

Argoelion Y Flwyddyn and Arwyddion Calan Ionawr

Two comparative editions

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Plagiaatverklaring

Hierbij verklaar ik dat er bij het schrijven en tot stand komen van dit B.A. eindwerkstuk, geen plagiaat is gepleegd.

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Datum: 25 april 2016

Handtekening:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N.S. van der Woude', written in a cursive style.

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List of abbreviations

ACI	Arwyddion Calan Ionawr
AF	Argoelion y Flwyddyn
BL	Bodleian Library MS. 14,913
HF	Hywel Fychan
Llan 27	Llanstephan 27
RBH	Red Book of Hergest
RBT	Red Book of Talgarth

Introduction

In the Middle Ages, pseudo-sciences like astrology, astronomy and even divination were common means to determine events and get a hold on the future. In a society where so much was dependent upon the thriving of crops and livestock, having knowledge of the weather and seasonal circumstances in the days to come must have been a worthy thing and one can only imagine the ways people would try to gain that knowledge. In Llanstephan 27, there are two short, adjacent texts that concern themselves with these practices. They are *Argoelion y Flwyddyn* and *Arwyddion Calan Ionawr* respectively, and both can be labelled as texts belonging to the prognostics genre. A genre that knows many sub-categories, such as lunaries and dream books. The appointing of important and/or unlucky days is one of the most accepted and popular sort of prognostics. It is often found in medieval texts, but similar sources can be traced back to the Classical period, with sources in Ancient Greek.

In *Argoelion y Flwyddyn* we can see how the Welsh used this pseudoscientific tool. This text is found in two surviving manuscripts, both of which I will be using and comparing in this edition. They are NLW MS. Llanstephan 27, also known as The Red Book of Talgarth (Welsh name: Llyfr Coch Talgarth) and Oxford Jesus MS. 111, also known as The Red Book of Hergest (Welsh name: Llyfr Coch Hergest). Llanstephan 27 will be abbreviated here as Llan27 and Oxford Jesus MS. 111 as RBH.

The adjacent text, *Arwyddion Calan Ionawr*, in Llan 27, is clearly another a prognostic text, but also has some elements that belong to the overarching computus genre. As they are both quite short texts, I will be discussing them both equally and, apart from the introductory words, treat their editions as two separate ones.

Chardonens describes how texts about the Egyptian Days were often used as space-fillers in earlier calendars¹, but later insular manuscripts had no need for these and it is therefore crucial to look at why they were thought to be worthy enough to take up any precious space and material. Apparently, *Argoelion y Flwyddyn* was deemed important enough to include it both in the more religious Red Book of Talgarth, as well as the Red Book of Hergest. Which makes the notion that it was simply put in as a way to fill up any “awkward gaps”, as Chardonens calls them, highly unlikely. His idea that prognostics texts in the later Middle Ages were put into manuscripts for a reason and not haphazardly, is supported further by the fact that in Llanstephan 27, it is accompanied by texts of the same genre, like *Arwyddion Calan Ionawr*, but also the somewhat prognostic texts regarding the day and night of Christmas: *Haul dydd Nadolig* and *Gwynt nos Nadolig*. In the Red Book of Hergest, it is accompanied by a text about bloodletting and other medical texts. Computi and prognostics were considered to be attributive to medical texts and practices, stemming from the believe in humors. It was common belief that the human body and its thriving, was related to the microcosm, thus prognoses about seasons and elements, were indirectly also prognoses about health of the body².

¹ László Sándor Chardonens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics, 900-1100: Study and Texts*, (BRILL 2007) 28.

² R.M. Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics: an edition and translation of texts from London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii'*, (London 2011) 73-75.

About the manuscripts

NLW MS. Llanstephan 27

The texts *Argoelion y Flwyddyn* (from this point on abbreviated as *AyF*) and *Arwyddion Calan Ionawr* (abbreviated here as *ACI*) are found consecutively in Llan27. Most texts found in Llan27 are of a religious nature, but, as the aforementioned texts prove, there are a few exceptions. The titles that are used to refer to the texts, are not given to them by the scribe of the manuscripts, but rather by a later transcriber. Most likely by Luft, Thomas and Smith from the Rhyddiaith Gymraeg website. *ACI* is introduced in the manuscript by a short sentence: *Argoelion y flwyddyn herwyd kalan Jonawr*, which gives a brief but clear summation of the both the previous text, as well as the one following, and obviously served as inspiration for the given titles³.

The manuscript is dated between the last quarter of the fourteenth century and the first quarter of the fifteenth century⁴. Most of the texts in the manuscript, including *AyF* and *ACI*, have been identified as having been written by the same scribe, namely Hywel Fychan ap Hywel Goch of Buellt (here abbreviated as HF). His patron was Hopcyn ap Thomas of Ynysforgan, a layman who has many texts dedicated to his name, such as the Red Book of Hergest. However, in the case of RBT, the commissioner was most likely a relative of Hopcyn ap Thomas⁵. Hywel Fychan is, based on the works that have survived and are known to us today, the largest contributor to the Medieval Welsh canon and one of only three scribes we know by name⁶. On page 160r. *AyF* is written, and *ACI* is found on 160v.

Oxford Jesus College MS. 111

The second version of *AyF* is found in Oxford Jesus College MS. 111, or the Red Book of Hergest. Interestingly, RBH is viewed by many as a manuscript collection with a companion that complements it, in the form of the Red Book of Talgarth. This manuscript is dated approximately around the same time as the Red Book of Talgarth. Huws says that it must have been written shortly after 1382⁷. The hand of scribe Hywel Fychan is present in the majority of the texts in this manuscript, as well, and also wrote this version of *Argoelion y Flwyddyn*. This is peculiar, because the two versions of the text, although similar in structure and message, show critical differences, which I will be demonstrating further on.

The Red Book of Hergest is described as a one-volume library of the medieval Welsh canon and contains the Four Branches and other texts of the *Mabinogion*, as well as other narrative texts, historical tracts and poetry. Texts concerning law and religion are not included in this manuscript collection, likely because the patron of Hywel Fychan already had access to these kinds of texts in the form of the RBT and undoubtedly other manuscripts, as well⁸. *AyF* is found on page 243r of the Red Book.

³ Information from Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.cardiff.ac.uk/en/ms-page.php?ms=Llst27&page=160v>

⁴ Information from Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/tei-header.php?ms=Llst27>

⁵ Information from Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/tei-header.php?ms=Llst27>

⁶ Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, (Cardiff 2000) 50-52.

⁷ Ibid. 82.

⁸ Ibidem.

BL additional MS. 14,912

This manuscript has been damaged much more than Llan 27 and is therefore also harder to read. It was mostly written in a late fourteenth century , rounded textura and has been dated as such at the end of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the fifteenth century. *ACI* is, like the majority of the manuscript collection, written by an unknown scribe, referred to as Hand A. This is the only manuscript I will be discussing that has not been written by Hywel Fychan, which explains the larger contrast in orthography in this case. The scribe of this manuscript is described on *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg* using fairly standard orthography⁹. *ACI* is found on fol. 81r to fol. 82r. This text is abbreviated here as 'BL'.

⁹Information from *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg* 1300-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.cardiff.ac.uk/en/tei-header.php?ms=BLAdd14912>

Methodology and theoretical framework

There are, of course, multiple ways to go about creating an edition and different forms to choose from, depending on the used texts. Kevin Murray describes several of these forms that are specific to the writing of editions of medieval texts, in *Reviews, reviewers and critical texts*¹⁰. He has himself written an edition of the Irish tale *Baile in Scáil* and therefore talks particularly about the editing of medieval Irish texts, but his approaches can just as well be used when editing a medieval Welsh text. He gives his own preference to the multiple-text approach, which he used for his own edition, as well. As the title suggest, this approach is aimed at presenting every extant copy available, and presenting it in the form of a diplomatic transcription¹¹. Also, if the other source texts are found to be superiorly written (whether grammatically or substantively) at some parts, they can be offered as alternative readings.

Another option is to create a normalized text. This is achieved by placing the different versions of a text next to each other and thus creating a reconstructed text, while still being able to refer to the original. The spelling of the edition is normally standardized.

Thirdly, there is the Lachmannian approach, which is described by Kloppenborg and Newman as a method that “seeks to identify the manuscript or archetype from which all other extant manuscripts descend...”¹².

Another method is the so-called best text approach. This is usually applied when there are more than two versions of a text, in different manuscripts. One of the versions, the one that is deemed to be the superior by the editor, is chosen as the main source for the edition and although variant reading may be included, it is the intention of the editor to stay as close to the chosen text as possible. In the cases of *AyF* and *ACI*, none of the texts have superiority over one another, so this method would not be suitable for this edition.

There is also the matter of semi-diplomatic and diplomatic editions. The latter is often used alongside a normalized text and the former usually goes together with the best text approach. A diplomatic edition stays as true as it possibly can to the original text as found in the manuscript, whereas a semi-diplomatic edition contains some alterations, such as added punctuation, capitalization and sometimes even adding or removing letters or words. I have decided upon a semi-diplomatic edition, because the texts sometimes show irregular differences in capitalization and punctuation, as well as the writing of consonant mutation. These differences (for example the capitalization of the noun *gaeaf* in BL) do not contribute to the meaning of the text and therefore, I will be adding and altering capitalization and punctuation, where I think it will benefit the accessibility of the text. Consonant mutation will also not be shown in the edition, even it was present in the transcription that was used as source, in order to create a consistent pattern in all four texts.

The manuscripts that hold the texts represented in these two editions are all available electronically at the website of *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425*¹³. These are transcriptions of the

¹⁰ Kevin Murray, *Reviews, reviewers and critical texts*, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 57 (2009) 51-70.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 56,57.

¹² John S. Kloppenborg and Judith H. Newman, *Editing the Bible: assessing the task past and present*, *Society of Biblical Lit.* (2012) 91-93.

¹³ Diana Luft, Peter Wynn Thomas and D. Mark Smith. eds. 2013, *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425*, <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk>.

original manuscripts and are displayed with clearly marked additions and alterations, making it clear what the original manuscripts look like. They also stay true to the original punctuation and capitalization.

The fact that each text merely has two known surviving copies, does limit the available options to approach the edition, but does not make it less interesting. None of the four texts have been edited or researched extensively, nor are there many comparable texts in the Middle-Welsh language, so it would be very useful to give them a closer look.

The texts are both quite short, with *AyF* containing 292 words in the Llan 27 text and the version of *ACI* in the same manuscript containing 231, which allows for them to easily be edited in full. As mentioned, neither of the variant versions seems to me to have superiority over the other. RBH is slightly more elaborate than Llan 27, and BL has a few introductory words prior to the summary of kalends.

Multiple text approaches, like those described by Murray, could very well be used for the edition of *AyF* and *ACI*. The two versions of *AyF* look similar at a quick first glance and in several ways they are, but there are so many crucial differences, that the best approach in creating the edition would be to put both versions side-by-side in full, with the corresponding sentences next to each other. This will enable a critical comparison on different levels, such as orthography and spelling, for both versions.

The same goes for *ACI*, which has two versions that seem like they are basically the same text, but there are a lot of major differences that deserve a closer look.

Argoelion y Flwyddyn

Prognostics

There is an Egyptian papyrus calendar dated around 1300 B.C., that contains evidence of superstitious beliefs in the form of lucky and unlucky days. This is one of the first sources of evidence of this practice, which became extremely popular during the Middle Ages¹⁴. One variety of these were titled Egyptian Days, referring back to the time and society of its first known sources.

There are many Latin and Anglo-Saxon texts that state specific unlucky days for particular events and practices, such as being born, getting married and even bloodletting and the consumption of goose meat. However, as common as the tradition of listing unlucky days is in Latin and Anglo-Saxon texts, they are much more rare in Welsh sources. In England, there was a sudden peak in the production of prognostic texts in Old English in the eleventh century, which was most likely caused by a continental influence as all the known exemplars for Anglo-Saxon prognostics texts were written in Latin, Greek and sometimes French¹⁵. It is highly probable that the Welsh came into contact with these particular type of texts, through their Anglo-Saxon neighbours, as this was the case with many literal genres and traits. Although the Celts were no strangers to the distinguishing of lucky versus unlucky times. In the Gaulish calendar of Coligny, dating back to the 2nd century AD, druidic writings describe certain months as being either unlucky, or *anm(at)*, or lucky, or *mat*. Welsh: *anfad* and *mad* respectively. Months consisting of thirty days were deemed *mat* and 29-day months were considered *anm(at)*¹⁶. Around the turn of the twelfth century, scribes seemed to lose interest in prognostics and their production decreased considerably¹⁷.

Of the tradition of counting unlucky days, the Egyptian days is the subcategory most widely used. The Egyptian Days themselves know three subcategories as well: three days per year, twelve days per year and twenty-four days per year, the latter being the most common. Egyptian Days are also called *dies mali* and the first non-Egyptian source in which they are mentioned, goes back as far as 354AD. There is, however, a gigantic gap between 354 AD and the ninth century, in which no texts mentioning *dies mali* are known to be written, until they become quite popular in the ninth century, up until the late Middle Ages¹⁸.

There are also unlucky days that are simply referred to as such, and are different from Egyptian Days in that these dates change each year, as they are dependent on the changing phases of the moon, whereas Egyptian Days are traditionally set dates that do not change per year. Unlucky days are usually two days per month and the most common misfortune they bring, is that any task that is started on one of the unlucky days, will never be brought to completion. László Sándor Chardonens gives as a list of Egyptian days that are mentioned in Anglo-Saxon medieval texts (they are all copied from either Latin or French exemplars) in his *Anglo-Saxon*

¹⁴ Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic & Experimental Science*, Columbia University Press (New York 1965), 14.

¹⁵ László Sándor Chardonens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, (BRILL 2006) 93.

¹⁶ Henri Hubert, *The Rise of the Celts*, Routledge (2013), 234.

¹⁷ Chardonens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, (BRILL 2006) 93.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 331.

Prognostics. It is not uncommon, as he proves, for different dates to be mentioned in different manuscripts, even though Egyptian Days are technically not supposed to differ¹⁹.

¹⁹ Ibid. 356.

Discussion of the texts

As mentioned before, the two versions of *AyF* show many differences when it comes to the dates. There are only ten dates that are stated in both versions. This is somewhat puzzling, as this is not what would be expected in the case of one and the same scribe being responsible for both versions stemming from the same exemplar. It poses the question of what moved HF to cite such a varying pattern of dates, or if he perhaps had two very similar, but still different exemplar texts. This latter option becomes more plausible, when we see that the differences run deeper than the varying dates. Words are replaced by others, sometimes with a similar meaning such as on line 2: *gadarnassant* (Llan 27) and *hyscriuennassant* (RBH), but not in every case like on line 8: *dydyeu hynny* (Llan 27) and *ohonunt* (RBH). Also the introductory paragraphs before the summation of dates, though comparable in message, are very diverse.

HF uses the *mae/maent* form of the verb *bod* “to be” in both versions, which is not unusual, as the predicate (the number of unlucky dates belonging to that particular month), is placed after the verb, and the sentences are existential. However, the Llan 27 text consistently displays a difference between the singular form *mae* and the plural form *maent*, whereas the RBH version only has the singular form, even when the mentioned number of dates is not.

Orthography

The texts are quite similar in their summations, giving little variation in the sentences. However, some of the same words are spelled differently in both versions. Such as the word for ‘February’, which in the Llan 27 text is written as ‘chwefrawr’ and in the RBH as ‘whefrawr’, the former being a northern way of spelling in Middle Welsh and the latter more characteristic of southern spelling²⁰.

HF is very consistent in his use of mutations: always writing the lenition where it would be expected, for example, after prepositions such as *ar*, and showing the aspiration after a(c). Medieval Welsh scribes were usually not at all constant in the writing of mutations, failing to show them in their writing most of the time or even irregularly within the same text.

²⁰ D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, (Dublin 1964) 11.

The dates

Here follows an overview of the dates in both manuscripts. Those in bold print are similar in both versions, those in italics only feature in one of the manuscripts.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Dec ²¹	Nov
Llan27	1,2,4, 5, 10, <i>12,</i> <i>19</i>	<i>7,</i> <i>14,</i> 18	15, 16, 18	<i>6, 11</i>	<i>5, 6,</i> 16, 20	<i>10</i>	15, <i>20</i>	<i>2,</i> <i>12,</i> <i>19</i>	16, <i>17</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7, 16,</i> 20	<i>6, 8,</i> <i>15</i>
RBH	1, 2, 4, 5, 10, <i>15,</i> <i>17</i>	<i>16,</i> <i>17,</i> 18	15, 16, 18	<i>3, 16</i>	<i>15,</i> 16, <i>17,</i> 20	<i>2</i>	15, <i>17</i>	<i>18,</i> <i>20</i>	16, <i>18</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>15,</i> 20	<i>16,</i> <i>17,</i> <i>18</i>

The most important difference between the two manuscripts, is the fact that they do not agree on the number of dates per year that are unlucky. Llan 27 names thirty-four, whereas RBH only names thirty-two. The 20th is always the latest day in the month that can be unlucky; neither version mentions a date between the 21st and the 31st. This information, together with the fact that the first days of January are paralleled, makes it impossible for the difference in number to be blamed on a leap year. Either HF must have had a legitimate reason for either adding two in Llan 27 or omitting two in RBH, or this is a big piece of the puzzle, pointing in the direction of these two versions having been copied from two different exemplar texts.

There is some similarity in the structure, in that January has the most bad days, namely seven in both versions, and except in the cases of August and December, the number of unlucky days per month is paralleled. However, only ten dates are mentioned in both the Llan 27 version and the RBH version.

The number of dates of April corresponds with RBH, but the dates mentioned, do not. RBH gives *y trydyd* and *vnuet ar bymthec* as being unlucky. Three days sooner and five days later respectively, than Llan 27.

Like in the case of April, the number of dates for May is the same in both manuscripts, but the first three dates are not. However, their pattern is comparable in a few ways: Llan 27 has two adjacent dates (the fifth and the sixth) and so does RB (the fifteenth and the sixteenth). The last two dates are apart by three, in the case of Llan 27, and four days in the RBH. Both versions name the *ugeint* as the fourth unlucky date in May.

Given the fact that in both versions, the last unlucky day in May was the 20th, there is no seeming pattern between the unlucky dates mentioned in Llan 27 and RBH for June.

It is quite clear that the middle of the month is the most troublesome.

Several explanations for the alternation of dates in the two versions are possible. Especially when assumed that Hywel Fychan did not write them both in the same year, which would seem highly unlikely given the fact that he was responsible for not only writing *AyF*, but the majority of both their manuscript collections, i.e. the RBH and RBT.

First of all, it could have something to do with the way the days of the week would fall in the particular year (or perhaps the following year) that Hywel Fychan wrote the different versions. Just as certain numbers had positive or negative connotations, so did days of the week in the Middle Ages. For example, a Friday was, according to Christianity, a highly unfortunate

²¹ I am upholding the order of dates here as they are presented in the manuscripts.

day, because Christ was crucified on a Friday. However, when we look at the dates, we can clearly see that there are several instances, like in August, where the dates are a week apart, so we cannot blame it all on the fear of Fridays. The idea that weekdays could play a part in the switching of dates per year and possibly also per text, becomes more acceptable when we presume that the base for the computing of these dates is the same as for other important dates, such as Easter, which is a computus based on the lunar calendar. This was a very common practice in the Middle Ages and was applicable to many things, such as bloodletting, but also in combination with the perception of thunder on a particular date of the week and nativities of new-borns²².

Considering the fact that Llan 27 was written and established within a heavily religious context, the Christian superstitions and beliefs concerning days of the week may have influenced the dating in *AyF*, and perhaps less so in the RBH, which was intentionally more free of religious undertones. If Christianity did indeed play a role in the establishing of unlucky dates, important days like the celebrations of saints or biblical events could have influenced this process. Most importantly, the computus of Easter Sunday, which was dependant on the lunar calendar and thus could have altered the system of unlucky dates.

However, we still do not know whether HF actually took the liberty of adjusting these very important dates. He was not a particularly passive scribe, as we can see by the colophon he added to his copy of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, in which he criticized Vortigern and Medrawd for their actions.²³ Therefore, I do not deem it unlikely that, in the case of *AyF*, too, he could have looked at the text with a critical eye and perhaps thought it necessary to enhance or alter them somewhat. Perhaps for religious reasons in the case of Llan 27.

Both versions jump from October to December to November. I do not know of a traditional reason as to why the Welsh would put December before November, so this could be due to an error in the exemplar text that was copied, as I doubt HF would make the exact same mistake twice, unless perhaps he copied either of the texts from his own copy. This little mix-up of dates does make it seem more likely that these two versions are derived from a common source.

I am more inclined to think that HF copied both versions of *AyF* from two different exemplars, that were both copied by two different scribes from another, common exemplar. In the process of translation from the parent-text the dates could have been altered and sentences added and enhanced. Varying knowledge of the exemplar's language could lead to errors and misinterpretations while translating, and a scribe may choose to interfere in a text and tweak things according to his own interpretation and ideas. This makes this subject an interesting base for further research, as well as the fact that there is not much known about Welsh prognostics or *computi*. Furthermore, the Lachmannian approach may be useful, when granted more time and resources, to see if a parent-text can be traced. The mentioning of varying dates makes *AyF* a potentially useful text in the field of dating and computing.

²² Thorndike, (1965) 679.

²³ Helen Fulton, *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society*, (2005) 250.

The Welsh texts

Llanstephan 27

1. Athrawon a gawssant y geluydyt honn
ac a gadarnassant ar dieuoed ac
amseroed y vlwydyn.

Hyspys yw bot yn y vlwydyn pedwar

5. diwarnawt ar dec ar hugeint.

A phwy bynnac a dygwydo y mywn clefyt
gorweidyawc yn vn o'r dydyeu hynny,
ny chyfyt vyth.

A phwy bynnac a aner yn un o'r dydyeu hynny,

10. ny byd hir hoedlawc.

Heuyt, pwy bynnac a gymero arnaw mynet y
fford bell, ny daw dra e gefyn.

A phwy bynnac a wnel y briodas,
ef a deruyd idaw y neill beth yn ehegyr,

15. a'e gwahan, a'e wynteu a vuchedockaont
drwy dolur a thlodi.

A phwy bynnac gymero arnaw neges
uawr ny's gorffenn yn da.

Llyma weithyon enweu y dydyeu hynny.

20. Nyt amgen, ym mis Jonawr y maent seith
niwarnawt, nyt amgen no'r dyd kyntaf
o'r mis, a'r eil, a'r pedwryd, a'r pymhet,
a'r decuet, a'r deudecuet, a'r vnuet eisseu
o ugeint.

25. Yn chwefrawr y maent tri.

Y seithuet a'r pedweryd ar dec,
a'r deunawuet.

Ym mis mawrth y maent tri: y pymthecuet
a'r unuet ar bymthec; a'r deunawuet.

30. Y mis ebrill y maent deu:

y chwechet a'r unuet ar dec.

Y mis mei y maent pedwar: y pymhet,

a'r chwechet, a'r vnuet ar bymthec, a'r ugeinuet.

35. Y mis meheuin y mae vn dyd: y decuet.

Y mis gorffennaf y maent deu:

y pymthecuet a'r ugeinuet.

Y mis awst y maent tri: yr eil, a'r deudecuet,
a'r unuet eisseu o ugeint.

40. Y mis medi y maent deu:

yr unuet ar bymthec, a'r deuet ar bymthec.

Y mis hydref y mae vn dyd: y pymhet.

Y mis racuyr y maent tri.

Y seithuet, a'r unuet ar bymthec, a'r ugeinuet.

45. Y mis tachwed y maent tri:

Argoelion y Flwyddyn

Oxford Jesus College MS. 111

Athrawon da a gawssant y gwybot hwenn,
ac a'e hyscriuennassant.

Nyt amgen no bot deudec niwarnawt ar
hugeint yn y ulwydyn yn beriglus

a gwybyd di pwy bynnac a aner yn vn
na byd byw yn hir.

A phwy bynnac a briotter yn un ohonunt,
ef a uyd marw heb ohir,

ney ynteu a uo byw

trwy dolur a thlodi,

a phwy bynnac a dechreuo neges yn vn
ohonunt, ny's gorfenna yn da.

O'r dydyeu hynny yn ionawr y maent seith,
nyt amgen: y kyntaf a'r eil, a'r pedwryd, a'r
pymhet, a'r decuet, a'r pymthecuet, a'r
deuet ar bymthec.

Yn whefrawr y mae tri.

Yr unuet ar bymthec, a'r deuet ar
bymthec a'r deunawuet²⁴.

Ym mawrth y mae tri. Y pymthecuet a'r
unvet ar bymthec, a'r deunawuet.

Yn ebrill y mae deu:

y trydyd, a'r vnuet ar bymthec.

Ym mei y mae pedwar: y pymthecuet, a'r
unuet ar bymthec, a'r deuet ar bymthec,
a'r ugeinuet.

Ym meheuin y mae un. Sef yw hwennw yr eil.

Ym mis gorffennaf y mae deu:

y pymthecuet, a'r deuet ar bymthec.

Ym mis awst y mae deu: y deunawuet, a'r
ugeinuet.

Ym mis medi y mae deu:

yr unuet ar bymthec, a'r deunawuet.

Ym mis hydref y mae un: y whechet.

Ym mis racuyr y mae deu:

y pymthecuet, a'r ugeinuet.

Ym mis tachwed y mae tri. Yr unuet ar

²⁴ The manuscript reads a crossed out *ugeinuet*, which would be different from Llan 27. However, now both versions give the 18th.

y chwechet, a'r wythyet, a'r pymthecuet.

Yr unuet ar deunawuet.
Pwy bynnac a amheuo yr ymadrodyon
hynn, gwybydet ef y uot yn gallach, no'r neb
gauas y gwybot hwnn yn gyntaf.

Notes

1. *Athrawon*: RBH gives the adjective *da* 'good/great'. *Athro* is a noun that can mean 'teachers', or 'scholars', or even 'druids'. Therefore, the adding of the adjective could be a way to emphasize that it is only a certain kind of *athrawon*, only the *athrawon da*, that are meant here. Otherwise, the texts appear to get off to a parallel start.

gawssant: RBH gives the verbal noun *gwybot*, a masculine noun, hence the following demonstrative pronoun is *hwnn*, whereas Llan 27 has *honn*, the feminine variety that corresponds with the feminine noun *c/keluydyt*.

2. *gadarnassant*: RBH gives *hyscruennassant*, which has a more literal meaning than Llan 27's *gadarnassant*, even though the same general meaning is implied and the construction of this first (part of) the sentence, is similar. Also, the verb in RBH is intransitive, which means it does not require a direct object, whereas *cadarnhau* does.

2-3. *ar dieuoed... vlywdyn*: This second part of the first sentence is not present in RBH.

4. *Hyspys*: RBH uses *nyt amgen* to start this sentence, which is not the most drastic of changes, but it does show that the texts are straying from the similar path they started on.

yw bot: RBH only gives verbal noun *bot*, which works in the construction with *nyt amgen*.

4-5. *pedwar diwarnawt ar dec*: RBH only speaks of thirty-two unlucky days in the year. See the discussion of the texts.

5. *yn beriglus*: RBH literally states that the days with which the text concerns itself are dangerous, *yn beriglus*, whereas Llan 27 goes on to illustrate with several examples, that the things that befall certain people on those days are very unfortunate.

6-8. *A phwy... chyfyt vyth*. Absent in RBH.

9-10. *A phwy... hir hoedlawc*: The information about someone who is born on an unlucky day, is mentioned in RBH, but as the first example and not in a new sentence.

un o'r dydyeu hynny: RBH uses *ohonunt*; the 3pl conjugated form of the preposition *o*, as seen in Llan 27²⁵.

ny byd hir hoedlawc: This last part of the sentence after the comma does strongly resemble the RBH text. More so in meaning than words: Llan 27 has a negation-verb-predicate structure, where RBH gives a negation-verb-adjective-adverb: *na byd byw yn hir*.

11-12. *Heuyt, pwy... e gefyn*: RBH also has no mention of anyone who should commence on a long journey on an unlucky day.

13. *A phwy bynnac*: These are also the words RBH continuously uses to start the sentences about the unlucky days' effects.

wnel: RB uses the passive form of the verb *prïod*.

Neill in this case might be figurative and intended to mean something such as 'the opposite' (of being married).

13-16. *A phwy bynnac... a thlodi*: The RBH is slightly more harsh in this example: *ef a uyd marw heb ohir*. Llan 27 does mention the possibility of dying on the form of *darfod*, but it is used beside *marw* and could therefore also carry a slightly less final meaning here. There is another possible option. Both texts state that the unfortunate couple will live *d(t)rwy dolur a thlodi*, but they use different ways of getting to that information.

²⁵ D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, (Dublin 1964) 59.

17. *neges*: also used in RBH to explain this particular effect of the unlucky days.

BL: *a dechreuo*; Llan 27 has a different grammatical structure with the incorporation of a prepositional pronoun, *arnaw*.

18. *uawr*: RBH does not give the adjective here.

nys gorffenn yn da: RBH uses *gorfenna*, which is denominative. Llan 27 gives *gorfenn*, which is the simple form of the verb 'to end'²⁶. The meaning of the sentence remains unaltered despite this small difference, but because that is the case, it does raise the question why Hywel Fychan, if he was copying both versions from the same exemplar, chose to make this alternation. The rest of this sentence is strikingly similar in both manuscripts.

BL: The manuscript reads a crossed out *ugeinuet*, which would be different from Llan 27.

However, now both versions give the 18th.

19. *Llyma weithyon enweu y dydyeu hynny*: This introduction with expressional *llyma* is in contrast with RBH, where the text simply starts its summation here, starting with naming the seven unlucky days of January.

22. *pymhet*: RBH *pumhet*, which is the more modern way of spelling, but around the end of the fourteenth century, both types of spelling were used interchangeably.

25. *Yn chwefrawr y maent tri*: From this point on, there is a difference in the use of *mae* (singular) and *maent* (plural) in the two manuscripts: Llan 27 remains consistent in the use of the plural form where the subject is a plural number, and the singular form where the subject is singular, as well. However, RBH uses singular *mae* in every instance, regardless of whether the subject is plural or singular²⁷.

chwefrawr: RBH *whefrawr*. This could point to a regional difference: -chw being northern spelling and -wh typical of southern spelling, although it was not uncommon in Middle Welsh to find -chw and -wh interchangeably, not even when written by the same scribe²⁸.

28. *Ym mis mawrth*: From this point onwards, Llan 27 is consistent in summarizing the months starting the sentence with *Y mis*, whereas RBH omits the noun *mis* and simply states the names of the months, until July. This changes nothing for the meaning of the sentence, of course. It could be a stylistic choice, creating full sentences that appear more rhythmic because of their consistent repetition or this is one of the ways in which the exemplar texts for both versions differed.

The nasalization is written only in this instance in Llan 27, whereas RBH remains very consistent in writing out the nasalization caused by preposition *yn*.

35. *Y mis...vn dyd*: RBH uses the numeral *un* as the noun and predicate in this sentence, whereas Llan 27 uses *vn* adverbially to *dyd*.

Ym meheuin...yr eil: RBH has an extra (short) sentence here, and a different date altogether: *yr eil*.

42. Again, RBH uses the numeral substantively in this sentence, where Llan 27 adds *dyd* to fulfil this function.

43. *racuyrr*: One of the most striking features that are present in both Llan 27 and RB, is this interchanging of 'December' *racuyr*, and 'November' *tachwed*. I am not aware of any symbolic reason that would explain this, so this was mostly likely an error. However, for the same scribe

²⁶ Idem. 116-118.

²⁷ D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, (Dublin 1964) 143, 144.

²⁸ Idem. 11.

to make the same error in both manuscripts, would be too coincidental.

47-49. *Pwy bynnac... yn gyntaf*: In RBH there is an additional sentence that expresses an extra message as to the importance of the text. The imperative is used for the second time in RB here, *gwybydet*, (the first being *gwybyd* in the second line).

Translations

Llanstephan 27

1. Masters acquired this art
and solidified it upon days and
times of the year.

It is known that there are in the year

5. thirty-four days.

And whosoever should fall into a bed- confining
illness on one of those days,
never will he rise.

And whosoever should be injured on one

10. of those days, will not be long-lived.

Moreover, whosoever shall take onto him
the travelling of the far road, he will not return.

And whosoever should enter his marriage,
the other will happen to them hastily

15. and separate them, or they
will live a life through grief and poverty.

And whosoever takes upon himself a great task,
he shall not end it well.

Behold henceforth the names of those days.

20. Namely, in the month January there are seven
dates: none other than the first day of the month
and the second and the fourth and the fifth
and the tenth and the twelfth
and the nineteenth.

25. In February there are three.

The seventh and the fourteenth
and the eighteenth.

In the month March there are three: the fifteenth,
and the sixteenth; and the eighteenth.

30. In the month April there are two:
the sixth and the eleventh.

In the month May there are four: the fifth,
and the sixth and the sixteenth and the twentieth.

35. In the month June it is one day: the tenth.

In the month July there are two:
the fifteenth and the twentieth.

In the month August there are three: the second,
and the twelfth, and the nineteenth.

40. In the month September there are two:

Prognosis of the Year

Oxford Jesus College MS. 111

Great masters acquired this knowledge
and they documented it.

Namely, that there are thirty-two
dangerous dates in the year,

and you should now, that whosoever is
injured on one of them, he will not be alive
for long.

And whosoever is married on one of those
(days), he will be dead without delay,
or he will be alive
through grief and poverty.

And whosoever should commence a task on
of those (days), he will not end that well.
Of those days, there are seven in January,
namely the first and the second and the
fourth, and the fifth, and the tenth, and the
fifteenth and the seventeenth.

In February there are three.

The sixteenth, and the seventeenth,
and the eighteenth.

In March there are three: the fifteenth and
the sixteenth, and the eighteenth.

In April there are two:
the third and the sixteenth.

In May there are four: the fifteenth and the
sixteenth and the seventeenth
and the twentieth.

In June there is one. That is the second.

In the month July there are two:
the fifteenth and the seventeenth.

In the month August there are two:
the eighteenth and the twentieth.

In the month September there are two: the

sixteenth and the seventeenth.

In the month October it is one day: the fifth.

In the month December there are three.

The seventh, and the sixteenth and the twentieth.

45. In the month November there are three:
the sixth and the eight and the fifteenth.

the sixteenth and the eighteenth.

In the month October there is one:the sixth.

In the month December, there are two: the
fifteenth and the twentieth.

In the month November there are three.

The sixteenth and the seventeenth and the
eighteenth.

Whosoever should doubt this report,
let him know that he will be wiser, than
someone who accepts this knowledge
the sooner.

Arwyddion Calan Ionawr

Computi

This is the practice that deals with the computing of important dates, most prominently, the dating of Easter. Computi are often found side by side with ecclesiastical calendars and texts related to astrology and divination. The Egyptian days, other prognostics and computi go hand in hand and it can be argued that prognostics are a sub-category of the computus²⁹.

As prognostics thrived in the eleventh century, so did computus. Both were present in monastic life from an early age³⁰, but Chardonnens says on the matter: “[...] the computus, which harboured a growing corpus of prognostics, flourished in the eleventh century and was responsible for a wider dissemination of prognostics than before. This is clearly visible if we compare the contents of tenth-century computi to those of the next century.”³¹ He goes on to say that the popularity of these texts, at least in the Anglo-Saxon territory, decreased as time went on. Yet HF and the BL scribe copied ACI three full centuries later, which illustrates how there was often a delay in the integration of Anglo-Saxon traits to Wales.

ACI shows clear elements of a computus text, as its intent is to inform on how the year and, more specifically, the seasons will be, depending on New Year’s Day, or the kalends. Texts such as these are found in many different languages, as well as comparable texts that describe how the year will turn out, depending on what day of the week Christmas will be that year. The computi texts based on the kalends, in which similar predictions are made, were very common and featured a whole range of possibilities concerning agriculture, medicinal interests, live-stock and sometimes even slightly political projections. An example is The Revelation of Ezra. This is an elaborate Latin computus text, for example: “The Day of Mercury (Wednesday): productiveness of crops, a good vintage, lack of fruits, success in business, a destruction of men, a warm winter. Autumn will be moderate. (There will be) dangers from the sword, plenty of oil, looseness of the bowels and entrails. Women will die, there will be famine in diverse places (and) a good summer. Something new will be heard (and) there will be no honey”³².

It is likely that this text, like *AyF*, has a Latin exemplar as well. Thorndike mentions the Cotton Tiberius A, iii manuscript, which was written partly in Latin and partly in Anglo-Saxon³³. The first lines of that manuscript reads: “If the kalends of January shall be on the Lord’s day, the winter will be good and mild and warm, the spring windy, and the summer dry. Good vintage, increasing flocks; honey will be abundant; the old men will die; and peace will be made.” Apart from the last five words concerning peace, this section is an almost exact match to *ACI* as found in Llan 27³⁴. The reference about the making of peace, does occur later in the text: “a hedwch a vyd” on lines 24-25. The manuscript Cotton Tiberius A, iii is written in multiple hands, prior to the Norman conquest of England. The text of which I gave the section above, is

²⁹ Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 1 (New York, 1965).

³⁰ Liuzza, R.M., *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics: an Edition and Translation from London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. III*, (DS Brewer 2011) 76.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic literature and testaments*, Hendrickson Publishers (2010) 604

³³ Lynn Thorndike, (1965) 676-677.

³⁴ *Pan del kalan Jonawr ar duw sul, gaeaf da yn y vlwydyn honno a vyd, a hygar agwressawc, gwannwyn gwynnawc, haf sych tessawc. Y gwinllanneu a vyd da, deueit a mel a vyd amyl, yr hen dynyon a vydant ueirw.*

found twice in the manuscript, quite close to each other. On fol. 34r, there is a Latin version with an Anglo-Saxon interlinear version, and another version is found on fol. 39v, which is solely written in Anglo-Saxon³⁵.

This 11th century Latin/Anglo-Saxon text could very well have been the parent-text for *ACI* as presented in Llan 27. The version on fol. 34r is practically identical, with only a few minor differences³⁶. No title is given in the original manuscript, but there is a rubric, reading 'signa de temporibus'³⁷, which roughly translates into *signs of times*. Though *ACI* has no official title in either manuscript, *signa* is similar in meaning to *arwyddion*.

As is the case with *AyF*, further research into (older) comparable Anglo-Saxon and Latin texts, could be useful to prove that the Cotton Tiberius A manuscript was the exemplar text, or that there was perhaps another parent-text used. The same could of course be done for the BL version.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ R.M. Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics: An Edition and Translation of Texts from London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A .iii.* (Cambridge, 2011) 154-155.

³⁷ Idem, 233.

Discussion of the texts

With this text, differences are less surprising than in the case of *AyF*, as the two versions are written by two different scribes. However, the texts show differences that go beyond a preference of writing out mutations or not, or even a different way or skill of translating, as both versions have entries that do not exist whatsoever in the other.

Multiple factors could have contributed to the variances:

- Geographical: different dialects could have made for variant spellings, should the texts have been written in different regions of Wales.
- Temporal: normally, there could also be the issue of differences between writers from different times, However, this factor does not apply here, as HF and the scribe of the Bodleian manuscript were both active as scribes around the end of the fourteenth century.
- Different sibling-texts: as with *AyF*, the two versions of this text, too, could have been copied from two different sibling-texts that derived from a common exemplar. This seems a very likely scenario, as there are many different computus texts, that still share a comparable structure and sometimes they even say the same things about the prognoses for certain months. An example is *The Revelation of Ezra*, which I have shown earlier. This is a computus text that is much more elaborate and in many ways, very different from *ACI* or its exemplar, but still displays parallels in certain predictions. For example, it mentions the perishing of women if the first day of January will be a Wednesday, which is also what the Bodleian manuscript version of *ACI* tells us, but there is no mention anywhere in the Llan 27 version of women dying.

Up until Llan 27 line 5 the two texts still very much agree on what is going to happen and even name most of the same things that will be effected. However, BL elaborates more here and describes the effects on *deueit* and *mel* separately. *Llwyddyaw* and the noun *amledd* are used in BL, where Llan 27 gives *vyd amyl*. Secondly, Llan 27 simply names *yr hen dynyon* and BL has *gwrachiod*, 'hags', which is a more specific and negative group than just 'the old people'. As the texts continue, we see more and more differences between the two texts and even clear contradictions, as in the case of *y gwinllaneu a vyd da* in Llan 27 and *ny byd da y gwinllaneu*.

Orthography

As I mentioned before, both HF and BL Hand A use a very standardized Middle Welsh spelling. However, BL Hand A, shows more archaic forms of spelling. For example, he uses the Greek delta sign (both in this text, as in other texts in the manuscript collection) to indicate a lenited Welsh /d/, pronounced [ð]³⁸. This is represented in the transcript in a modern Welsh spelling, namely as /dd/, as seen in the lenited form of *ddynyon*³⁹. However, this is represented as such on *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg*; the original manuscript has *dynyon*, and the same goes for the other words starting with lenited /d/. He also consistently writes *gayaf* 'winter' with the first letter capitalized.

Gwrageth demonstrates unusual spelling, ending in -th. The more usual form being 'gwragedd', this almost seems to have been written out phonetically.

³⁸ Diana Luft, Peter Wynn Thomas and D. Mark Smith. eds. 2013, *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425*, <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk>.

³⁹ D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, (Dublin 1964) 7.

Llanstephan 27

1.

Pan del kalan Jonawr ar duw sul,
gaeaf da yn y vlwydyn honno a vyd,
5. a hygar agwressawc, gwannwyn gwynnawc,
haf sych tessawc. Y gwinllanneu a vyd da,
deueit a mel a vyd amyl,
yr hen dynyon a vydant ueirw.

10. Os duw llun vyd kalan Jonawr, gaeaf kyfartal,
gwannwyn da, haf gwynnawc,
y gwinllanneu a vyd da,
clefydyeu ar y dynyon ym pob lle a vyd
a'r gwenyn a vydant veirw.

15. Os duw mawrth uyd kalan ionawr,
y gaeaf bonhedickaf, gwannwyn gwynnawc
glawawc, haf da, a'r gwraged a vydant veirw.
Y llongeu a beriglant,

20. drwc vyd y gwinllanneu.

Os duw merchyr vyd kalan Jonawr,
gaeaf kadarn garw, gwannwyn drwc,
haf da.
Y gwenith y uyd da, y dynyon Jueingk a
25. vydant ueirw, ny byd amyl y mel.
Y porthmyn a vyd mawr eu llauur.

Os duw Jeu, vyd kalan Jonawr, gaeaf da,
gwannwyn gwynnawc, haf da,
y brenhined a'r tywysogyon a vydant ueirw,
30. a hedwch a vyd.

Os duw gwener vyd kalan Jonawr,
gaeaf eiraawc, gwannwyn da,
clefydyeu a vyd ar y llygeit da vyd y gwinllanneu,
y deueit a'r gwenyn a vydant ueirw,
35. drwc vyd y newit ar y bwyt.

Os duw sadwrn vyd kalan Jonawr,
gaeaf tywyll,
drwc vyd y newityeu, ffrwytheu a vyd ar y coet,
y dynyon a glefychant, a'r rei hen a vydant
40. ueirw, a'r gwenyn,
a da vyd ffrwyth y gwinllanneu.

Oxford Jesus MS. 111

Llyma arwyddon duw kalan Jonawr o
gwbyl herwydd keluyddyt astronomi.
O'r damweina duw kalan Jonawr ar dduw
sul da vyd y gayaf,
a gwannwyn gwynnawc,
a haf sych, a'r gwinllanneu yn fynnu
a'r deueit yn llwyddyaw ac amledd o vel
a'r gwrachiod yn merwi,
a thagnefed vydd ar y dayar.

Os ar duw llun y byd Gayaf kymysgedic vyd
a gwannwyn da a haf gwynnawc timestlus
ny byd da y gwinllaneu,
ac ef a dybygei ddynyon y fynnnaw,
mall a vyd ar y gwenyn.

Os duw mawrth vyd duw kalan Jonawr:
Gayaf kawadawc a gwannwyn gwynnawc
a haf glawawc a mall a vyd ar y gwrageth
a'r llongeu yn perigul ar y mor
a meirw vyd y brenhined,
a frwytheu mawr a vyd ar y gwinllanneu.
Os duw merchyr vyd duw kalan Jonawr
gayaf calet garw a vyd a gwannwyn drwc
a haf da a'r gwinllanneu yn da a'r
gwraged yn merwi a llawer o ddynyon yn
gleifon a mel vyd amal.

Os duw Jeu vyd duw kalan Jonawr, Gayaf da
vyd a gwannwyn gwynawc a haf da
ac amllder o dda vyd yn y vlwyddyn honno
a heddwch rwng y tywysogyon.

Os duw gwener vyd duw kalan Jonawr,
gayf anwadal a vyd a gwannwyn da a haf da
a mel yn amal a dolur ar y llygeit a thynnu
y gwin a meirw vyd yr hen ddynyon.

Os duw sadwrn vyd duw kalan Jonawr,
Gayaf kynhurus vyd, a gwannwyn drwc
gwynnawc a haf da a'r frwytheu yn aml
a'r deueit yn meirwi a llosgi y tei yn vynyach
gwir ynt yr arwyddyon hyn od ymddengys
yr heul y'r ddayar.

Notes

1-2. Llan 27 starts the text quite abruptly, whereas BL gives a few short words of introduction. BL tells what the underlying “science” is that was used to gather the knowledge about the kalend of January, namely astronomy.

3. Pan del...duw sul: BL uses damweina to describe the occurrence of the kalend of January on a Sunday; Llan 27 del from dyuot.

4. Gaeaf: BL consistently writes gayaf and usually with the –g capitalized.

Gaeaf...a vyd. This is a very different construction than the BL version, which has a predicate-verb-subject sentence: da vydd y gayaf.

Here we see that this form of ‘bod’ has lenition, even though there is no verbal particle to cause it directly. The particle could have been omitted in the process of copying, but there are several other instances where ‘bod’ is used without a verbal particle.

5. a hygar agwressawc: Even though both texts speak of a good winter, Llan 27 expands on this information by adding two more adjectives.

gwannwyn gwynnawc: here too, both texts agree.

6. haf sych tessawc: Both texts agree, but again, Llan 27 is more elaborate by adding tessawc.

6. Y gwinllanneu a vyd da: Though the general idea of the condition of the vineyards corresponds with BL, the latter uses yn fynnu.

8. ueirw in Llan 27 is the verbal noun; BL merwi, which is a very rare form of spelling.

9. a thagnefed...ddayar: this sentence about the coming of peace because of the kalend being on a Sunday, is omitted in Llan 27.

10. Os ar duw llun: The mixed order is used here, emphasizing ‘duw llun’. It is the only occurrence of this order in this text and it was possibly used here, because the case of Sunday in a way flows straight from the introductory sentence. By using the mixed order, it is emphasized that there is a different day being introduced here, as well as a summation of other cases⁴⁰.

Os: BL adds a preposition meaning ‘on, upon’: Os ar.

Gaeaf: This is most likely a spelling error. As I mentioned, I do not have access to the original manuscript, so I am not able to check this.

kyfartal: BL kymysgedic, ‘changeable’.

11. gwannwyn da: BL corresponds.

haf gwynnawc: BL corresponds, but adds tymestlus.

12. y gwinllanneu a vyd da: BL tells us exactly the opposite, and has a negation-verb-predicate-subject order: ny byd da y gwinllaneu.

ny byd: There is no lenition after the negation here. This could be because of the unique qualities of the verb ‘bod’, in that it does not always lenite. Another explanation is described in Evans’ GMW: in the cases of words that start with ‘b’ or ‘m’, an earlier system sometimes survives in Middle Welsh spelling, in which negation was not followed by lenition, but by spirant mutation in the case of principal clauses.

13. BL: fynnnaw: According to the Rhyddiaith website, these three adjacent occurrences of the letter ‘n’, are true to the manuscript.

13-14. Clefydyeu... vydant veirw: The general idea is paralleled in both texts, but they are described very differently. Again, this could be due to the fact that these texts were written by two different scribes, who perhaps interpreted the parent-text differently. BL does not use clear terms like clefydyeu or meirw and stays slightly more cryptic, whereas the message in Llan 27 is very straightforward, to the point of crudeness. On the other hand, though meirw is quite definite, it is also very general. It can cover a whole range of deaths.

16. bonhedickaf: BL kawadawc, ‘showery’, which is different from what Llan 27 tells us.

16-17. gwannwyn gwynnawc glawawc: BL gives gwannwyn gwynnawc, as well, but uses

⁴⁰ D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, (Dublin 1964) 140.

glawawc to describe the summer, instead of the spring.

17. vydant veirw: Llan 27, like in the case of the note relating line 9-11, is very definite here, using meirw once more, where BL talks of a mall upon the women.

18. beriglant: BL has a similar message, but uses a construction with a predicate: yn perigul.

19. meirw vyd y brenhined: at this point, we see another major crack in the seemingly parallel structure of the two different texts. BL states that 'the kings will be dead'. This unfortunate fate of the kings is mentioned in Llan 27, as well, but only when the kalend is on a Saturday.

20. drwc... gwinllanneu: BL has a much more optimistic prospect for the vineyards in this case: that there will be many fruits upon them.

22. gayaf calet garw: this echoes what is said here, but uses (a) different (order of) adjectives.

Calet and kadarn have similar meaning and this difference, again, is so slight, it could be due to a different way of translating from Latin or a preference of the scribes.

22-23. gwannwyn drwc, haf da: The BL text stays very close to Llan 27 on the account of the spring and the summer.

24. gwenith: BL speaks of gwinllanneu here, and does not mention gwenith anywhere in the text.

dynyon Jeuingk: BL never specifically mentions young people as being at risk from the kalend falling on the "wrong" day. Here it states that the gwraged are the ones that will perish.

24-25. BL: a llawer... yn gleifon. Llan 27 does not give this information. The adjective 'claf' is plural here, with ending -on, which has caused internal vowel change to occur: 'glaf' > 'gleifon'.

25. ny byd amyl y mel: Though almost the exact same words are used (BL: a mel vyd amal), the negation in Ll27 makes for a strong contrast between the two texts here.

26. Y porthmyn... llaur: This whole sentence is absent in BL. In fact, BL never mentions cattle in the general sense.

27. gaeaf da: This corresponds, but BL has the verb vyd in its construction.

29. y brenhined... ueirw. This is not exactly the same sentiment as in BL, where it states amllder o dda vyd yn y vlwyddyn honno.

30. BL: a heddwch rwng y tywyssogion. It is interesting that BL does use the noun tywyssogion here, even though the previous sentence was so much unlike what was said in Llan 27. Even more so, the two texts are suddenly on the same track again, speaking of hed(d)wch. Even though BL is more specific in what sort of peace, namely one between the princes, whereas Llan 27 simply states that there will be peace.

32. gwannwyn da: BL corresponds.

Strangely, Llan 27 completely omits saying something about the summer here. BL gives haf da and also mel yn amal.

BL: gayf anwadal: anwadal translates as 'changeable' rather than 'snowy', as Llan 27's eiraawc. It is not too great of a difference in meaning, as in that it is not the exact opposite as we have seen before, but too great to blame it on a different way of translating by the two different scribes.

33. clefydyeu: BL: dolur ar y llygeit. Dolur has a very similar meaning to clefydyeu.

gwinllanneu: BL does not say anything about the gwinllanneu here, but rather about the product of the vineyards: gwin, and it is not as positive as in Llan 27.

35. drwc vyd...bwyt: omitted in BL.

37. gaeaf tywyll: BL kynhurus. Though both adjectives are negative, they are too different to be confused with one another.

The transcript version on Rhyddiath Gymraeg had an added asterisk, meaning this is a spot in the manuscript where either the vellum was too damaged to be comprehensible, or an idiosyncrasy is found here. I have translated it here as 'blistery'. The suffix -us creates an adjective to the noun 'cynnwrf'.

37-38. BL: gwannwyn drwc gwynnawc a haf da: again, Llan 27 neglects to mention the effects on the summer and the spring in this instance.

41. ffrwyth y gwinllanneu: BL frwytheu yn aml. This mostly corresponds in meaning.

Translations

Llanstephan 27

1.

When the first day of January may come
upon a Sunday,
there may be a good winter in that year,
5. pleasant and warm; a stormy spring;
a dry, hot summer. The vineyards will be good;

sheep and honey will be plentiful;

the old people dead.

10. If Monday would be the first day of January,
a moderate winter; a good spring;

a stormy summer;
the vineyards will be good.
Diseases will be on the people everywhere

15. and the bees will perish.

If the first day of January would be a Tuesday,

the most magnificent winter;
a stormy, rainy spring; a good summer,
and the hags will perish.

The ships will be wrecked;

20.

the vineyards will be bad.

If the first day of January would be a Wednesday,

a cruel, harsh winter; a bad spring;

a good summer. The wheat will be good;

25. the young people will perish.

The honey will not be plentiful.

The cattle, great will be their labour.

If the first day of January would be a Thursday,

a good winter; a stormy spring;

a good summer;

Signs of the First Day of January

BL Additional MS. 14,912

Behold, the signs of the first day of January
wholly according to the craft of astronomy.

If it should be that the first day of January
falls on a Sunday,

winter will be good

a stormy spring,

and a dry summer, and the vineyards
desiring

and the sheep thriving, and abundance of
honey

and the hags dying and peace will be on the
earth.

If it should be on a Monday,

winter will be changeable, and a pleasant
spring,

and a stormy and tempestuous summer;

the vineyards will not be well and it is

believed that the people will be wanting,

a plague will be on the bees.

If it is so that Tuesday would be the first
day of January,

a showery winter,

and a stormy spring, and a rainy summer,

and a plague will be on the women,

and the ships will be wrecked on the sea,

and the kings will be dead.

And great fruits will be on the vineyards.

If it is Wednesday that should be the first
day of January,

it will be a harsh and rough winter, and a
bad spring

and a good summer, and the vineyards will

be well, and the women will be dead,

and many of the people ill,

and honey will be abundant.

If it is Thursday that would be the first day
of January,

it will be a good winter, and a stormy

spring, and a good summer, and a

30. the kings and the princes will perish
and there will be peace.

If the first day of January would be a Friday,

a snowy winter; a good spring;

illnesses will be upon the laymen; good will be
the vineyards; the sheep and the bees
will perish.

35. Change will be bad for the food.

If the first day of January would be a Saturday,

a dark winter, changes will be bad,

the fruits will be on the trees, the people will fall

40. ill and the elderly will be dead and the bees.

And the fruit of the vineyards will be good.

multitude of good will there be in that year,
and peace between the princes.

If it is Friday that would be the first day of
January,

it will be a changeable winter, and a good
spring and a good summer, and much
honey, and sickness on the laymen
and the wine will be dried up,

and dead will be the old people.

If it is Saturday that would be the first day
of January,

a blustery winter it will be and a bad,
stormy spring and a good summer

and the fruits in abundance

and the sheep will be dead

and the houses will be burned often.

True are these signs if the sun shows upon
the earth.

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