

Early Irish & Celtic Studies Research Seminar
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Towards a Linguistic Profile of the Medieval Welsh *Transitus Mariae*

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Towards a Linguistic Profile of the Medieval Welsh *Transitus Mariae*



Introduction

general background

Welsh texts and manuscripts

our project

The linguistic profile of the medieval Welsh *Transitus*

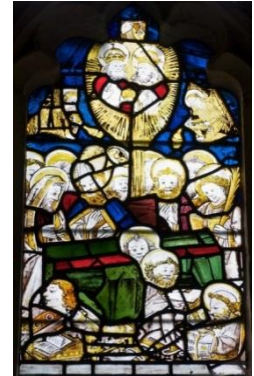
native narrative devices

Latin constructions without Welsh equivalents

Latin influences: lexicon
syntax

Some tentative conclusions

Introduction: general background



Transitus Mariae / Dormitio Mariae

A attributed to Joseph of Arimathea

B attributed to Melito

C (or W)

B1 published by Tischendorf

B2 published by Haibach-Reinisch

Introduction: Welsh texts and manuscripts

1 Peniarth 182, around 1514, based on the Golden Legend

2 Llanstephan 117, a version of Latin A, attributed to Joseph of Arimathea

3 Latin B (B2):

Peniarth 14i, c. 1250, together with Miracles

Peniarth 5, c. 1350, White Book of Rhydderch (Peniarth 4/5), together with Miracles, 'scribe A of WBR'

Jesus College 119, 1346, Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi (The Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi), 'scribe B of WBR'

Llanstephan 27, c. 1400, Red Book of Talgarth, together with Miracles

Peniarth 15, c. 1400; NLW 5267, 1468; Peniarth 27iii, c. 1460-90

Introduction: Welsh texts and manuscripts

Maredudd ab Owain (d. 1265)

Gruffudd ab M.
Madog ab Selyf

Owain ab M. (d. 1275)

Efa

Gruffudd Bola

leuan Llwyd–Angharad

Rhydderch (c. 1325-1398/99)

WBR (c. 1350)

Llywelyn ab O. (d. 1309)

Elen–Llywelyn ab Philyp

Gruffudd ab LI. ab Ph.

LIA (1346)

Introduction: Welsh texts and manuscripts

Brother Gruffudd Bola (translator of *Creed*)

However, there is one thing you should know to start with, when translating from one language to the other, as from Latin into Welsh, it is not always possible to replace one word with another whilst at the same time preserving fairly the proper nature of the language and the sense of the diction. For this reason I have sometimes translated word for word and elsewhere followed the sense and meaning, according to what was a natural and proper mode in our language. (transl. C. Lloyd-Morgan)

Introduction: Welsh texts and manuscripts

derived from Latin B2

Peniarth 14i

Peniarth 5 (White Book of Rhydderch)

Jesus College 119 (Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi / The Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi)

Llanstephan 27 (Red Book of Talgarth)

Peniarth 15, NLW 5267; Peniarth 27iii

Introduction: our project



Middle Welsh translations of religious texts in the Book of the Anchorite as a locus of linguistic contacts between a source language and a target language

Dr Elena Parina

Raphael Sackmann

co-operation: Dr Marieke Meelen (Cambridge, UK)

Introduction: our project

Book of the Anchorite	Peniarth 5
Ac ar ybestyl yn canu. Ar englyonn yn kytganu ac 6y. Ac yn k6ppla6 ar6ylyannev mab yr argl6yd ..	ac a'r ebestyl yn canu a'r egylyon yg kytcanu ac wynt y cuplant arwylyanheu mam yr Argluyd ...
and with the apostles singing and the angels singing with them and performing the funeral rites of the Lord's son ..	and with the apostles singing and the angels singing with them they perform the funeral rites of the Lord's mother ...
	B2
	Canentibus ergo apostolis et concinentibus angelis ut decebat ad exequias dominicae Genitricis ...

Introduction: our project

John Morris Jones (1894): ‘The greatest value of the text to the grammarian lies in the light it throws upon the effect upon literary Welsh of translation from Latin’

(1) *yr hwn* etc as relative pronoun: ‘Thus *angeli qui* is here translated *yr egylyon yr rei [ysyd]* [lit. ‘... the angels, the ones who are ...’, instead of *yr egylyon ysyd*]

(2) agreement between verb and plural subject in sentences where the nominal subject follows its verb: ‘Our scribe, writing unconsciously his own speech, uses the third person singular, in such cases; [...] when consciously translating he writes the plural’:

En6eu ystoryaeu yllyuyr h6nn **y6SG** yrei hynnPL ‘These are the names of the tracts of this book’

ac anvar6a6l **hyntPL** yr engylyonnPL ‘and the angels are immortal’

Introduction: our project

John Rhÿs: 'The texts, being translations, cannot be regarded as the best models for Welsh prose, but they are important in the lexicographical sense'

Thomas Jones (1937): 'ample traces of translation', 'these texts cannot be regarded as models of Welsh prose, and are infinitely inferior in style to that of original compositions like the Mabinogi', 'great service in helping to equip Mediaeval Welsh with a philosopho-theological vocabulary'

Introduction: our project

Saunders Lewis (1932): ‘They [i.e., learned European works of the twelfth century] found Welsh translators who frequently were masters of prose. Let us here give an example [i.e., a passage from the Welsh *Elucidarium* in the Book of the Anchorite] to show how modern the tune of their style is. ... The smoothness and the variety of rhythms of this paragraph are fascinating.’

Sir Idris Foster (1950): ‘considerable vigour of its own’, ‘at their highest level the prose translations in the Book of the Anchorite take the place among the glories of that tradition [i.e., of Welsh Prose]’

Introduction: our project



Transitus Mariae in the Book of the Anchorite
between two languages and between two textual cultures
researching the textual interface and the interaction between Latin and Welsh

The linguistic profile of the Welsh *Transitus* : native narrative devices

- (a) periphrastic constructions with a verbal noun and a finite form of *gwneuthur* 'to do'
- (b) narrative verbal nouns (verbal nouns used for a finite verb)
- (c) cataphoric *sef*-constructions

Native narrative devices

periphrastic constructions with a verbal noun and a finite form of *gwneuthur* 'to do'

... **deuchreu** wylyw e hun **a oruc** yn lle dirgel yn y ty

she began to weep alone in a secret place in her house (*lit.* beginning to weep alone she did ...)

... lacrimari sola in domus illius receptaculo coepit.

A g6edy g6nneuthur ohonei y g6edi. **ymhoelut** adref a **oruc**.

And after she had prayed, she returned home (*lit.* returning home she did)

Et haec dicens, reversa est in domum suam.

Native narrative devices : narrative verbal nouns

Ac yma y kyymmerth meir y palym ry dathod gann yr aghel. a **cherdet** parth a mynyd oliuet y wedia6.

And then Mary took the branch of palm which had come with the angel, and went to the Mount of Olives to pray.

Et accipiens palmam illam, quam sumpserat de manu angeli, perrexit in Montem Oliveti praefulgente sibi luce Spiritus Sancti et coepit orare.

Native narrative devices : narrative verbal nouns

[Mary's direct speech] Ac odynd **dangos** ida6 y hamdo yr h6nn y kledid hi ynda6. Ar palym goleu a gymerassei hi y gann yr agel. A **dyscu** ida6 d6yn y palym o vlaen yr elor ...

And then she [Mary] showed [*lit.* showing] to him [John] her veil, in which she would be buried, and the branch of the palm which she had received from the angel, and advised [*lit.* advising] him to carry the branch of the palm before the bier ...

Et haec dicens ostendit illi vestimenta sepulturae suae et palmam illam luminis, quam acceperat ab angelo, monens eum ut illam faceret ferri ante feretrum suum cum iret ad monumentum.

Native narrative devices : *sef*-constructions

Sef a oruc y teir g6erydonn a oedynt yno **kymryt** y corff o e olchi o deua6t y rei a elynt y angheu.

This the three virgins who were present did: they took [*lit.* taking] the body to wash it according to the custom of those who went to death.

Tres autem virgines quae ibidem erant susceperunt corpus beatae Mariae, ut lavarent illud more funereo.

On the fence : *nachaf* = *ecce*

nachaf angel ger y bronn yn dyuot. Ac yn kyuarch g6ell idi. Ac yn dy6edut val hynn

behold an angel coming towards her and greeting her and speaking like this

Et **ecce** angelus magni luminis habitu splendens ante eam astitit et salutationis verba persolvit dicens

Latin constructions without Welsh equivalents : present participles

Et haec **dicens**, reversa est in domum suam.

And saying this [her prayer], she returned to her house.

A **g6edy g6nneuthur** ohonei y g6edi. ymhoelut adref a oruc.

And after she had prayed, she returned home.

Latin constructions without Welsh equivalents : present participles

Et ibant angeli in magna exultatione magnas laudes Domino **concinentes**

Ar englyonn a aethant dr6y lewenyd ma6r **gann ganv** molyannhev yr
argl6yd

And the angels went in great exultations, singing praise of the Lord

Latin constructions without Welsh equivalents : present participles

A **phann weles** hi ef wylya6 a oruc o le6enyd

And when she saw him, she wept from happiness

Vidensque eum Maria, coepit prae gaudio flere

Ac yma **y kyymmerth** meir y palym ry dathoed gann yr aghel. a cherdet parth a mynyd oliuet y wedia6.

And then Mary took the branch of palm which had come with the angel, and went to the Mount of Olives to pray.

Et **accipiens** palmam illam, quam sumpserat de manu angeli, perrexit in Montem Oliveti ...

Latin constructions without Welsh equivalents : present participles

... A **dyscu** ida6 d6yn y palym o vlaen yr elor ...

... and advising [→ advised] him to carry the branch of the palm before the bier

... **monens** eum ut illam faceret ferri ante feretrum suum cum iret ad monumentum

nachaf angel ger y bronn yn dyuot. Ac yn kyuarch g6ell idi. Ac **yn dy6edut** val hynn

behold an angel coming towards her and greeting her and speaking like this

Et ecce angelus magni luminis habitu splendens ante eam astitit et salutationis verba persolvit **dicens**

Latin constructions without Welsh equivalents : ablative absolute

Haec eo **dicente** ... ⇔ Ac val y **dy6eit ef** hynny ...

‘And as he said that ...’

[direct speech] **Ar argl6yd yn dy6edut hynny.** gog6yda6 ar y g6ely a oruc. a diol6ch yr argl6yd. Ac anuon y hyspryt.

With the Lord saying that, she reclined on her bed and thanked the Lord and emitted her spirit

Peniarth 5: Ac a’r Argluyd Duv yn dyvedut hynny, gogwydav ar y guely a dioluch y’r Argluyd anuon y hyspryt.

Et **haec dicente Domino**, accumbens Maria super lectum suum, et gratias agens Domino, emisit spiritum.

Latin influences : lexicon

corporalis: *corfforawl* (*corffor* ‘body’ + adj. *-awl*)

Peniarth 14i: ... 6al e guelwyf wynt en gorfora6l (‘... that I may see them bodily’, ‘videam eos corporalibus oculis’)

Jesus 119 ... ych g6elet ch6ithev am llygeit **kna6ta6l** (*knawt* ‘flesh’ + adj. *-awl*) ... to see you with my bodily eyes

Peniarth 5 ... a’m llygeit **corfforaul**

B2 ... videre vos **corporalibus** oculis

knawtolyaeth ‘incarnation’

Peniarth 14i o argluydia6l gnaudolaeth ⇔ de incarnatione dominica
argluydiawl ‘pertaining to the Lord’ < *dominicus*

Latin influences / genre : lexicon and morphology

adjectives in *-edic* ⇔ Latin participles in *-(t)us*

anwahanedic 'indivisible'

sathredic 'trampled', 'conculcatus'

dyrchauedic 'elevated', 'superexaltatus' (Transitus, Peniarth 14i)

gorchyvygedic 'defeated', 'victus' (Transitus, Peniarth 14i)

bendigedic 'glorious', 'benedictus'

cyssegredic 'sacred', 'sanctus'

etholedic 'chosen', 'electus'

gwynnydedic 'blessed'

poenedic 'tormented'

yscriuennedic 'written'

genre : lexicon and morphology

cyssegredigyonn engylyonn
etholedigyon vrodyr

‘angelis sanctis’, ‘holy angels’
‘fratres electi’, ‘elected brothers’

anrydedusson vrodyr

‘venerabilibus fratribus’, ‘revered
brothers’

Ymborth yr Enaid (‘The Food of the Soul’), around 1250

gloywgochyon rudyeu (YE 18.55-56)

‘clear-red cheeks’

y ffydlonnyon greaduryeit (YE 18.65)

‘his faithful creatures’

y sercholyon wefuissev (YE 18.66)

‘the loving lips’

Latin influences : agreement patterns, and variation

... onny **deuant** attaf yr ebestyl. An brodyr ...

... if the apostles, our brothers, do not come to me ...

B2 ... nisi **venerint** fratres et coapostoli mei ...

Peniarth 5: Ac yna y **dattkynnvys** yr ebestyl idi ...

Jesus 119: Ac yna y **datkana6d** yr ebestyl idi ...

And then the apostles told her ...

Pen 5: (...) **arwedassant** yr ebestyl corff y Wynuydedic Veir ...

Jesus 119: Ac odyrna yr **ar6eda6d** yr ebestyl corff y wynnvydedic veir Wryry ...

And then the apostles took the body of the blessed virgin Mary ...

Latin influences : agreement patterns, and variation

Peniarth 14i: ... yu anrydedussyon vrodyr yg crist e rei **esyd** an pressvylllyav en laodicia

Jesus 119: ... o e anrydedusson vrodyr yg krist. y rei **yssyd** yn press6yla6 yn laodicia

Peniarth 5: ... e'u anrededusson vrodyr ygkrist, y rei a **oedynt** yn laodicia
... to their brothers in Christ who are (living) in Laodicia

Latin influences : agreement patterns, and variation

Sef a oruc y teir g6erydonn_{PL} a **oedynt**_{PL} yno kymryt y corff o e olchi o deua6t
y rei_{PL} a **elynt**_{PL} y angheu.

This the three virgins who were present did: they took [*lit.* taking] the body
and washing it according to the custom of those who went to death.

. .ygyt a e engylyonn_{PL} a **oedynt**_{PL} ynn kanu ...

... together with his angels who were singing ...

... yn erbyn y gouudyev_{PL} a **da6**_{SG} arnaf.

... against the pains that will come to me

ch6i_{2PL} a **oede6ch**_{2PL} ym ketemeithas ...

you who were in my community ...

vos qui secuti estis me ..

Latin influences : marking of relative clauses, and variation

'native' marking

... ygyt a e engylyonn **a** oedynt ynn kanu

... together with his angels who were singing

... yr lle **yd** oedynt gynt ynn pregethu **ynda6**

... to the place in which they were preaching earlier

Latin influences : marking of relative clauses, and variation

Latin-influenced marking

... ma6r wyrtheu du6 **yr h6nn a** uchedockaa ac a argl6ydia ...

... the great miracles of the Lord who lives and reigns ...

... magnalia Dei, **qui** in Trinitate perfecta et una deitatis substantia vivit, dominatur ...

Ac vrth hynny ti a e g6ely ef o gyffredin gyureith genedyl **tr6y yr honn y** da6 aghev ytt.

And therefore you will see him because of the general law of humankind through which death comes to you

Tu igitur videbis eum quidem communi lege humani generis, **per quam** sortita es finem mortis

Latin influences : layered periods

Secundo igitur anno postquam Dominus caeli alta conscendit, die quadam desiderio eius succensa, lacrimari sola in domus illius receptaculo coepit.

Ar eil vl6ydyd g6edy ysgynnv o grist argl6yd y oruchelder nef. Di6arnna6t yd oed hi yn gyfula6n o e damunet ef. d(r)echreu wylya6 e hun a oruc yn lle dirgel yn y ty.

And the second year after the Lord Christ had risen to the heights of heaven, one day when she was full of yearning for him, she began to weep alone in a secret place in her house.

Tentative conclusions



composite nature of the text

not a direct translation of a Latin original

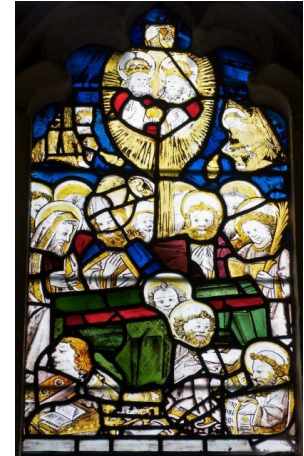
Tentative conclusions



Gruffudd Bola

it is not always possible to replace one word with another whilst at the same time preserving fairly the proper nature of the language and the sense of the diction. For this reason I have sometimes translated word for word and elsewhere followed the sense and meaning, according to what was a natural and proper mode in our language.

Tentative conclusions



implicit ideal: word-for-word translation

counter-acted by required preservation

- » of sense of source
- » of the proper nature of the target language in terms of grammar and idioms

Tentative conclusions



register, specific elevated style, associated with translated texts

genre effects, stylistic demands ↔ immediate interference resulting from the translators' acquaintance with two linguistic systems

'the effect upon literary Welsh of translation from Latin'



the effect of literary Welsh upon translation from Latin

Early Irish & Celtic Studies Research Seminar
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thank you

Stained glass windows
15th century
Gresford / Denbighshire

