

Weapons and Fighting in *Y Gododdin*¹

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Y Gododdin is a collection of verses attributed to the poet Aneirin that praise and commemorate the military exploits of various heroes of the North British kingdom of Gododdin, along with comrades-in-arms from other northern lands and even from as far afield as Gwynedd in Wales.² The warriors appear to be based at Edinburgh, perhaps specifically the Castle Rock, and there is mention of going to, and fighting at, *catraeth*, often identified with Catterick in Yorkshire.³ Enemies mentioned include the Angles of Deira and Bernicia, though John Koch suggests that the verses actually recall fighting between the British kingdoms of Gododdin and Rheged with Anglian allies on both sides; fighting against Scots and Picts is also mentioned, though again, it seems there was at least one Pict on the side of the Gododdin warriors.⁴ It is likely, indeed, that *Y Gododdin*'s various poems, stanzas or *awdlau* do not all relate to a single battle.⁵ The 'battle of Catraeth' is, in any case, unattested outside Welsh poetry, and the date and historicity of *Y Gododdin* continue to inspire debate. Some scholars argue that it did originate in the British North in the sixth or early seventh century (or, more narrowly, c.600), whilst others maintain that it could have been the work of later, Welsh poets, perhaps those of the ninth or tenth century whose patrons had an interest in the 'Old North'.⁶

¹ This article is based on papers delivered at the International Ancient Warfare Conference, Aberystwyth, 18–20 September 2013, and for the Celtic Studies Reading Group in the Welsh Department, Aberystwyth University on 7 March 2012; each was derived in part from my doctoral thesis (Day 2010). I thank the organizers and delegates at both meetings for their constructive comments and questions, and am also grateful to Gruffydd Aled Williams and Marged Haycock for their encouragement and guidance during my doctoral studies, to Aberystwyth University for the award of a Postgraduate Research Studentship, and to Ken Dark, Marged Haycock and John Koch for advice and comments on this paper (any errors that remain are, of course, my own responsibility).

² Several editions and translations have been published: I have relied chiefly upon Williams 1938, Jackson 1969, Jarman 1988, Koch 1997, referring also to interpretations in Isaac 1993, 1996, 1999a, 2001, and Thomas 2012. Where I quote a single published translation precisely, below, I cite the reference, but my other translations from *Y Gododdin* are also much indebted to these authorities. The discussions below do not include the 'Gorchanau' which are also

preserved in the Book of Aneirin. Also omitted are three verses that are generally agreed to be unrelated interpolations within *Y Gododdin*, namely the 'Strathcarron stanza' (B¹.1/A.78), a stray *englyn* from the Llywarch Hen cycle (A.44) and 'Pais Dinogad' (A.87); the first two, in any case, do not mention weapons, and the third is concerned with hunting rather than warfare.

³ Williams 1938: xxv–xl; Jackson 1969: 75–8, 83–4; Koch 1997: xiii–xiv. For different views on *catraeth* see Isaac 1999b: 144; Dunshea 2013, and see further Padel 2013: 137–40; Haycock 2013: 18.

⁴ Williams 1938: xxv; Jackson 1969: 6–8; Jarman 1988: xxxvi–xxxviii; Koch 1997: xiii–xlii (see also Cessford 1995); Dunshea 2013: 104.

⁵ O Hehir 1988: 73–9; Isaac 1999b: 147. The Welsh term *awdl* can mean either 'stanza' or 'poem'.

⁶ For a range of views see Williams 1938: xvi; Jackson 1969: 11–13, 22–5; Jarman 1988: xvii–xxviii, lxviii–lxxv; Koch 1997: xiii–cx; Mac Cana 1971; Greene 1971; Jackson 1973–4; Charles-Edwards 1978 and 2013: 364–78; Dumville 1988; Isaac 1999a and b; Padel 2013. On the 'Old North', see Haycock 2013; Padel 2013: 141.

The debates over the date and historicity of *Y Gododdin* have at times turned to its portrayal of warfare and material culture, perhaps most notably with regard to the plausibility or otherwise of its cavalry tactics.⁷ As yet, however, there has been no full, quantitative survey of the references to weapons and their usage in *Y Gododdin*, and this is what is attempted below. The terminology and imagery are discussed in relation to other Welsh poetry: both to the securely dated twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry, mostly by named poets and addressed to named patrons and recently edited in *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion*, and to other poetry of the period before 1300, diverse in genre, date and purpose but collectively known as the *hengerdd*. Reference is also made to archaeological and historical evidence, addressing the question of the extent to which such comparisons can be used for dating purposes.

The A- and B-texts

Y Gododdin is not a single poem with a beginning, middle and end. The surviving text, recorded in the Book of Aneirin (Cardiff, Central Library 2.81) in the second half of the thirteenth century, was written by two scribes known as A and B, each apparently using different written sources: there are 88 *awdlau* in the A-text, and 42 in the B-text which is incomplete, part of the manuscript having been lost (Jackson 1969: 41–6; Huws 2000: 72–5). Several *awdlau* are duplicated in variant form in both texts, either in their entirety or, sometimes, partially, but there are many that are not duplicated; there is also some duplication within the A- and B-texts.⁸ The B-text is widely acknowledged as using the more archaic orthography which has suggested to some that it may be more original than the A-text; furthermore, Graham Isaac, following Ifor Williams, has suggested that the B-text itself derives from two or more written sources, its latter part (which he terms BII, containing *awdlau* B.24 to 42) showing a greater number of archaic orthographic features than the first part (BI, containing *awdlau* B.1 to 23).⁹ John Koch, in his 1997 edition, adopts the same division but refers to the sections as B² and B¹.

Below, references to *Y Gododdin* are from Ifor Williams's 1938 edition, using his line numbers but with Kenneth Jackson's *awdl* numbers and John Koch's added superscript (B²/B¹).

Terminology

Although the frequency and diversity of *Y Gododdin*'s weapon references has long been recognized (Williams 1938: lxii; Jackson 1969: 31–3), uncertainties over interpretation make it difficult to answer even the basic question of how many references, or how many different weapon terms, it contains. It seems best to offer a range of minimum and maximum figures, the former being those instances that are (reasonably) certain, and the

⁷ Higham 1991; contrast the counter-arguments in Cessford 1993; Hooper 1993; Dark 1994: 199; Rowland 1995. On weapons and warfare in *Y Gododdin* and its material culture in general, see also Alcock 1971, 1983, 2003.

⁸ Jackson 1969: 44–5, and see the tables in Owen 1978: 125–6; Dumville 1988: 9.

⁹ Isaac 1993, 1999a; see also Williams 1938: 214; Koch 1997: lxvi–lxxx.

latter including both certain and uncertain instances.¹⁰ Another problem is the issue of duplication within and between the B- and A-texts. There are between 30 and 36 references to weapons in the B-text and 102–15 in the A-text, so, for *Y Gododdin* as a whole, there could be said to be at least 132 references to weapons and perhaps as many as 151. These, however, cannot all be considered as independent references. There are seven or eight instances of weapon terms that are duplicated (differences in form or orthography aside) in two, or on one occasion three, variant *awdlau*, and a further four instances where one term has replaced another or where corrupt forms, difficult to interpret, have intruded during transmission leading to more than one possible interpretation.¹¹ Taking these into account, there remain between 120 and 138 ‘independent’ references to weapons in *Y Gododdin*.¹²

Between 35 and 43 different words are used to refer to the weapons – although, as discussed below, it seems some were not well-established weapon terms but, rather, poetic metaphors. For offensive weapons (or their heads, blades or shafts) the words used are *ais*, *arf(au)*, *berau*, *cangen*, *ceingiell*, *cethrawr*, *cleddyf(awr)*, *coed*, *cyllell*, *fflamddur*, *glasawg*, *gweyllion/gweyllion*, *gwayw(awr)*, *gwialen/?gweyelin/?gwial*, *hëyrn*, *llafn/llafnawr/llafnau*, *lläin*, *llwry*, *mehyr/myhyr*, *offer*, *onn*, *paladr/peleidr*, *?pâr/parau*, *pedryollt bennawr*, *pren*, *saffwy*, *ysbâr/ysberi* and, perhaps, *banceirw*, *colwedd*, *cymawn*, *gweilging*, *gwýdd*, *saxa* and *sychyn*.¹³ It is also worth including here *bwyellodau* ‘axe-strokes’ (*bwylljadeu* in the manuscript), derived from *bwyell* ‘axe’.¹⁴ For shields, the words used are *aes/?ais*, *aesawr*, *calch*, *cylchwy*, *rhodawg*, *rhodawr*, *(y)sgwyd(awr)* and perhaps *ysgeth*. Unsurprisingly, there are many more different weapon terms in the A-text than there are in the (shorter) B-text (Table 1).

Spears account for the majority of the references to weapons and have the most diverse terminology. The most common spear term is *gwayw* (plural *gwaywawr*) which occurs 15–16 times and is represented in the B- and A-texts (in addition, an older form of the word may survive as the second element in *tafloyw* (*tavloyw*, A.82.1008)).¹⁵ *Gwayw* was the most

¹⁰ The boundary between ‘certain’ and ‘uncertain’ is, of course, subjective.

¹¹ For duplicated instances see B².24.596/B¹.3.607/A.48.587 (*scuyt/ysgwytl/ysgwytl*), B².29.851/A.68.838 (*laueneu/llavneu*), B¹.6.493/A.41.482 (*prenn*), B¹.11.276/A.23.267 (*ysberi*), B¹.14.752/B¹.15.734 (*saffwy*; cf. *seri* in A.62.718 (not a weapon term, see Williams 1941–4)), B¹.18.316/A.26.306 (*onn*), A.38.425/A.53.431 (*lavnawr*) and perhaps B².40.785/A.63.777 (*guid/wit*) (the *gwýdd* here may or may not be weapons). For the instances of substitution or corruption see B².25.511/A.42.500 (*saxa/axa*; corrupt in B².35.523), B¹.4.1080/A.86.1057 (*rodawc/rodawr*), B¹.4.1089/A.86.1066 (*llain/llavyn*), B¹.5.473/A.40.463 (*guiau hem/waiw*) (see further below). Cf. also B².33.868/A.69.860 (*gweilging/gweilch*); here the A-text reading (‘hawks, warriors’) is not a weapon term and so does not affect the totals given above.

¹² That is, ‘independent’ in the sense that they are not in obviously parallel, duplicated passages. I have not attempted to adjust the figures to take into account any instances of deliberate repetition for literary effect, or imitation of earlier material in later additions/accretions, or the (perhaps) unconscious influence of one part of the text on another during copying (see, for example, Williams 1941–4 on *seri/saffwy*).

¹³ Singular and/or plural forms are given, to represent the usage in the texts. For ease of comparison, when discussing the terminology I generally use standardized modern Welsh spellings (cf. Jarman 1988; *H-cd*).

¹⁴ A.82.1012, and see Williams 1938: 310. A further eight or nine terms likewise suggest the presence of weapons without actually denoting them, namely *arfawg*, *cyfarfawg*, *cleddyfal*, *gwylfan*, *peleidyral* (or *peleidyral*), *preñial*, *saffwyawg*, *sgwydawg* and perhaps *tafloyw* (these derive from weapon terms that, unlike *bwyell*, are represented in *Y Gododdin*). Together, these 9–10 derived terms (including *bwyellodau*), account for a further 14–15 ‘independent’ instances (three in the B-text and 12–13 in the A-text, with one (*cleddyfal*) being duplicated in both). If these were added to the weapon references noted above, the overall total would be 134–53 ‘independent’ weapon(-related) references. (For some other derived terms, see n. 53.)

¹⁵ Singular *gwayw* is in B².26.1205, B².39.813, A.37.420, A.40.463, A.64.797 and perhaps B².28.1220 (reading *guaiu rud* ‘red/bloody spear’ or *gnaut guaiu rud* ‘customary is a red/bloody spear’ for *guaurud*, see Williams 1938: 341 and Isaac 1999a: 75 (n. 76); contrast Koch 1997: 9); plural *gwaywawr* is in B¹.17.1151, A.10.87, A.17.170, A.24.280, A.26.302, A.29.336, A.33.374, A.36.402, A.39.456 and A.62.723.

Table 1. Weapon terms used in the A- and B-texts. Terms used in both A and B are shown in bold (even if, in one of the texts, they are present only in a derived or corrupt form, as in the case of *saffwy* / *saffwyawg* and *saxa* / *axa*). Derived forms are shown in curly brackets. Modern spellings are used, and in some cases manuscript readings have been amended (see main text and notes).

	B-text	A-text
Spears (or their heads or shafts)	gwayw(awr) ?gweilging gwial(en) ?gwŷdd onn ?pâr ?pren saffwy ysberi	ais, ?banceirw, berau, cangen, ceingiell, cethrawr, coed, gwayw(awr) {?tafloyw}, ?gweyelin {gwyalfan}, gweyllion/gweŷllion, ?gwŷdd, llafnawr, ?llwry, onn , paladr/peleidr {peleidryal/ peleidriad}, parau , ?pedryollt bennawr, ?pren {prenial}, { saffwyawg }, ?sychyn, ysbâr/ysberi
Cudgels / clubs / staffs	?pren	?cymawn, ?llwry, ?pren
Spears / blades / swords	lläin myhyr	?colwedd, fflamddur, glasawg, hëyrn, lläin , mehyr
Blades / swords	llafnau/llafnawr	llafn/llafnawr/llafnau
Swords	cleddyf { cleddyfal }	cleddyf(awr) { cleddyfal }
Knives	cyllell ?saxa	?axa
Axes		{bwyellodau}
Generic weapons	?arf {cyfarfawg}	arf(au) {arfawg}, offer
Shields	aesawr calch rhodawg (y) sgwyd(awr) {sgwydawg}	aes/?ais, aesawr , calch , cylchwy, rhodawr, ysgwyd(awr) , ?ysgeth

common word for a spear elsewhere in the poetry, too (Day 2010: 211), as well as being widely used in prose. This may account for the instance where, in one of the A-text *awdlau*, this term ([g]wairw) appears to have replaced an earlier *gwialen* (*guialen(n)*) which survives in corrupt form (*guiau hem*) in a parallel B-text *awdl* (A.40.463/B¹.5.473).¹⁶ This *guialen(n)*, according to John Koch's analysis (1997: 161), may itself have been a corruption of **lqm=lenn* 'gauntlet' or 'gauntleted hand' (later *lloflen*, see GPC s.v.). There are no other instances of the singular form *gwialen* in *Y Gododdin* and though there are one or two possible instances of plural forms that may denote spears, their interpretation

See Koch 1997: 231 on *tafloyw* as a compound of *taul* 'cast, throw' and *guoïu*, the Old Welsh form of *gwaew*.

¹⁶ See Williams 1938: 187–8, 189, where it is noted that the ending *-en* is needed for the rhyme.

is uncertain.¹⁷ This, then, seems not to have been a familiar spear-term as far as the (later) scribes were concerned, and indeed there are only one or two possible instances of its use in relation to weapons in other pre-1300 poetry.¹⁸ Its usual meaning was ‘rod, twig, withe, sapling’ (*GPC* s.v.), though the context of three instances of the compound *gwyalfan* – two in *Y Gododdin* and one in another text from the Book of Aneirin, ‘Gwarchan Tudfwlch’ – shows that it could readily be transferred to a (wooden-shafted) spear, as it was again in a fifteenth-century poem by Lewys Glyn Cothi.¹⁹

After *gwayw*, the next most common word for a spear (or spear-shaft) is *paladr* (pl. *peleidr*), with six instances; it also occurs in the compound *peleidryal* (or *peleidriad*) ‘spear-thrust(s)’ (all forms are in the A-text only).²⁰ Like *gwayw*, *paladr* is well represented as a spear term in both poetry and prose. Other fairly well-attested spear terms occurring in *Y Gododdin* are: the plural nouns *ais* (1–2 instances, A.23.262–3) and *berau* (A.23.263);²¹ the collective noun *onn* which could mean either ‘ash (tree(s), wood)’ or ‘spears (made of ash)’ (B¹.18.316/A.26.306);²² the singular noun *saffwy* (B¹.14.752/B¹.15.734; cf. *saffwyawg* ‘(warrior) with a spear’, A.34.384); the plural *parau* (A.19.209; singular *pâr* is, possibly, in B².27.1211),²³ and, lastly, both singular *ysbâr* and its plural, *ysberi* (A.84.1044, B¹.11.276/A.23.267). *Berau* could denote skewers or spits as well as spears, and ‘spear’ was also an alternative meaning for *gwaell* or *gwäell* (‘skewer, bodkin’, *GPC* s.v.), the plural *gweyllion* or *gweyllion* being represented, according to Graham Isaac (2001: 277–8), by a single instance in *Y Gododdin* (A.58.684, [g]weyllion).²⁴ Another word for pointed objects that seems to denote weapons (most likely spears) is *cethrawr* (A.14.126), a plural form of *cethr* ‘nail, spike’; and further, more obscure terms that may be used in a similar way are *sychyn* (A.74.933), thought to be a diminutive form of *swch* ‘point, spike’ (or ‘ploughshare’), and *banceirw* ‘?antlers’ (A.49.610) (and cf. *colwedd*, discussed below).²⁵ There is also an interesting reference to *pedryollt bennawr* (A.11.95), these ‘four-cleft’ or ‘four-sided’ ‘heads’ probably being spear-heads that were square in cross-section, though a reference to arrows or bolts is another possibility (see below).²⁶

¹⁷ A.54.660 ([g]weyelin, translated as ‘little spear(s)’ in Koch 1997: 103; contrast Thomas 2012: 79, ‘little twigs’); B¹.21.1172 (*gwyllaes*, read as *gwial laes* and translated as ‘long spears’ in Thomas 2012: 121).

¹⁸ *LPBT* 2.48 (*gweyl*), *CBT IV* 6.154 ([g]wial), and cf. the derived verbal noun *gweyhelu* in *PT IX*.17; see the line notes in these editions.

¹⁹ *GLGC* 89.33 (praising a patron a *dyr gweilyn wrth dre Galais* ‘who breaks a spear near the town of Calais’). For *gwyalfan* see A.13.120, A.29.338 and ‘Gwarchan Tudfwlch’ line 1308 (Williams 1938: 51), and on the meaning, see further Williams 1938: 105; *GPC* s.v. *gwialfan*, *gwyalfan* ‘position of spears in the van of battle, place of spear-fighting’; contrast Koch 1997: 85, ‘the points of shafts’.

²⁰ *Paladr* is in A.50.621, and *peleidr* in A.33.374, A.72.910, A.74.931 (twice) and A.77.961. For *peleidryal* see A.72.911. Williams 1938: 289 suggests reading *peleidryat* (*peleidriad*) for the sake of the rhyme but contrast Koch 1997: 112, 225.

²¹ *GPC*² s.vv. *asen*² (c) ‘lath’ and *bêr* (a) ‘spear’ (contrast (b), ‘spit, skewer’); Williams 1938: 142.

²² *GPC* s.v. *onn*. Cf. Old English *æsc* which could mean ‘spear’ as well as ‘ash’ (Swanton 1973: 26). *Y Gododdin* also refers to (‘sown’) spears of holly wood, see B¹.17.1151 (*gwaewaur kelin*).

²³ For the interpretation of *bar* in B².27.1211 as either *bâr* ‘anger’ or *pâr* ‘spear’, see Williams 1938: 339; the former is favoured by the later editors and translators.

²⁴ Cf. the *gwaell paladyrlas hirtrum* ‘long heavy blue-shafted lance’ in *BR* 16.3–4, and, perhaps, the *gweill* in *EWSP* 426 (44c), interpreted as ‘javelins’ in Williams 1935: 139 (contrast Rowland, *EWSP* 566).

²⁵ See *GPC* s.vv. *cethr* and *swch*¹; *GPC*² s.v. *banceirw*. *Sychyn* may represent the warrior himself as a weapon-/spear-point or ploughshare pushing through enemy ranks (Williams 1938: 296). There are no other instances of *banceirw*: for its interpretation as ‘antlers’ (*ban* ‘horn’ + *ceirw* ‘stags’), an apt metaphor for spears, see Williams 1938: 221–2. Cf. *rhaidd* (< Latin *radius*), a term used in later poetry (and elsewhere) that could mean ‘spear’ as well as ‘antler’ (*GPC* s.v. *rhaidd*¹).

²⁶ For instances of *pen* ‘head’ denoting a spear-head see *GPC* s.v. *pen*¹ 2(b), *CO*² line 799, *HP* 70.3; cf. *dardeu pedrogyl* ‘four-cornered darts’ and [g]wayw ... *a’e benn yn bedrogyl* ‘lance with a four-cornered head’ in *YCM*² 83.3, 103.19–20. The fourteenth-century poet Dafydd ap Gwilym used *pedryollt* to describe a *boltt* ‘bolt, arrow’ (*DG.net* 21.12; Parry 1952: 460), and he, or a (near-) contemporary, also referred to the head (*pen*) of a four-sided bolt (*pen boltt bedwarollt*, *DG.net* 163.26).

In addition to *onn* and *gwialen*, other terms for trees, wood or wooden items that seem to denote spears in *Y Gododdin* are *cangen* 'branch' (A.71.891 and 893, and perhaps A.48.578), *coed* 'wood, trees ... pieces of wood' (A.84.1038) and perhaps *gwŷdd* 'tree(s), branches' (B².40.785/A.63.777, also in *blaenwydd*, A.75.945).²⁷ Of these three, it seems only *gwŷdd* is used to denote spears in any other surviving pre-1300 poetry.²⁸ The word *ceingiell* (A.47.569), otherwise attested only in lexicographical sources according to *GPC* (s.v.), may be another wood-related term if it derives from *cainc* 'branch' as suggested by Ifor Williams (1938: 212), and the context in *Y Gododdin* certainly suggests that it denotes a weapon (held by a warrior). By contrast, *gweilging* (B².33.868), though well-attested with meanings such as 'rod, branch, staff', seems to be used figuratively of a hero and so might mean either 'spear-(shaft)' or 'post', in the sense, respectively, of 'warrior' or 'supporter' (Williams 1938: 281).²⁹

Another wood term that might refer to a spear or its shaft is *pren*, occurring in variant *awdlau* in the B- and A-texts (B¹.6.493/A.41.482). This, however, could equally well be understood as a humble staff or piece of wood, the context being praise of a man so brave that he would tackle a wolf *without* such an item.³⁰ Again, a single instance of *llwry* (A.18.179) could mean 'staff' or 'spear-(shaft)' or indeed 'cudgel' or 'club'.³¹ (A further possible reference to a staff, cudgel or club is *cymawn* (A.55.666) but in this case, too, the interpretation is uncertain.³²) Lastly, it seems that *llafnawr*, the plural of *llafn* (well-attested with the meaning 'blade, sword'), could on occasion denote spears, this being the most likely interpretation for the *llafnawr* that are 'sown' in an *awdl* occurring in two variant forms in the A-text (A.38.425/A.53.431). In summary, the 22 terms discussed above in relation to spears (not including *cymawn* '?club, cudgel') account for 40–56 references (8–14 in the B-text and 32–42 in the A-text), or 35–49 'independent' references.

A further, fairly common weapon term in *Y Gododdin* is *lläin* with seven instances, two in the B-text and the remainder in the A-text.³³ A derivation from Irish *laigen* or *läigen* 'broadheaded spear' was suggested but has been challenged,³⁴ and in some instances in

²⁷ *GPC* s.vv. *cangen* 1(a), *coed* and *gwŷdd*¹ 1(a). In the case of *gwŷdd*, the 'trees of battle' said to have been trampled in both texts (*segit guid gunet /sengi wit gwned*) could be fallen warriors (Williams 1938: 265; Jackson 1969: 113), but compare the trampling of spears in A.62.723 (*sengi waewawr*). As regards *blaenwydd*, Williams (1938: 297) suggested it could mean 'foremost spears' or could be a personal name, but contrast Koch 1997: 115, 'the points of wooden shafts'.

²⁸ *GPC* s.v. *gwŷdd*¹ 1(d); Day 2010: 507, 534–5.

²⁹ *Gweilging* is not well-attested as a spear term but cf., perhaps, 'Gwarchan Cynfelyn' (Williams 1938: 53, line 1340), *CBT II* 30.3 (Gwilym Rhyfel) and *CBT IV* 11.3 (Cynddelw). It is also worth noting that in *Y Gododdin* the parallel A-text *awdl* has *gweilch* 'hawks, warriors' where the B-text has *gweilging* (A.69.860/B².33.868), and that Koch (1997: 14–15, 143) favours *gweilch* as the earlier reading.

³⁰ *GPC* s.v. *pren* (c) 'piece of wood, wooden stick or staff ... spear'. Williams (1938: 191) suggests that the idea is that this feat would be performed without *even* so much as a staff; cf. Koch 1997: 33 ('wooden shaft'), but contrast Jackson 1969: 101, 133 ('spear'). Cf. also *pren-* as an element in *prenial*, one of the many Welsh

terms for battle or fighting, which probably reflects the prominence of wooden weaponry such as spears (and shields) (A.71.899; Williams 1935: 75–6).

³¹ Williams 1938: 125 (drawing comparison with Old Irish *lorg*, see *eDIL*²⁰¹³ 2 *lorg* (a) 'staff, stick', (b) 'cudgel or club', (c) 'handle or shaft of an implement'); see also Jackson 1969: 123; Koch 1997: 73, 194.

³² In *G* 100 *cymawn* is compared to Old Irish *cammán* 'hurley-stick' (*eDIL*²⁰¹³ s.v.); cf. Williams 1938: 239 ('pastwn'); Isaac 1996: 102 ('?club'); contrast its interpretation as 'feat(s)' in Koch 1997: 103, 219.

³³ B¹.4.1089, B¹.14.758, A.6.58, A.11.95, A.55.666, A.80.990, A.83.1015. In most of these cases there are rhymes with words like *trin* and *byddin* (*bedin*), indicating that the *lläin* of the text was bisyllabic *lla-in* (*lläin* in Modern Welsh spelling). In the court poetry, by contrast, there are instances of rhymes with both *-in* and *-äin*: Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, indeed, uses both in the same poem (*CBT III* 16.143, 164).

³⁴ As Ifor Williams noted (1938: 85), the lack of *i*-affection (of *a* to *e*) suggests that *lläin* is a loan-word; this remains true even if his proposed derivation from *laigen* or *läigen* is rejected (see O'Rahilly 1942: 153 (n. 2)).

the later court poetry the context indicates that a *lläin*, *eurllain*, *glaslain* or *rhuddlain* is a sword or blade.³⁵ None of the instances in *Y Gododdin* can be identified with such certainty as swords as opposed to spears, or vice versa, though it is worth noting that the term is never used for weapons that are ‘sown’.³⁶ Also of interest is the substitution in the A-text of *llavyn* (*llafn*) ‘blade, sword’ where *llain* (*lläin*) appears in the corresponding *awdl* in the B-text (B¹.4.1089/A.86.1066).³⁷ This appears to be another instance of a scribe using a familiar weapon term to replace a less familiar one.³⁸ This substitution need not mean that the two terms were considered as synonyms, however, since even if a sword had been substituted for a spear the line would still have made sense: this *llafn* or *lläin* is simply something with which the hero would strike or kill. It remains uncertain, therefore, whether the instances of *lläin* in *Y Gododdin* should be interpreted as ‘spear(s)’, ‘sword(s)’ or ‘blade(s)’.

Similarly, *mehyr* or *myhyr* (A.19.203, B¹.12.228) might mean ‘spears’, ‘swords’ or ‘blades’: there is nothing in the context of either these instances in *Y Gododdin*, or the three in the court poetry, that would help narrow down the meaning.³⁹ Another term that is hard to categorize is *hëyrn*, the plural of *haearn* ‘iron’ (A.14.128, A.74.932). This could mean ‘iron weapons’, which might be (or include) swords, or it could denote spears – most likely javelins or darts, bearing in mind that there are several references in the court poetry to the ‘sowing’ of *hëyrn* (Day 2010: 245–9). Another (probably) metal-related term is *fflamddur* ‘flame, flaming’ + ‘hard, steel(y)’ (A.74.934).⁴⁰ This word also occurs in the court poetry, being used as an adjective (‘of/with flaming steel’) to modify *cleddyf* ‘sword’ and *llew* ‘lion, brave warrior’ (*CBT V* 9.6, *CBT VII* 37.1). The element *fflam*- is associated with swords in the later poetic tradition as well: fourteenth-century poets mention not only a *fflamddurgledd* and a *fflamgledd* but also a [*c*]ledd o *fflamawchddur glân* ‘sword of fair flaming-edged steel’.⁴¹ In *Y Gododdin*, a warrior (*gwr*) is praised as being *flamdur rac esgar* ‘(with) flaming steel against the enemy’;⁴² here *fflamddur* could be either an adjective or a noun (if the latter, it is probably a metaphor or metonym representing the warrior). In either case, the presence of a sword could be implied, but it is also possible that the word refers more generally to the warrior’s armaments or is intended to suggest his own fierce nature.⁴³

³⁵ The first elements in these compound nouns mean ‘gold’ or ‘splendid’ (*aur/eur*-), ‘bright’ (*glas*) and ‘red’ or ‘bloody’ (*rhudd*). The mention of a *glaslain* on its owner’s hip or thigh (*ar glun*) shows that it is a sword rather than a spear (*CBT IV* 6.128–9), whilst the use of *bulch/bolch* to describe damage to a *lläin* and a *glaslain* (*CBT III* 16.143; *CBT V* 21.15) is reminiscent of the poets’ references to swords that are similarly ‘notched’ (Day 2010: 317). The word *eurllain*, by contrast, is used as an adjective, modifying *cledd* ‘sword’ (*CBT IV* 4.77), and may refer to the blade, specifically (hence ‘gold-/splendid-bladed’); cf. *r[h]uddlain lafn*, perhaps ‘red-bladed sword’ (*CBT VII* 4.5). For later usage and interpretations of *lläin/llain* see GPC s.v. *llain* (a).

³⁶ Although *coch eu cledyuawr na phurawr / eu llain* (A.11.94–5) is generally interpreted as describing two different kinds of weapons (e.g. Jackson 1969: 120, ‘Red were their swords, may their spears never be cleansed’), the poet could be referring to swords (*cleddyfawr*) and their blades (*lläin*). It seems *lläin* is

also a plural or collective noun in some other instances in *Y Gododdin* (see, in particular, B¹.14.758 and A.6.58) and in ‘Gwarchan Maellderw’ (Isaac 2002: 92).

³⁷ This substitution destroyed the line’s internal rhyme (*trin / lläin*) (Williams 1938: 319).

³⁸ As noted below, *llafn* is the most common term for an offensive weapon in *Y Gododdin*. Furthermore, there are only 2–3 instances of *lläin/llain* in other *hengerdd* poetry and 15 instances in court poetry, as compared with 20 and 113, respectively, of *llafn*, including compounds and derivatives (Day 2010: 508–9, 535–9).

³⁹ Williams 1938: 129; Morgan 1997; Isaac 2001: 282; cf. *CBT I* 9.80, *CBT III* 17.22, *CBT IV* 4.236.

⁴⁰ GPC s.v. *dur*, *fflam* and *fflamddur*; on *dur* see further Parina 2015.

⁴¹ *GDC* 1.41, *GMBen* 17.10, *GGMi* 3.198.

⁴² Cf. Jackson 1969: 146; Koch 1997: 21.

⁴³ For the former, cf. *arueu dur* ‘hard/steel(y) weapons’ (A.31.359) and *heyrn dur* ‘hard/steely irons [=weapons]’ (A.14.128), and for the latter, the use of

Another word that may relate indirectly to a weapon's metal blade is *glasawg* (A.79.979), derived from *glas* ('bright', 'blue' or 'steel-coloured'; *GPC* s.v. *glas*⁴⁴). There are no similar instances in the context of weapons or war (*GPC* s.v. *glasog*) and it is probably only a poetic usage. The poet might well have had a sword in mind, such weapons being more noticeably 'steel-coloured' than spears and also bright, and indeed there are references to *cleddyfawr* and *llafnawr* that are *glas* elsewhere in *Y Gododdin* (A.1.7, A.77.960). It is worth noting, though, that in other pre-1300 poetry *glas* is used to describe spears as well as swords.⁴⁴ Lastly, there is *colwedd* (A.20.223), a word attested nowhere else. This could be another term that relates to a spear's pointed nature, if the first element is *col* ('awn, beard of corn' or 'spike'), but it is worth noting that a cognate of *col* is Irish *colg* whose meanings, though similar, also include 'sword'.⁴⁵ Together, *colwedd*, *fflamddur*, *glasawg*, *hëyrn*, *lläin* and *mehyr/myhyr* account for 13–14 references (all 'independent', and counting *colwedd* as uncertain) of which only three are in the B-text (*lläin*, *myhyr*).

There are ten instances in *Y Gododdin* of *cleddyf* 'sword' (pl. *cleddyfawr*), one in the B-text and the remainder in the A-text.⁴⁶ Also used was the derived noun *cleddyfal* 'sword-stroke', with five instances in the A-text, one of which is also in a parallel *awdl* in the B-text.⁴⁷ More common though – indeed, the most common term for an offensive weapon in *Y Gododdin* – is *llafn* (pl. *llafnawr*, *llafnau*), with five instances in the B-text and 17 in the A-text; of the latter, one is duplicated within the A-text itself and another in the B-text.⁴⁸ The usual meaning of *llafn* is 'blade', or 'sword', and most of these instances probably do refer to swords or their blades; however, as noted above, *llafnawr* that are 'sown' (A.38.425/A.53.431) are assumed to be javelins or darts.⁴⁹ Accordingly, though there are a total of 22 instances (or 20 'independent' instances) of the term, it seems there are only 20 instances (19 'independent') that are likely to relate to swords.

There is a single mention of a *cyllell* 'knife' (B².26.1206) and also an intriguing *saxa*, perhaps denoting the type of Anglo-Saxon knife or single-edged sword known as a seax. Unfortunately, there is corruption in the relevant lines in all three variant *awdlau*: *un s saxa secisiar* (B².25.511), *uener sehic / am sut seic sic sac* (B².35.522–3), *vn axa ae leissyar* (A.42.500). John Koch (1997: 5–6) suggested that the original reading included *saxa* and offered the tentative translation 'A [?] Saxon dirk', but Graham Isaac (1999a: 68–9) proposed that the original reading was *un axis eicsior* (in later, Middle Welsh spelling, *un*

durawd 'of steel, hard as steel, cruel, severe' to describe a warrior or leader (*dragon*) as well as a blade (*llavyn*) (A.22.244 (*duawt* in the manuscript), A.54.663); see Williams 1938: 139, 238–9; *GPC* s.v. *durawd*.

⁴⁴ For spears, see *EWSP* 441 (89c), 443 (101b), Roberts 1978: 302 ('Ymddiddan Arthur a Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr', line 78), *CBT I* 27.37, *CBT IV* 4.27 (*glas feraw*, in each case), *CBT VII* 24.126 (*newyddlas feraw*), *CBT III* 16.199, 26.10 (*glasfer*), *CBT V* 16.22 (*glas waywawr*), *CBT III* 16.37 (*glasbar*); for swords or blades, *CBT II* 21.8 (*llafn glas*), *CBT IV* 6.128, *CBT V* 21.15 (*glaslain*) (see n. 35).

⁴⁵ *G* 161 ('?bron, calon' ('breast, heart') or "gwaewffyn" neu debyg' ("spears", or something similar); Koch 1997: 166 ('weapon point'); *GPC* s.v. *col*¹; *eDIL*²⁰¹³ s.v. *colg*. If a *colwedd* was indeed a sword, then on the basis of etymology it would be expected to have a pointed, stabbing blade; however, J. P. Mallory (1992: 134–5) notes that even the well-attested *colg* may not necessarily have retained this specific

meaning at the time of composition of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, so the interpretation and significance of this single instance of *colwedd* remain very uncertain (see further the discussion at the end of the 'Fighting with spears and swords' section, below).

⁴⁶ Singular *cleddyf* is in B².26.1206, A.27.325, A.34.385, A.46.557, A.47.563, A.80.993; plural *cleddyfawr* is in A.1.7, A.11.94, A.33.375, A.82.1012.

⁴⁷ B¹.18.315/A.26.305, A.29.337, A.41.480, A.58.685, A.70.876.

⁴⁸ Singular *llafn* is in A.19.215, A.26.309, A.54.663, A.57.414, A.86.1066 (contrast *lläin* in B¹.4.1089); *llafnawr* is in B².34.1221, B².36.762, B¹.21.1170, B¹.22.1176, A.5.49, A.7.66, A.9.76, A.12.100, A.14.127, A.33.377, A.36.405, A.38.425/A.53.431, A.77.960, A.77.963; *llafnau* (*laueneu/llavneueu*) is in B².29.851/A.68.838.

⁴⁹ Cf. *GPC* s.v. *llafn* 1(a) 'blade (sometimes sword, &c.)'.

aes eissyor), meaning ‘alone, like a shield’ or ‘one like a shield’. Isaac does, however, suggest that the *saxa* in B².25.511 may have arisen because a scribe thought of the Old English word for a knife when faced with an unclear form in his source material.⁵⁰

Axes are represented by a single mention of axe-strokes (A.82.1012, reading *bwyellodau* (< *bwyell* ‘axe’) for *bwylllyadeu*).⁵¹ Also mentioned are generic ‘weapons’. There are five clear instances of *arf(au)* ‘weapon(s)’ in the A-text and a possible sixth in the B-text.⁵² Also represented in *Y Gododdin* are the derivatives *arfawg* ‘armed’ (A.5.46) and *cyfarfawg* ‘fully armed’ or ‘armed alike’ (B¹.9.1135).⁵³ There is a single instance of *offer* ‘tool(s), weapons’ (A.27.322).

Turning to shields, the most common term is (y)*sgwyd* (pl. (y)*sgwydau*); this word, cognate with Old Irish *sciath*, is also the most common shield term in other pre-1300 Welsh poetry.⁵⁴ There are 23–4 instances in *Y Gododdin* of which seven are in the B-text and 16–17 in the A-text; one instance is duplicated three times in variant *awdlau*, hence there are 21–2 ‘independent’ instances.⁵⁵ The derived term (y)*sgwydawg* ‘(warrior) with a shield’ occurs once (B¹.22.1179, reading *scuidauc* for manuscript *scyndauc*; Williams 1938: 333). There are four instances of *aesawr*, which could be a singular or a plural noun (B².34.1223, A.14.124, A.19.208, A.77.958), and the related term *aes* is in A.17.155.⁵⁶ As noted above (in relation to *saxa* as a possible knife term), an early form of *aes* (*axis*) may have been the original reading in variant lines in the B- and A-texts (B².25.511/B².35.522–3/A.42.500; Isaac 1999a: 68–9); and there are one or two possible instances of a disputed plural form, *ais* (*eis*), in the A-text.⁵⁷ There are also instances of

⁵⁰ Another interpretation that has been suggested is ‘Saxon’, see Williams 1938: 195; Rowland 1990; Thomas 2012: 68–9.

⁵¹ Williams 1938: 310; cf. *GPC* s.v. *bwyellod* ‘axe stroke’ (where, however, this instance is not cited).

⁵² Though generally a singular noun (pl. *arfau*), *arf* is thought to be derived from the Latin neuter plural *arma* (*GPC*² s.v.), and may itself have been originally plural in meaning (John Koch, personal communication, 2015); see, in particular, *Aryf angkynnull* (A.23.258), interpreted as ‘Scattered weapons’ in Williams 1938: 141; cf. Jackson 1969: 126; Jarman 1988: 18, 95; contrast Isaac 1996: 70, ‘Disordering weapon’. Other instances of *arf* are in A.49.608, A.57.413, A.76.957 and possibly B¹.3.597. The plural *arfau* could mean (or came to mean) ‘armour’ as well as ‘weapons’ (*GPC*² s.v. *arf*), and either meaning would be possible in the case of *peredur arueu dur* (A.31.359) (or, more broadly, ‘armament(s)’, as in Koch 1997: 87, ‘Peredur of the steel armament’). Other armour terms represented in *Y Gododdin* are *llurig* and *seirch* (Williams 1938: lxii; Jackson 1969: 32; see further Alcock 1971: 333); cf. also *haearn gaduc* (A.46.556), translated ‘iron armour’ in Jackson 1969: 135 and Koch 1997: 99 (see G 93; Williams 1938: 209).

⁵³ *GPC*² s.v. *arfawg*; *GPC* s.v. *cyfarfog*; Koch 1997: 37 (cf. *GPC* s.v. *cyf*- (b)). Some further terms related to *arf*, but not (necessarily) so strongly suggestive of the presence of actual armaments, are *arfod* (A.19.217), *arfodiawg* (A.22.246) and perhaps *arfaeth* (A.3.33, A.13.111, A.25.295, A.32.364) and *arfaethu* (*aruaethei*, A.19.217); see *GPC*² s.v. *arfod*¹ ‘stroke (of weapon) ... attack’, *arfodiog* ‘dealing blows, severe’, *arfaeth*

‘intention’ and *arfaethaf*¹: *arfaethu* ‘to intend ... prepare’; see also G 38–9, and Koch 1997: 55, 65, 188 (on *arfaeth* as ‘martial purpose’, ‘preparing for battle’).

⁵⁴ Williams 1938: 63–4; *GPC* s.v. *ysgwyd*²; Day 2011: 30.

⁵⁵ The ‘duplicate’ instances are B².24.596/B¹.3.607/A.48.587 (*scuyt/ysgwyt/ysgwyt*). Elsewhere, forms without an initial y- (the earlier form of the word) are in B¹.17.1148 (singular) and B².28.1219, B².31.445 (plural); whilst those with a y- are in B².26.1205, A.1.5, A.3.36, A.17.169, A.29.335, A.39.449, A.50.617, A.64.796, A.84.1043 and perhaps A.24.277 (singular), and B¹.21.1169, A.4.45, A.14.122, A.31.360, A.33.373, A.39.448, A.41.479, A.71.902 (plural). In the case of A.24.277 the line may be corrupt; a suggestion in Williams 1938: 145 that y *duw* *ysgwyd* should be read *ardwy* *ysgwyd* was followed by later editors and translators (e.g. Jackson 1969: 126, ‘protective (?) shield’), but contrast *ei ddwy* *ysgwydd* in *H-cd* (‘his two shoulders’).

⁵⁶ *GPC*² s.v. *aesawr*¹ and *aes*.

⁵⁷ In A.23.262–3, *kynnor eis* closely follows a reference to *eis* ‘javelins, darts’. Williams 1938: 142 suggests reading *kynnor treis*, cf. Jackson 1969: 126, ‘in the front rank of the fray’, but contrast Koch 1997: 79, ‘in the front rank of shields’. In A.72.910, spears (*peleidyrr*) are said to be *en eis*, which could mean ‘in laths’ (i.e. in fragments), ‘in ribs’ or ‘in shields’ (Williams 1938: 289; for ‘laths’ and ‘ribs’ see *GPC*² s.v. *asen*²). The first interpretation is favoured by Jarman (46: 1988), the second by Jackson (1969: 145) and Isaac (1996: 80), and the third by Koch (1997: 113). For ribs and shields in this context, compare

cylchwy (A.35.395) and *rhodawg* (B¹.4.1080); both of these occur in other pre-1300 poetry but *rhodawr*, which replaces *rhodawg* in a parallel A-text *awdl* (A.86.1057) and also occurs in a similar line in another *awdl* (A.2.23), is not attested anywhere else.⁵⁸ There are references to damaged *calch* ‘lime-wash’, probably referring to painted shield-decoration or, by extension, to the shields themselves (B².34.1228, A.36.403, A.88.1123; also *gwyngalch* ‘white lime-wash(ed shields)’, A.11.95).⁵⁹ Lastly, John Koch (1997: 179, 231) suggested that *ysgeth* (A.3.36, A.82.1008) represents **sceth*, a borrowing from Early Old Irish **scēth* ‘shield’ (the precursor of *sciath*), translating it as ‘Scottic shield’ and suggesting that ‘this form probably goes back to dark-age North Britain and the ethnic interaction there’.⁶⁰

If (y)*sgeth* is counted as uncertain there are seven or eight shield terms used in *Y Gododdin*, accounting for 36–43 references (10–11 in the B-text and 26–32 in the A-text) or 33–9 ‘independent’ references. Aside from the ‘Scottic’ (y)*sgeth*, it is unclear to what extent these were understood as denoting different kinds of shields: though *cylchwy*, *rhodawr* and *rhodawg* contain elements meaning ‘circle’ or ‘wheel’ and were probably understood as denoting round shields, specifically, the other terms do not imply any particular shape.⁶¹

Clearly, it is the spear terms that show the greatest diversity in *Y Gododdin*, as elsewhere in the poetry (see Table 1).⁶² Some of this no doubt reflects a genuine diversity in form and function: hand-held spears, cavalry lances, or javelins or darts. It is, however, extremely difficult to identify words that consistently denote spears of any particular type, even amongst those that may be most confidently regarded as regular ‘spear terms’, namely *ais*, *berau*, *gwayw(awr)*, *onn*, *paladr/peleidr*, *pâr/parau*, *saffwy* and *ysbâr/ysberi*.⁶³ Though semantic changes over time may account for part of the problem a further factor, no doubt, is the poets’ tendency to use terminology loosely on occasion in order to vary their vocabulary or to meet the demands of rhyme and alliteration.⁶⁴ Lastly, and importantly, it seems that the different, variable elements of a spear’s construction – its wooden shaft, the species of wood, and the iron spear-head’s pointed or blade-like shape – provided enormous scope for the development of new terminology, particularly in a

Cynddelw’s references to spears (*parau*) lodged in the *ais* of the dead (*yn ais meirw*) and to a spear (*gwayw*) in *ais* and in an *ysgwyd* (CBT IV 6.52–3, CBT III 26.90). GPC² (s.v.) gives only *aesau*, not *ais*, as a plural form of *aes*, cf. *G* 13; contrast Roberts 1978: 304 and *DG.net* 161.63 (*hoelion ais* ‘shield nails’).

⁵⁸ The original reading in A.86.1057 was probably *rhodawg* (Williams 1938: 317).

⁵⁹ Compare *ysgwyt eur crwydyr* (A.29.335), discussed in the next section, below, and on shield decoration, see further Day 2011.

⁶⁰ Elsewhere, *ysgeth* has been interpreted as referring to a spear, to general weapons or armour, or to a warrior’s appearance or demeanour (Williams 1938: 76–7; Fulk 1978–80; Jackson 1969: 117, 149 (‘beauty (?)’, ‘style (?)’); Isaac 1996: 37, 81 (‘fair form’, ‘?shrug’)).

⁶¹ GPC s.v.v. *cylch*, *cylchwy*, *rhod¹*, *rhodog* and *rhodor¹*. On shield shapes, see further Day 2011; on *rhodawg*, *rhodawr*, see also Koch 1997: 157, 178.

⁶² Cf. Brooks 1991: 210 and Mallory 1992: 137, on spear terms in ‘The Battle of Maldon’ and the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

⁶³ Cf. Rowland 1995: 23. This matter remains problematic when *Y Gododdin* is considered in the wider context of Welsh poetry. For example, though the cognates and etymology of *gwayw* (GPC s.v.) suggest that it, or its earlier form *gwoew*, may originally have been a small spear, perhaps a javelin or dart, in *Y Gododdin* it denotes both spears used for throwing and those apparently used in close-quarters combat (see below), whilst elsewhere it seems to have become a widely used and apparently generic term for a spear – often applied, indeed, to couched lances in prose and late-medieval poetry (Day 2013: 245–8). Conversely, *pâr*, used (in its plural form) in *Y Gododdin* to denote spears used in close combat (see below), denotes a throwing-spear in PKM² 91–2 (and probably also in CO² lines 62–3, where the hero carries two in one hand). See further Day 2010: 240–56 (especially nn. 256 and 288).

⁶⁴ Cf. Brooks 1991: 210. For a late-medieval Welsh example, see Gruffudd Llwyd’s use of the loan-word *dart* to refer to what is clearly a couched lance: *Drylliaist ... / Dy ddart hyd ymron dy ddwrm* ‘You broke ... / your spear almost as far as your fist’ (GGL 11.61–2).

poetic context. It is likely, indeed, that several of the 'spear terms' discussed above were used, or began, simply as metaphors or metonyms for spears. Some may have gone on to become an established part of the poets' vocabulary, or gained even wider currency, whilst others were used only once or so rarely that each instance seemed new and original, to the poet concerned.⁶⁵

Though there are fewer terms denoting swords and shields, they, too, were clearly considered important: *ysgwyd* is the most common weapon term in *Y Gododdin*, *llafn* the second most common and *cleddyf* the fourth (after *gwayw*).

'Pedryollt bennawr' and 'ysgwyd eurgrwydr'

Y Gododdin's references to 'four-cleft/-sided heads' and 'gold sieve shields' provide an unusual hint of detail and offer the tantalizing possibility that they might be identifiable with artefacts or techniques known to archaeologists and so be useful for dating purposes. M. J. Swanton (1973: 37–9) compared *pedryollt bennawr* to spear-heads of triangular cross-section, becoming square at the tip, from the Dark Age site of Dunadd (Argyll) and also discussed rare spike-like Anglo-Saxon spear-heads, quadrangular in cross-section.⁶⁶ Interestingly, he referred to an apparent 'general abeyance of thrust weapons' from the later seventh century onwards, with perhaps 'a hiatus until the reintroduction of heavier defensive armour and more extensive cavalry some time during the eleventh century' (Swanton 1973: 39).⁶⁷ This would have implications for the dating of this part of the text, though it cannot place it unequivocally in the Dark Ages, of course.⁶⁸

There are, furthermore, other possible interpretations for *pedryollt bennawr*. Though the very nature of a 'four-sided' weapon-head suggests it was used for piercing rather than slashing, the context in *Y Gododdin* says nothing about how (or even whether) the *pedryollt bennawr* were used in battle: they might be the heads of hand-held spears, or javelins or darts, or even arrows or crossbow bolts.⁶⁹ This latter interpretation, again, would be plausible either for a Dark Age context or a much later one.⁷⁰ If *pedryollt bennawr* is indeed a reference to archery equipment used by *Y Gododdin*'s warriors, then it is unique. Indeed, the poets in general (before 1300) did not often mention any kind of

⁶⁵ Cf. Lewys Glyn Cothi's use of *gwielyn* (see n. 19).

⁶⁶ This interpretation seems preferable to the identification with a barbed angon in Jackson 1931–3.

⁶⁷ Compare the (late-)Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman spear-heads, with a thick, 'diamond'-shaped cross-section and apparently designed to pierce armour or shields, in Nicolle 1988: numbers 854 and 856.

⁶⁸ Note, too, that the relevant *awdl* (A.11) may have been added to the A-text during transmission (see n. 86).

⁶⁹ For javelins, compare the Roman *pilum* (Bishop and Coulston 2006: 50–3, 73–6, 129–30, 150–1, 200); contrast, however, the leaf-shaped North British spear-head from Buiston, Ayrshire (Munro 1882: 224–5; Alcock 2003: 162, 165). 'Four-sided' spear-heads may well have been atypical in the North (as they were, too, amongst the Anglo-Saxons).

⁷⁰ Both bows and crossbows were used in the Late Roman period (Southern and Dixon 1996: 116–18,

158), and were also known in Dark Age North Britain, and in Wales in the High Middle Ages (see Alcock 2003: 166–9; Day 2010: 153–73, 445–7, and the references cited in both). Crossbow bolts were of course characteristically square, and triple- and quadruple-vaned arrowheads dating from the third century AD have been found at Caerleon and Corbridge (Bishop and Coulston 2006: 166–7). A further possibility is that the poet had the bolts of a catapult or *ballista* in mind (I thank Ken Dark for this suggestion). On the use of such artillery by the Romans, see Bishop and Coulston 2006: 88–91, 168–70, 206–8, and for evidence that a similar kind of engine was known to the Franks and Anglo-Saxons, see Bradbury 1985: 8, 18. Cf. also John Koch's suggestion (personal communication, 2009) that the [c]atp[ul]l in another poem from the Book of Aneirin, 'Gwarchan Tudfwlch' (Williams 1938: 50–2, line 1290), might derive from Latin *catapultula*.

bows or arrows, partly no doubt because of the low status and non-heroic connotations of these weapons. It may be significant, therefore, that the *pedryollt bennawr* are associated with the Gododdin army in general rather than with any individual hero, which is precisely the context in which we might expect to find archery equipment mentioned, if it were mentioned at all.⁷¹ On balance, though, spear-heads do seem more likely. They would have been a more visible and impressive part of the warriors' equipment than arrow- or bolt-heads, and the association of *pedryollt bennawr* with *gwyngalch* (probably 'white lime-washed shields') also suggests spears.

Kenneth Jackson's interpretation (1969: 129) of *ysgwyt eur crwydr* (A.29.335) as a shield decorated with gold filigree aroused some debate with regard to the plausibility or otherwise of this technique before the late seventh century (Alcock 1983: 13; Cessford 1996: 59). However, *eurgrwydr* suggests more strongly a sieve-like pattern or ornament (Williams 1938: 162; Rowland 1995: 13 (n. 1)) or 'sieve-like open-work', perhaps with a curvilinear pattern in view of the derived verb *crwydro* 'to wander, meander' (Koch 1997: 85, 202); and indeed there are other possibilities as well (Day 2011: 42–4). This, then, is another instance where there are too many possible interpretations for any conclusions to be drawn for dating purposes.⁷²

Usage and distribution of major weapon-types

In order to carry out a meaningful comparison, the references for the most common weapon types only, excluding knives, axes and cudgels/clubs/staffs, were grouped into categories according to their usage and associations (Table 2).⁷³ As a result of the uncertainties discussed above, *lläin* was given its own category, *fflamddur*, *glasawg*, *hëyrn* and *mehyr/myhyr* were placed in a combined 'sword/blade/spear' category and *colwedd*, *gweilging*, *llwry*, *pedryollt bennawr*, *pren* and *ysgeth* were not included at all. Most instances of *llafn/llafnau/llafnawr* were treated separately as 'blades', save for the 'sown' *llafnawr* which were counted with the spears. The wide range (minima and maxima) of many of the totals given reflects uncertainties of interpretation, relating to either the meaning of the term itself, or interpretation of a particular instance as a particular type of weapon, or the context of the weapon's use. Though I have tried to take into account the wide range of published opinion the categorization is also to a large degree subjective, and the tables are intended only to provide a very rough overview of the way in which weapons were used by the poets.

More than half of the weapons are associated with particular heroes, and of these, most are used actively in battle (Table 2). Bloodstains are generally mentioned with respect to individual heroes, or to other warriors on the side with which the poet identifies (categorized as 'our side', for convenience), and are usually on offensive weapons.⁷⁴ As regards shields, though there are references to their being under attack or to the noise they make

⁷¹ Cf. the references to archery equipment in armies commanded by patrons in, for example, *CBT VI* 18.41 and *GLGC* 54.45–7, and see further Day 2010: 342–6 and Day 2013: 259–68. On attitudes to archery elsewhere, see Hatto 1940, and compare the poets' attitudes to knives and axes, discussed in the 'Literary context' section, below.

⁷² On this issue, and others relating to the use of

archaeological evidence to date or to 'flesh out' literary texts, see Mallory 1992: 103–15.

⁷³ Instances of derived terms such as *arfawg* were not included in the tables (but see n. 81). Also omitted were two doubtful and obscure instances of *arf* (B¹.3.597) and *cangen* (A.48.578).

⁷⁴ In addition to the instances in the 'bloodstain' sub-categories shown in the table, there are 2–4

Table 2. Distribution of major weapon-types in *Y Gododdin*. Figures are shown in bold when there are instances (either ‘certain’ or ‘uncertain’) in both the B- and the A-texts; elsewhere a superscript indicates in which text the instances appear. Parallel instances occurring in more than one ‘duplicate’ *awdl* are counted only once, except in the case of the last two columns. Sub-categories (rows) having zero instances were omitted.

	spears	<i>llain</i>	other s/b/s ¹	blades (<i>llafrn</i>) ²	swords (<i>clledyf</i>)	generic weapons	shields	Overall total	B-text total	A-text total
Hero										
active use	7-18	2-3	3-4	12	5 ^A	1 ^A	2 ^B	32-45	8-11	27-38
bloodstain ³	0-1 ^B	0	0	0	0	0	0-1 ^A	0-2	0-1	0-1
damage/disarray	0-1 ^A	0	0	0	0	0-1 ^A	9-13	9-15	4	8-14
mention only	6-10	0-1 ^A	1 ^A	2 ^A	2	2-3 ^A	4-8	17-27	5-6	13-22
figurative	0-3	0-1 ^A	0	0	0	0-1 ^A	1-4	1-9	0-2	1-8
totals ⁴	16-28	2-5	4-5	14	7	4-5 ^A	19-22	66-86	17-23	56-72
‘Our side’										
active use	1-2 ^B	0	0	2-3 ^A	0	0	0	3-5	1-2	2-3
bloodstain	0	1 ^A	0	1	1 ^A	0	0	3	1	3
array/formaton	0	1 ^A	0	0	0	0	1 ^A	2 ^A	0	2
mention only	3-4	0-2 ^A	0	0	1 ^A	0	2-4 ^A	6-11	0-1	6-11
totals	4-6	2-4 ^A	0	3-4	2 ^A	0	3-5 ^A	14-21	2-4	13-19
Non-specific										
active use	5-8 ^A	0-1 ^B	1-2	1-2	1 ^A	1 ^A	1 ^A	10-16	1-3	9-13
damage/disarray	1-3	0	0	0	0	0-1 ^A	5-7	6-11	2-3	4-9
mention only	0-1 ^A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0-1 ^A	0	0-1
totals	6-12	0-1 ^B	1-2	1-2	1 ^A	1-2 ^A	6-8	16-28	3-6	13-23
Enemies										
active use	4-7	0-1 ^B	0	0	0	0	2	6-10	2-3	4-7
damage/disarray	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 ^A	1 ^A	0	1
mention only	0-1	0	0	0	0	0	0-1 ^A	0-2	0-1	0-2
totals	4-8	0-1 ^B	0	0	0	0	3-4	7-13	2-4	5-10

¹ This category contains the swords, blades or spears denoted by *fflamdddur*, *glasawg*, *hëryn* and *melyr/mylyr*.

² This category excludes the *llafrnau* that are ‘sown’ in A.38.425/A.53.431, these being counted amongst the spears instead.

³ This sub-category includes only those instances where the blood is the *only* indicator of a weapon’s use in battle; see further n. 74.

⁴ Totals have been adjusted to take account of the fact that some instances were counted as ‘uncertain’ in more than one sub-category.

(B¹.17.1148, B².34.1223), their role in battle is most often represented by damage sustained, as in the case of *tull tal y rodawr* ‘pierced [was] the front/boss of his (round) shield’ (A.2.23) or, in the most extreme instance, *meint a gaffeilau / nyt atcoryei ohanau* ‘there did not return of it as much as his hand could grasp’ (B².34.1225–6). ‘Lime-wash’ or *calch*, too, could provide a visible record of the blows a shield had received, but *calch* could also denote the shield itself; a line such as *calch drei tyllei vydinawr* ‘[bearing a] battered lime[-washed shield] he would pierce armies’ (A.36.403), therefore, could refer either to a damaged shield or more specifically to the damage on its paintwork. This line makes it clear that the damage in no way impairs the warrior’s ability to fight, as also seems to be the case for most other references to damaged ‘hero’ shields. The serious consequences that might result from a shield’s failure are, however, suggested by another line, *Ny mat wanpwyf ysgwyf* ‘Not fortunately was the shield pierced’ (A.50.617).⁷⁵

It is only with respect to heroes that we find possible figurative references, with weapons being used as metaphors or metonyms to represent the warriors themselves or, in one case, to symbolize the protection that a deceased warrior used to provide: *O gollet moryet ny bu aessawr* ‘Through the loss of Moried there was no shield’ (A.77.958; Isaac 1996: 80). Most of the ‘figurative’ references are uncertain and could be interpreted differently: for example, the *arf* that ‘escaped’ in A.76.957 could be a metaphor whereby the warrior himself is envisaged as a weapon, or a metonym (‘weapon-bearing warrior’), or it could be envisaged as an actual weapon – whose ‘escape’ might nonetheless symbolize that of its bearer.⁷⁶ Other possible figurative references involve spears, a *lläin* and more shields.⁷⁷ Surprisingly, there does not appear to be any reference to a hero as *cleddyf* or *llafn*; however, the personal name (or nickname) *Llif* or *Llifiau* (B¹.13.257 *llif* / A.22.249 *llivyeu*), though not a weapon reference as such, does imply comparison of this hero to a similar sharp-edged blade.⁷⁸

Both the poems’ heroes and ‘our side’ in general are described as fighting with spear, sword and shield, but there are a few differences in the way these weapons are portrayed. Weapons that are simply mentioned as being carried into battle or present in battle (the ‘mention only’ sub-category) are represented particularly strongly for ‘our side’, in the A-text (see further at the end of this section). Furthermore, the only two references to specific weapons in array or formation are in the ‘our side’ category, namely ‘spears forming an array’ (*llain en emdullyaw*, A.6.58) and a ‘fortress of shields’ (*ysgorva ysgwydawr*, A.14.122). Also of interest is the word *gwernor* (*guernor*, B².38.1244), which may denote a defensive palisade of alder wood or a ‘wall’ of alder-wood shields (perhaps figurative, in either case) (Williams 1938: 344; Jackson 1969: 112). These references may be compared

instances of ‘actively used’ ‘hero’ weapons that are bloodstained or shed blood (*blaenwydd*, *ysberi* and perhaps *llafn(awr)*). Furthermore, the *sgwydawr* in B².28.1219, placed in the ‘non-specific’ sub-category, are both blood-stained and damaged according to Koch 1997: 9. A further possible instance of a blood-stained shield is in A.24.277, if [*t*]alvrið is interpreted as a speckled shield-face or -boss (cf. Koch 1997: 199, ‘polychrome boss’), and if this speckling is understood as denoting blood rather than damage or decoration (cf. instances where *brith*, or its feminine form, *braith*, modifies a term denoting an offensive weapon, as in A.26.309 (*llauyn vreith*), CBT III 12.19 ([*p*]eleidr ... *brith*)).

⁷⁵ See the translations of the *awdl* in Koch 1997: 101 and Jarman 1988: 36, which, however, differ over whether or not this blow led to the hero’s death.

⁷⁶ Cf. Isaac 1996: 180; Koch 1997: 117.

⁷⁷ A.37.420 (*gwayw*), B².27.1211 (?*pâr*), A.74.933 (*sychyn*), A.83.1015 (*lläin*), A.17.155 (*aes*; also perhaps in B².25.511/B².35.522–3/A.42.500 (Isaac 1999a: 68–9, discussed above)) and A.29.335 (*ysgwyd*). Further possible figurative references not included in the tables are in A.18.179 (*llawr*, Koch 1997: 73; contrast Williams 1938: 125; Isaac 1999b: 155), A.20.223 (*colwedd*) and B².33.868 (*gweilging*).

⁷⁸ Williams 1938: 140; GPC s.vv. *llif* ‘saw’, *llifiaf* ‘to saw’, ‘sharpen’.

to the Anglo-Saxon shield-walls mentioned in, for example, the poem 'The Battle of Maldon' (Abels 1991: 149; Brooks 1991: 214–15), or indeed the *cwr ysgwydawl* 'border of shields' in a later, Welsh poem by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (fl. c.1155–95) (*CBT IV* 3.37). It is worth noting here, also, the instances in *Y Gododdin* of *dull* 'rank, array' and its derivatives, and the references to the van (*cynnor*) and wing (*eithaf*, *?ôr*) of battle.⁷⁹ Despite *Y Gododdin*'s emphasis on the courage of its individual heroes, therefore, it seems they are envisaged as fighting within a well-organized army (some of whom, as Jackson notes (1969: 30), must clearly be foot-soldiers). Such references call to mind Gildas's mention of handbooks of weapons training left behind by the Romans when they left Britain, and his own awareness of the value of an 'orderly square' and 'right wing' (*Gildas* 6.2, 18.2; Dark 1994: 198); and indeed they are also echoed in the court poetry of Cynddelw and others.⁸⁰

The 'non-specific' category encompasses weapons that might belong to either side or to both. Some instances describe the general carnage of the battle, whilst in others, though the poet's focus is much narrower, it is still hard to say whose weapon(s) he has in mind. Swords and blades seem under-represented here: there are no instances of *llafn/llafnawr/llafnau* at all, and just a single instance of *cleddyfawr*, in a line describing a charge with swords and axe-strokes (A.82.1012).⁸¹ By contrast, the word *berau* is found in this category only, in the collocation *cat uereu* (either 'spear-fight' or 'battle-spears', A.23.263).⁸² It is here, too, that *gwŷdd* occurs, denoting things trampled underfoot (B².40.785/A.63.777).⁸³

The sub-categories 'active use', 'damage/disarray' and 'mention only' are all represented within the 'non-specific' category. The same is true of the 'enemies' category (that is, the category of weapons associated with forces or individuals opposing the poems' heroes), although here there is only a single mention of a damaged weapon (a shield) and fewer weapon types are mentioned: only spears, shields and perhaps *lläin*. Swords (*cleddyf(awr)*) and blades (*llafn/llafnawr/llafnau*), absent from this category, also seem under-represented in the 'non-specific' category (as compared with 'hero' weapons or those of 'our side'). This probably reflects both the high status of swords and their more personal, individual nature, as compared with the spear. Spears, as widely used, less status-dependent weapons, were perhaps the most natural weapon to be associated with enemies or used in impersonal battle-scenes. Their impressive appearance *en masse* may also have been a factor: it is interesting to note that the sole instance of *coed*, literally 'trees', applied to spears in *Y Gododdin* appears to denote enemy weapons (A.84.1038). Enemy spears were particularly likely to be portrayed as being used actively, representing, of course, the peril faced by *Y Gododdin*'s heroes. One hero is said to have 'placed his side

⁷⁹ Jackson 1969: 30–1; and see Williams 1938: 69, 228, 294 on *kynhorawc*, *cynhor*, *eithaf* and *mor* (reading *or*).

⁸⁰ E.g. *CBT IV* 6.99 (*ymddulliau*), *CBT II* 28.44 (*eithaf*), *CBT I* 9.62 (*cynnor*); on Welsh infantry tactics and organization see further Davies 2004: 177–86.

⁸¹ Cf. *cleddyfal* 'sword-stroke': of the five ('independent') instances, three relate to heroes, one seems 'non-specific', and the fifth could be in either category. As regards other derived terms, *arfawg* 'armed', *peleidyral/peleidriad* 'spear-thrust(s)', *saffwyaug* '(warrior) with a spear', *sgwydawg* '(warrior) with a shield' and *tafloyw* '?throwing a spear' all relate to

heroes; whilst *cyfarfawg* 'fully armed' (or 'armed alike') describes 'our side'.

⁸² For the former interpretation, see Williams 1938:142, 'brwydr â gwewyr'; Jackson 1969: 126, 'javelin-fight' (cf. *gwyalfan* 'place of spear-fighting' (n. 19) and *prenial* (n. 30)); for the latter, see Isaac 1996: 70, 'battle-spits'.

⁸³ The interpretation of the single instance of the compound *blaenwydd* (A.75.945) is uncertain (either 'hero' or 'non-specific'), and the single instance of *gweyllion/gweyllion* (A.58.684), likewise, could belong in either category.

against the spear(s) of enemies' (*em dodes itu ar guaiu galon*, B².39.813), whilst another is killed with a *cangen* (A.71.891). Enemy shields, by contrast, are holed, or fail to provide protection, or resound like thunder before a hero's onslaught (A.84.1043, A.3.36, B².31.444–5).

References to *calch* are confined to heroes and 'our side', though given the disparity in numbers across the different categories this may or may not reflect a perceived difference as regards the actual equipment used. This disparity also makes it difficult to know whether the poet(s) envisaged enemies as using different kinds of spears as compared with their own side. Of those spear terms used of enemy weapons, namely *cangen*, *coed*, *gwayw(awr)*, *peleidr* and perhaps *parau* and *ysberi*, all save *coed* are (probably) also used of 'hero' weapons or those of 'our side'.⁸⁴ It is also worth noting that, when praising Picts or men of Gwynedd, the poet(s) did not attempt to portray them as using armaments that were any different from those of *Y Gododdin*'s other heroes.⁸⁵

When the distribution of weapon references across the various categories and sub-categories is compared for the B- and A-texts, there are just two major differences. Firstly, the A-text has a greater proportion of references to the active use of 'non-specific' weapons, suggesting a greater interest in the wider battle (as a backdrop for the exploits of the poems' heroes). Secondly, the A-text shows a greater tendency to mention or describe the weapons of 'our side' *without* portraying them as being actively used (the 'mention only' sub-category). It is worth noting that, in both cases, some of the relevant references are in *awdlau* that may be later additions to the text. Of those six instances counted as certain in the 'mention only' sub-category for 'our side', all are in two *awdlau* beginning *Gwyr a aeth gatraeth* 'Men went to Catraeth' (A.11, A.33) which John Koch suggests were among those 'chained' *awdlau* added (or expanded) in order to provide a broader explanatory context for the fighting of *Y Gododdin*'s heroes.⁸⁶ Two further *awdlau* beginning *Gwyr/Gwr a aeth gatraeth*, namely A.10 and A.14, contain three out of the nine references counted as certain for 'active' 'non-specific' weapons, whilst a fourth is in *awdl* A.57, perhaps a late addition to another 'chain' (Koch 1997: 220).

Although the 'mention only' sub-category for 'hero' weapons is represented to a similar degree in the B- and A-texts, in numerical terms, it is worth drawing attention to the unusually detailed and attractive descriptive passage in *awdl* A.1, an elegy for Ywain son of Marro which seems to be another late addition, though it may well be a genuine elegy (O Hehir 1988: 73–4; Koch 1997: 176). Though the young man's courage is praised and his death in battle is strongly implied, he is not described as using either his 'light, broad shield' (*ysgwyt ysgauyn lledan*) or his (possibly) gold-embellished 'bright, fair swords'

⁸⁴ There is uncertainty in the case of *cangen* (for the interpretation of A.71.893, see the next section) and in the case of the *pâr* (singular form of *parau*) in B².27.1211 (see n. 23).

⁸⁵ The relevant *awdlau* are, for Picts, B².24/B¹.3/A.48, B¹.13/A.22, and, for men of Gwynedd, A.4, A.19, A.73, B¹.4/A.86 (Jackson 1969: 27–8, 78–9; Jarman 1988: xxxvi; Koch 1997: lxii, 131, 167). The only weapon associated with these Picts is a shield (*ysgwyd*) (though the personal name or nickname *Llif* or *Llivyeu* suggests comparison with a sharp blade, as discussed above). The weapons associated with men of Gwynedd are *ysgwydawr* (A.4), *mehyr*, *aesawr*, *llafn* and perhaps *parau* (A.19; for the interpretation of these *parau* as

'hero' or enemy weapons see n. 88), and *lläin/llafn* and *rhodawg/rhodawr* (B¹.4/A.86). All these terms are also used elsewhere in *Y Gododdin*, with the possible exception of *parau* (as noted above, the only instance of the singular form *pâr* is uncertain).

⁸⁶ Koch 1997: xcv draws particular attention to two 'chains' of *awdlau* beginning with variants of the formulae *kayawc kynhorawc* (*awdlau* A.2–A.5) and *gwyrr/gwr a aeth gatraeth/ododin* (A.6–A.14, A.21, A.33); some, including A.10 and A.11, he considers as later additions, whilst others, including A.14 and A.33, may have been built upon elements of older elegies (ibid. 185, 188, 206–7).

(*kledyuawr glas glan*).⁸⁷ It seems, then, that the differing genre or purpose of some of the additions to *Y Gododdin* affected the way in which its weapons were portrayed, in some cases broadening the focus from individuals to the army or battle as a whole but, in another, allowing a detailed, almost leisurely description of the gear of a young man whose participation in fighting at Catraeth, specifically, is neither mentioned nor implied.

Fighting with spears and swords

Some further inferences can be made about how weapons were used. 'Splintered, broken spears' (*gwaewawr uswyd agkyuan*, A.29.336), either belonging to a hero or surrounding him, suggest close-quarters combat rather than the use of javelins or darts, and there is a clear reference to cut-and-thrust fighting in another line from the A-text, *ef rwygei. a chethrei. a chethrawr* 'he would rend and pierce with [?spear]points' (A.14.126).⁸⁸ Furthermore, the line *ystwng kyn gorot goreu gangen* (A.71.893) could suggest a spear (*cangen*) lowered for a charge (Jarman 1988: 46; Koch 1997: 113), which would probably have involved a two-handed grip as employed by Roman cavalry.⁸⁹

It is, however, the throwing of javelins or darts that is the most clearly described kind of spear fighting in *Y Gododdin*.⁹⁰ In one *awdl* it is made clear that the warrior (Marchlew) fought in this way from horseback: *ur rwy ysgeinnyei y onn o bedryholl / llav y ar vein erch mygedorth* 'the hero who had once scattered his ashwood [spears] from the four clefts / of his hand while he was mounted upon a bright slender steaming [steed]' (B¹.18.316–17; Koch 1997: 47).⁹¹ There is a parallel, but longer, version of the *awdl* in the A-text, which, as well as including a variant version of the two lines quoted above (A.26.306–7), also has a further reference to spear-throwing: *heessit waywawr y glyw. / y ar llemenic llwybyr dew* 'He sowed spears in battle / from a leaping, broad-tracked steed' (A.26.302–3; Isaac 1996: 72).⁹² The A-text version also differs in its use, in lines 302 and 306, of the verb *hëu* 'to sow ... scatter, cast, throw', rather than *ysgeinio* 'to disperse ... scatter' as in the B-text (*GPC* s.vv. *heuaf*, *ysgeiniaf*). Both verbs suggest that several javelins or darts were thrown in quick succession. There are further instances of *hëu* in the B- and A-texts, describing the 'sowing' by individual heroes of *ais* 'spears' and *llafnawr* 'blades' (probably also denoting spears in this context), and the 'sowing' of *gwaywawr celyn* 'holly spears' by a group of Gododdin warriors (A.23.262, A.53.431/A.38.425, B¹.17.1151).⁹³ There is also a possible reference to both sides throwing missiles: *Milcant a thrychant a emdaflawr. / gwyralltlyt*

⁸⁷ A.1.5–8, and for *ethy eur aphan* see Jackson 1969: 115 ('fringes of worked (?) gold'); Koch 1997: 53 ('of painstaking gold wirework'). It is noteworthy, too, that Ywain's shield is said to be on his horse's crupper or hindquarters (*ar bedrein*, line 6) rather than held in his hand or carried on his arm where it might be of more immediate use.

⁸⁸ Cf. *pareu rynn rwygyat / dygymynei. e gat* (A.19.209–10), translated as 'Threatening spears the tearer / Cut down in battle' by Jarman 1988: 16 and as '(With) rough lances he used to tear. / He would hew down in battle' by Koch 1997: 75.

⁸⁹ See Rowland 1995: 24–5, and the illustration in Bishop and Coulston 2006: 131; cf. the horseman depicted on a gilt bronze roundel from the Viking ship-burial at Gokstad, Norway (Graham-Campbell

and Kidd 1980: 159). Note, however, that Isaac (2001: 279) interprets the *cangen* in this line as an enemy spear that the hero caused to be lowered (in submission or defeat).

⁹⁰ Cf. the discussion of the battle scene on the Pictish cross-slab known as Aberlemno 2, thought to depict Picts and Northumbrians, in Cessford 1993; Hooper 1993: 190–1; Aitchison 2003: 86–8.

⁹¹ The 'four clefts of the hand' are the gaps between the fingers and thumb (Williams 1938: 98). On the equine associations of the hero's name (*march* means 'horse, stallion'), see further Koch 1997: 172.

⁹² On these two lines as a later accretion, see Koch 1997: 172.

⁹³ Cf. *tavloyw* (A.82.1008), interpreted as 'throwing a spear' in Koch 1997: 121, 231.

gwynnodynnt waewawr ‘a hundred thousand and three hundred cast at each other, bloodily they splashed spears’ (A.10.87; Jackson 1969: 169).⁹⁴

In her important article on the cavalry tactics of *Y Gododdin*, Jenny Rowland (1995: 22–7) notes that the weapons and tactics described, including the throwing of spears, are similar to those used by Roman auxiliary cavalry, and suggests that the Romans’ spear-throwing could itself have derived from earlier Celtic practices. The ninth-century Bretons likewise employed light cavalry using javelins (Hooper 1993: 190; Rowland 1995: 27–8) and indeed, as John Koch has shown, the early eleventh-century Breton-Latin Life of Iudic Hael contains a description of javelin ‘sowing’ that is reminiscent of that in *Y Gododdin*:

Uel, more inquilinorum in campo iactantium, Iudicaelus iactaret; ubicumque uoluisset ibi iaculum suum descendebat

(Or, in the manner of farmers in their fields, sowing seed, Iudic Hael scattered his javelins, each landing wherever he intended) (Koch 2005: 257–8)

Furthermore, it seems both English infantry and Norman cavalry threw spears at the battle of Hastings, this being clearly shown on the Bayeux tapestry (Ross 1963: 132–3). There is evidence that spears were also thrown by Welsh armies in this period, and later. Orderic Vitalis, in his account of the death of Robert of Rhuddlan in 1088 or 1093, describes his shield being weighed down by javelins or darts thrown by Gruffudd ap Cynan’s men, and Gerald of Wales states that twelfth-century Welsh armies were accustomed to begin a battle by throwing showers of javelins;⁹⁵ whilst archaeological evidence shows that light spears, suitable for throwing, were in use in Wales as late as the thirteenth century.⁹⁶

Spear throwing or ‘sowing’ is mentioned several times in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry (Day 2010: 240–50). In most cases it is not stated whether or not this was done from horseback, but mounted spear ‘sowing’ does seem to be implied in Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr’s elegy for Owain Gwynedd (who died in 1170):

Glas ferau hëyrn heusant,
Glas lasar gwasgar gwisgasant,
Am dwll farchogion marchogasant—wŷr
Am du llŷr a lliant.

‘they sowed bright iron-tipped spears [literally, ‘irons’], they wore blue-painted broken shields, warriors rode around wounded horsemen beside the ocean and the sea.’ (*CBT* IV 4.27–30)

⁹⁴ The splashing of the *gwaywawr* with blood may or may not have been envisaged as a direct consequence of the ‘casting’, and the interpretation of *emdaflawr*, too, is uncertain. See further Williams 1938: 95; Koch 1997: 61, 185; contrast, also, Jarman 1988: 8, ‘charged against each other’; Isaac 1996: 277, ‘will be thrown around’ (explained as “felled, routed” or the like’).

⁹⁵ *OV* IV 140–1, *Desc. Kamb.* II.3, and see further Davies 2004: 149–51; Day 2010: 84–94.

⁹⁶ Caple 2007: 192; Jessop 2007: 206. For earlier, Anglo-Saxon and North British spear-heads suitable for javelins, see Swanton 1973: 6–7; Alcock 2003: 162–5. A Dark Age javelin-head from Wales, with a long metal shaft between the (leaf-shaped) blade and the socket, is discussed by Barford et al. (1986); however, it is hard to envisage such a large, heavy weapon (probably derived from the Roman *pilum*) being ‘sown’ from horseback.

It is impossible to say whether Owain's men or, indeed, the heroes of *Y Gododdin*, really did 'sow' javelins or darts in the sense that they carried several into battle and threw them in quick succession. If they did, they may have carried them bunched in one hand, as suggested by descriptions in the tales of 'Culhwch ac Olwen' and 'Peredur'.⁹⁷ Alternatively, it may be that the 'sowing' image was one that appealed so strongly to the poetic imagination that it came to be used to describe anyone who threw a spear – an interesting contrast with the image of a warrior as 'reaper' which also occurs several times in *Y Gododdin*. Indeed, Marchlew, the 'spear-sower' mentioned above, is portrayed as a reaper in the same *awdl* (in the A-text only): *yt ladei a llawyn vreith o eithin. / val pan vel medel ar vreithin* 'he would strike/slay with a mottled fierce blade, as when a reaping-party/reaper strikes in unsettled weather' (A.26.309–10).

Another *awdl* describes a hero cutting or slaying with 'the sharpest blade' (*llavyn llymaf*), and compares his enemies to *brwyn* 'rushes' falling before his hand (A.57.414–15). Such references suggest the use of a weapon's edge rather than its point: perhaps a long, slashing sword is envisaged, akin to earlier Celtic blades or the Late Roman *spatha* – though indeed, similar swords were used by the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings and continued in use throughout the High Middle Ages.⁹⁸ Judging by references elsewhere in the poetry, the term *cleddyf* was also used of this kind of long, slashing sword.⁹⁹ By contrast, as discussed above, one possible etymology for *colwedd* suggests it may have been a pointed, stabbing sword. A parallel might perhaps be drawn with Pictish swords, which seem to have been relatively short and able to be used for both slashing and stabbing (though their tips seem rather blunt), or alternatively with the Late Roman short sword or *semispatha*.¹⁰⁰ The interpretation of *colwedd* is far too uncertain to draw any conclusions, however; and, as seems to have been the case with spears, the sword terms in general may not always have been used with any great precision (in the poetry, at least).¹⁰¹

Weapons in the A- and B-texts: summary

There are far fewer weapon terms in the B-text than in the A-text – unsurprisingly, given the disparity in length. Furthermore, it is in the A-text that the more obscure or unusual terms tend to be found (Table 1, and see the next section). As regards weapon types, knives are better represented in the B-text (or could be said to occur *only* in the B-text, depending on whether or not the A-text's *axa* is accepted as a corruption of an earlier

⁹⁷ These young heroes are described setting out on horseback carrying, respectively, two javelins and a 'handful' of darts (the terms used are *pâr* and *gaflach*); Peredur later uses one of his darts to kill an enemy whilst (apparently) still riding his horse (*CO*² lines 62–3, *HP* 10.4–5, 14.23). Cf. a carved capital from Auvergne, of late eleventh- or early twelfth-century date, that depicts a 'Horseman of the Apocalypse' holding three spears in one hand (Nicolle 1988: number 707H). Roman cavalrymen, by contrast, might use a quiver to carry javelins (Bishop and Coulston 2006: 78).

⁹⁸ Rowland 1995: 24; Southern and Dixon 1996: 103; Bishop and Coulston 2006: 82, 202, 271; Oakeshott 1991: 1–3.

⁹⁹ E.g. *cleddyfir* 'having a long sword' (*CBT VI* 15.21); *Piau y cleddyf clau ... / Clwyfir ...?* 'Whose is the swift sword ... that causes a long wound ...?' (*CBT II* 16.17). Note also that Old Irish *claideb* '(slashing) sword' is cognate with *cleddyf*, and may indeed be of British origin (*eDIL*²⁰¹³ s.v. *claideb*; Kelly 1971; and see further Mallory 1992: 132–4).

¹⁰⁰ On Pictish swords, see Laing 2000: 85–93; Aitchison 2003: 47–52; Alcock 2003: 161–3; on Late Roman short swords, see Southern and Dixon 1996: 111; Bishop and Coulston 2006: 154–7 (note especially the tapering, sharp-pointed blade from the third-century Künzing hoard).

¹⁰¹ See n. 45, and (on spear terms) the discussion at the end of the 'Terminology' section.

saxa), whilst axes (specifically, axe-strokes) are mentioned only in the A-text. Javelins or darts are mentioned in both texts, and it is interesting that a poet or scribe of the A-version was inspired to expand upon the description of Marchlew's spear-sowing: this technique, then, continued to be considered important during *Y Gododdin*'s development. The significance of the absence of some spear terms found in the A-text (including the common term *paladr/peleidr*) from the B-text is unclear, since we do not know what kind(s) of spear they may have denoted. It is, though, perhaps worth noting that both *cleddyf(awr)* 'sword(s)' and *cleddyfal* 'sword-stroke' are used disproportionately often in the A-text: nine and five instances, respectively, as compared with the single instances of each in the B-text. (By contrast, *llafn* 'blade, sword' and its plural forms are equally well-represented in both texts.) The significance of this greater prominence of *cleddyf(awr)* and *cleddyfal*, specifically, in the A-text is, again, unclear. It might reflect an increased usage of swords during the period of *Y Gododdin*'s development, or an increase in their status, or an enhanced poetic awareness of their importance as fitting and desirable armaments for heroes (and patrons): it is the 'bright, fair swords' of Ywain son of Marro that are (perhaps) gold-ornamented in the elegy added at the start of the A-text. Furthermore, as discussed above, as well as indulging in such (relatively) detailed description of the splendid appearance of weaponry, it seems that later additions to the A-text also paid increased attention to the weapons of the army or battle as a whole.

Literary context

Though much of *Y Gododdin*'s vocabulary (and imagery) is echoed in other pre-1300 poetry, there are some differences in the terminology used for weapons. Fourteen of *Y Gododdin*'s (possible) weapon terms do not occur (with the same meaning, or in some cases at all) in either the court poetry or the other *hengerdd* poetry, namely *banceirw*, *cangen*, *ceingiell*, *cethrawr*, *coed*, *colwedd*, *cymawn*, *glasawg*, *offer*, *pedryollt bennawr*, *rhodawr*, *saxa*, *sychyn* and *ysgeth*; a further two or three are in *Y Gododdin* and other *hengerdd* poems but not the court poetry, namely *bwyell(odau)*, *cylllell* and perhaps *gweyllion/gweyllion*, and two are in *Y Gododdin* and the court poetry but not in other *hengerdd* poetry, namely *fflamddur* and *mehyr/myhyr*.¹⁰² There are an even greater number of weapon terms that occur in the other poetry but are absent from *Y Gododdin* (Day 2010: Atodiadau Ia and Ib). These include *tarian* 'shield' and *glaiſ* 'lance, spear; sword', the former thought to be a borrowing of an Old English term itself borrowed from Norse, and the latter from Middle English or Old French: the absence of both is, of course, consistent with an early date(-range) for *Y Gododdin*.¹⁰³

Of the seventeen terms in *Y Gododdin* that are not in the court poetry, only one (*saxa*) is in an *awdl* represented in both the B- and A-texts (though this particular reading is only

¹⁰² I allow, of course, for differences and variations in form, including singular/plural forms. As noted above, *pedryollt bennawr* is unique to *Y Gododdin* only if both words are counted together as a single term. On the *gweill* in *EWSP* 426 (44c), see n. 24 above. I count *saffwy* as present in the other *hengerdd* poetry even though it occurs only as a derivative (*saffwyawg*, *PT* XI.29); by contrast, though *gorlasawg* (*PT* V.28, *PT* VIII.17) shares two elements with *glasawg*, it does not

derive from it according to *GPC* (s.v. *gorlasog*), so I count *glasawg* as confined to *Y Gododdin*. I also count the compound *fflamddur* as absent from the *hengerdd*, even though *dur* does occur as a weapon term in at least one instance (*EWSP* 459 (18b)), and see Day 2010: 291, 419–20, 502; Parina 2015: 6–9).

¹⁰³ *GPC* s.vv. *glaiſ*, *tarian*; on *tarian*, see also Meyer 1895–6: 83.

in the former), whilst another, *cyllell*, is in the B-text only. The remaining fifteen are represented solely in the A-text and some of these, including *colwedd* and *pedryollt bennawr*, may have been relatively late additions.¹⁰⁴ Others, however, could be as old as anything in *Y Gododdin*: because we know that part of the B-text has been lost, there is every reason to believe that some A-text *awdlau* that do not have any parallel in the surviving B-text could nonetheless preserve material that pre-dates the divergence of the two versions (see Koch 1997: lxxv).

Even so, not all of the weapon terms that are absent from the court poetry appear to be particularly obscure or archaic: *bwyell* and *cyllell* remain the usual Modern Welsh words for ‘axe’ and ‘knife’.¹⁰⁵ As regards *cangen*, *cethrawr*, *coed*, *gweyllion/gweyllion* and *offer*, these are all words that can, or normally, denote other things but could be applied to weapons at the whim of a particular poet; whilst *banceirw*, *ceingiell*, *glasawg* and *sychyn* are compounds or derivatives of more familiar words and could be poetic coinages (perhaps also metaphorical). Similarly, neither *pedryollt* nor *pennawr* is, separately, unique to *Y Gododdin*. *Colwedd* appears to be another compound noun, though both the identity of the first element and the interpretation of the word as a whole are uncertain. *Rhodawr*, by contrast, clearly derives from *rhod* ‘wheel’, as does *rhodawg*, though both may have a significance beyond weapons: John Koch suggests (1997: 157, 178) that they may have referred originally to chariots (meaning, respectively, ‘wheels’ and ‘wheeled’), with their presence in *Y Gododdin* suggesting ‘the persistence of descriptive phrases from the pre-Roman Iron Age’.¹⁰⁶

John Koch’s interpretation (1997: 179, 231) of (y)sgeth as a borrowing from Early Old Irish, meaning ‘Scottic shield’, is also significant, in terms of dating.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, it raises the interesting possibility that the item itself, as well as the word, was borrowed.¹⁰⁸ The same may be true in the case of *saxa*, if this was indeed envisaged as the Anglo-Saxon knife or single-edged sword known as a seax. The smaller kind was very common and would have been widely carried and used for a variety of everyday purposes, whilst the larger, sword-like long-seax is thought to have developed in the eighth century and was perhaps designed primarily for hunting; even these, though, are not often mentioned in accounts of battles, and though knives of any kind might be used in war it does not seem that the seax was a very prominent weapon for the Anglo-Saxons (Underwood 1999: 68–71). Knives of similar form appear to have been known to the Picts, though, again, they do not seem to have been common weapons of war (Aitchison 2003: 66; Alcock 2003: 166). The scarcity of knife references in *Y Gododdin* and other *hengerdd* poems suggests, likewise, that knives were not commonly used in war by the North British or the Welsh (not, at least, by the high-status combatants praised by the poets), though a poetic bias

¹⁰⁴ The line containing *colwedd* (A.20.223) is described as a late accretion by Koch (1997: 166), whilst both *pedryollt bennawr* and *cethrawr* are confined to a single ‘chained’ *awdl* (A.11, A.14; and see n. 86). *Rhodawr* and *ysgeth* are represented both in ‘chained’ *awdlau* (A.2, A.3) and elsewhere in the A-text.

¹⁰⁵ *Cyllell* derives from Latin *cullellus*; other terms thought to be of Latin origin are *aes*, *aesawr*, *arf*, *calch*, *cethr(awr)*, *llafn*, *mehyr/myhyr*, the element *cylch* ‘circle’ in *cylchwyr*, and perhaps *ysbâr* and also *offer* (if it is related to *offeren*) (see *GPC* and *GPC*² s.vv.; Koch 1997: 196 and Isaac 1999a: 68–9 (on *aes*, *aesawr*); Morgan 1997 (on *mehyr/myhyr*)). On the element *dur* in

fflamddur, see Parina 2015. (Cf. also *llurig*, from Latin *lōrica*; *GPC* s.v., and see n. 52 above.)

¹⁰⁶ On chariots and their significance, see Koch 1987; Aitchison 2003: 82–4; Day 2010: 451–3.

¹⁰⁷ For other interpretations, see n. 60. *Lläin* may be another borrowing from Irish, as noted above (see n. 34); cf. also n. 31 and n. 32 (on *llwry* and *cymawr*).

¹⁰⁸ It is worth noting that in one *awdl* an *ysgeth* is associated with the hero, whilst in another it fails to protect enemies, but the cultural identities of ‘our side’ and ‘enemies’ are in any case open to debate, as noted in the introduction above, and are not consistent across all the different *awdlau*.

against the knife as an 'unheroic' weapon may also be at work and probably accounts for the absence of knives from the court poetry.¹⁰⁹

Whether the *saxa* in *Y Gododdin* was the original reading or rather arose due to a later scribe's misapprehension, it is interesting that the poet or scribe saw nothing amiss in associating one of *Y Gododdin*'s heroes with an Anglo-Saxon or English(-sounding) weapon. This would certainly be in keeping with the idea that there were Anglian allies on 'our side' (see the introduction, above), though in any case the 'sharing' of weapons could readily have taken place across cultural, linguistic and ethnic barriers, whether acquired as gifts, in trade or as spoils of war.¹¹⁰ (Compare, also, the reference to a *honsex* or *honsecs* in the Welsh laws, a borrowing from Old English *hand-seax* or Middle English *hond-s(e)ax* ('hand-sax') (*Ior* 94, 156; Jenkins 1986: 301).)

Like knives, axes are absent from the court poetry and mentioned only rarely in the *hengerdd*. The rush or assault of axe-strokes (and swords) mentioned in *Y Gododdin* (A.82.1012–13) may have its closest parallel in 'Marwnad Cynddylan', a poem which, though surviving only in late manuscripts, may have had its origin in the seventh century in what would become the Welsh kingdom of Powys.¹¹¹ The first line of the poem ends with *by* and *eledd*, tentatively interpreted in John Koch's recent edition as *buyelledd* 'axe-fighting' (2013: 267, 273, 276–7); it is worth noting that here, as in *Y Gododdin*, it is the non-specific usage of axes that is mentioned, rather than a particular *buyell* wielded by a hero.¹¹² This is not the only similarity between these texts: like the A-text of *Y Gododdin*, 'Marwnad Cynddylan' has several stanzas beginning with variations on the same formulaic start to a line (in this case, *Mawredd gyminedd* 'The greatness of the sword-fighting'), and included among the heroes praised in each is a *Moriael* or *Moryal*.¹¹³ It is impossible to say whether the one influenced the other with regard to the axes, or, rather, whether axes were particularly prominent weapons (as far as the poets' perceptions were concerned) at the time when these verses were composed. There is, in any case, no evidence that axes were used any more often in the sixth or seventh centuries than they were in the period that followed.¹¹⁴ Indeed, there may be a reference to an axe used in war by a hero in a later poem from the Book of Aneirin, 'Gwarchan Maeldderw', according to Graham Isaac's interpretation (taking *teddydd* as a variant form of *teddyf* 'blade of an axe').¹¹⁵

The court poets' omission of axes from their verses probably reflects both the actual status of these weapons (though certainly known in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Wales,

¹⁰⁹ Whilst the *saxa* is apparently used to slay enemies, the other knife (*cylllell*) in *Y Gododdin* is named along with a spear, shield and sword in lines seemingly intended to emphasize the completeness of a warrior's armaments and, by extension, his military skills (B².26.1205–6). Compare the warning to the hero Maen not to leave his *cylllell* behind in *EWSP* 411 (8c). On knives in war and poetry, see further Davies 2004: 155–6; Day 2010: 135–8, 336–8, 461; Day 2013: 270–3.

¹¹⁰ See Graham-Campbell 1991: 222–3 for shield-fittings of Anglo-Saxon type found at Dinas Powys, South Glamorgan, and Redknap 1991: 28 for an Anglo-Saxon sword thought to have been found near Builth Wells, Powys.

¹¹¹ Gruffydd 1982; *EWSP* 120–41, 174–89; Koch 2013: 231–92.

¹¹² For other readings and interpretations see Gruffydd 1982: 22; *EWSP* 174–5, 181.

¹¹³ Koch 2013: 232–3, 263–4; Gruffydd 1982: 18–19; and see n. 86 above.

¹¹⁴ On the use of axes in war by the Late Roman army and the Anglo-Saxons see Southern and Dixon 1996: 115–16; Underwood 1999: 35–7, 72–5; and on their later (occasional) use in Wales and their association with Hiberno-Scandinavians see Davies 2004: 154–5; Day 2010: 147–52; also Russell 2005: 75, 153 (on the axe(s) at the battle of Aberlleiniog). Axes do not seem to have been common weapons of war among the Picts (Aitchison 2003: 64–5).

¹¹⁵ Isaac 2002: 89; contrast the amended reading in Thomas 2012: 139, giving *peddyd* 'footman'. Isaac (2002: 82 (n. 46)) dates the poem to, roughly, the tenth to eleventh century.

battle-axes do not seem to have been very widely used) and a certain bias against them: as with knives, though there were specialized forms designed for war, axes in the generic sense were humble everyday items; furthermore, fighting with axes was associated more with brute force than skill, and their association with Vikings may have been a further cause of poetic disfavour.¹¹⁶ It seems, then, that the range of weapons considered by the court poets as appropriate attributes for the subjects of their poems was rather narrower than that of *Y Gododdin* (and other *hengerdd* poetry), but this is not surprising. The court poets were chiefly concerned with conventional praise of the royal or aristocratic patrons who supported their profession, and their verses can seem rather unvarying when compared with the differing genres of the *hengerdd*.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, though the court poets did often refer to, and sometimes describe, real battles, they were particularly fond of using weapons in a generalized or figurative sense to praise their patrons' courage and prowess, and seem to have found the imagery of the familiar spear, sword and shield to be the most suited for the purpose.

Even so, when the most prominent weapon types and tactics are considered, the portrayal of warfare in the court poetry is remarkably similar to that in *Y Gododdin*.¹¹⁸ Swords, spears (including javelins or darts) and shields are used in similar ways, and there is mention of fighting in organized array as well as praise of individual heroism. Though there were undoubtedly instances where *Y Gododdin* had a direct effect on the court poetry, this cannot account for all these similarities: rather, they are the product of both a shared, continuing poetic tradition and a continuing knowledge and experience of warfare.¹¹⁹ Even if these two bodies of verse were separated by six centuries or so, the basic form and function of sword, spear and shield may not have changed all that much – not, at least, in ways that would be discernible from the kind of references we find in poetry – and some changes that did occur may have been ignored by the poets, either from simple conservatism or from disapproval of what they perceived as undesirable outside influence.¹²⁰

Conclusions

There seems, then, to be a high degree of continuity from *Y Gododdin*'s warfare to that of the High Middle Ages (again, with the proviso that we are only speaking of war as *represented in poetry*); but there is, too, continuity from what we know of Late Roman warfare. There is, in my view, nothing in *Y Gododdin*'s portrayal of weapons or war that is inconsistent with a sixth- or early-seventh-century context (though the divergence of the B- and A-texts, various textual corruptions and substitutions, and the apparent addition of entire *awdlau* to the A-text make it clear that not *all* of its weapon references can be this early). Conversely, however, I would not wish to argue that any of the weapon types or tactics described can be used to *prove* that any part of *Y Gododdin* is as early as the sixth or seventh century – other varieties of proof, based on the linguistic analysis of individual terms, or

¹¹⁶ Day 2010: 150–2, 340–1, 461–2; Day 2013: 274–6.

¹¹⁷ It could be argued that *Y Gododdin*, as a result of later additions to the text, itself comprises more than one genre.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Rowland 1997: 21.

¹¹⁹ For instances of *Y Gododdin*'s influence see Williams 1938: xxiii–xxiv, lxxxvi; *CBT II* 206–8, 221–3; *CBT IV* 87; also Day 2011: 42–4 (on *eurgrwydr*).

¹²⁰ See further Day 2010: 466–81; Day 2011: 49–52 (on shield shapes, heraldry and the couched lance).

on the interpretation of the logistics or geo-political context of the fighting, I must leave to others.

Abbreviations

<i>BR</i>	<i>Breudwyt Ronabwy allan o'r Llyfr Coch o Hergest</i> , ed. M. Richards (Caerdydd, 1948)
<i>CBT I</i>	<i>Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion</i> , ed. J. E. C. Williams, P. I. Lynch and R. G. Gruffydd (Caerdydd, 1994)
<i>CBT II</i>	<i>Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif</i> , ed. K. A. Bramley, N. A. Jones, M. E. Owen, C. McKenna, G. A. Williams and J. E. C. Williams (Caerdydd, 1994)
<i>CBT III</i>	<i>Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, I</i> , ed. N. A. Jones and A. Parry Owen (Caerdydd, 1991)
<i>CBT IV</i>	<i>Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, II</i> , ed. N. A. Jones and A. Parry Owen (Caerdydd, 1995)
<i>CBT V</i>	<i>Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn 'Prydydd y Moch'</i> , ed. E. M. Jones and N. A. Jones (Caerdydd, 1991)
<i>CBT VI</i>	<i>Gwaith Dafydd Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd Hanner Cyntaf y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg</i> , ed. N. G. Costigan (Bosco), R. G. Gruffydd, N. A. Jones, P. I. Lynch, C. McKenna, M. E. Owen and G. A. Williams (Caerdydd, 1995)
<i>CBT VII</i>	<i>Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg</i> , ed. R. M. Andrews, N. G. Costigan (Bosco), C. James, P. I. Lynch, C. McKenna, M. E. Owen and B. F. Roberts (Caerdydd, 1996)
<i>CO²</i>	<i>Culhwch ac Olwen</i> , ed. R. Bromwich and D. S. Evans (2nd edn, Caerdydd, 1997)
<i>Desc. Kamb.</i>	<i>Descriptio Kambriæ</i> , in <i>Giraldi Cambrensis Opera VI</i> , ed. J. F. Dimock (London, 1868); English translation in L. Thorpe, <i>The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales</i> (London, 1978)
<i>DG.net</i>	Dafydd ap Gwilym.net, http://www.dafyddapgwilym.net
<i>eDIL²⁰¹³</i>	<i>Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language</i> (revised edn, 2013), http://edil.qub.ac.uk/
<i>EWSP</i>	<i>Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the Englynion</i> , J. Rowland (Cambridge, 1990)
<i>G</i>	<i>Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg</i> , J. Lloyd-Jones (Caerdydd, 1931–63)
<i>GDC</i>	<i>Gwaith Dafydd y Coed a Beirdd Eraill o Lyfr Coch Hergest</i> , ed. R. I. Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2002)
<i>GGLI</i>	<i>Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd a'r Llygliwiaid Eraill</i> , ed. R. Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2000)
<i>GGMi</i>	<i>Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd: i. Canu i Deulu Penmynydd</i> , ed. B. J. Lewis (Aberystwyth, 2003)
<i>Gildas</i>	<i>Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works</i> , ed. M. Winterbottom (London, 1978)
<i>GLGC</i>	<i>Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi</i> , ed. D. Johnston (Caerdydd, 1995)
<i>GMBen</i>	<i>Gwaith Madog Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Ddeg</i> , ed. B. J. Lewis and T. Morys (Aberystwyth, 2007)

GPC	<i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> (Caerdydd, 1950–2002)
GPC ²	<i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> (2nd edn, Caerdydd, 2003–)
H-cd	<i>Yr Hengerdd: Mynegeiriau Cyflawn</i> , ed. G. Isaac (CD-ROM, Aberystwyth, 2001)
HP	<i>Historia Peredur vab Efwrc</i> , ed. G. W. Goetinck (Caerdydd, 1976)
Ior	<i>Llyfr Iorwerth</i> , ed. A. R. Wiliam (Cardiff, 1960)
LPBT	<i>Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin</i> , ed. M. Haycock (Aberystwyth, 2007)
OV IV	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis, IV</i> , ed. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1978)
PKM ²	<i>Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi</i> , ed. I. Williams (2nd edn, Caerdydd, 1951)
PT	<i>The Poems of Taliesin</i> , ed. I. Williams, revised and translated by J. E. C. Williams (Dublin, 1968)
YCM ²	<i>Ystoria de Carolo Magno o Lyfr Coch Hergest</i> , ed. S. J. Williams (new edn, Caerdydd, 1968)

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