Chapter 2

Language, literacy and aspects of identity in early modern Wales

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the spoken word in early modern Britain involved the changing fortunes of seven or eight languages. The related English and Scots tongues expanded socially and geographically eroding Scottish Gaelic and reducing Cornish and Norse (spoken in Orkney and Shetland), and later Manx, to the point of extinction. Irish and Welsh proved the most resilient of the non-English languages of the British Isles and their speakers increased in number between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. However while Irish collapsed in the nineteenth century, Welsh entered a new phase of success with secure domains of language use. By the mid-nineteenth century rural and industrial parts of Wales were united by a Welsh-speaking and Welsh-reading Nonconformist culture that has subsequently deeply influenced definitions of Welshness. The elaboration of Welsh identity in the nineteenth century had much in common with the emergence in the same period of the 'buried' nationalities of central Europe and the rediscovery or invention of national traditions.¹

The history of decline of the other Celtic languages suggests that the resilience of the spoken word in Welsh occurred against the odds. Why was Welsh different? The history of the spoken word is inseparable not only from the interaction between different languages but also the interrelation between spoken and written forms of the same language. Wales alone among the Celtic languages developed a vigorous print culture in the vernacular that built upon a written tradition reaching back into the Middle Ages. It is our contention that the survival and development of the written language, culminating in the print culture of the nineteenth century, became an essential condition for the reproduction of the modern spoken language.

This chapter examines some aspects of the interrelations between writing and speaking in Wales in the period covered by this book, broadly between about 1500 and 1800. It is hoped that a broad-brush treatment of oral and literate culture over this long period can bring out significant shifts in the relationship between literacy, language and aspects of identity in Wales. Speech and writing in Wales related dynamically throughout this period, as it did in England. However the relationship between the written and spoken word had an additional complexity in Wales because of the cross-cutting hierarchy of the English and Welsh languages. The changing relationship between the spoken and the written word and between English and Welsh has been considered in three broad periods. Much has been omitted, but it is hoped that the dynamic between language, literacy and identity will clearly emerge.

The first period extends broadly from the fifteenth-century recovery after the revolt of Owain Glyndŵr to the Acts of Union (1536 and 1543). Reaction to the revolt included an attack on the language and customs of the Welsh. Nevertheless, despite disabling statutes against the Welsh, there was probably a marked social and geographical expansion of the spoken language, and an extension in the domains of written Welsh in the fifteenth century. In particular, some oral genres, especially praise poetry and genealogy, found vigorous written expression and incidentally demonstrated the increasing accommodation of urban and rural elites of English origin within Welsh-speaking communities. The second period, extending from the Act of Union (1536) to the Restoration (1660), saw the institutional dominance of the new Court of Great Sessions. The court was an agency of anglicization, actively eroding custom and promoting the use of English. This period witnessed a general expansion of domains of literacy but contraction in the use of written Welsh. Despite the inheritance of Welsh as a written language, and the numerical predominance of Welsh speakers, literacy was increasing equated with reading and writing in English only. English became the dominant literate language for commercial and administrative purposes; Welsh as a literary language declined in significance and the status of professional bards and musicians, and other professionals literate in Welsh, was undermined by cultural shifts. However, crucially, the language of public worship was Welsh and the translation of the Bible into Welsh gave the language in its spoken and written forms new status in the religious domain.

Lastly, the period from the Restoration to about 1830 is considered. At the beginning of the period traditionalist (mainly clerical) intellectuals 'felt that the life blood was ebbing away from Wales, Welsh history was regarded as an irrelevance, the language was becoming a mere patois, and traditional culture ... was waning even among the more isolated common folk'.² The religious imperative, however, promoted schemes for literacy in Welsh. Although a relatively low rate of literacy existed in the seventeenth century,

by the mid-eighteenth century Wales had been transformed into one of the most literate countries in Europe. Constructing literacy in Welsh through teaching in the medium of Welsh provided the basis for a new consciousness of *being* Welsh. The written word was a common standard uniting groups of dialect speakers. Welshness was increasingly defined in terms derived from literate Nonconformity, and the organization of religious societies and chapels provided a new awareness of the terrain of Wales. The majority of Welsh men and women regarded themselves as a people of the Book and with renewed linguistic confidence sometimes (with tongue only slightly in cheek) referred to their language as 'the language of heaven'.

SPEAKING AND WRITING IN LATE MEDIEVAL WALES

The diversity of language in late medieval Wales needs to be emphasized. There were many different voices in late medieval Wales but not all of them found written expression. English-language communities were to be found in the towns where they formed legally privileged islands in a sea of Welshness and also in rural communities, especially in the south, which had originated in the period of Anglo-Norman settlement. Pembrokeshire was particularly diverse with clearly defined Englishries and Welshries as well as the remnants of Flemish communities, and a continually replenished Irish population who tended to adopt English rather than Welsh as their language. But, unquestionably, Welsh was the dominant language within Wales and the only language spoken by the majority of its inhabitants whose speakers were increasing numerically throughout the late medieval and early modern periods and spilled over into some areas historically regarded as English.³

Diversity of speech was paralleled by diversity in writing. Four languages of record may have been used within Wales. When William Herbert was created Earl of Pembroke and a knight of the garter in 1460, a commission from the Crown was apparently directed to 'learned men' of south Wales, who included three bards, to certify the lineage of the earl because English heralds could not agree upon his descent. They assembled at Pembroke Castle and consulted ancient documents that included court records, histories, monastic registers and pedigree books and rolls. The agreed genealogy was sent to the king written in four languages: Latin, Welsh (*Bryttish*), French and English. This document may in fact have been a sixteenth-century fabrication but, if so, it was a clever forgery. It accurately revealed the existence of a whole range of records generated in literary, religious and administrative contexts, stressed the importance of specialists – especially bards of high status – needed to interpret them, and identified four languages used in Wales: two trans-national languages of record and two vernaculars.⁴

The use of written Welsh by no means reflected the dominance of the

spoken language. In fifteenth-century Wales, however, there was growing use of the vernacular as a written language which paralleled the growth of English as a written language in new contexts and the slippage of Latin and Anglo-French as languages of record in some domains. Llinos Smith's indispensable survey of the evidence concludes that there was 'a marked intensification' of the process of creating a literate mentality in later medieval Wales. In fifteenth-century Wales literacy was widespread but what types of record were generated in which languages, and by and for whom? For the later medieval period, especially, we need to appreciate that characteristic expressions of literacy were not only the book or the roll but also painted and inscribed funerary monuments, inscriptions on artefacts, and wall-paintings in churches and domestic buildings. The prestige of the document means that historians can be neglectful of the written word in other media. Paper and parchment were expensive but other materials were available that may have been used for writing intended to have only a temporary significance.⁵

In this respect the archaeological discovery of an accumulation of shattered slate writing tablets, probably of late fifteenth-century date, in the debris of the ruined Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida helps us to understand the uses of cheaper writing materials. Some of the inscribed slates had lettering trials, others were used for verse composition, and some served as temporary administrative records. In particular, a ruled tablet re-used as a roofing slate recorded a bailiff's account for a monastic grange and is carefully inscribed in Welsh. One may suppose that in addition to libraries in the conventional sense, the abbey may have had collections of stone tablets used in routine administration which were regarded as temporary rather than permanent records. Three languages occur on these tablets – Welsh, Latin, and English – although the dominant language is Welsh and two of the scribes appear to have been, characteristically, a monk (David Gwyn, *monachus*) and a minstrel (David Grythor, a crowder).⁶

Relatively few Welsh language manuscripts survive from the first half of the fifteenth century. It appears that there was a long hiatus in manuscript production in the aftermath of Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion. However, from the mid-fifteenth century a new literate phenomenon is apparent: the production of autograph poems and the compilation of household books of poetry for patrons. These books were often rather 'home-made' productions, not the work of the scriptorium, or professional scribes, and written on paper rather than parchment. Characteristically, as Daniel Huws has argued, the poetry they contained was taken directly from oral tradition. Huws has drawn attention to the paradox that although a new poetic style (the *cywydd*) had developed in the mid-fourteenth century that was subsequently to dominate poetic composition, this new poetry did not find a written form until a century later. Huws arrives at the hypothesis that 'there were no manuscript collections of the poetry of the *cywyddwyr* earlier than about 1450 for the reason that

oral tradition was so predominant'. But he suggests that by 1450 a barrier – 'a taboo almost' – had been broken and the written transmission of poetry became increasingly important between the mid-fifteenth century and the collapse of bardic culture in the late sixteenth century.⁷

There seem to have been tensions between the written and the spoken word that were probably closely related to conventions of bardic training and performance, especially the 'secret' nature of some aspects of bardic knowledge and the public recitation of verse by poets and professional reciters. Composition and performance were in some respects separate skills. Poets composed but did not necessarily recite their own poetry, but there were professional reciters (*datgeiniaid*) who recited poetry composed by others. Some poets and all reciters depended for their livelihoods on committing poetry to memory, and were accordingly threatened by written texts that made this poetry more widely accessible. Collections of poetry might be jealously preserved. 'Truly I say to you Sir John', runs a cautionary note from scribe to owner of a substantial manuscript of poetry, 'guard your book well from *datgeiniaid* because there are many good things in it.' Presumably the book had a scarcity value that would have been devalued by *datgeiniaid* committing its contents to memory and reciting them. However autograph manuscripts by poets of high status have survived and it seems probable that poets who could not read and write, or were hostile to poetry in manuscript form, were disadvantaged in their relations with literate patrons. The high status of the expert bards needs to be appreciated, as does the companionable quality of the relationship between poets and patrons, some of whom were amateur versifiers and musicians. Although praise poetry was essentially an oral genre, the distinction between bards of high status and those of low status may have been defined increasingly in terms of literacy as well as proficiency in strict-metre poetry.⁸

The public recitation of poems before patrons remained of central importance but the transmission of poetry shifted partly from an oral to a written mode in the Tudor period. It seems to have become the practice of some poets to present patrons with written copies of their poems after performance. Indeed, for some poets the written text may have displaced the importance of the memorized version of a poem. A revealing anecdote related how Meurig Dafydd (*floruit* c. 1550) came to a great house to 'singe songes and receave rewardes', and presented his patron with a new poem containing 'partelie the praises of the gentleman, and partelie the pettygrees and matches of his auncesters'. The patron perused the poem and asked Meurig if there were other copies. 'No by my fayth (sayd the rhymmer) but I hope to take a copie of that which I delivered you.' The patron then gave the poet his reward but at the same time rebuked the bard for an unsatisfactory composition and consigned the text to the hall fire, saying, 'By my honestie I swere yf there bee no copie of this extante, none shall there ever bee.'⁹

The sheer quantity of these late medieval poems, principally praise poems that enhanced the status of patrons by emphasizing their gentility, leadership and generosity, should be noted. Some thousands exist in manuscript and many are of 'local' rather than 'national' interest, expressing the regional context of patronage by numerous 'freemen' descended from noble families (*uchelwyr*) who were influential in their own districts. This surviving corpus of vernacular literature is difficult to parallel elsewhere in Europe. It is also important to appreciate that this poetic culture flourished alongside a renewed and vigorous post-Glyndŵr material culture. The new timber houses of a great late medieval rebuilding that took place between 1430 and 1550 provided the physical – including acoustic – context for oral poetry. Material and poetic culture were two sides of the same coin of conspicuous consumption.¹⁰

Praise poems and elegies contained much genealogical material and the late medieval poets were increasingly authorities on genealogy and heraldry. Siddons has traced the development of heraldry in Wales from a more-or-less decorative system to a disciplined system with a distinctive vocabulary and heralds licensed by the College of Arms. Pedigree rolls commissioned from the herald bards and other experts by the sixteenth-century Welsh gentry combined heraldry and genealogy in a strikingly visual way.¹¹ The bards made numerous compilations of genealogies and may have gathered fresh genealogical information in a systematic way. An account of c. 1600 claims that the bards were present at the christenings, marriages and burials of the gentry families and registered these events in their books. The genealogy of a patron was integrated into a final elegy (*marwnad*) that was recited by the poet before kin and neighbours. A written version of the elegy was then lodged with the kin of the deceased and 'thousands' of these 'ancient epitaphs' were safely preserved. This may be a somewhat idealized account, composed when the bardic system was in decline, but numerous *marwnadau* survive and genealogical manuscripts reveal the systematic recording of descents relating to several thousand individuals in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹²

In the domain of genealogy we may note the interplay between the spoken and written word. The poets were to have ready on the day of burial the elegy as well as the genealogy of the deceased which, it is reasonable to suppose, may have been prepared for some time. These were solemn occasions relating to the dissolution of an individual whose social position was defined genealogically in terms of his ancestry and posterity. The elegy describing the merits of the deceased was recited publicly ('openly') with 'a loud and clear voice' before those attending the funeral, principally 'the chief gentlemen of the country who would hear it and judge it'. The genealogy of the deceased was evidently also recited as well as the names of the deceased's spouse and their children. The genealogy extended to eight generations, a pattern of relationships called in Welsh *yr wyth rhan rhieni*. The bard was

expected to declare this mournfully 'in manner of bemoaning', presumably using a distinctive rhythm and voice colouring.¹³

In many ways genealogy defined the person because of its relation to status and inheritance. A gentleman's extended patronymic was not simply a string of names but also a record of the descent of his estate from a noble ancestor. Accordingly, as an antiquary explained, a gentleman 'of the meaner sort' in Wales would have in his house not only the written pedigree of his family but was also expected to be able to name his four great-grandfathers and their wives. This feat would probably have been impossible for most English gentlemen of the period, but a Welsh gentleman unable to demonstrate his ancestry in this way was accounted 'an obscure and careless man' who was 'out of love with himself'. It was acknowledged that this interest in genealogy, socially widespread in Wales, would be 'a strange and rare thing' if found 'in the meaner sort of people in England'. But in Wales knowledge of one's kindred had practical significance for inheritance and other aspects of Welsh customary law.¹⁴

The recitation from memory of complex genealogies was an oral genre, although it is not apparent how they were recited and what mnemonics were employed. Sir John Wynn's celebrated history of the Gwydir family seems in some ways a late literary recension in English with occasional documentary 'proofs' of a Welsh oral genre of event-structured genealogy that paid special attention to feuding and inheritance. Numerous anecdotes revealed the genealogical awareness of Wynn's neighbours. 'Conferring often with the freeholders of the parish of Llanrwst', Wynn found that 'most of them are descended lineally from Ednyfed Fychan'. The professional genealogist (*achwr*) who knew genealogies on a regional basis also appears in Wynn's family history. In an enlightening anecdote, Wynn described how his great-grandfather asked Robin Achwr ('the greatest antiquary of our country') to present a nosegay to the best-descended gentlemen at a country assembly. To Wynn's ancestor's chagrin the nosegay was delivered to another, the obscure Llywelyn ap Dafydd, before the assembled gentlefolk. Other sources confirm that there were public demonstrations of genealogical learning, including assemblies where the bards would recite ('rip up') pedigrees and related traditions of the saints.¹⁵

Genealogical and poetic manuscripts, closely related to oral genres, reveal a new scribal consciousness in late medieval Wales that co-existed with routine administrative record keeping in Latin. The relationship between Latin as a language of record and the vernacular languages was probably shifting. Llinos Smith shows that the steadily increasing use of English as a medium of literacy in England was also mirrored in Wales where English rather than Welsh was sometimes used for documents that would previously have been written in Latin, especially deeds, arbitration awards, marriage settlements, wills and petitions. Nevertheless Welsh might be used for more

personal estate memoranda or temporary administrative records, and occasionally Welsh was used in formal parchment administrative records. Remarkably, a mid-Tudor (1549) survey and rental of Crown lands in a part of Anglesey made, according to the Latin preamble, by the oath of named freeholders, is actually a listing in Welsh of tenements according to 'beds' (*gwelyau*) or agnatic holdings which had descended to tenants from common ancestors, and presumably reflected oral tradition and its expression in current place names. We do not know the language of its predecessor survey, but its early seventeenth-century successor two generations later was in Latin.¹⁶

The variety of language in record keeping reflected in part the amalgam of custom and practices in the courts of the Marcher lordships. Variability of custom was in the nature of the Marcher lordships and each lordship had its own mix of English and Welsh customary law. Welsh judges were present in some Marcher courts and Welsh law was appealed to in extra-curial arbitrations up to and beyond the Act of Union. The oral procedure in many Marcher courts was in the Welsh language although the final written record of a court was in Latin. Some of the Welsh procedural terms have been preserved, including verdicts in cases of life and death, and the substitution of oral procedures in English after the Act of Union was a profound change.¹⁷

In many lordships the custom of partible inheritance was recognized and land was inherited by and divided equally between male co-heirs. Inherited land could not be sold but a distinctive form of mortgage (*prid*) developed in medieval Wales that circumvented the obligation to retain lands within a kin group. Welsh mortgages were theoretically perpetually renewable. Land was transferred for a fixed term, usually four years, and at the end of the period the land was either redeemed or re-mortgaged for a further term.¹⁸ This system of permanently redeemable mortgages provided a practical reason for preserving genealogies since land was never (in theory) permanently alienated from a kin group. As an Elizabethan authority noted, 'this law among the Welshmen did move some very earnestly to study their own descents' hoping to redeem land mortgaged by a member of their kindred.¹⁹

There was an expanding land market in late medieval Wales. Deeds, while surviving unevenly, are almost without exception in Latin – the universal language of public record – although more private memoranda of land transactions, especially Welsh mortgages, might be recorded in books and rolls in Welsh. Lordships varied in the way land was transferred but in great tracts of west and mid-Wales tenements were surrendered by the rod. This was regarded as a Welsh custom although it was not unknown in England. Those who had inherited land or were mortgagees were handed a rod by a bailiff or steward in open court in token that they were admitted tenants in a lordship. These transactions were not necessarily supported by deeds and charters, and Llinos Smith has noted the corresponding absence of deeds in

some Welsh regions.²⁰ Land disputes in these areas were probably frequently settled extra-curially by arbitrators expert in Welsh land law who depended as much on the memory of witnesses as on the written word. A complex and revealing mid-Tudor arbitrators' award, written entirely in Welsh in 1540 between first and second Acts of Union, survives for the Caeo area in west Wales. The award clearly suggests that evidence was taken orally from the disputants according to certain procedural steps before final judgment was made by two arbitrators familiar with Welsh law. Again, the linguistic complexity of the situation must be appreciated. The bond binding the parties to litigation was written in English on parchment; evidence was given orally in Welsh; the judgment of the arbitrators was given in writing in Welsh on paper.²¹

A literate culture centred on the monastic houses co-existed with the bureaucratic administration of lordships and Principality. The books of the monastic libraries largely – but not entirely – disappeared with the dissolution of the religious houses. Reminders of the ubiquitous former existence of liturgical books can be provided archaeologically, as at Carmarthen Greyfriars where book clasps were found scattered throughout the monastic church, especially in the choir.²² Religious houses were not only centres of religious learning but also of secular learning. In particular some heads of religious houses were patrons of the bards and experts in heraldic and genealogical learning. Important literary and historical manuscripts were lodged in monastic libraries. The sources of William Herbert's pedigree, mentioned above, were said to have included 'bookys of remembrans founde in the auntyent abbeye of Strata Florida' as well as 'the rowls of Morgan Abbot'. These manuscripts have disappeared, but a significant survivor of the lost Welsh monastic libraries is the oldest-known European ordinary of arms which was kept at Greyfriars, Carmarthen, in the fifteenth century. This interest in heraldry and genealogy was no doubt partly informed by a pragmatic interest in patrons' and founders' kin who were often buried in religious houses.²³

The late medieval Welsh religious houses and greater parish churches were full of memorials and other monuments with genealogical and heraldic information. In this context the written word was part of a broadly based visual culture whose non-verbal elements had also to be read. The badge (an eagle's claw and fish) repeatedly carved on the rood screen at Conwy parish church, for example, announced that Sir Richard Pole, constable of the castle, had commissioned the screen. It was usual for memorials to contain several visual elements. A window of c. 1500 which survives in Llangadwaladr parish church, Anglesey, contains the heraldry of the donor, several inscriptions and a depiction of the donor kneeling before an open book.²⁴

Inscriptions provide one of the best indications of the growing status of the written vernacular in the fifteenth century, although extant examples are few in number and often difficult to fully interpret. Surviving inscriptions

are generally in stone but a unique Welsh inscription in timber at Llanfair Waterdine (now in Shropshire) suggests that some of the elaborate Welsh rood screens, mostly destroyed at the Reformation, carried vernacular inscriptions. A medieval school of stone carving in north Wales had used Latin for the memorial inscriptions of the fourteenth-century Welsh aristocracy, but in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Welsh memorials were found alongside Latin inscriptions. Most notably, the entrance to Llanfihangel Esgeifiog church, Anglesey, has a Welsh inscription in bold relief asking all those who passed through the doorway to say a paternoster for the donor's soul and other Christians; above the doorway two niches contain figures holding books. The solemn request reveals the new status of Welsh in an ecclesiastical context and presupposes both a laity who could read the inscription and, of course, a relationship between written (inscription) and oral (prayer) genres.²⁵

The most interesting surviving late-medieval memorial inscription commemorates Adam of Usk (*ob.* 1430), the clerical lawyer whose Latin chronicle is an important source of information for events between 1377 and 1421. His memorial brass, surviving but no longer in its original location in Usk priory church, has a black-letter inscription in Welsh of four couplets. The inscription is an early expression of the fifteenth-century enthusiasm for giving new Welsh verse a written form. Moreover, the use of a Welsh inscription in a town that was 'English' and had been attacked by Owain Glyndŵr is revealing. Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion and the Crown's reaction had reinforced the identity of Welshness with the Welsh language. Adam himself records his shock that Welsh had become a proscribed language during the war and he may have suffered personally because of his Welsh sympathies. There can be little doubt that the vernacular inscription was an expression of Adam's identity as a Welshman.²⁶

Tombs and memorials provided the most concentrated expressions of the late medieval and Tudor links between verbal and visual culture and history and genealogy. Poetic descriptions of funerary monuments show that the tombs of the ruling families were admired and contemplated by contemporaries, illuminating details that are not now readily apparent. The most elaborate altar tombs had naturalistic carvings of the deceased set above inscriptions, painted coats of arms and emblematic figures holding books and scrolls. A herald's visitation of south Wales made in 1531 shows that a large number of memorials existed in Welsh churches and religious houses on the eve of the Reformation. They included tombs and coats of arms attributed to significant historical figures and founders of families. In Carmarthen Greyfriars, for example, over thirty armorial monuments were recorded as well as important altar tombs in the choir, where reposed, among others, Edmund, Earl of Richmond, father of Henry VII. In the Marches at Wigmore Abbey, the herald was shown the tomb of Gwladus Ddu, daughter

of Llywelyn the Great, 'which Gladius the Welshmen take for a goddess'.²⁷ Tombs and shrines provided physical pegs on which to hang the historical and genealogical traditions which were an important part of oral culture. The destruction of so many monuments at the Reformation inevitably involved an assault on Welsh historical mythology.²⁸

The relationship between identity and language was complex in late medieval and Tudor Wales. In addition to a hierarchy of languages there was a hierarchy of media for recording these languages. The available evidence, which includes inscriptions as well as paper and parchment, suggests that there was an expansion in the use of written Welsh, which in the case of poetry and genealogy directly related to oral genres associated with the bards. Bardic learning, which was probably substantially oral, related deeply to definitions of Welshness. A late tract on the 'office and function' of the bards neatly brings out the elements which defined Welshness: language, history and custom; these were 'the three memorials' (*y tri chof*) which the bards were expected to maintain. The bards were to preserve the purity of the ancient tongue, accounting for every word and syllable they used, by avoiding any foreign words. The bards were also to know the notable acts of the Welsh kings and princes, and required to keep the genealogies of the Welsh nobility who descended from them, including their division of lands and their coats of arms.²⁹ Welsh identity was not only a matter of maintaining the spoken word but entailed maintaining those customs and the historical mythology which also constructed a sense of separate identity.³⁰ The attack on custom after the Acts of Union was as much a deliberate erosion of Welshness as was the explicit exclusion of the Welsh language from certain domains of use.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY AFTER THE ACTS OF UNION

In Wales the mid-Tudor reformation of religion and the reformation of custom had profound consequences for the status of the Welsh language, domains of literacy, and the definitions of identities – both personal and national. The preamble to the Act of Union (1536) was uncompromising: in Wales there were divers rights, usages, laws and customs 'far discrepant from the Laws and Customs of this Realm'. Furthermore, the speech of the Welsh people was 'nothing like nor consonant to the natural Mother Tongue used within this Realm'. All courts were to be held in English, and all office-holders were to be English speakers. The aim was 'utterly to extirp' all the 'sinister Usages and Customs' in Wales now that it was fully incorporated within the realm of England. The primary instruments for establishing uniformity were new assize courts, the Courts of Great Sessions, which were to become immensely busy.³¹

The drive for legal and linguistic uniformity in the Tudor state-building process meant not only an attack on custom but also an erosion of oral and written genres in Welsh that related to custom. Significant areas of Welsh-language learning, particularly genealogy, became devalued, partly because their relevance to status and inheritance within an extended kindred had been lost with the abolition of partible inheritance and the new freedom to alienate land inherited from ancestors. Welsh land law and inheritance, an important marker of the difference between the English and the Welsh, had been killed almost stone-dead by the Act of Union. Inheritance claims by kin relating to gavelkind land held by those dying before the second Act of Union, specifically by the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist 1541 in the thirty-third year of Henry VIII's reign, were entertained by the Court of Great Sessions. However it was a measure of the assimilation of custom that the number of these claims rapidly declined in the second half of the sixteenth century.³²

A decline in learning in Welsh – especially bardic learning which combined both written and spoken genres – occurred in the second half of the sixteenth century, but it was a prolonged and nuanced process. As is explained in Chapter 5 of this volume, the decline in the status of the bards was a complex combination of changes in taste, the emergence of an increasingly anglicized gentry class, and the redefinition of itinerant entertainers as vagabonds and their rewards as begging. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the capacity of professional bards to earn a living had been seriously curtailed and poetic, historical and genealogical learning became the preserve of a small number of antiquarian-minded gentlemen and clerics. There was a sense of finality about the ending of the older order and the loss of learning in the Welsh language. As one antiquary put it at the beginning of the seventeenth century, 'at this time all the greate knowledge of the bards, there credit and worth is altogether decayed and worne out, soe that at this time they are extinguish[ed] amongst us'.³³

There can be little doubt that there was a consequential decline of literacy in Welsh. The erosion of domains of literacy was accompanied by the loss and destruction of manuscripts generated by the old centres of literacy. The literary, administrative and religious books of the religious houses mostly disappeared at the Reformation, with a few important exceptions. The routine administrative documents of the Marcher lordships suffered similarly after the Act of Union. It was no longer necessary to register transfers of land in the books of the Marcher courts; this could now be done without the lord's knowledge simply by levying a fine in the Court of Great Sessions. As manuscripts lost their relevance they were jettisoned. Genealogies compiled before the Act of Union were already 'rare and decayed' by about 1600. Surviving Welsh-language manuscripts reveal the selective nature of preservation. Very little devotional, administrative and later legal material has

survived. Literary manuscripts have survived unevenly and the older part of the Welsh literary 'canon', especially the pre-1400 poetry and *Mabinogion* tales, rests on a slender thread of unique texts in four or five 'ancient books'.³⁴

The peripatetic Courts of Great Sessions emerged as a central domain of language use from which by and large Welsh was excluded. Welsh was not recognized by the court as a formal language of procedure or record. As there was a hierarchy of languages, so there was a hierarchy of media. Welsh-language business in the courts was confined to oral statements that were translated into English. The English language was admitted into the record of the court, especially in the form of examinations, as paper records. Finally, the record of the court was made in Latin on parchment. It may be noted, however, that certain points in the criminal procedure linked the spoken and written word theatrically. As in England, convicted felons could claim 'benefit of clergy' by demonstrating in open court their ability to read in Latin like a clerk. Those who successfully claimed benefit of clergy were discharged after branding on the brawn of the thumb; those who failed to read were executed. These public demonstrations of literacy and non-literacy were dramatic, and sometimes produced unexpected results attributed to God's intervention. In 1602 Thomas Bull was convicted of poisoning, and claimed benefit of clergy at the Radnorshire Great Sessions. He was brought a book 'to assaye and to rede upon', but although literate ('lettered') found 'he could not reede any Whitt, but said that there was a Miste before his eyes so that he could not decerne the letters'. But there were numerous successful claims to benefit of clergy in Tudor and Stuart Wales. It was a procedure that could be manipulated by both court and those convicted.³⁵

However, outside the formal English and Latin procedures of the court there existed a largely hidden Welsh-language system of compromise and arbitration dominated by the spoken word. Civil actions rarely proceeded to trial and judgment although very large numbers of writs were issued between sessions. Numerous accusations of felony were made but acquittals were high and a large proportion of bills of indictment were thrown out by the grand jury before trial for lack of evidence. Writs and bills of indictment induced defendants to compromise with plaintiffs and suspects to 'compound' with accusers. Numerous early modern arbitrators' awards have survived and they show that large numbers of disputes were settled extra-curially through a complex interplay between written and oral procedures in English and Welsh. Dispute settlement took place orally in Welsh using arbitrators and sworn testimony, occasionally using large numbers of 'oath-helpers', but the final outcome took the form of written awards in English that sometimes became the subject of litigation because of non-performance.³⁶

The records of the Great Sessions reveal that commercial transactions in Wales were increasingly regulated by written agreements in English. A flood of actions for debt were grounded upon written transactions ranging from

entries in mercers' shop-books to formal agreements for leasing land, selling stock and produce, building and repairing houses and numerous other circumstances. The written agreement was probably the rule rather than the exception and provided work for the scribes who can sometimes be identified in taxation documents and other records as a moderately prosperous occupational group. Most agreements were supported by conditional bonds that entailed a financial penalty if the terms of the agreement were not kept. This was an interesting situation linguistically. Welsh society, rural and urban alike, was increasingly enmeshed in a nexus of debt recorded in a language most would not be able to understand, let alone read. It emerges from pleadings that the written and spoken word were linked by unnamed translators. It was the practice for the terms and conditions of these English bonds to be recited in Welsh (perhaps by scribes or attorneys) before sealing.³⁷

The experience of literacy in early modern Wales was often an expression of legal and religious authority reinforced by the spoken word. This included the hearing of proclamations and other black-letter texts publicly read. Literacy was rarely the direct experience of education or entertainment. Basic work on measuring literacy remains to be done but the evidence, such as it is, suggests that rates of illiteracy were higher in Wales than in England. It has been bravely estimated that by the 1640s less than a fifth (about 18 per cent) of the population in Wales could read. Readers were unevenly distributed both socially and geographically. There was a pronounced rural-urban literacy divide that ran parallel with the linguistic divide between town and country. This is clearly conveyed by the pattern of jurors' marks and signatures on coroners' inquisitions in the seventeenth century. In urban locales, jurors – mostly tradesmen – were overwhelmingly literate in the sense that most signed their names; conversely in rural locales, jurors were overwhelmingly illiterate in the sense that most made a cross or some other mark. The growing numbers of jurors who signed with their initials and presumably were therefore able to recognize letters probably indicates a steadily increasing proportion of rural jurors who could read but not write. This information relates of course to male jurors; the extent of female literacy is unknowable.³⁸

The expansion of the use of English for all legal and quasi-legal documents was probably accompanied by a contraction in the literate use of Welsh. Given the nature of schooling it was to be expected that even the most personal of documents composed by Welsh speakers would be in English. Letter writing in Wales was almost exclusively an English-language genre even though the author and recipient of a letter might be Welsh speakers. Wills were not required to be in Latin or English, but they were very rarely written in Welsh until the eighteenth century. In a revealing late sixteenth-century encounter, a mortally sick Montgomeryshire yeoman asked Hugh Pennant to write his will because the curate of the parish was absent. Hugh Pennant, a bard and graduate of the 1568 *eisteddfod*, obliged but 'did write

the same in the welche tongue for that as he saied hee could not write the same in Englishe'.³⁹ The incident is particularly interesting because it confirms that the older literacy in Welsh could be independent of literacy in English. The Preface to the first printed Welsh book (1546/47) had referred to the 'many Welshmen who could read Welsh but not a word in English or Latin'.⁴⁰

However, literacy in Welsh was probably a declining skill in the century after the Act of Union because it was considered less practically useful in a worldly sense than literacy in English. By the mid-seventeenth century it was alleged that few people were able to read Welsh apart from the clergy, and even they found it difficult.⁴¹ Reading and writing in Welsh were rarely formally taught. Indeed in certain circumstances literacy in Welsh might be regarded as a suspect skill and there were sometimes searches for seditious books that were both Welsh *and* Catholic. The Denbighshire grand jury was asked to locate books that contained doctrine contrary to the established religion, and searches for seditious books were authorized at the Flintshire assizes. Catholics in Wales made an effort to circulate literature in the vernacular, including satirical songs, and had a short-lived clandestine press.⁴²

The adverse consequences of the Act of Union for a sense of separate Welsh identity based on language and custom were profound. Welsh custom and language were both deemed 'uncivil' or even 'sinister'. A new word – 'civility' – entered the discourse of power to describe the superiority of English language and custom on which the unity of the peoples of the British Isles under the Crown was to be based. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the reforming activities of the Court of Great Sessions was deemed to have brought Wales 'to knowe civilitie'. Petitions to the court from 'mere' Welshmen, who were described as simple and illiterate, unable to speak or write English, reveal a sense of inferiority among some Welsh speakers and the growing reality of the dominance of the English language in many domains of language use.⁴³

However although the English language dominated legal and commercial domains, religion remained a contested domain in terms of language use. The state's language policy of uniformity was tempered by acknowledgement of the necessity for people to gain knowledge of religion in their own tongue. The 1563 Act authorizing the translation of the Bible and *Book of Common Prayer* into Welsh, and permitting the use of Welsh in divine service, also ordered that English versions should be placed in churches where Welsh Bibles were needed so that people 'by conferring both Tongues, [may] the sooner attain to the Knowledge of the English tongue'. The status of Welsh in this domain was expressed publicly by painted black-letter texts derived from the *Book of Common Prayer*. An Elizabethan (1583) episcopal visitation of the diocese of St Davids enquired whether altars, rood lofts and other 'signs and monuments of superstition and idolatory' had been removed and 'sentences of Holy Scripture written in their places'. The written word had

replaced the image in the post-Reformation churches of Wales and, crucially, in this domain the words were in Welsh. The erosion of custom meant that language was to become increasingly important as a signifier of difference, especially within the religious domain where it acquired special status.⁴⁴

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND RELIGION IN EARLY MODERN WALES

Religion has frequently been identified as one of the major driving forces behind the growth of literacy during the early modern period.⁴⁵ In Wales religion was a fundamental motivation for the spread of literacy and – alone among the Celtic languages of Britain – the development of a vigorous print culture in the vernacular. From the mid-sixteenth century, the authorities recognized that unity of religion had to take priority, for the time being at least, over unity of language.⁴⁶ It was more important to make the Welsh into good Protestants than to make them into good English speakers. The aim in the long term may well have been to convert them into good English-speaking Protestants. In the meantime, however, it was realized that Welsh was the most effective means of communication to ensure their conversion. The translation of the Bible and *Book of Common Prayer* into Welsh ensured the development and maintenance of a standard literary language that was read aloud in the parish churches of Wales and heard week in and week out by the majority of Welsh men, women and children.⁴⁷

The inter-relationship between language, religion and education would have profound implications for the survival of the Welsh language. Welsh was seldom the language of formal instruction during the early modern period. The urban grammar schools, established from the sixteenth century onwards, used English as the medium of instruction and were intended primarily for the sons of the gentry, burgesses and well-to-do yeomen farmers. The Dissenting academies, initially established during the period of persecution to provide an alternative form of higher education for Dissenters who were banned from attending the universities, also used English as the medium of instruction.⁴⁸ In the wake of the Acts of Union, English increasingly came to be considered the language of prestige and advancement, whereas Welsh was the language of the marketplace and the farmyard. Ultimately the saving grace for the language in terms of education was that the educational initiatives of the early modern period were all prompted by a single concern: the need to instil saving knowledge of the Gospel. With the spread of print culture, religious reformers of the period became acutely aware of a fundamental truth, perhaps best expressed by David Maurice in 1700: *I mae'r llais, a glower, yn darfod yn ddisymmwth, ond yr scrifên a beru byth* (The voice,

which is heard, ends suddenly, but writing lasts forever).⁴⁹ The statement expresses a perception of the transience of the spoken word, and the growing authority of the more permanent printed word.

From the mid-seventeenth century onwards attempts were made to encourage literacy among substantial sections of the population in Wales. The first of these endeavours was the work of the state, in the form of the Act for the Better Propagation of the Gospel in Wales (1650–53), passed by a Puritan regime which regarded Wales as ‘one of the dark corners of the land’, where superstition, popery and ignorance ruled.⁵⁰ This first attempt to establish free elementary education for the children of Wales began with the best of intentions, but ultimately failed to fulfil its ambitions and the last of the schools established under the Act were abolished with the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Subsequent efforts to promote education and literacy came as the result of various voluntary movements, including the Welsh Trust (1674–81), the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) (1699–1737) and Griffith Jones’s circulating schools (1731–79). The Welsh Trust was the brainchild of Thomas Gouge, a London minister who, despite his own strong Puritan tendencies, was able to appeal to moderates among both the Anglicans and the Nonconformists. By summer 1675 over eighty schools had been established in some of the major market towns of the country, with over 2,000 children attending them. However, despite the initial success, decline soon set in and by 1678 only thirty-three schools remained open. Hostility grew as people became suspicious that the Trust aimed to revive Puritanism. The influence of the schools was also limited by the decision to use English as the medium of instruction. Most of the schools tended to be located in major towns and in the border areas, where knowledge of English was more widespread. Even so, Stephen Hughes, the Trust’s leading figure in Wales, was vehemently opposed to the language policy of the schools. The Trust was eventually wound up after the death of Thomas Gouge in 1681.

It would appear that any remaining funds were ultimately transferred to the coffers of the SPCK. This organization was fuelled by the same Pietist influences as other societies from this period, such as the Society for the Reformation of Manners. Its aim was to establish elementary schools to improve educational facilities in Wales and to publish improving literature. The drive to establish schools met with some initial success. It is significant that thirty of the first schools set up by the SPCK were located in places where Trust schools had previously been established. Like the Trust, the SPCK concentrated on setting up schools in the major market towns, particularly in the south of the country. Ninety-six schools were set up by the SPCK, sixty-eight of which were established by 1715. Support dwindled subsequently, partly as a result of the Schism Act of 1714 and partly because the SPCK was suspected of harbouring a secret Jacobite agenda. Once again, their influence

had been limited by the continued insistence on the use of English, although many of the schools in north Wales appear to have been conducted in Welsh. Ultimately, the SPCK's greatest success may well have been its contribution in terms of publications. Despite its reluctance to use Welsh as a medium of instruction, it was willing to publish religious literature in Welsh. In particular the Society played an important role in producing substantial copies of the Welsh Bible, which would be of paramount importance to subsequent educational initiatives. The 1718 edition of the Bible ran to 10,000 copies, 1,000 of which were distributed free to the poor.

The real breakthrough in terms of popular literacy came with the work of Griffith Jones and the circulating schools. Born in Carmarthenshire in 1684, Jones's name is inextricably linked with the parish of Llanddowror, which he served as rector from 1716 until his death in 1761. It may well have been an outbreak of typhus in south-west Wales between 1727 and 1731 that spurred Griffith Jones into action. He was acutely aware that many of those who died during this epidemic were woefully ignorant of the basic principles of their faith. Like David Maurice, he realized all too well that preaching alone could never be sufficient to combat this ignorance. His initial response was to establish a school in his own parish of Llanddowror in 1731. It is not clear precisely when he embarked on the circulating system, but by 1738 the first annual report on the progress of the schools, *Welch Piety*, was published. The circulating schools basically consisted of a schoolteacher sent to an area for some three months at a time to conduct classes in any available building. The schools were invariably established between September and May, so as not to clash with the busiest months of the agricultural calendar.

These attempts to increase literacy were by no means completely detached from orality. Indeed, the spoken word remained at the heart of Griffith Jones's educational initiative, which relied to a large degree on mnemonic devices and reading aloud. The greater emphasis on reading over and above writing ensured that this was the case. The curriculum was severely curtailed to concentrate primarily on reading. The pressing aim was to teach as many people as possible to read the Bible in as short a time as possible. Writing, arithmetic and other subjects favoured by the SPCK were jettisoned as superfluous to the primary intention of the schools. Thus, with a streamlined syllabus, it was possible to achieve more in a short space of time. It was Griffith Jones's proud boast that in his schools a child could be taught to read in Welsh within the space of three months. Lessons began with learning the alphabet, but much of the subsequent instruction was based on the repetition of sentences read aloud by the teacher, as Jones himself explained:

I am credibly informed, that it has, in England, been found a good Method, to bring Children to read soon, without Hesitation, to have some Sentences first read

by the Teacher, and then for the Scholar to read them; and this to be repeated over and over again, till the Scholar reads them readily, and without Hesitation. It is for want of this most rational Practice that many Children are long in learning to read readily, without Hesitation, and are therefore thought dull, when, in reality, it is not their Fault.⁵¹

This method explains how some blind scholars were taught, since they could recite and memorize sections of the Scriptures, even though they could not read the letters. In Gelli-gaer in Glamorgan, for example, an old blind woman of eighty attended the school to receive instruction in 'the Principles of Religion'. She was motivated to attend after a visit to the school during which she heard the children going through the responses to the catechism.⁵² Reciting the catechism was given a high priority in these classes and it is significant that Griffith Jones referred to his schools in *Welch Piety* as the Circulating and Catechising Schools. Jones himself provided Welsh-medium catechisms to be used by his scholars, such as *Esoniad Byr ar Gatecism yr Eglwys* (1752; A Brief Explanation of the Church Catechism).

At the end of the quarter, the teacher would move on to begin the process again in another area. However, in many parishes, teachers would return for a second or third visit to consolidate their work, instruct new recruits and impart further instruction to the most advanced pupils. The schools were open free of charge to pupils of all ages and every social status. Additional classes were conducted during the evening for those whose work did not allow them to attend during the day. It is estimated that two-thirds of the total number of scholars were adults, many of them advanced in years. Reports in *Welch Piety* contain numerous accounts of elderly men and women moved to tears of joy at gaining access to the printed word for the first time and tears of regret that they had not had this opportunity earlier in life.

In many ways, Jones's ideas were not particularly new. The idea of ambulatory schools had previously been advocated by the SPCK in the Highlands of Scotland. In 1719, Sir Humphrey Mackworth, a patron of the SPCK in Wales, suggested that the use of itinerant teachers might have some value. What was new was the combination of inspiration, dedication and practicality that prompted Griffith Jones to decide upon the use of the Welsh language as the medium of instruction. Previous efforts by the Welsh Trust and the SPCK had foundered at least partly because of their insistence upon using English in their schools. English was used in the circulating schools located in more anglicized areas, such as south Pembrokeshire, Gower and Monmouthshire, but Welsh was the language of the vast majority of the schools. This caused some concern amongst English philanthropists and also among critics within Wales itself. Griffith Jones was forced to defend his policy and did so partly on the grounds of pragmatism and economy. Welsh was the language of the majority of the population, as Jones stated: 'Welsh is still

the Vulgar Tongue and not English'.⁵³ Whilst that remained true, it was the logical choice to educate the mass of the population in Wales. Since the main aim was the salvation of souls, it was imperative to employ the quickest and most effective methods to introduce the scholar to the Bible. Otherwise, countless souls might be condemned to ignorance, as Griffith Jones pointed out:

For how much better is it that the Welsh People should forever be ignorant of the English Language ... than that they should live and die ignorant of what is necessary to their salvation, and which they cannot be instructed in ... but in Welch only?⁵⁴

Pupils could be taught to read in Welsh in three months; indeed, it was claimed that one seven-year-old child in Cynwyl Elfed in Carmarthenshire was taught to read Welsh in less than three weeks.⁵⁵ But it might take three to four years to teach them to read through the medium of English.⁵⁶ This was time they could ill afford. In addition, the shorter the process of instruction, the cheaper it was. Griffith Jones took pride in the fact that for every twenty-shilling donation he received, six poor children were taught to read in Welsh. He was therefore able to put forward a sound and practical defence for the use of Welsh. The main reason behind the decision to make Welsh the medium of instruction was the simple fact that it was the language of the spoken word for the majority of the population. If the decision was governed by the strength of the Welsh language, then the fact that Welsh, and not English, became the medium of education in these schools in turn reinforced that strength. It helped ensure that the English language would not be regarded exclusively as the language of schooling and literacy in Wales.

After Griffith Jones's death in 1761, the schools continued under the management of Madam Bridget Bevan. She proved to be a most efficient and business-like manager. The number of schools actually increased under her supervision, particularly in English-speaking areas. Madam Bevan intended the schools to continue after her death in 1779, with the help of a £10,000 bequest in her will. Unfortunately, however, some members of her family contested the will and, with the money tied up in legal wrangling, the schools went into a sharp and inexorable decline.

During their heyday, the schools had provided many tenant farmers, cottagers and labourers, along with their wives and children, with their first real opportunity to acquire basic literacy. Local clergy were asked by Griffith Jones to testify to the benefits they had witnessed in their parishes as a result of the schools. They were invariably able to do so because of the emphasis on reading aloud and catechizing in the schools, which enabled visitors to judge the progress of the scholars. As a result, David Morris, vicar of St Lawrence in Pembrokeshire, was able to give this account of the changes wrought amongst his parishioners by 1747:

To our Shame be it spoken, I can very well remember that the grey Hairs of Persons arrived to the full Age of Man, Sixty Years old and upwards, were so ignorant and illiterate, as not to be able to read the Lord's Prayer in the Mother Tongue; but now, by the Grace of God, a beardless Boy distinctly reads the Welch Bible; a Blessing entirely owing to the Welch Schools.⁵⁷

He and other witnesses expressed their joy at the remarkable experience of hearing the pupils reading and responding to the catechism. The best indication of the extent of the influence of the circulating schools may be gained from the figures. By the time of Griffith Jones's death in 1761, over 200,000 pupils had received instruction in some 3,325 schools, at a time when the population of Wales was an estimated 489,000. Wales could be counted amongst the most literate countries in Europe in this period. News of this success reached as far as Russia where Catherine the Great instructed her ministers to make further enquiries about the schools. There is a consensus amongst historians of Wales that the circulating schools did much to revive the fortunes of the Welsh language. According to Glanmor Williams, Griffith Jones's contribution 'did more than anything else to preserve and fortify the Welsh language and literature, of which the Bible was the corner-stone'.⁵⁸ Geraint H. Jenkins agrees that the circulating schools 'were the chief means by which the native tongue was strengthened and preserved during the eighteenth century'.⁵⁹ The momentum of the circulating schools was to some extent maintained by numerous petty schools, some of which were presided over by schoolteachers trained in Griffith Jones's service. One such was William Thomas, of Michaelston-super-Ely in Glamorgan, whose diary includes several references to keeping school in a number of locations in the area of the Vale of Glamorgan.⁶⁰ By the end of the century, Thomas Charles of Bala had begun his pioneering work with the Sunday schools, which would do much to continue the tradition of the circulating schools.

There seems little doubt that rates of literacy had increased by the end of the eighteenth century, despite a possible contraction following the decline of the circulating schools. There is some evidence to confirm this from the visitation returns for the Diocese of St David's in 1804, in which the parish clergy were required to indicate what proportion of the poor in their parishes were able to read.⁶¹ One indication of the growth of literacy was the notable increase in the number of books published in Welsh during the eighteenth century. Up until 1695, the business of printing books had been restricted to London, Oxford and Cambridge. The production of books in Welsh was a laborious process fraught with difficulties. Errors were all too common when printers were unfamiliar with the Welsh alphabet and language. However, with the lapsing of the Licensing Act after 1695, presses were soon to be established in Shrewsbury, which was much more convenient for both

authors and purchasers within Wales. The first printing press in Wales itself was set up by Isaac Carter at Trefhedyn near Newcastle Emlyn in 1718. Other presses were soon established in market towns, including Swansea, Carmarthen and Brecon. During the eighteenth century over 2,500 books, excluding ephemera, were published in Welsh, and in the nineteenth century the Welsh press continued to expand; by 1820 there were over 50 printers in Wales.⁶²

It must be remembered, however, that solitary book reading was by no means the only aspect of print culture.⁶³ The custom of reading aloud, as described by Erasmus Saunders in 1721, was certainly popular at this time:

[T]here are many, even of the common People, who gladly make the best use of what little Knowledge they have gain'd, and take the Pains privately, by Reading or Discoursing to instruct one another in their Houses. And it is not uncommon to see Servants and Shepherds, as they have an Opportunity, strive to do these good Offices to each other.⁶⁴

From the mid-seventeenth century onwards, it became increasingly common practice to include in published works a guide to the illiterate to help them learn to read. This was particularly true of those works edited by Stephen Hughes during the mid-late seventeenth century. In his Introduction to his edition of *Tryssor i'r Cymru*, Hughes urged those familiar with written works to guide the less familiar over the difficult words.⁶⁵ In 1683, Thomas Jones went a step further in his *Llyfr Plygain* and produced a guide for those learning to write, including instructions on how to fashion a pen and advice about ink and about the ideal seated posture for the exercise. The work also included examples of italic, round and mixed hand for the uninitiated.⁶⁶

There was apparently a tradition of reading aloud and discussing texts in craftsmen's workshops. Craftsmen had an advantage over farmers and agricultural labourers in that their work was not always as physically demanding and therefore in some instances allowed such discussion groups to take place. It is not clear, however, how prevalent the custom of silent reading had become. There are occasional clues, as in William Williams's elegy to Mrs Grace Price of Watford, which describes her sitting in her chair by the fire reading, making a note of which of Williams's hymns appealed to her most, or pointing out sections of printed sermons that had served to inspire her.⁶⁷ She could, however, be classed as a member of the minor gentry and may not have been wholly representative of the population at large. The growth of literacy and printing in some ways might even have helped to revive some elements of the oral tradition. The publication of medieval *cywyddau* during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries encouraged a revival of interest in strict-metre poetry. Free verse, however, was apparently less likely to be preserved in print during this period. Examples do appear, however, in manuscript form and many ballads, carols and other forms of popular verse are noted in commonplace books from this period.

It seems that the least likely to survive was the work of women poets.⁶⁸ It has been suggested that women's preference for free-verse poetry partially accounted for this, since it was not afforded the same respect as strict-metre poetry. Even the work of Ann Griffiths, now regarded as one of the most important hymn writers of the eighteenth century, was not recorded in print during her lifetime and only one verse survived in Ann's own hand. Instead, it was memory that preserved her verse. Her maidservant, Ruth, had memorized all her mistress's hymns and was able to dictate them so that they might be published for posterity.⁶⁹

The growing value placed on the written word did not immediately eradicate the importance of oral transmission. Many people read in order to commit to memory. Editions of Rees Prichard's religious verses remained popular throughout the eighteenth century. Motivated by his concern for the welfare of his parishioners, Vicar Prichard of Llandovery composed numerous catchy verses with an obvious moral or religious message, which were intended to be easily memorized. The first printed version of his work appeared in 1658 and numerous subsequent editions proved to be remarkably popular.⁷⁰ His rough and ready verses are peppered with colloquialisms and seem to have been originally written in the dialect of the area of Carmarthenshire, bordering with Glamorgan, where he lived and worked. There is no doubting their immense appeal. It is a mark of the Vicar's success that beggarwomen knew his verses on the duty of charity by heart and were apt to recite them to encourage those reluctant to part with their money.⁷¹ Nesta Lloyd suggests that Rees Prichard's verse lost its popularity by the twentieth century simply because it was so firmly rooted in the oral tradition. These were verses designed to be heard, whose rhyme scheme may appear strange on the printed page but works when they are read aloud in the appropriate dialect, as initially intended.⁷² In addition, folk-tales, traditions, ballads and carols continued to be passed on by word of mouth. Howel Harris, the Methodist revivalist, may have been greatly influenced by reading the Welsh versions of Puritan classics, but he was also captivated by the many folk-tales and traditions recounted to him on his travels. For instance, he was told of a woman of sixty who visited a holy well at Llanwennog and was subsequently able to breastfeed her infant granddaughter.⁷³ Harris also heard several accounts of the appearance of corpse candles which he judged to be 'truth real'.⁷⁴ In 1770 in Pembrokeshire Harris encouraged his listeners, 'ye old Brittons', not 'to swallow ye English Pride & Language & despise their own'.⁷⁵

The growing romanticizing of Wales by patriots and travellers prompted increasing interest in language and folk tradition. Scholars and romantics scrambled to record – and sometimes elaborate – remaining folk-tales and traditions, songs and dances for future generations.⁷⁶ There was anxiety that traditions might be lost forever if not preserved in print. These concerns prompted William Owen Pughe to found the *Cambrian Register*, a periodical

that appeared in three volumes between 1795 and 1818. According to the editorial Preface, its aim was to preserve the oral tradition before it vanished forever:

Since the revival of learning in Europe, most nations have been emulous of bringing forward their respective stores of ancient memorials, in order to enrich the common stock; but a vast treasure is contained in the Welsh language, in manuscripts, and the oral traditions of the people, of which barely a notice has hitherto been given to the world.⁷⁷

This treasury of Welsh antiquarian and literary traditions was produced in English, published in London, and ultimately folded through lack of support. However, at the same time there were numerous ventures in publishing Welsh-language periodicals, often with denominational links and a high religious content. *Seren Gomer* (The Star of Gomer) was established as a weekly journal in 1814 and distributed throughout Wales, and has some claim to be the first national newspaper in one of the 'non-official' languages of Europe.⁷⁸

The overwhelming majority of the material produced in print was of a religious nature. There seems to be little doubt that the emphasis on learning to read the Bible and the number of religious works published in this period had a profound impact on the Welsh language. The growth of Methodism and Nonconformity emphasized the need for a common standard that would overcome the divisions of regional dialects. Substantial numbers travelled to Llangeitho in the south-west to hear Daniel Rowland preach and later in the century to Bala in the north to hear Thomas Charles. Rarely, if ever, had such mass meetings, drawing people from north and south, east and west, been held in Wales. Initially, the Methodist preachers from the south had received a poor welcome in the north, partly at least because their accents and dialects had marked them out as strangers. It was imperative, therefore, that the revivalists should be understood by all their hearers. They were acutely aware of the need to communicate in a dialect that would be intelligible to all. Hence the development of a 'pulpit language' which would unite the entire audience and a 'Welsh style' of preaching by peripatetic preachers which was expressed most dramatically in periodic religious revivals.⁷⁹

Preachers were by no means the only group of people to wrestle with the problem of uniting an audience without a common dialect. The north-south linguistic divide proved to be especially troublesome to authors. Many of the early books printed in Welsh referred to this problem and some seventeenth-century authors included glossaries explaining the meaning of regional words which might be unfamiliar to their readers.⁸⁰ As Stephen Hughes remarked in 1688, this was necessary so that the inhabitants of the north and south should not be as 'barbarians' to each other.⁸¹ It was perhaps inevitable that the Methodists, who used the Bible as their guide and inspiration in so many

matters, would turn to the Scriptures in this respect also. The evolution of Methodist and Nonconformist imagery and language owed much to the Bible. The Methodists in particular developed their own idiom of religious experience when attempting to discuss their spiritual condition in their societies. In the early years of the movement during the 1740s the local superintendent, who oversaw the spiritual welfare of a number of individual societies, was expected to write regular accounts of the condition of each member. These reports were then sent to the Association, the movement's governing body. There was a marked tendency to categorize members according to their spiritual experience and development. The terms used to do so were largely derived from the Bible. Some were described as being 'under the Law', others as 'searching for the pearl', and these scriptural references would be immediately intelligible to the Methodist community. The Scripture then supplied them with a form of shorthand which could be used to describe members. In one instance, Anne David of Dyffryn-saith society in south Cardiganshire was categorized with a simple reference to the Gospel of St Luke, chapter fifteen, which contains the reference to the 'joy in the presence of angels of God over one sinner that repenteth'.⁸² Such efforts to analyse and express religious experiences undoubtedly served to enrich the language. It is notable that many composite Welsh words beginning with the prefix *hunan-* (self-) appeared in print for the first time during the eighteenth century in works by religious writers and in translations of English Puritan works of the seventeenth century.⁸³

As aspects of Welsh culture bound up with the oral tradition seemed to be dying out, Methodism and Nonconformity replaced them with an alternative culture in which orality in other forms was a vital element. Field preaching was an important feature of the Methodist revival and one of the main methods by which converts were attracted to the movement. Although Griffith Jones had on occasion preached out of doors when his congregation proved too large to be contained within a church, it was the Methodists who truly developed itinerant field preaching. The fervour and enthusiasm of Methodist sermons, frequently lasting two to three hours, was new to the majority of their audiences. Word of mouth, therefore, proved to be the most effective means of communicating the Methodist gospel. Despite being so thoroughly grounded in the Book, the Methodist movement relied heavily on the spoken word. Methodist societies were termed 'experience meetings' because their essential activity was to relate and analyse experiences. It was this that led Saunders Lewis to describe them as 'clinics of the soul', where those who had gone through the overwhelming experience of conversion could discuss their feelings with their fellow members.⁸⁴ Extempore prayers and hymn singing were also popular elements in the activities of the societies. Hymns were not sung from books, but repeated line by line after the individual member entrusted to pitch the tune. These activities set the foundations for

the numerous prayer meetings, sermons, society meetings, Sunday schools, the Band of Hope, choirs and the *Cymanfa Ganu* (hymn-singing festival) which would become part and parcel of a new ‘chapel civility’ during the nineteenth century.⁸⁵

From the sixteenth century onward, the Bible had been the cornerstone of standardized literary Welsh and its influence continued into the nineteenth century.⁸⁶ By the early nineteenth century, the growth of Nonconformity had particularly fostered the importance of religion as a focus for Welsh identity and the development of a chapel-based social culture in the Welsh language. The religious census of 1851 revealed that nearly 60 per cent of the Welsh population attended a place of worship and that the overwhelming majority of worshippers – almost 90 per cent – belonged to Nonconformist denominations. Nonconformity was in the ascendancy in most of the forty-eight Poor Law districts used as the basis for enumeration. The Established Church was strongest along the borders with England and in the more anglicized areas of the south and was weakest where the Welsh language was strongest.⁸⁷ This intensified the belief in the association between Nonconformity and Welsh language and identity that would be emphasized increasingly by Nonconformist leaders as the century progressed. Nonconformity came to be seen as an essential part of Welsh identity, and literacy in Welsh as a fundamental part of Nonconformist identity. The growth of the institutions of Liberal Nonconformity in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with the spectacular growth in the number of Welsh speakers. In 1911 nearly 1 million Welsh speakers were enumerated, although numbers of Welsh speakers have declined substantially subsequently. In the twentieth century alternative and competing definitions of Welshness emerged that did not depend on religious allegiance and the Welsh language.⁸⁸

NOTES

- 1 See generally the volumes in the series ‘The Social History of the Welsh Language’, general ed. Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997–2000). Important contextual essays include: Brynley F. Roberts, ‘The Celtic Languages of Britain’, in Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 407–40; R. J. W. Evans, ‘Language and Society in the Nineteenth Century: Some Central-European Comparisons’, in Jenkins (ed.), *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 397–424.
- 2 Prys Morgan, ‘Keeping the Legends Alive’, in Tony Curtis (ed.), *Wales: the Imagined Nation. Studies in Cultural and National Identity* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), 26.
- 3 See generally, Llinos Beverley Smith, ‘The Welsh Language Before 1536’ and Geraint H. Jenkins, Richard Suggett and Eryn M. White, ‘The Welsh Language

- in Early Modern Wales', in Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, chs 1 and 2.
- 4 Text in Richard Fenton, *A Historical Tour Through Pembrokeshire* (Brecon: Davies & Co., 1903), 340–1. Objections to its authenticity are noted in P. C. Bartrum, 'Notes on the Welsh Genealogical Manuscripts', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, Session 1968 (1969), 70. As M. T. Clanchy observes, forgery is at the centre rather than the margin of a literate culture: *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 248–57. Cf. also the commission of Henry VII to examine the pedigree of Owen Tudor, discussed by Sidney Anglo, 'The British History in Early Tudor Propaganda', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 44 (1961), 24–5, 46–7.
- 5 David Wallace (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), passim; Helen Suggett, 'The Use of French in England in the Later Middle Ages', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 4th ser., 28 (1946), 61–83; Llinos Beverley Smith, 'Inkhorns and Spectacles: the Impact of Literacy in Late Medieval Wales', in Huw Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 202–22.
- 6 E. D. Jones, 'Inscribed Slates from Strata Florida', *Ceredigion*, 1 (1950–51), 103–5. Cf. Alan J. Bliss, 'The Inscribed Slates at Smarmore', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 64, sec. C (1965), 28–37.
- 7 Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press and National Library of Wales, 2000), passim, esp. 16–17, 83, 91. On the earlier manuscript tradition, see generally Brynley F. Roberts, 'Writing in Wales', in Wallace (ed.), *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, 182–207.
- 8 Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, ch. 6, esp. 89–90 and n. 15 citing 'yn wir dewedaf i chwi Sir John kadw du lyfr yn dda rag dadgainiait kanys y may indo ef lawer o bethau da'. On *datgeiniaid*, see below, ch. 5 in this volume.
- 9 John Stradling, 'The Storie of the Lower Borowes of Merthyr-mawr', *South Wales and Monmouth Record Society Publications*, 1 (1932), 70–1.
- 10 R. F. Suggett, 'The Chronology of Late-medieval Timber Houses in Wales', *Vernacular Architecture*, 27 (1996), 28–37.
- 11 M. P. Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1989–93), I–III; P. C. Bartrum, 'Notes on the Welsh Genealogical Manuscripts', parts I–III, *Trans. Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion*, Session 1968 (1969), 63–98, Session 1976 (1976), 102–18, Session 1988 (n.d.), 37–46; M. P. Siddons, *Welsh Pedigree Rolls* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1996).
- 12 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), MS 9853E, 100–1 (a transcript of George Owen Harry's, 'The Wellspring of True Nobility'); E. D. Jones, 'Presidential Address', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 112 (1963), 3–4.
- 13 NLW, MS 9853E, 100–1.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Sir John Wynn, *The History of the Gwydir Family and Memoirs*, ed. J. Gwynfor Jones (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1990), passim, esp. 34–5; see p. 15, this volume, for assemblies where pedigrees were recited.
- 16 T. Jones Pierce, *Medieval Welsh Society*, ed. J. Beverley Smith (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972), ch. 4.
- 17 R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), passim; R. F. Suggett, 'The Welsh Language and the Court of Great Sessions', in Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, 154–5.

- 18 On this complex subject, see Llinos Beverley Smith, 'The Gage and the Land Market in Late Medieval Wales', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 29 (1976), 537–50; A. D. Carr, '"This my Act and Deed": the Writing of Private Deeds in Late Medieval North Wales', in Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, 223–37.
- 19 NLW MS 9853E, 104.
- 20 Smith, 'Inkhorns and Spectacles', 215–16. Smith notes the relationship between power and closely controlled access to the curial record of land transfers; NLW MS 1388D, f. 10.
- 21 T. Jones Pierce, 'The Law of Wales – the Last Phase', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion* (1963), 7–32. The bond specifically required the parties to obey the judgment of 'ii men learned in the Welsh law': NLW, Edwinsford Deeds & Documents 1913.
- 22 Dee Brennan, 'The Small Finds and Other Artefacts', Topic Report of *Excavations at Carmarthen Greyfriars 1983–1990*, ed. Terrence James (Carmarthen: Dyfed Archaeological Trust, 2001): for book-clasps and fittings, nos. 32–42; for page-holder, no. 41.
- 23 Cf. David H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians*, 2 vols (Caldey: Cistercian Publications, 1984), I, 159–63; 'William Fellow's Visitation of South Wales and Herefordshire, 1531', in M. P. Siddons (ed.), *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales*, (Publications of the Harleian Soc., new ser. 14, 1996), 23–103. Most of the monuments recorded by Fellow have disappeared.
- 24 F. H. Crossley, 'Screens, Lofts and Stalls Situated in Wales and Monmouthshire, [part] II', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 97 (1945), 80; Richard B. White, 'The Llan-gadwaladr East Window – an Examination of the Inscription and its Personae', *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society* (1969–70), 80–110.
- 25 John Rhys, 'The Welsh Inscriptions of Llanfair Waterdine, Y Cymmrodor', xxvi (1916), 88–114; Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Anglesey* (London: HMSO, 1937), appendix vii, for Welsh inscriptions described by Ifor Williams, esp. at p. cxliii (Llanfihangel Esgeifiog).
- 26 J. M. Lewis, *Welsh Monumental Brasses* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1974), 38–9; *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. and trans. C. Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
- 27 D. J. Bowen, 'Gwladus Gam a'r Beirdd', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol XXV* (Denbigh, Gwasg Gee, 1998), 84–8 (descriptions of the tomb of Sir William ap Thomas at Abergavenny); 'William Fellow's Visitation', ed. Siddons, 65–71, 85.
- 28 Occasionally there were attempts to create alternative historical mythologies. In particular, the marble armorial tomb of Edmund, Earl of Richmond, father of Henry VII, was removed from Carmarthen Greyfriars after the dissolution and re-erected in front of the high altar at St David's Cathedral. This was an extraordinary secular translation of relics that attempted to displace the cult of St David (whose shrine had been despoiled) with the cult of the Tudors. See Heather James, 'The Cult of St. David in the Middle Ages', in Martin Carver (ed.), *In Search of Cult: Archaeological Investigations in Honour of Philip Rahtz* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 105–12, at p. III.
- 29 Ceri W. Lewis, 'Einion Offeiriad and the Bardic Grammar', in A. O. H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (eds), *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282–c. 1550* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 45; D. J. Bowen, 'The Bardic Functions', in

- D. M. and E. M. Lloyd (eds), *A Book of Wales* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1953), 104–8 (a transcript of part of NLW, Llanstephan MS 144).
- 30 Cf. R. R. Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland, 1100–1400: [part]IV Language and Historical Mythology', *Trans. Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 7 (1997), 1–24, esp. 22–3.
- 31 Act 27 Henry VIII, c. 26, *Statutes of the Realm* III (1817; repr. 1963), 563–9; R. F. Suggett, 'The Welsh Language and the Court of Great Sessions', in Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, ch. 4.
- 32 Act 34 & 35 Henry VIII, c. 26, *Statutes of the Realm*, III, 926–37, paras xxxvi, lxiv.
- 33 On the decline of poets, see this volume, ch. 5; extract from NLW, Llanstephan MS 144, 16–17, in D. J. Bowen, 'Y Cywyddwyr a'r Dirywiad', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 29 (1981), 492 (no. 96).
- 34 NLW MS 9853E, 98; Graham C. G. Thomas, 'From Manuscript to Print – I. Manuscript', in R. Geraint Gruffydd (ed.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature, c. 1530–1700*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 241–62; Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, esp. chs 1 and 5.
- 35 Suggett, 'The Welsh Language and the Court of Great Sessions', 161–4; G. Dyfnallt Owen, *Elizabethan Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964), 224. It is not impossible that a proportion of professional thieves formed a subculture of readers. It was certainly in their interests to have a reading ability when their lives could depend on it. A few cases actually reveal that some thieves were habitual book carriers, but this may have related less to a literate mentality and more to the nature of the oath regarded as binding when sworn on the Gospels. It seems that some Welsh men who had committed a robbery or an assault forced their terrified victims to swear on a book not to divulge the circumstances of the crime. See R. Suggett, 'Pedlars and Mercers as Distributors of Print in Early Modern Wales', in Peter Isaac and Barry McKay (eds), *The Mighty Engine. The Printing Press and its Impact* (Winchester and Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), 23–32.
- 36 Suggett, 'The Welsh Language and the Court of Great Sessions', 164–7; see also Llinos Beverley Smith, 'Disputes and Settlements in Medieval Wales: the Role of Arbitration', *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), 835–60. The arbitrators' award written in Welsh, discussed earlier, is an exceptional survival.
- 37 Litigation enrolled on the plea rolls of the Court of Great Sessions.
- 38 William P. Griffith, 'Schooling and Society', in J. Gwynfor Jones (ed.), *Class, Community and Culture in Tudor Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1989), 108–9; information derived from coroners' inquisitions filed on the gaol files of the Court of Great Sessions.
- 39 George Owen, *The Description of Penbrokeshire*, ed. Henry Owen Cymmrodorion Record Series no. 1 (London: Cymmrodorion, 1892), 36; John Fisher, 'Three Welsh Wills', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 6th ser., 19 (1919), 189–92.
- 40 Glanmor Williams, 'The Renaissance and Reformation', in P. H. Jones and E. Rees (eds), *A Nation and its Books* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1998), 41–54, at p. 47.
- 41 The view of the Puritan Oliver Thomas cited in P. H. Jones, 'Wales 1546–1695', *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), IV.
- 42 Suggett, 'The Welsh Language and the Court of Great Sessions', 174–5; Geraint

- Bowen, 'Roman Catholic Prose and its Background', in Gruffydd (ed.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature c. 1530–1700*, ch. 9.
- 43 Suggett, 'The Welsh Language and the Court of Great Sessions', 153, 156–7 (references to petitions). For civility and the Welsh, see Prys Morgan, 'Wild Wales: Civilizing the Welsh from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries', in Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (eds), *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 15.
- 44 Act 5 Eliz. c. 28, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV. 1 (1819; repr. 1963), 457; W. P. M. Kennedy, *Elizabethan Episcopal Administration*, Volume III: Visitation Articles and Injunctions, 1583–1603 Alcuin Club Collection, 27 (London: Alcuin Club, 1924), 140.
- 45 F. Furet and J. Ozouf, *Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Keith Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', in G. Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 97–131, at p. III.
- 46 See Glanmor Williams, 'Unity of Religion or Unity of Language? Protestants and Catholics and the Welsh Language 1536–1660', in Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, 207–33.
- 47 Jones, 'Wales 1546–1695'; Glanmor Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 338–60.
- 48 Dewi Eurig Davies, *Hoff Ddysgedig Nyth* (Swansea: Tŷ John Penry, 1976), 124–25; R. Tudur Jones, 'The Puritan Contribution', in Jac L. Williams and Gwilym Rees Hughes (eds), *The History of Education in Wales* (Swansea, Christopher Davies, 1978) I. 42–4.
- 49 David Maurice, *Cwnffwrdd ir Gwan Gristion, neu'r Gorsen Ysyg Mewn Pregeth* (London, 1700), vi.
- 50 Christopher Hill, 'Puritans and "the Dark Corners of the Land"', in *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974), 3–47; Geraint H. Jenkins, *Protestant Dissenters in Wales 1639–1689* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), 9–10.
- 51 *The Welch Piety* (London, 1752), 21.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 41–2.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 1.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 59.
- 58 Glanmor Williams, 'Religion, Language and the Circulating Schools', in *Religion, Language and Nationality in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), 215.
- 59 Geraint H. Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales* (Oxford: University of Wales Press, 1987), 380.
- 60 *The Diary of William Thomas of Michaelston-super-Ely, near St Fagans, Glamorgan, 1762–1795* ed. R.T.W. Denning (Cardiff: South Wales Record Society and South Glamorgan County Council Libraries and Arts Department, 1995).
- 61 NLW, Records of the Church in Wales, SD/QA/3; SD/QA/63; SD/QA/120; SD/QA/183.
- 62 Jenkins, Suggett and White, 'Welsh Language in Early Modern Wales', 92; Eiluned Rees, 'The Welsh Book Trade from 1718 [to] 1820', in Jones and Rees (eds), *A Nation and its Books*, 123–33.

- 63 Roger Chartier (ed.), *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 1–9.
- 64 Erasmus Saunders, *A View of the State of Religion in the Diocese of St David's About the beginning of the 18th Century* (1721; repr. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1949), 32.
- 65 Stephen Hughes (ed.), *Tryssor i'r Cymru* (London, 1677).
- 66 Thomas Jones, *Llyfr Plygain* (Shrewsbury, 1683); G. H. Jenkins, *Thomas Jones yr Almanaciwr 1648–1713* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), 95–9.
- 67 N. Cynhafal Jones (ed.), *Gweithiau Williams Pantycelyn* (Holywell: P. M. Evans, 1887), I. 525.
- 68 For further discussion of these themes, see C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Oral Composition and Written Transmission; Welsh Women's Poetry from the Middle Ages and Beyond', *Trivium*, 26 (1991); C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Women and Their Poetry in medieval Wales', in Carol M. Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain 1150–1500*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Nia Watcyn Powell, 'Women and Strict-metre Poetry in Wales', in M. Roberts and S. Clarke (eds), *Women and Gender in Early Modern Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 129–58.
- 69 Dyfnallt Morgan (ed.), *Y Ferch o Ddolwar Fach* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 1977); A. M. Allchin, *Ann Griffiths* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976); A. M. Allchin, *Ann Griffiths: the Furnace and the Fountain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1987).
- 70 No copy of the 1658 edition, *Rhan o waith Rees Prichard*, has survived.
- 71 G. H. Jenkins, *Literature, Religion and Society in Wales, 1660–1730* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press on behalf of the History and Law Committee of the Board of Celtic Studies, 1978), 154.
- 72 Nesta Lloyd, *Cerddi'r Ficer: Detholiad o gerddi Rhys Prichard* (Llandybie: Cyhoeddiadau Barddas, 1994), xxi–xxiii; idem, 'Sylwadau ar laith rhai o Gerddi Rhys Prichard', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 29 (1996), 257–80; Siwan Non Richards, *Y Ficer Prichard* (Caernarfon: Pantycelyn Press, 1994), 14–26.
- 73 NLW, Calvinist Methodist Archive, Diaries of Howel Harris, Diary 41, 28 February 1739.
- 74 Ibid., Diary 41, 1 March 1739; Diary 70, 26 February 1741.
- 75 Diary 262, 24 May 1770.
- 76 Prys Morgan, 'From a Death to a View: the Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 46–7.
- 77 Quoted in Prys Morgan, *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1981), 41.
- 78 See generally Gwyn Walters, *Y Wasg Gyfnodol Gymreig 1735–1900: the Welsh Periodical Press 1735–1900* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1987).
- 79 See generally, W. P. Griffith, 'Preaching Second to No Other under the Sun': Edward Matthews, the Nonconformist Pulpit and Welsh Identity during the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in R. Pope (ed.), *Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland c. 1700–2000* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 61–83. On preaching and public prayer as oral genres, see the remarks of Brynley F. Roberts, 'Oral Tradition and Welsh Literature: a Description and a Survey', *Oral Tradition*, 3 (1988), 79–80.

- 80 For instance, Charles Edwards, *Gwyddorion y Grefydd Gristianogol* (London, 1679); Robert Llwyd, *Llwybr Hyffordd yn cyfarwyddo yr anghyfarwydd i'r Nefoedd* (London, 1682); John Davies, *Llyfr y Resolusion* (London, 1684).
- 81 John Bunyan, *Taith y Pererin*, ed. Stephen Hughes (London, 1688). This work is a Welsh translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.
- 82 NLW, Calvinist Methodist Archive, Trefeca MS 3004, 4–5. The passage referred to is Luke 15:10.
- 83 *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: a Dictionary of the Welsh Language* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950), sv 'hunan-'.
- 84 Saunders Lewis, *Williams Pantycelyn* (London, 1927), passim.
- 85 'Chapel civility' is Prys Morgan's helpful phrase, 'Wild Wales: Civilizing the Welsh from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries', in Burke *et al.* (eds), *Civil Histories*, 279–80.
- 86 See, for instance, D. Ll. Morgan, *Y Beibl a Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1998).
- 87 Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, *Explorations and Explanations: Essays in the Social History of Victorian Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1981), 217–35; E. T. Davies, *Religion and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1981), 27–34.
- 88 Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880–1980* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Gwyn A. Williams, *The Welsh in Their History* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), esp. ch. 8; R. Merfyn Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992), 330–57; Jenkins (ed.), *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century*, passim; Graham Day and Richard Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness: Aspects of Nationalism in Nineteenth-century Wales', in Gareth Rees, Janet Bujra, Paul Littlewood, Howard Newby and Teresa L. Rees (eds), *Political Action and Social Identity* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 91–115.