

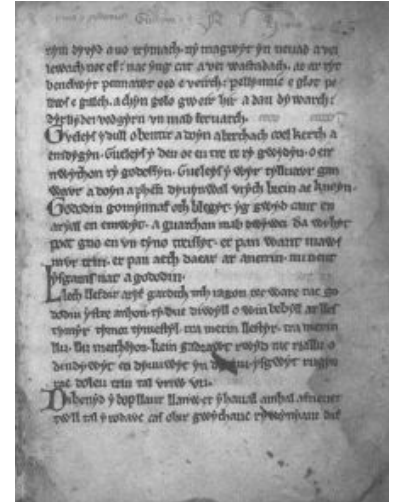
# HOW LONG HAVE CORACLES BEEN IN BRITAIN?

Coracles in Wales have been mentioned throughout the ages.

Amongst the oldest poetry in Wales is the poem known as **Y Gododdin** written by Aneirin, which can be dated to the **7<sup>th</sup> Century**. Part of the poem is a lullaby called **Pais Dinogad**: a mother tells her son, Dinogad, of his father's skills in hunting:

'ef lledi bysc yng corwc  
mal ban llad, llew llywywg.'

'he would kill a fish in his coracle  
As a lion kills an animal'



Hywel Dda

In medieval times, **Welsh law** gives the value of a coracle as **eight pence**:

'corwc wyth keinhawc  
kvfreith'



Text from the Laws of Hywel

The first clear description of the true Welsh river coracle appears in the writings of **Gerallt Cymro** (Gerald of Wales) who in **1188** accompanied the Archbishop of Canterbury on a journey through Wales recruiting men for the **Third Crusade**. He wrote:

'To fish or cross streams, they use boats made of willow, not oblong nor pointed at either end, but almost circular or rather in the form of a triangle, covered without but not within with raw hides.

When a salmon thrown into one of these boats strikes it fiercely with its tail, it often oversets it and endangers both vessel and boatman. In a clumsy manner, in going to or coming from the river, the fishermen carry these boats on their shoulders.'

