – oeddud,
 Eiddun wallt, dremyn gwiw;
 Llwyd y'm gwaig calon fraisg friw,
 Rhag mor llwyd, hagr wyd heddiw!²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ CDG, no. 137. 24. Translation: dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 137. 24.

²⁰⁵ Huws, 'Dros fy mhlw ar draws fy mhlwyf', 33–56.

²⁰⁶ Owen, 'Englynion Bardd i'w Wallt', 69. See also dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 171. 1–4.

²⁰⁷ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 171. 1–4.

²⁰⁸ Owen, 'Englynion Bardd i'w Wallt', 70. See also dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 171. 21–24.

*(You were a yellow veil like the colour of gold, / Desirable hair, a wonderful sight; / Today my brave but broken heart / crushes me completely / Because you are so grey and ugly!)*²⁰⁹

Turning to the portrayal of the month of May in the calendars and the Books of Hours in the Middle Ages, (Dafydd's favourite time of the year and the month so frequently associated with the lover and love-making in the works of the *Cywyddwyr*), we see that it is consistent with the image Dafydd gives in this poem, as he is presented as a young lad with yellow, curly hair.

In passing, it is worth commenting that the colour yellow, or the lack of it, is what denotes old age in 'Cwyn y gŵr llên gwrthodedig' too, a piece of poetry included in the *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid* as an example of the *awdl-gywydd*. Here the poet explains that if a woman rejects the cultured poet who once had yellow hair but is now grey, she will end up with a villain of a low status:

O gwrthody, liw ewyn,
Gwas difelyn gudynnau,
Yn ddiwladaidd, da ei lôn,
A'i awen yn ei lyfrau,
Cael yt filain aradgaeth,
Yn waethwaeth ei gyneddfau.²¹⁰

(If you reject, one the colour of foam, / A boy with locks that are no longer yellow / polite, of good education / and his muse in his books, / you will have for yourself a villain bound to the plough / of much worse qualities.)

Rachel Bromwich however took 'di-' to be affirmative, that is: 'the lad with yellow curls'.²¹¹ Bleddyn Owen Huws agrees with this: 'Ond nid annichon darllen yr elfen gyntaf fel rhagddodiad cryfhaol, a roddai i'r gair ystyr gwbl wahanol, sef 'gwallt

²⁰⁹ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 171. 21–24.

²¹⁰ Einion Offeiriad, *Gwaith Einion Offeiriad a Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug* (Aberystwyth, 1997), no. 33. 1–6.

²¹¹ R. Bromwich, *Aspects of the Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym: Collected Papers* (Cardiff, 1966), 125.

melyn iawn’’.²¹² Supporting this argument is that a ‘gwas’ would have usually been too young to have grey hair.²¹³ According to their interpretation, the lad is rejected despite still having yellow hair. Either way, the colour is associated with the learned man of high status, demonstrating further the positive significance of the colour in this period.

Returning to Dafydd’s work, a reference to hair might also reveal something of his educational background, when Morfudd mocks the poet by saying that he has a tonsure. Dafydd denies this by saying that he has never worn religious clothing or learned Latin, and given the emphasis Dafydd places on his shiny, golden locks, we can understand how he would not want to be associated with any suggestion that he was balding. He insists that he is insulted and deeply hurt by Morfudd’s harsh words:

Gwawr euren, ai gwir anad
Ddywedyd na fynnud, fun,
Oer chwarae, ŵr â chorun?²¹⁴

(Golden-headed lady, is it actually true / that you said you would not want, girl, / cold play, a man with tonsure?)

O Dduw, pam, loer ddinam lw,
Yr honnaist y gair hwnnw?
Os gwrthod, ffyrf anghlod ffydd,
Gorug rwyf, gŵr o grefydd
Er gemau, aur ac owmal,
I ti, fy nyn euraidd dâl,
Bodlon wyf is bedwlywyn ir,
Eto fun, yti feinir.

Os tremig, hoen llathrfrig haf,
Fy nghair, neu ornair arnaf,
Forfudd hael, fwyarael fun,

²¹² Huws, ‘Dros fy mhlau ar draws fy mhlwyf’, 45. Translation: ‘*Is it not impossible to read the first element as a positive prefix, that is ‘very yellow hair’*’.

²¹³ Ann Parry Owen notes that: ‘Gallai gwas olygu ‘gwasanaethwr’ yn ogystal â ‘dyn ifanc’ (‘Gwas can also mean ‘servant’ as well as ‘a young man’).

²¹⁴ CDG, no. 106. 8–10.

Fu'r gair am fy aur gorun,
Rhyddwys, fy nyn rieddawg,
Y rhoist y destun y rhawg.²¹⁵

(Oh God, why, moon of perfect oath, / did you make that declaration? / if [you] refuse, serious disrespect to the faith, / (it was an act of pride) a man of religion / for the sake of jewels, gold and enamel, / for yourself, my girl of shining forehead, / I am still waiting, girl, / To [be with] you beneath a green birch grove.

If that talk about my shining tonsure / was contempt, hue of summer's sparkling height, / my treasure, or an insult to me / generous Morfudd, girl of blackberry brow, / too harshly, my noble girl, / did you make mockery this time.)²¹⁶

It is interesting to note that the colour of the hair around the said tonsure in the above quotation is also gold ('aur gorun' in line 22), offering further proof that Dafydd had fair coloured hair. This is translated as 'shining' above as per the translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, perhaps 'golden' would be a more suitable translation however. The tone of the poem is in keeping with the strong element of self-mockery so evident in his poetry. Perhaps he was indeed balding, and reciting a poem like this would add to the humour and to the audience's enjoyment. It is also plausible despite his protest that Dafydd did at one point in his life have a tonsure, as there is some evidence that he received a religious education. He continues to deny this by insisting that his tonsure is not any more nor any less than it was the day they met:

Nid llwyd fy marf, arf efrai,
Nid lled fy nghorun, nid llai,
No'r nos yr oeddem, gem gu,
Einym gur, yn ymgaru.²¹⁷

(My beard is not grey, splendid implement, / My tonsure is no bigger, nor any less / than on the night when we, dear jewel, / our pang, made love.)²¹⁸

²¹⁵ CDG, no. 106. 11–24. See also the notes to the poem's background in CDG, no. 106 and John Rowland on the poem in *50 o Gywyddau Dafydd ap Gwilym*, ed. Alan Llwyd.

²¹⁶ dafyddapgwilym.net, English translation of no. 106. 11–24.

²¹⁷ CDG, no. 106. 49–53.

²¹⁸ dafyddapgwilym.net, English translation of no. 106. 49–53.

He finishes by telling Morfudd that unless she is deadly serious, she should never say a bad word about a man's baldness, as it is a deeply upsetting thing:

Ac na ddywaid, f'enaïd fun,
Air chwerw am ŵr â chorun.²¹⁹

*(And do not say, my beloved girl, / a bitter word about a man with a tonsure.)*²²⁰

A balding head is not the only type of hairstyle which is mocked in Dafydd's poetry, as is evident in another of his poems, namely 'Merched Llanbadarn'. As in the *englynion* to his hair, here again we find Dafydd, the unsuccessful lover who once, according to him, enjoyed such luck with women. This time, the setting is a service at the church in Llanbadarn. Here Dafydd overhears two women in the church making fun of his hair, as he describes himself through the eyes of the girls as:

'Y mab llwyd wyneb mursen
A gwallt ei chwaer ar ei ben.'²²¹

*(That pallid lad with the face of a coquette / and his sister's hair upon his head.)*²²²

It is significant that the poet clearly distinguishes between the hair of a woman and the hair of a man: he should not wear his hair long like a woman, particularly perhaps in church. Paul's words in the first letter to the Corinthians promulgated the belief held by the Church that men should not have long hair.²²³ Describing a male figure as having long-flowing yellow hair, and placing him in a religious setting triggers at least two reactions. Firstly, it could perhaps be a symbolic way of rebelling against those within the Church who tried to restrain sexual freedom, and

²¹⁹ CDG, 106.73–74.

²²⁰ dafyddapgwilym.net, English translation of no. 106. 73–74.

²²¹ CDG, 137.29–30.

²²² dafyddapgwilym.net, English translation of no. 137. 29–30.

²²³ I Cor. 11: 14: 'Does not even nature itself tell you that it is a shame for a man to have long hair?'

secondly it would be sure to add to the humour of the poem. Bleddyn Owen Huws in his discussion of the poem draws a comparison here with another yellow-haired lover, namely Chaucer's Absolon, the parish clerk in 'The Miller's Tale'.²²⁴ He too is described as one who took great pride in brushing his locks when preparing to serenade Alisoun, the unfaithful wife of a carpenter:

Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanne large and brode;
Ful straight and even lay his joly shode.²²⁵

It is easy to imagine Dafydd taking pride in his appearance, and attending to it carefully before setting out to meet his lovers; no wonder that he was so disappointed and insulted when they spotted the grey hairs and mocked his 'plu'.²²⁶

A further glimpse into the notion that mocking the hair was seen as a serious insult is in another poem by Dafydd, 'Sarhau ei Was' (*Degradation of his Servant*).²²⁷ Here, he sends his servant as a 'llatai' (*love-messenger*) to the woman with the gift of wine, but when the woman finds out that it is Dafydd ap Gwilym who has sent it, she pours the wine over the lad's hair. This act is seen by Dafydd as the ultimate insult. If we remember the laws that stated the different types of compensation due to a man if someone had pulled his hair, we can understand the poet's hurt:

Cael y claerwin o'r dinas
A'i dywallt yng ngwallt fy ngwas.
Amarch oedd hynny ymy,
Amorth Mair i'm hoywgrair hy.²²⁸

²²⁴ See Huws, 'Dros fy mhlw ar draws fy mhlwyf', 45–47.

²²⁵ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L. D. Benson (Oxford, 1988), lines 3314–16 (pp. 69–70).

²²⁶ Huws, 'Dros fy mhlw ar draws fy mhlwyf', 46.

²²⁷ See CDG, no. 74. For the translation see dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 74.

²²⁸ CDG, no. 74. 49–52.

*(She took the bright wine from the town / and poured it in my servant's hair.
/ That was an insult to me, / Mary bring misfortune to the bold fair
treasure.)*²²⁹

But it is not only women who insult Dafydd ap Gwilym's hair, creatures of nature also mock his locks. In his *cywydd* to the magpie, the bird draws attention to his grey locks and explains that it is pointless for him to stay waiting for the woman who is supposed to show up, because she is not interested in someone who is so clearly growing older:

Ofer i ti, gweini gwŷd,
Llwyd anfalch gleirch lled ynfyd,
Syml a arwydd am swydd serch,
Ymlafar i am loywferch.²³⁰

*(‘You are wasting your time, pursuit of vice, / undignified half-witted grey
old man, / a foolish sign of the work of love, / jabbering about a beautiful
girl.’)*²³¹

Mastr Harri offers similar advice to one of his patrons, as he pleads with him not to love a younger woman. By drawing attention to his beard and hair, both of which are ‘wenllwyd’ (*white-grey*), it becomes clear that Mastr Harri believes that the age gap between his patron and the woman is inappropriate:

A'r iad fal lleuad ei lliw,
A'r wenllwyd farf o'r unlliw,
Gŵr llwyd, oediog wyd a gwan;
Er Duw, edrych ar d'oedran!²³²

*(And the head the colour of the moon / And the white-grey beard the same
colour, / A grey man, you are lazy and weak, / By God, look at your age!)*

Before finishing the section on Dafydd ap Gwilym, it is interesting to note Gwyn Thomas's argument that Dafydd was a black-haired man.²³³ He bases this

²²⁹ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 74. 49–52.

²³⁰ *CDG*, no. 36. 47–50.

²³¹ Translation on dafyddapgwilymn.net, no. 36. 47–50.

²³² *Gwaith Syr Phylip Emlyn*, no. 9. 15–18.

²³³ Thomas, *Dafydd ap Gwilym*, 5.

argument on the fact that Dafydd describes himself as ‘brawd du o ŵr’ (*a black friar*) in the poem to his shadow and one with ‘llorpau gwrach ar dudfach du’ (*an old woman’s shanks on black stilts*).²³⁴ But as Ann Parry Owen notes, these can very easily be descriptions of the shadow itself: ‘Gan mai du yw lliw pob cysgod, gellir diystyru’r cyfeiriadau hyn’ (*As black is the colour of every shadow, we can ignore these references*).²³⁵ Gwyn Thomas also uses the *cywyddau ymryson* between Gruffudd Gryg and Dafydd where each insults the other by using the word ‘du’ such as ‘ŵr trahäus du’ (*boastful black man*), ‘du fastardd’ (*black bastard*) and ‘ŵr du dirym’ (*powerless black man*), for example, as further proof of his theory.²³⁶ Sara Elin Roberts in her edition of the poem however explains how these references to the colour have a more general negative meaning rather than actively referring specifically to the hair.²³⁷

Ann Parry Owen notes that perhaps it was in a similar vein that Dafydd used the word ‘du’ when talking about the jealous husband, ‘Eiddig’, in his poetry although it could also be a reference to Eiddig’s dark locks, which would be in contrast to Dafydd’s light-coloured hair.²³⁸ Using this part of the body would be a clear way to distinguish between the two seeking Morfudd’s attention:

Gwahawdd nawdd, nyddig fuost,
 Gwahardd, du fastardd, dy fost.
 Gwae di na elly’n hy hyn,
 Gwadu’r cwpl, gwe adrcopyn,
 Am ddeugyw, amau ddigawn,
 Eryr a iâr, oerwr iawn.
 Gair o gamryfyg erwyr,

²³⁴ CDG, no. 63. 36 and 28.

²³⁵ Owen, ‘Englynion Bardd i’w Wallt’, 55.

²³⁶ Thomas, *Dafydd ap Gwilym*, 5–7. For the references to the quotations from the poems see CDG, no. 27. 26, no. 28. 14, 38.

²³⁷ See her notes to the poem on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 28.14n.

²³⁸ Owen, ‘Englynion Bardd i’w Wallt’, p. 56.

Garw dy gerdd, y gŵr du gŵyr.²³⁹

*(One who invites support, you were twisted, / give up your boasting, you black bastard. / Woe to you that you can't do this boldly, / deny the couplet, you cobweb, / which you said about two chicks, rather suspicious, / an eagle and a hen, you hopeless wretch. / A word of unjust and false arrogance, / Your verse is rough, you crooked black man.)*²⁴⁰

Af i Wynedd, amlwledd ym.
Ar dy dôr, ŵr du dirym.²⁴¹

*(I will go to Gwynedd, there will be many feasts for me, / despite you, you powerless black man.)*²⁴²

Resounding proof of Dafydd's attitude towards dark-haired men is given to us in a poem to Rhys Meigen. Dafydd refers to his big head 'carnben Rys Meigen' (*Rhys Meigen the blockhead*) and calls him a great, fake, black-haired man: 'Ddu geufab' (*false black lad*).²⁴³ His hair is like that of an ape; coarse, thick and untamed:

Gwryd ateth gardotai,
Garw blu, ni bu gwrab lai.²⁴⁴

*(Stature of a fat-bellied beggar, / Coarse hair, no male ape was ever smaller.)*²⁴⁵

With these remarks on the symbolism of black hair in Dafydd ap Gwilym's work, we shall return to the palette and look at the portrayal of this colour in the poetry.

iv) Black: 'Cydwylbod deg cyd boed du'²⁴⁶

It could be argued that painting the unpleasant portrayal of Eiddig and others in black is in keeping with the negative connotations associated with those handful of men in the *Mabinogion* who have black hair. The scant references appear in *Owein*

²³⁹ CDG, no. 28. 13–20.

²⁴⁰ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 28. 13–20.

²⁴¹ CDG, no. 28. 37–38.

²⁴² Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 28. 37–38.

²⁴³ CDG, no. 31. 5–8. Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 31. 5–8.

²⁴⁴ CDG, no. 31. 57–60.

²⁴⁵ Translation on dafyddapgwilym.net, no. 31. 57–60.

²⁴⁶ gutorglyn.net, no. 10. 2.

and *Peredur*.²⁴⁷ The black-haired man in *Owein* might well have power, and is compared to a lord, but he is certainly not portrayed as praiseworthy:

A chyarch gwell a orugum i y'r gwr du, ac ny dywedei ynteu wrthyf namyn gwrthgroched. A gowyn a wneuthum idaw pa wedyant a oed idaw ef ar yr aniweileit hynny. "Mi a dangossaf ytti, dyn bychan," heb ef. A chymryt y ffon yn y law, a tharaw karw a hi dynawt mawr hyny ryd ynteu vreiuat mawr. Ac wrth y vreiuat ef y doeth o anieileit gwyllt hyny oed gyn hamlet a'r ser ar yr awyr, ac hyny oed kyuyg y mi seuyll yn y llannerch gyt ac hwynt, a hynny o seirff a llewot a gwiberot ac amryual anieileit. Ac edrych a oruc ynteu arnadunt hwy, ac erchi udunt vynet y bori. Ac estwng eu penneu a orugant hwynteu ac adoli idaw ef val y gwnaei gwyr gwardawc y eu harglwyd. A dywedut wrthyf i, "A wely dy yna, dyn bychan, y medyant yssyd y mi ar yr anieileit hyn?"²⁴⁸

*(And I greeted the black-haired man, but he replied discourteously. I asked him what power he had over those animals. "I will show you, little man," he said. And he took the club in his hand, and with it he struck a deer a great blow so that it gave a great bellow. And at his bellow wild animals came up until they were as numerous as the stars in the sky, so that there was scarcely room for me to stand in the clearing with them, what with all the serpents and lions and vipers and other kinds of animals. He looked at them, and ordered them to go and graze. And they bowed their heads and did homage to him as obedient men would do to their lord. And he said to me, "Do you see now, little man, the power I have over these animals?")*²⁴⁹

A few sentences later, we meet the yellow-haired man and it is interesting to note the difference in the way his personal traits are described. The yellow-haired man is polite, gentle and helpful. He even greets Owain before Owain himself has a chance to do so:

A phan yttoed Owein yn mynnv kyarch gwell y'r gwr melyn, kyarch gwell a oruc y gwr y Owein, a dyuot yn y vlaen parth a'r gaer.²⁵⁰

*(And when Owain was about to greet the yellow-haired man, the man greeted Owain, and went on to the castle.)*²⁵¹

His kind nature is further demonstrated in the description of him listening to Owain and patiently assisting him by giving directions:

²⁴⁷ See *Peredur*, 43. 17.

²⁴⁸ *Owein*, 6–7. 127–139.

²⁴⁹ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 119.

²⁵⁰ *Owein*, 10. 241–244.

²⁵¹ Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 122.

A gowenu a oruc y gwr melyn a bot yn anhawd gantaw menegi y Owein y kereded hwnnw, mal y bu anhawd gantaw uenegi y Gynon. Ac eissoes menegi a oruc y Owein gwbyl wrth hynny. Ac y gysgu yd aethant.²⁵²

*(The yellow-haired man smiled gently, and it was hard for him to tell Owain about that journey just as it had been hard for him to tell Cynon. Yet he told Owain everything about it, and they went to sleep.)*²⁵³

Naturally, some patrons of poetry did have black hair and there are examples where poets turned their attention to praising this colour, ignoring any possible ‘negative’ connotations, and attaching virtues to it. Guto’r Glyn in particular has a preference to black, and while we have seen his praise of William Rodn’s yellow hair, we must remember that this might have been less than sincere as he needed to flatter William to encourage him to give up one of his possessions. Indeed, in a *cywydd* dychan to Hywel Dafi, Guto showed how he believed that having fair hair was characteristic of a jealous person:

Gan amled yw gweled gwŷr
Gwynion yn genfigenwyr.
Hywel gwyn, holi gweniaith
A’ m beio y bydd am bob iaith.²⁵⁴

*(It is so frequent I see men / with light hair being jealous. / Fair-haired Hywel, claims flattery / and blames me for all kinds of language.)*²⁵⁵

Hywel had insulted Guto by referring to his balding head:

Mae erioed, ffel yw ’mrawd ffydd,
Mal y bradwr, moel brydydd.²⁵⁶

*(He is ever, my dear friend is sly, / like a traitor, the bald poet.)*²⁵⁷

²⁵² Owein, 11. 253–256.

²⁵³ *The Mabinogion*, 122.

²⁵⁴ gutorglyn.net, no. 18. 3–6.

²⁵⁵ My translation.

²⁵⁶ gutorglyn.net, no. 18a. 63–64.

²⁵⁷ gutorglyn.net, no. 18a. 3–6.

Guto may have thus used Hywel's hair as a target to satirize whatever its colour. Be that as it may, the next discussion will reveal that Guto was a firm admirer of dark hair.

It is particularly interesting that a poet who does not pay any attention at all to the appearance of his patrons does frequently draw attention to their black-coloured hair. In a poem celebrating the release of the captain, Sir Rhisiart Gethin ap Rhys Gethin, Guto does not mention Rhys's name but simply refers to him as the 'black-haired lord', associating his success with this particular hair colour:

Eisoes (cerddwr oedd Iesu).
Deryw'n deg am dēyrn du.²⁵⁸

*(And yet (Jesus was a man of skill), / things have turned out fine for the black-haired lord.)*²⁵⁹

In his poem to Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan, his dark coloured hair is praised three times as Guto portrays him as a beloved patron. The line 'Cydwylbod deg cyd boed du' (*clear conscience even though he is dark-haired*) is revealing because by using the word 'cyd' (*although*), the poet hints towards the fact that black hair is not usually characteristic of something good.²⁶⁰ The praise for Hywel continues as he draws upon animals famous for their brave nature to emphasize Hywel's strength. Once more, this virtue of the nobleman along with the generosity he showed towards poets is manifested through the praise to the blackness of his hair when he is described as:

Iawn oedd hyn i unwedd Hu,
Iarll y gerdd yw'r llew gorddu,
Iôr Glasgrug, eiriau glwysgroyw,

²⁵⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 2. 21–22.

²⁵⁹ gutorglyn.net, translation of no. 2. 21–22.

²⁶⁰ gutorglyn.net, no. 10. 2. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 10. 2.

Eryr Deheuwr du hoyw.²⁶¹

*(This was fitting for one who is Hu's equal, / the dark lion is the earl of song, / lord of Glasgrug, fine clear words, / lovely dark-haired eagle of the men of the South.)*²⁶²

It is not only bravery and generosity that Guto associates with black hair, but as becomes evident in a poem to Dafydd Mathau, he also believes it is a symbol of wisdom. In this praise, Guto heralds his ability to keep the family together and to retain his good name after a dispute over a will and the distribution of land. Guto opens his praise by comparing Dafydd to King David in the Bible and by painting an image of a nobleman supporting his community: 'A dwyn erioed dan yr iau / Eich deuedd, fraich y Deau' (*And you always places yourselves, the pair of you, / under the yoke, sustenance of South Wales*).²⁶³ He reminds his patron that in return for the care he has tirelessly shown towards his people, he has gained the support of the whole of Glamorgan and Llandaf:

Dafydd Mathau, bendefig,
Dawn y dref, dy enw a drig.
Didwyll i'r Deau ydwyd,
A dedwydd o Ddafydd wyd.
Duw a gyflawnodd dy iad
Â doethder dy fendithdad.
Difalch wyd, dwyfol, â chall;
Balch a thaerfalch wrth arall.
Agoriad wyd ar Gaerdyf
A'i chlo addwyn a'i chleddyf,
Angelystor gwlad Forgan
Uwchlaw Morgannwg achlân,
A llew du – gorau lliw dyn –
Llandaf, a'r llu yn d'ofyn.
Ni bu, lew du, ne lwyd iach
Ar wyneb gŵr dirionach.
Haws tynnu tân o waneg
No thynnu dawn o'th wên deg.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 10. 49–52.

²⁶² Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 10. 49–52.

²⁶³ gutoglyn.net, no. 17. 25–26. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 17. 25–26. See the same technique to open a poem in *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, no. 1 and no. 12.

²⁶⁴ gutorglyn.net, no. 17. 1–18.

*David Mathew, chieftain, / the town's blessing, your name will endure. / You are without guile against South Wales, / and you are indeed a blessed David. / God has filled your head with the wisdom of your blessed father. / You are modest, O God-fearing one, towards a wise man; / proud, and insistently proud, towards any other. / You are the key to Cardiff / and its splendid lock and its sword, / the evangelist of Morgan's land / elevated above all Glamorgan, / and the black-maned lion of Llandaf, / the best colour a man can have, and / with the crowd begging for you. / Never, O black-maned lion, did man's face bear / a wholesome, blessed expression which was more gracious. / It's easier to draw fire from a wave than to draw the favour out of your fair smile.*²⁶⁵

Interestingly, the only part of the body praised is the colour of his hair. The poet mentions that he has received his wisdom from his 'blessed father', and twice he is called the 'llew du' (*black lion*).²⁶⁶ Although Guto does not mention the style of Dafydd's hair, from what is considered to be his tomb in the Cathedral in Llandaf, it is believed that he had very curly shoulder-length hair.²⁶⁷ This offers further evidence supporting the idea that flowing hair was a clear visual marker of nobility.

In the final section of praise to Dafydd, Guto also wishes to see a continuation of the good virtues set by his patron. After placing such emphasis on the importance of the black hair, it is reasonable to believe that this is one of the things he wishes to see recurring in the next generation. Possibly, given that this is the only part of Dafydd's appearance mentioned, this is what he means when he says that there are similarities between the father and his four sons. The *tree : man* equation is used as the four brothers, having been compared to four fingers and then to stags, are finally portrayed as branches:

Mawr yw cael pedwar aelawd
Megys pedwar bys a bawd.

²⁶⁵ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 17. 1–18. The final line of the quote could be double-edged, i.e. 'you look very amiable, but no gift comes.'

²⁶⁶ gutorglyn.net, no. 17, 6, 13 and 15.

²⁶⁷ See the notes to poem 17 on gutorglyn.net.

Nid aelaw gŵr heb dylwyth,
 Nid derwen na phren heb ffrwyth.
 Derwen fawr wyd er un fainc,
 Pedwarcarw yw'r pedeircainc,
 A'i brig oll, fal nas bwrw gwynt,
 Yw dy bleidiau, dwbl ydynt.
 Un ffunud wyd, un ffyniant,
 Ffyrf blaid, â Phriaf a'i blant.
 Pa rai yw meibion Priaf?
 Pedair llin dur Pedr Llandaf.²⁶⁸

(It is a great thing to have four bodily members / like four fingers, and a thumb. / A childless man is not wealthy, an oak without fruit, or any other tree, is no tree at all. / You are a mighty oak fit to make a whole single bench, / four stags are the four branches, / and its topmost crown, such that the wind will not blow it down, / are your bands of adherents, they are in ranks two-deep. / You are exactly similar to, every bit as prosperous / as Priam and his children, a mighty company. / Which ones are Priam's sons? / The four steely descendants of the St Peter of Llandaf.)²⁶⁹

The idea of dark hair as a symbol of generosity and kind nature is seen throughout Guto's work. Dafydd Llwyd ap Dafydd is called the 'dulwyd hael' (*the generous black-grey haired man*)²⁷⁰ and Siancyn Hafart's generosity prompts Guto to call him first of all a black-haired pope: 'pab du yn euro pob dyn' (*a black-haired pope giving gold to everyone*),²⁷¹ before continuing to equate his wisdom and generosity with his dark locks:

Daly ergyd dy law eurgoeth,
 Da yw dy wst, y du doeth.
 Deuwell wyd – dyelly art –
 Yn y cefn, enwog Hafart,²⁷²

(Receiving a shot from your fair, golden hand, / it's a delightful pain which you inflict, O wise dark-haired man. / You are doubly good – you understand scholarship – / in support, O famous Havard.)²⁷³

²⁶⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 17. 47–58.

²⁶⁹ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 17. 47–58.

²⁷⁰ gutorglyn.net, no. 37. 21–22.

²⁷¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 31. 17. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, 31. 17.

²⁷² gutorglyn.net, no. 31. 55–58.

²⁷³ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 31. 55–58.

If further proof of Guto's sentiments towards black-coloured hair is needed, then we can find it in the poems to Harri Gruffudd, or Harri Ddu, who was given his nickname because of his dark hair. In all five poems to Harri, Guto does not fail to mention how highly he rates this feature. Harri lived in what Guto and his fellow poets called 'Euas', the Welsh unit of the 'Golden Valley' in Hereford and held the rank of esquire.²⁷⁴ He was a well-connected individual; indeed Guto notes that it was Harri who introduced him to the Duke of York: 'Dug fi at y dug of Iorc / Dan amod cael deunawmorc' (*He took me to the Duke of York*) and was also associated, along with his sons, with the Devereux and Herbert families.²⁷⁵ We know that he was a very young man in 1425 when his father was still alive, and that he lived until sometime between 1467 and 1477.²⁷⁶ This poem dedicated to his black hair is difficult to date, but according to the editors of the Guto'r Glyn website: 'Since there is so much emphasis here on the colour of his hair and his physical strength, he was presumably a young man still. The poem therefore belongs to the 1430s or 1440s'.²⁷⁷ Here then it is black, not yellow, hair that is associated with youth. The first sixteen lines of the poem focus only on describing this colour and it opens by wishing success on all men who have black hair, explaining that God has granted the best and noblest men hair of this colour:

Lle nid da lliw onid du,
Llwyddiant ar bob dyn lliwddu!
Gorau lliw dan gwr lleuad
A roes Duw ar ŵr o stad.²⁷⁸

*(Since no colour is any good except black, / may every man with black hair enjoy prosperity! / God has set upon a man of substance / the best colour which exists under the horn of the moon.)*²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ See under 'Harri Gruffudd' on gutorglyn.net.

²⁷⁵ gutorglyn.net, no. 36. 23. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 35. 23.

²⁷⁶ See under 'Harri Gruffudd' on gutorglyn.net.

²⁷⁷ See the English notes to poem 33 on gutorglyn.net.

²⁷⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 1–4.

²⁷⁹ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 1–4.

He then goes on to explain how he is inspired by this colour, and in keeping with the religious tones set in the first four lines, he explains that Jesus himself was a dark-haired man:

Dewin wyf diwan afael,
Duw Ei hun oedd ŵr du hael,
A du fydd dragywydd dro
Y Fernagl a fu arno.²⁸⁰

*(I am an inspired one with no weakling's hand, / God Himself was a noble black-haired man, / and black too, for ever more, / will be the Vernicle which lay upon Him.)*²⁸¹

The next section draws upon other fine, precious and beautiful things of the same shade. He compares it to ebony, from which jewellery and ornaments were made, and makes use of the heraldic term for black, 'sabl', to elevate the status of the colour and its connection to nobility.²⁸² It is interesting that he refers also to silk and velvet, two types of textiles that were only worn by the highest class in society. Velvet in particular was very expensive, and Guto is among the very few poets who make reference to it in the fifteenth century.²⁸³ He expresses deep gratitude for objects made of such fine material, which is further proof of the status given to it in the period:

Y melfed (pwy nis credai?),
Muchudd du fydd a di-fai;
Sidan a phupr, os adwaen,
Y sabl oll y sy o'u blaen.²⁸⁴

*(Velvet (who would not believe it?), / ebony too is black and pure; / silk and pepper, if I'm well informed, / they all bear pure sable before them.)*²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 5–8.

²⁸¹ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 5–8.

²⁸² See *sabl* in *GPC*.

²⁸³ Elsewhere, Guto gives thanks for a purse he has received made from velvet, see gutorglyn.net, no. 87.

²⁸⁴ gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 9–12.

²⁸⁵ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 9–12.

Textiles are used again to describe the blackness of hair colour in another poem by Guto, this time to Dafydd Cyffin. He refers to ‘du o lir’ (*he is black like the cloth from Liere*) and ‘du llundain’ (*London black*), which were both a type of cloth.²⁸⁶ As with the poem to Harri, and in keeping with the list of special textiles, the ‘fernagl’ (*vernicle*) is referred to in the poem to Dafydd too in order to elevate further the status of this colour in the opinion of the listener. Dafydd is, however, also called ‘fy llew gwinau iach’ (*my fine auburn lion*), which is interesting as this word normally is used for auburn or brown hair.²⁸⁷ The very same word is used in the poem praising Harri’s black hair. ‘Auburn’ or ‘brown’ would seem entirely out of place in a poem that places such importance on the darkness of the colour black. Perhaps we should agree with Barry J. Lewis when he explains that: ‘Probably the poet has in mind dark hair in general, in contrast to blond, and is not distinguishing brown from black’.²⁸⁸

As well as the noble virtues, bravery is associated with Harri Ddu through the colour of his hair as he closes the section by noting that there is no bolder man than the one who has black hair:

Gorau un lliw, graen a llwydd,
 Gan ŵr ydiw gwineurwydd.
 Ni chair er ofn na charu
 Un dewr dewr ond o ŵr du.²⁸⁹

(*The best hue of all, lustre and prosperity, / for a man is swarthinness. / You won’t find for fear nor love / a really bold man except a black-haired one.*)²⁹⁰

He is called an ebony-hued stag, and Guto points out that it is much easier to love

²⁸⁶ gutorglyn.net, no. 94. 64–65. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 94. 64–65.

²⁸⁷ gutorglyn.net, no. 94. 5. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 94. 5.

²⁸⁸ gutorglyn.net, notes to poem 33.

²⁸⁹ gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 13–16.

²⁹⁰ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 13–16.

someone with dark-hair than it is to love a redhead.²⁹¹ He goes further by saying that all men should turn their hair to be the same colour as Harri's if they wanted to succeed:

Pob lliw 'n y byd, cyngyd call,
Âi yn ddu o iawn ddeall.²⁹²

*(Every colour in the world (a clever intention) / would turn black if it knew better.)*²⁹³

The final section of the poem is worth quoting in its entirety. Guto explicitly says that he is going to list all the good qualities he sees associated with this colour. Harri is praised for excelling in all the sports associated with the nobleman, putting Guto's attempts to shame. His fair and kind nature is praised and linked to his hair as is his bravery, boldness and generosity in distributing wine, and hosting feasts:

Llyna fal y dyfalwn,
Garw du pert, gywirdeb hwn:
Nid daueiriog naturiol,
Ni thry'r un a wnaeth ar ôl,
Gwir Dduw, y gair addawo
A dyr fyth, a dewr yw 'fo.

Ni baid neb yn wyneb Nudd
At Henri â'r gwayw tanrhudd,
Dewraf corff diryfyg hael
A chryfaf, wychyr afael.
Och ym er dir a chymell
O bu wr â bwa well,
Na chystal, ynial annerch,
Ar y maen mawr er mwyn merch.
I minnau, gwarau gwiwraen,
Y bu air mawr er bwrw maen;
Hiroedl a fo i Harri
Y sydd i'm diswyddaw i!
A hefyd, fy niwyd nêr,
O gorfydd moes ac arfer,
Gwell y gŵyr gwallaw a gwin
Garbron, no gwŷr y brenin.

²⁹¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 20; 25–26.

²⁹² gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 27–28.

²⁹³ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 27–28.

Hirbell y catwo felly
 Harri fraich y Dref Hir fry.
 Dyro iddo, Duw rwyddael,
 Fywyd hir, fab i Fawd hael,
 A chadw, Grist iechyd a gras,
 Angel du yng ngwlad Euas.²⁹⁴

(This is how I would describe / the faithfulness of this man, the handsome black-hued stag: / his words aren't double-edged by nature, / he never twists any word back upon itself, / as God is true, he never breaks / any word he has promised, and he is brave too.

No one dares, confronted with this man like Nudd, / to attack Henry with the fire-red spear, / The boldest noble unassuming body / and the strongest, a formidable grip. / May there be affliction for me on / account of force and coercion / if there was ever a better man with a bow, / or one as good (address full of vigour) / at throwing the big rock to impress a girl. / I myself, very expert play, / have had a high reputation in throwing the stone; / long life to Harry / who is putting me in the shade! / And also, my faithful lord, / where etiquette demands, / he knows better how to serve with wine before him / than the king's own men. / Long may Harry uphold in this manner / the sustenance of Longtown. / Generous and willing God, grant him / long life, the son of noble Maud, / and maintain, O Christ of salvation and grace, / the black-haired angel in the land of Ewyas.)²⁹⁵

Harri Ddu's youth and its relation to his black hair is again praised in a poem which explains that Harri Gruffudd and Ieuan Gethin were both seeking the attention of Gwladus from Neath. It becomes clear that Guto is in favour of Harri, and compares Ieuan's old age with Harri's youthfulness. Ieuan is described as a spotty hermit, whilst Harri – with references to his black hair – is portrayed as the most faithful man in the kingdom:

Cywira' mab yn caru
 O Gaer hyd Went yw'r gŵr du.²⁹⁶

(The black-haired man is the most faithful lad / who loves between Chester and Gwent.)²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 29–56.

²⁹⁵ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 33. 29–56.

²⁹⁶ gutorglyn.net, no. 34. 19–20.

²⁹⁷ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 34. 19–20.

Things were not always so sweet between Guto and Harri however, and a whole poem has survived complaining about his patron's miserliness. The first thing mentioned is the hair, as the poem opens on a triumphant note, praising the hair and wishing it never to change to a colour any lighter than dark grey:

Y du hydr o'r Deheudir,
Da ei lun mewn du o lir,
Llew du fal dy ddillad wyd,
Lliw nid êl llai no dulwyd!²⁹⁸

*(O bold black-haired man from south Wales / whose figure looks fine
clothed in black-a-lyre, / you are a black-maned lion to match your clothing,
/ may the colour never fade lighter than greyish black!)*²⁹⁹

But the poem quickly crosses *genre* and enters the world of satire as Guto turns to complain about how hard it is to get money out of Harri and that he gives patronage only to 'female' poets, showing that sometimes even the best of the dark-haired men could have an even darker side. When the time came to compose his *marwnad*, we see that Guto regrets satirizing Harri, as he insists that what he said was not true. The apology came too late, as Barry J. Lewis points out, 'awgryma'r lledymddiheuriad yn y llinellau hyn nad oedd y ddau wedi cymodi cyn marw Harri' (*the half-hearted apology in these lines suggests that the two were not reconciled before Harri's death*).³⁰⁰

Dengair o gellwair i gyd
Fu rhof a Harri hefyd.
O dywedais, da ydoedd,
Ynn na rôl aur, enwir oedd!
Ni rôl gawn er a genynt
Glêr y dom, bwngleriaid ynt,
Ac i'r gwŷr gorau eu gwaith
Ar unrhodd y rôl'r anrhaith.
Rhydd fu'r Cwrtnewydd i ni,
A'r Dref Hir, dra fu Harri.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 35. 1–4.

²⁹⁹ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 35. 1–4.

³⁰⁰ gutorglyn.net, notes to poem 36.

³⁰¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 36. 27–36.

*(Also, some ten words, no more, / of leg-pulling passed between me and Harry. / If I said – he was a good man – / that he was unwilling to give us gold, it was not true! / He wouldn't give reeds for what would be sung / by the dunghill minstrels, they are bunglers, / and to the men with the best craftsmanship / he would give treasure all in one go. / Newcourt was open to us, and Longtown, while Harry lived.)*³⁰²

In this elegy, dating from around 1467–1477, Harri's black hair becomes one of the things most longed and mourned for, and again, the only thing we learn about his appearance. It opens by accusing a powerful and violent God of taking Harri, naming all the lands that are affected by the loss, before turning to praise God and Jesus for giving Harri not only hair of the best colour, but also shiny, healthy locks:

Ni roes Iesu rasusoed
Orlliw ar ŵr well erioed.³⁰³

*(Jesus whose life brought grace / never bestowed lustre on a better man.)*³⁰⁴

In a number of elegies by Guto'r Glyn, this ability to retain hair colour until death is constantly praised. In the elegy to Gruffudd Fychan he describes his hair as being 'jet-black' and in Einion ap Gruffudd's elegy, black hair is associated with his gentle nature: 'A du a theg a doeth iawn' ('*and black-haired, reasonable and very intelligent*').³⁰⁵

One other poem merits mention before closing the discussion of black hair in the poetry, and it is Guto's poem to the Abbot Dafydd ab Ieuan of Glyn-y-groes, to whom Guto dedicated at least eleven of his poems.³⁰⁶ Amongst these there are poems of praise, thanking the Abbot for healing him when he was an invalid, and

³⁰² Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 36. 27–36.

³⁰³ gutorglyn.net, no. 36. 49–50.

³⁰⁴ Translation on gutorglyn.net, 36. 49–50.

³⁰⁵ gutorglyn.net, no. 52. 9 and no. 42. 33–42. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 52. 9 and no. 42. 33–42.

³⁰⁶ See the notes under 'Abbot Dafydd ab Ieuan of Valle Crucis' on gutorglyn.net. See also D.M., Robinson, *The Cistercians in Wales: Architecture and Archaeology 1130–1540* (London, 2006).

also a poem expressing gratitude for the gift of a buckler. In almost all of these works, Dafydd's black-hair is praised. Ann Parry Owen suggests that this was in order to refer subtly to the abbot's youth, which would be in keeping with the symbolic role this colour of hair plays in the poems to Harri.³⁰⁷ He is described as an 'angel du' (*a black-haired angel*) and as a noble leader with shiny, black hair: 'Arglwyddwalch o ŵr gloywddu' (*A chieftain of a man with shining black hair*).³⁰⁸ He is a fair, kind and pleasant individual who is hard-working and talented:

Du llawenddoeth heb dwyll ynddo,
 Dau lawenydd a'i dilynno:
 Dewrwalch dioriog, dianair, doniog,
 Dinerthog dyn wrtho.³⁰⁹

(A jovial and wise black-haired man free of deceit, / may two joys follow him: / a constant and valiant hawk, irreproachable and generous, / everyone is powerless compared to him.)³¹⁰

These virtues are remarked upon again in a poem where Guto asks to borrow the Book of the Grail from Trahaearn ab Ieuan on behalf of the Abbot Dafydd.³¹¹ In the third section of this *cywydd*, Guto praises Trahaearn by comparing him to Dafydd; they are both generous patrons and hosts of feasts, knowledgeable and learned. The only difference between them is their dress and their hairstyle, demonstrating the importance of the way hair was cut in terms of being a visible symbol of identity, as well as adding an element of humour to the poem:

Abad ein gwlad a wna gwledd,
 Llanegwestl, oll un agwedd:
 Un gost gwin a rhost yn rhydd,
 Eich dwyford, chwi a Dafydd;

³⁰⁷ See the notes to line 9 of the poem 'In Praise of of Abbot Dafydd ab Ieuan of Valle Crucis', gutorglyn.net, no. 112.

³⁰⁸ gutorglyn.net, no. 110. 4 and no. 112. 19. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 110. 4 and no. 112. 19.

³⁰⁹ gutorglyn.net, no. 113. 77–80.

³¹⁰ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 113. 77–80.

³¹¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 114. See also the notes for the poem on gutorglyn.net and *Ystoryaeu Saint Greal*, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1992), p. xiv, on whether the MS in question was Peniarth MS 11.

Un ddiwyg yn y ddwyallt
Eithr ei wisg a thorri'i wallt;³¹²

*(The abbot of our land who provides a feast, / of Llanegwystl, is completely of the same manner: / alike is the expenditure on your two tables, you and Dafydd, / generously on wine and roast meat; / similar is his manner between the two slopes / except for his dress and the way his hair is cut;)*³¹³

The frequency of the link between youth and black hair made by Guto can be compared to the expression of anxiety regarding old age seen in his poetry and his fear of growing older so powerfully conveyed in his poems to abbots and women and in his meditations at the end of his life. We have already mentioned the abbot Dafydd ab Ieuan and the way in which Guto praised his dark hair, and it is perhaps particularly interesting that Guto in his old age turns to this abbot, a symbol of youth and virility, as he articulately describes his hatred of his old age and his painful longing for his younger days. This poem to the abbot begins with Guto crying out:

Mae'r henwyr? Ai meirw'r rheini?
Hynaf oll heno wyf i.
I minnau rhoed mwy no rhan
Anynadrwydd neu oedran.³¹⁴

*(Where are the old men? Have they passed away? / Tonight I am the very oldest. / And to me has been given more than my fair share / of irritability or old age.)*³¹⁵

v) Grey: 'A'i wallt yn hen llwydwyn hir'³¹⁶

Guto's reflection on growing old leads us to the final colours, grey and white. As we have already mentioned, Taliesin used the colour white as a symbol for the old age of his patron, and in the Poetry of the Princes, we see the poets using their own

³¹² gutorglyn.net, no. 114. 33–38.

³¹³ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 114. 33–38.

³¹⁴ gutorglyn.net, no. 117. 1–4. See also nos. 118 and 119.

³¹⁵ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 117.1–4.

³¹⁶ Dafydd Llwyd, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn*, ed. W. Leslie Richards (Cardiff, 1964), no. 51. 2.

grey/white hair colour to denote their own old age. Gwalchmai, for example in his dream poem *Breuddwyd Gwalchmai*, asks God for assistance after losing his beloved patrons and uses the colour grey to mark his protest, explaining that despite the fact that he is getting older, his feelings and thoughts should not be cast aside and dismissed:

Nid breiddgof gennyf, cyn bwyf llwyd,
Lleas Goronwy, gŵr yn ysgwyd;³¹⁷

(Though I may be grey-haired, the death of Goronwy, / A man who was a shield (for his friends), it is no muddled memory.)

In Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch's work, another example of using this colour as a symbol of old age is to be found. Like Gwalchmai, Gruffudd sings to God, this time describing the sorry state of the sinner, one who does not care about his actions and who does not think twice about Judgment Day.³¹⁸ By using the themes 'The Ages of Man' and 'The Signs of Ageing', the poet describes the state of the sinner from his birth to his death.³¹⁹ Many parts of the body are referred to as the poet graphically explains how the body decays and decomposes. What is interesting for this study is that the hair is the only part of the body mentioned where a personality trait is associated with it. To Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, the source of the sinners pride is directly in the hair:

Llwyd ei ben, pan henyw ei falchder,
Llygad briw heb liw, heb leufer,
Lle'r dannedd yn dwn pan geiser,
Lledr y grudd yn grin pan deimler,
Llwm ei groen, crinfrych, ysgeler,
Lle rhyfedd rhyfyg a balchder!³²⁰

³¹⁷ *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, eds. J. E. Caerwyn Willims *et al.*, (Cardiff, 1994), no. 12. 13–14.

³¹⁸ See *Gwaith Bledodyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, ed. Rh. M. Andrews *et al.*, (Cardiff, 1996), no. 38.

³¹⁹ On these themes, see the notes to poem no. 38 in *Gwaith Bledodyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, p. 438.

³²⁰ *Gwaith Bledodyn Fardd*, no. 38. 33–38.

(His head, whence comes his pride, is grey, / His eye is sore, without colour, without light / Where his teeth were is sore when touched, / His leathery cheek is wrinkled when felt / His skin is bare, wrinkled and spotted, lamentable, / A remarkable home for arrogance and pride!)

However the attitude towards grey hair as a symbol of growing old is not always negative. This thesis has already established that of all the surnames using colours, ‘Llwyd’ was the most popular, and that it is difficult to attest whether this referred to the colour ‘grey’ or ‘white’, or to a more symbolic meaning. Evidently, there were noblemen who had grey hair, and despite praising the yellow and black hair of their noble patrons and condemning their own grey hair, the poets were not able to deny that some of their patrons would inevitably turn grey/white as they grew older. Even Dafydd ap Gwilym, despite consistently protesting against becoming grey, accepts that this is an inevitable part of life, as the proverbial tone of this line demonstrates: ‘gnawd bid llwyd deddf annwyd dyn’ (*It is normal that the law of human nature is to grow old and grey*).³²¹

In the praise poetry, grey and white are not portrayed as the emblems of weak and old men but rather as symbols of wisdom and experience. The poets normally turn to grey hair in this symbolic way to prove that their patrons were still great men, despite appearing older. Siôn Ceri for example in one poem sings that:

Er llwydo’r gwallt, llew dewr gwyh,
Am yr oedran mae’r edrych.³²²

(Despite the greying of the hair (a splendid, brave lion) / He does not act his age.)

And similarly, in another poem he notes that:

³²¹ Owen, ‘Englynion Bardd i’w Wallt’, 69–70.

³²² *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, no. 3. 17–18.

Er gwynnu'r gwallt gan ŵr gwych
Mae byw nerth meibion wrthych.³²³

(Despite the hair of a splendid man becoming white / Sons, the living strength, have come from you.)

Others turn to associate grey hair with experience, using it as a factor to praise the nobleman for being the best leader: 'Gorau yw llys y gŵr llwyd' (*the grey-haired man's hall is the best*) says Guto'r Glyn,³²⁴ and Lewys Morgannwg exalts Siôn ap Tomas by referring to his hair and describing him as:

Ysgwier llys, y gŵr llwyd
Wrth wead Harri Wyth ydwyd.³²⁵

(A squire of the court, the grey man / You are of the same weave as Henry the Eighth.)

Indeed, just as the poets had used the image of the warrior with golden locks flowing on the nape of the neck, they turn to similar praise to celebrate those with silver hair. This could imply that the 'llwyd' in these instances in fact refers to a light (probably blonde) colour of the hair. Elsewhere it is clear how the connection between youthfulness and hair is meant by stressing that the best of men, despite having grey hair, are still youthful in their ability to shine on the battlefield, as these two examples testify:

Mae'r war arian mor wrol:
Er nad yw'n aur nid ai'n ôl.³²⁶

(The silver neck is as brave / Although it is not gold, he doesn't turn back.)

O llwydai fry lliw dy frig,
Flew gŵr fel Gei o Warig,
Y gallon ffres, gelyn Ffrainc,
Os ai i nofio, sy'n ifanc.³²⁷

³²³ *Gwaith Siôn Ceri*, no. 14. 27–28.

³²⁴ gutorglyn.net, no. 71. 11. Translation also on gutorglyn.net, no. 71. 11.

³²⁵ Lewys Morgannwg, *Gwaith Lewys Morgannwg*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake, 2 vols (Aberystwyth, 2004), ii, no. 70. 7–8.

³²⁶ *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, no. LXXIV. 59–60.

³²⁷ *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, no. XXIX. 71–74.

(If the colour of your hair would become grey / The hair of a man like Guy of Warwick, / The fresh heart, the enemy of France / If he went swimming, is young.)

The four most interesting poems to white hair are by Guto'r Glyn, Lewys Daron, Lewys Môn and Dafydd Llwyd of Mathafarn, who are all astonished by the brilliance of the white hair of William ap Gruffudd from Cochwillan.³²⁸ It is quite possible that Guto and William were contemporaries and old men at the time Guto's poem was composed. There is mention of 'oeswr' (*contemporary*) and 'f'oes' (*my time*), indicating that they were of the same generation.³²⁹ The first 34 lines of Guto's poem focus solely on praising the generosity William has shown towards him and others, and it has been suggested that the poet's wish to stay for the rest of his life with him (a statement he made in many poems to various patrons) was perhaps more serious here:

There seems to be more to the intention this time.... Guto's declaration that he will leave Cochwillan only in a coffin (lines 33–4) could owe as much to genuine desire as to bardic convention.³³⁰

Before turning to praise William's hair, Guto gives a description of himself going to Cochwillan as a bald man, no doubt offering a point of comparison between his own hair and the abundance of locks on the head of his patron:

Mi af i'w lys, mwyfwy wledd,
Mal eidion moel i adwedd³³¹

(I shall go to his court like a bald bullock goes homeward, / an every greater feast)

³²⁸ On the poetry to him see D. J. Bowen, 'Y Canu i Gwilym ap Gruffudd (m. 1431) o'r Penrhyn a'i Fab Gwilym Fychan (m. 1483)', *Dwned*, 8 (2002), 59–78. For the poems see gutorglyn.net, no. 55, *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, nos. XLII, XLIII and XLIV, *Gwaith Lewys Daron*, nos. 8 and 11 and Dafydd Llwyd, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn*, ed. W. Leslie Richards (Cardiff, 1964), no. 51.

³²⁹ gutorglyn.net, no. 55. 10 and 53.

³³⁰ See the notes to the poem on gutorglyn.net, no. 55.

³³¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 55. 31–32.

Pointing specifically to William's hair, he recalls Samson's last act when he demolished the temple in his old age and draws comparisons between the hair of the Biblical king and that of his patron. The strength associated with Samson's hair as well as its colour lies behind these lines, as we see that Guto emphasizes the idea that hair can provide strength:

Bwrw ydd wyf, beraidd ofeg,
 Breuglod hir i'r briglwyd teg.
 Samson yn awchlon a wnaeth
 Â'i flew arian filwriaeth;
 Wiliam â'i wallt, waywlym ŵr,
 Arian mawl, yw'r ail milwr.³³²

*(I'm casting a flowing, ample song of praise / for the fair, grey-headed man, sweet intent. / Samson eagerly did a soldier's work with his silver hair; / William with his hair is the next-best warrior / sharp-speared man, essence of praise.)*³³³

Lewys Môn's poem offers evidence that William perhaps became grey at an early age, as he notes that he is 'iau na lliw dy wallt' (*younger than the colour of your hair [suggests]*).³³⁴ However, this could also imply that one should not be fooled by his ability in old age, as he could be younger than we think. Lewys places further importance on the radiance of William's hair, describing it as 'llathreiddwallt' (*brilliant hair*) and associating it with his ability to shine on the battlefield: 'Marchog barugog brigwyn' (*A horseman covered with hore-frost, his hair white*) his bravery: 'brigwyn dewr' (*brave, white-haired*), as well as comparing it to the fleece of a lamb to describe his gentle nature: 'Fal oen wyd, a'i flew yn wyn' (*You are like a lamb, with its hairs white*).³³⁵

³³² gutorglyn.net, no. 55. 35–40.

³³³ gutorglyn.net, translation of no. 55. 35–40.

³³⁴ *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, no. XLII. 32.

³³⁵ *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, no. XLII. 31; 23; 26; 24.

Similar imagery is expressed in Dafydd Llwyd's poem, which is without doubt the greatest expression of praise to William's white hair. Although this poem's title notes that it is a poem of thanks to William for a horse, only twelve lines of the *cywydd* actually do so; the rest is dedicated to William's brilliant, thick, white hair. The message here too is that we should not be fooled by this colour; William is still a strong man. The image of the warrior with long, flowing hair appears again, and its abundance, wealth and shininess is described by drawing upon images from nature with striking comparisons to the *cywyddau* to women's hair such as 'sidan' (*silk*) and the 'llwyn' (*thicket*). Because of its extravagant description, it is worth quoting the section here in its entirety:

Y gŵr ieuanc a gerir,
A'i wallt yn hen llwydwyn hir,
Darogan ei ddadannudd,
Bendefig a'i brig yn brudd.
Wiliam f'eryr, helm fowrwen
Ar hyd y war, a'r hed wen.
Ys da lwyn onest o lin,
Ys to im mal ystamin.
Holl Wynedd a wyl heddiw
Lonaidd ei gap o lawnd gwiw.
Swrn o feirn sy arno fo,
Sidan wedi'i bresidio.
Llathraid liw, llwyth yr iad lân,
Llewyth eiry fal lluwch arian.
Llwyn o wydr llawn yw edrych
Dros goler ysgwier gwyth;
Na dim cyn wynned yma,
Nac ewyn dŵr na gwin da.
Pe cneifid, ond odid oedd,
Cnu'n pen nis cawn er punnoedd.
Rhai a debygai, o barch,
Blew Wiliam i blu alarch;
Yn ugeinmlwydd ebrwydd oedd,
Llwydwyn, teca lliw ydoedd.
Rhywiogaeth ydyw, hygar,
Oedd felly, Cymry a'i câr.³³⁶

³³⁶ *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn*, no. 51. 1–27.

(The young man that is loved / And his hair long, the colour of old grey and white / Predicting his reclamation of patrimony, / A chieftain with his wise hair / Wiliam, my eagle, with a large white helmet / Along the nape of the neck, the white hat / It is a good bush, honest cloth / It is a roof for me like a worsted cloth / The whole of Gwynedd see today / His cap full of a worthy growth many judgements rest on him / Silk having been pressed / Brilliant colour, the load of the pure head. / The glowing snow like shimmering silver / A thicket of glass, it looks full / Over the collar of a splendid squire / There is nothing as white here / Neither the foam of the water nor good wine / If it were sheared, but it hardly would be / A fleece like this head, I wouldn't / have despite paying a fortune / Some used to liken, out of respect, / William's hair is like the feathers of a swan / As soon as he was twenty, / Grey-white, the fairest colour was he. / He is of good pedigree, amiable / He was like that, the Welsh love him.)

Grey or white hair was not always a symbol of death and decay, but was also something to be celebrated when it was used as a marker of a long and prosperous life. In numerous poems, expressing hope that a patron's hair will turn grey became a way of wishing that he had a long and happy life:

Iarlles Ann, o'r llys honno
Iarll yw dy fab, gŵr llwyd fo!³³⁷

*(Countess Ann, of that court / your son is earl, may he live to be a grey-haired old man!)*³³⁸

Furthermore, it became popular among some poets such as Lewys Glyn Cothi, to end a *cywydd mawl* by specifically wishing long life on a patron's hair:

saith ugain tref tan Reinallt,
saith oed y ddâr ar ei wallt

Tri oed rhoed Duw ar ei wallt,
tair oes i garw tir Oswallt

Brenin egin Penegoes,
bid ar ei wallt bedair oes.³³⁹

(Seven twenty towns under Rheinallt / The seven ages of the oaktree upon his hair / God place three ages on his hair / three ages to the stag of

³³⁷ gutorglyn.net, no. 26. 11–12.

³³⁸ Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 26. 11–12.

³³⁹ *GLGC*, no. 214. 61–62; no. 208. 67–68; no. 192. 59–60.

Oswallt's land / The King of Penegoes's seed / Let there be four ages on his hair.)

As the reflections on the colour of hair are concluded, it is evident that opinions vary in terms of which colour was the best. Dafydd ap Gwilym clearly preferred golden hair while Guto'r Glyn sang mainly in praise of black hair. It has been demonstrated how the symbolic role hair plays in the Middle Ages is expressed by linking hair to youth, strength and bravery. Yet, when describing old age, the multifaceted role hair plays in the period becomes more evident, as it is portrayed as a symbol of death and decay on the one hand, and on the other, celebrated as a marker of a person who has lived a long and fulfilling life. Although the poets differ in terms of colour preferences, what unites the praise is the fact that the abundance of hair is always important.

Later in Part Three we found that becoming bald was much worse than becoming grey and could represent the loss of strength, manliness, youth and beauty and in some cases, it could prevent the men from being a part of certain social orders.³⁴⁰ If losing hair due to natural causes was portrayed negatively, then being shaved unwillingly was an even greater humiliation. On this note of shaving hair as a sign of humiliation, one other aspect that appears in the works of the *Cywyddwyr* is a hint of the battlefield rituals involving the removal of the enemy's hair (and with this, we remember the shaving of Ysbaddaden before his death). Dafydd Johnston has drawn our attention to the reference in Guto'r Glyn's important poem

³⁴⁰ Although we should note the epithet 'Moel' (*bald*), e.g. Idwal Foel, a tenth-century king of Gwynedd, see *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, ed. P. C. Bartrum (Cardiff, 1966), pp. 38 (MG 1), 47 (JC 25).

to Sir Rhys ap Tomas, where he praises Sir Rhys ap Tomas for not only killing Richard III the ‘baedd’ (*boar*), but for also shaving his hair:

Cwncwerodd y Cing Harri
Y maes drwy nerth ein meistr ni:
Lladd Eingl, llaw ddiangen,
Lladd y baedd, eilliodd ei ben.³⁴¹

*(King Henry won the day / through the strength of our master: / killing Englishmen, capable hand, / He killed the boar, he shaved his hair.)*³⁴²

Iolo Goch also describes Sir Hywel ab Gruffudd as a barber, shaving the heads and beards of his enemies:

Eillio â'i law a'i allu
Bennau a barfau y bu.³⁴³

*(With his hand and strength / he did shave heads and beards.)*³⁴⁴

And the praise to Ifan ap Maredudd by Tudur Penllyn which described a giant who could shave the field, ‘Cawr â llaw fawr, eillia faes’ (*A giant with a large hand, shave the field*), offers further evidence that it was a custom to shave the heads of the enemy as they lay slain in the aftermath of battle. Recalling the significance of hair to the male figures of the period as a marker of fertility, bravery, masculinity, nobility and virility, then shaving the hair in this manner would be a manifold insult. On this barbaric note, the reading of the hair of male figures in medieval Welsh society draws to a close.

³⁴¹ gutorglyn.net, no. 14. 35–38.

³⁴² Translation on gutorglyn.net, no. 14. 35–38.

³⁴³ *GIG*, no. II. 65–66.

³⁴⁴ *IGP*, no. 2. 65–66.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions

[T]he language of the self would be stripped of one of its richest resources without hair: and like language, or the faculty of laughter, or the use of tools, the dressing of hair in itself constitutes a mark of the human.³⁴⁵

In the above quotation, Marina Warner draws attention to the importance of hair to humankind, and throughout this thesis, we have found that much can be learnt from reading this part of the body. Part One emphasized that hair was a particularly powerful carrier of meanings in the Middle Ages, and evidence of its potency as a conveyer of personal attributes was noted in the way characters in the *Mabinogion* are often referred to and described solely by their hair. We saw later how hair would be used as epithets and eventually as surnames in Welsh society beyond the literary texts.

In this first part we also noted the importance of considering the cultural context if we are to decode the social messages conveyed by hair. In terms of medieval Welsh scholarship, we found that some of the more obvious social constructs, such as the dominance of men or the connection between a woman's beauty and her hair, have been taken for granted. Because of this, scholars have neglected to examine them in detail, and consequently opportunities have been missed to deepen our insight into life in the Wales of the Middle Ages. Decoding the many hitherto ignored references to hair in the literature of the period has enabled us to go part of the way towards redressing this omission.

³⁴⁵ M. Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995), 371.

In Part Two, after considering the way women's hair is portrayed in the *Mabinogion*, the main focus of the study was the fourteen poems to hair that form a sub-genre of the Canu Serch. While this thesis was primarily concerned with the symbolic significance of the portrayal of hair in the texts, this exercise suggested arguments for reconsidering the traditional categories used to distinguish between the Canu Serch from the Canu Mawl genres.

Attention to the detail of these poems helped us understand the complex balancing-act society demanded of women. For example, the lack of references to hair in the fourteenth-century poems of the Canu Mawl and the inclusion of references to the other features of the face suggests that a woman was obliged to hide her hair. A problem is the scant nature of references to the headdress itself, the very garment that would serve to cover any offending hair. It seems that the headdress was kept out of these poems as its symbolic value was confusing. Beyond the obvious positive attributes it could signal, there was a danger of evoking negative associations. These instances gave us a glimpse of the dilemma of any woman who wished to be deemed worthy of praise. On the one hand her headdress could signal her 'good' character as it symbolised wealth and chastity, but on the other it could also, in its decoration, allude to her vanity and pride.

In the poems that have been categorised as belonging to the Canu Serch genre, however, we found exuberant praise for the woman's hair. In these poems, the prevalence of the *hair : fertility* homology is tangible through the constant use and development of images related to nature and growth. We saw examples of poems that open with a comparison with seeds, and develop the image all the way

to a garden. Elsewhere the images from the process of ploughing a field are used to describe the hair, making it synonymous with fertility and reproduction, an idea seen clearly when the poet expresses his wish to see the lineage of the subject continued. We caught sight of the day-to-day life of the elite women of the poems and witnessed how they had handmaidens and other servants who would aid in the dressing of their hair. Praise of the materials involved in the grooming gave us a flavour of the way Welsh medieval society conducted commerce with London and the fashionable areas of France, including Paris, and the comfortable surroundings of the women in question could be appreciated in the examples that showed her hair compared to such exotic things as saffron and oranges.

The discussion of the poetry showed that unmarried women would wear their hair loose and uncovered, but on account of the surprise expressed by the poets on seeing a married woman with her hair loose (or in some cases *wishing* to see it loose), we learnt that it was customary for her to keep her tresses bound. We gathered that these poems were not only meant for the ears of unmarried women, but also for the nobleman's wife. Much was learnt about the value system of medieval society by looking in particular at the saints with whom the poets compared their subjects in their attempt to flatter them. Some were chosen as icons of virginity, faithfulness and devoutness, others as role models for mothers that epitomised fertility and offered a future for the family's lineage. Some, such as the Virgin Mary and Non, symbolised all of these traits, and here, we saw further evidence of the medieval woman's predicament. The impossibility of emulating Mary, both virgin and mother, for example, went beyond her miraculous condition, and into the basic question of hairstyle. Mary was often portrayed with long flowing

hair. Mary was a role model as a mother. Yet in the Middle Ages mothers needed husbands, and married women were expected to keep their hair bound and covered.

Turning to the literature concerning men, we also find that hair plays an ever-present, though to date a largely unnoticed role. One of the clearest findings of this section is that medieval society in Wales saw hair as a marker of identity for men on a number of counts. We saw that it features frequently in the medieval laws where fines are stipulated for hair that is pulled without consent and where wishing shame upon your husband's beard was an offence punishable by beating. Although we do not know to what extent these laws were practised, the fact that hair is seen as untouchable, demonstrates its significance. Turning to the proverbs and idioms of the day, such as 'shame upon my beard', further proof was found of the symbolic role of hair as an emblem of masculinity. Evidence emerged for the rituals of grooming hair as a sign of acceptance and bonding, in particular the relationship between father and son. In *Culhwch ac Olwen* we found clever play on the idea of *barbatoria* where it is turned on its head and becomes a signifier of Ysbaddaden's broken relationships and demise.

We noted that the works of the *Cywyddwyr* that form the sub-genre of 'the poems to the beard' (defined by Dylan Foster Evans) indirectly praised the poets' ability to grow beards (and therefore the strength of their manhood) by wishing that they were clean-shaven. The significance of this was further established when we saw how the patrons were praised for possessing good facial hair. However, we found that references to hair that are scattered elsewhere (beyond this sub-genre) and that have gone largely unnoticed were also telling and should not be taken

merely as ‘padding’. The frequency of their appearance in the praise poetry alone merits attention. The fact that we very rarely learn anything else about the appearance of the male subjects singles them out as markers of significance. It is, however, difficult to decode and prescribe a specific meaning to each hair colour, and we found that yellow, grey, black and white can all be attached as praise words for various qualities in men. We need not be surprised at this, bearing in mind that as these poets were commissioned to praise their patrons, they would not wish to attach a negative trait to any colour associated with those who paid the bill. We can however, draw attention to the fact that they are noted (amongst other praiseworthy qualities) as markers of wisdom, nobility and bravery, and that they were certainly key factors in the appearance of a man. By placing these references within the context of a society where hair was used as a fundamental marker of identity through its use in epithets (and later surnames) demonstrates the power and status hair carried.

One of the other main objectives of this thesis was to correct the trend of earlier studies where men and women have been considered as polar opposites. Although we needed to look at them separately in the first instance due to the fact that the initial, detailed poem-by-poem work had not been done before, setting them in parallel offered an opportunity to see more clearly the similarities as well as the differences between the genders. Hair played a symbolic role both in terms of the self and the wider society for men and women alike, yet, while this principle is shared, the details differ between the genders. The behaviour of women on which society insisted placed restrictions on them in terms of demonstrating their individuality. Hair could define their status from maiden to married woman to

widow, and in order to be considered beautiful women needed to conform to the very narrow definition placed upon them by society. The way in which hair was dressed was also a way of expressing how women valued and adhered to the social codes through their morals and virginal status.

It became clear that the expectation by which women were required to use their hair to establish their conformity differs from the way in which society treated men's hair. Here we saw how it was closely linked with their individual identity as well as their social ranking. For the male figures, it seems there was much more flexibility in terms of acceptable hair colour and its symbolic role as a carrier of virtues. We found, however, that having good and well-groomed hair was of utmost importance for men too, as this marked the virtues of wealth, good upbringing, and nobility. Further evidence of its importance was seen in its role in battlefield rituals and the rites of passage that created fraternal ties.

Over the course of its three parts, this thesis has demonstrated how we can deepen our understanding of the Middle Ages by highlighting and analysing one particular element, and that the misconceptions that arise from dismissing references to appearance as merely superficial need to be corrected. By searching hard in the mirror held up by some of the Welsh poems and prose texts, this thesis has been able to reveal more about the customs, beliefs and values of the Middle Ages. While medieval scholars are showing a growing interest in the symbolism of the body and an increasing realisation of how it can reveal much about humanity, this thesis has offered a uniquely Welsh perspective so often ignored in scholarly works that claim to discuss the period as a whole. It is hoped that this work will

pave the way for further research in the field so that the detail in the Welsh material and the important contribution it can make to studies of medieval literature can be included in fuller discussions.

Abbreviations

<i>BBCS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies</i>
<i>CDG</i>	<i>Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym</i> , eds. D. Johnston <i>et al.</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010)
<i>GDG</i>	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ap Gwilym</i> , ed. T. Parry (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952)
<i>GDG</i> ³	<i>Gwaith Dafydd ap Gwilym</i> , ed. T. Parry (3 rd edn., Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979)
<i>GIG</i>	<i>Gwaith Iolo Goch</i> , ed. D. Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988)
<i>GLGC</i>	<i>Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi</i> , ed. D. Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995)
<i>GMW</i>	D. Simon Evans, <i>A Grammar of Middle Welsh</i> (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1964)
<i>GPC</i>	<i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950–2002)
<i>IGP</i>	<i>Iolo Goch Poems</i> , ed. and trans. D. Johnston (Llandysul: Gomer, 1993)
<i>LIU</i>	D. Johnston, <i>Llên yr Uchelwyr: Hanes Beirniadol Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1300–1425</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005)
<i>MFGLI</i>	<i>Mynegai i Farddoniaeth Gaeth y Llawysgrifau</i> (Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales, 1978)
<i>OBWV</i>	<i>The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse</i> , ed. T. Parry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> (2 nd edn., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)
<i>PKM</i>	<i>Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi</i> , ed. I. Williams, (2 nd edn., Cardiff, 1951)
<i>PWDN</i>	<i>The Poetical Works of Dafydd Nanmor</i> , eds. T. Roberts and I. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1923)
<i>TYP</i>	<i>Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads</i> (3 rd edn., Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), ed. R. Bromwich

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