EARLY AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

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One of the two major MS colls of med. W. prose is examined by Prys Morgan, ‘Glamorgan and the Red Book of Hergest’, *Morgannwg*, 22, 1978 (1979): 42–60. He confirms that the book was produced for Hopcyn ap Thomas of Ynysforgan (more properly than Ynys Dawe) and suggests that it passed to the Vaughans of Hergest as part of the possessions of Hopcyn’s family which were forfeited to the crown and granted to Sir Roger Vaughan of Tretower (a poem to whom is contained in the MS) in 1464. The Hergest Vaughans were a branch of this family; another branch was at Talgarth with whom is to be associated the Red Book of Talgarth written by the same scribe as the Hergest book. Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads*, Cardiff, Wales U.P., 2nd revd ed., 1978 (1979), 597 pp.; many corrections are embodied in the text and pp. 524–65, ‘Additional Notes’, are corrections, new views and insights since the first ed. of 1961. Gwyn Thomas, ‘Bras ddosbarthiad ar ein rhyddiaith gynnar’, *TB*, 11: 28–51, is a brisk résumé of the main classes of med. W. prose texts, which again draws attention to the variety of styles and subjects in the material. Jeffrey Gantz, ‘Thematic structure in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi’, *MAe*, 47: 247–54, attempts to show that the Four Branches have a greater degree of structural logic and coherence (whatever of narr. unity) than is often assumed, and that a systematic arrangement of parallel and antithetical sequences creates a single matrix which generates the central themes. Structurally branches i and iii balance ii and iv; the last is a darker version of i. The theme of a just world wherein good begets good, evil evil, is reflected in the structure. Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘Honour and status in some Irish and Welsh prose tales’, *Eriu*, 29, 1978 (1979): 123–41, remarks on the apparent foolish or unintelligible expression of honour and status found side by side with a more rational expression in some med. Welsh and Irish tales. In the contemp. social context of the tales both types are rational and an appreciation of the
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social idiom adds to the power of these stories. Relative position of inferior vis-à-vis superior is shown in rules of dialogue, titles, and order of speaking which the author of the Four Branches uses with fine accuracy to reveal a complex system of honour and status. The romance of Peredur is examined in two arts. The former, J. K. Bolland, 'Peredur: The four early manuscripts', B, 28:365-72, analyses orthographical and verbal variants in the four early MSS of the romance. He concludes that if the White Book and Peniarth 7 represent two recensions, the other MS in each (Red Book and Peniarth 14) shows the influence of the other recension. There is, however, no divergent narrative trad. Meirion Pennar, 'Tyng hedden Peredur', TB, 11:52-62, examines only the White Book text, believing it to be a conscious attempt to create a meaningful unitary story from diverse fragmentary and often contradictory materials about the hero.

Gwyn Thomas, 'I liw papir', B, 28:404-405, and J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Balchnoe', Tr, July 1979, 138-40, contribute brief but useful notes on phrases in two poems by Dafydd ap Gwilym, the former suggesting that the metaphor 'paper' for the lady's skin refers to its stained begrimed nature, the latter showing that 'balchnoe' (Noah's boat) is an apt and not uncommon metaphor for the Church. R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'Sylwadau ar gywydd 'Yr Adfail' gan Ddafydd ap Gwilym', TB, 11:109-15, provides a lecture expliquée of a single cywydd and discusses the levels of meaning to be found in the image of 'the ruined cottage' — the former love-nest, a comment on time and old-age, an awareness of sinister other-world-powers — but throughout shines a conviction that what was good remains so. The cywydd reveals Dafydd's complex responses to life, and the poetic skills and imaginative power which enable him to express them. D. J. Bowen, 'Y Cywyddwyr a'r noddwy'r cynnar', TB, 11:62-108, is a wide-ranging art. which succeeds in putting the work of the first generation of cywyddwyr in the social setting of the 14th c. B. claims that older views of the period as a break with the past, politically and culturally, are too simplistic and he reveals how trad. lit. values and standards were enriched by the economic circumstances of the new aristocracy expressed in new styles of domestic architecture, in a new audience, in new relationships with Anglo-Norman aristocracy. Meirion