

Copyright Notice

Staff and students of this University are reminded that copyright subsists in this extract and the work from which it was taken. This Digital Copy has been made under the terms of a CLA Licence which allows you to:

- Access and download a copy
- Print out a copy

This Digital Copy and any digital or printed copy supplied to or made by you under the terms of this Licence are for use in connection with this module or course of study. You may retain such copies after the end of the course, but strictly for your own personal use.

All copies (including electronic copies) shall include this Copyright Notice and shall be destroyed and/or deleted if and when required by the University.

Except as provided for by copyright law, no further copying, storage or distribution (including by e-mail) is permitted without the consent of the copyright holder.

The author (which term includes artists and other visual creators) has moral rights in the work and neither staff nor students may cause, or permit, the distortion, mutilation or other modification of the work, or any other derogatory treatment of it, which would be prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the author.

Title of extract: **King, Queen and Eding in the Laws of Court**

Name of Author: **Stacey, R.C.**

Title/Author of book/edition (if applicable): **The Welsh King and His Court. Charles-Edward, T.**

Name of Visual Creator or other acknowledgement (if applicable):

Journal details –title/Vol/Year (if applicable):

Publisher: **University of Wales Press**

Pages scanned: **29 - 62**

Course of Study (Module name and number): **Women in the Middle Ages: Sources from the Celtic Regions CYCS7005**

Name of Designated Person

authorising scanning: *E.L. Harris*

Date authorised: 07.02.17.

Moodle/Powerpoint

KING, QUEEN, AND *EDLING* IN THE LAWS OF COURT¹

ROBIN CHAPMAN STACEY

THE tractate on the Laws of Court that opens the principal redactions of the Welsh lawbooks is a very strange animal indeed. Perhaps 'mythical beast' might be closer to the truth, for while it purports to be an account of the structure of royal government in medieval Wales, in fact it is one of the best arguments that exists against the notion that the boundary between history and literature is at all hard and fast. No purely literary source could possibly do a better job recreating the atmospherics of an early medieval court. Insolent falconers swagger off into the bushes to relieve themselves knowing that the king must by custom hold their horse for them until they return; female bakers hurl kitchen tools into the air to determine the extent of the sanctuary they are permitted to offer. Footholders vigorously massage the royal toes, while huntsmen and stewards scrupulously parcel out animal body parts among the officers of the court. This text is stylized, outrageously artificial, and even funny.² What it is not is reflective to any easily appreciable degree of the historical realities of medieval Welsh courts: to read it side by side with David Stephenson's *The Governance of Gwynedd* is a highly disorientating experience.³

It seems likely that some medieval jurists also were baffled or put off by elements of this text. Certain of the Latin Redactions, confused or perhaps embarrassed by the archaic-sounding silver rod and golden goblet with a cover as broad as the king's face named in their original as the insult payment of a king, joined the two together in their version to form a more evidently

¹ I would like to thank John Koch, Charles MacQuarrie, Joseph Falaky Nagy and Robert Stacey for their advice and assistance on various aspects of this chapter.

² On legal burlesque in the 'Laws of Court' see Nerys Patterson, 'Honour and Shame in Medieval Welsh Society: A Study of the Role of Burlesque in the Welsh Laws', (1981-2) 16/17 *Studia Celtica* 73-103.

³ David Stephenson, *The Governance of Gwynedd* (Cardiff, 1984).

utilitarian object.⁴ And some compilers voted with their feet and left the tractate out of their lawbooks altogether.⁵ Modern scholars have also stayed away in droves; until the publication of this present volume, Goronwy Edwards's 1962 presidential address to the Royal Historical Society was the only substantial printed discussion available.⁶ The medieval and modern reactions to this tractate would thus appear strikingly similar to one another: an uneasy recognition that the text is important, coupled with considerable uncertainty as to precisely why.

Much of the difficulty readers experience in confronting this text has probably to do with its age. Indeed, ages may be the more apposite term, since the tractate as it exists today appears to reflect a state of affairs considerably older than the thirteenth-century manuscripts in which it is first preserved. Some of the material contained in it may be very old indeed. Thomas Charles-Edwards has pointed to Common Celtic elements in the fire and seating symbolism attendant on the *edling*,⁷ and there are evident Irish parallels in the passage on the king's honour-price. Unfortunately, in neither instance is there anything to indicate in what venue — textual, literary, or ritual — such symbolism might have been carried forward. 'Archaisms' of this sort do not automatically entitle one to speak in terms of a continuous legal tradition.

The origins and dating of the tractate *qua* tractate are equally unclear. The name by which it is generally known, *cyfreithiau llys*, 'laws of court', is used twice in *Culhwch ac Olwen* with reference to the prerogatives and customs associated with Arthur's court.⁸ As Goronwy Edwards has pointed out, the

tractate was in its earliest form constructed around lists of privileges enjoyed by various court officers,⁹ and lists of this type in their oral form could conceivably be what lies behind the *Culhwch ac Olwen* passages. However, there is nothing in the tale to suggest that it is to a particular text that reference is there being made, and this would in any case still tell us little about the age of the customs memorialized or the compositional context of the tractate itself. It is possible to suggest dates and locales for individual redactions of the text on the basis of the regional and political affiliations they express, but 'the original' — if indeed one can speak in such terms — remains for us shrouded in mystery and doubt. Certainly it is typical of the difficulties involved that the texts to which the Laws of Court are most frequently compared, Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii* and the English *Constitutio Domus Regis*, are dated to the ninth and early twelfth centuries respectively.

In the end, perhaps the most helpful observation one can make about the dating of this tractate is that texts like it seem to have been written at moments of transition or uncertainty in the holding of royal office.¹⁰ This was probably true also of the Laws of Court, for whatever else it may be about, it is surely, above all else, 'about' Welsh kingship. It is no coincidence that it appears as the first tractate in a lawbook in which, for the jurists, Welsh unity and identity were rooted.¹¹ The court depicted in it may be fanciful, but it is also intricate, self-reliant and *native*. Moreover, as will be my contention in this chapter, the Laws of Court remained a vehicle through which jurists expressed their thoughts on Welsh politics during the final centuries of native rule. Just as hagiographers reinterpreted the lives of founder saints in a manner consistent with their own political goals, so the redactors of the lawbooks reworked the sources bequeathed to them in support of their particular viewpoints. Their aim was not merely to reflect historical reality, but actively to reshape it: that they could do this without naming a single name or ever visibly departing from the Hywelian milieu in which the Laws of Court are

⁴ Lat A 110.9–21; Lat B §1.2/4–7 = LTWL 194.1–12 and see Lat B §2.3 = LTWL 207.18–29; Lat D 317.19–37; Lat E 436.17–31. Lat C and Bleg (here *not* following Lat D) both have it right: Lat C 277.5–12 and 277.19–26; Bleg 3.17–4.6. See also Cyfn 3/2 = WML 2.23–3.7 and Ior 3/4–5. These changes may have stemmed initially from a textual error in one of the Welsh texts underlying the Latin source common to Lat A and Lat B — an error on which the author of this common Latin source then embroidered in an effort to make sense of the objects he was describing. MSS I and S of Bleg suggest how such a mistake might have occurred. In those MSS, *emi*, 'on it', is mistakenly added to the end of the (otherwise separate) descriptions of the rod and goblet — probably under the influence of *emi* in the description of the goblet that immediately precedes it — and this small addition has the effect of joining the two objects together: DC I.ii.4. (Note that the honour-price passages cited in n. 25 below from the Latin texts do *not* combine the two together.) What they construed it as is another question: perhaps a *ciborium*? See the Grail as *ciborium* in Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Grail from Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol* (Cardiff and New York, 1963), illustration I, facing p. 32.

⁵ For example, MS O, N, and Tr of Bleg, which form a distinct subgroup within that redaction: Morfydd Owen and Dafydd Jenkins, 'Gwilym Was Da', (1979–80) 21 *National Library of Wales Journal* 429–30, at p. 429; LTMW xxii–xxiii.

⁶ J. Goronwy Edwards, 'The Royal Household and the Welsh Lawbooks', (1963) 13 *TRHS* 163–76.

⁷ Charles-Edwards, 'The Heir-Apparent in Irish and Welsh Law', (1971) 9 *Celtica* 180–90.

⁸ CO, lines 112, 135; WM, cols. 457.18, 458.24; and see LTWL 94. In the lawbooks, see Cyfn 1/6 = WML 1.25 and WML 36.21–2; Lat B 209.13 (*curiales leges*); Lat C 276.12 (same as Lat B); Bleg 2.14–15 (*kyfreith y llys beunydyawl*); Ior 43/13 (*Lleuer Llys*).

⁹ Edwards, 'Royal Household', 171–5.

¹⁰ The *Constitutio Domus Regis* was probably written at the time of Henry I's death — ostensibly to instruct his successor Stephen, but perhaps more credibly to assert the claims of the officers named in that text to certain dues and privileges. Hincmar wrote his considerably idealized portrait of the Frankish court under Charlemagne in 882 in order to inspire Carloman in his struggles with the Vikings and the non-Carolingian Boso of Provence.

¹¹ R. R. Davies, 'Law and National Identity in Thirteenth-Century Wales', in R. R. Davies, Ralph Griffiths, Ieuan Gwynedd Jones and Kenneth Morgan (eds.), *Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical Essays Presented to Glanmor Williams* (Cardiff, 1984), 51–69; Dafydd Jenkins, 'The Lawbooks of Medieval Wales', in R. Eales and D. Sullivan (eds.), *The Political Context of Law: Proceedings of the Seventh British Legal History Conference, Canterbury, 1985* (London and Roncverte, 1987), 1–15; Huw Pryce, 'The Prologues to the Welsh Lawbooks', (1986) 33 *BBCS* 151–87; and Michael Richter, 'The Political and Institutional Background to National Consciousness in Medieval Wales', in T. W. Moody (ed.), *Nationalism and the Pursuit of National Independence* (Belfast, 1978), 37–55; Thomas Charles-Edwards, *The Welsh Laws* (Cardiff, 1989), 9–13, 38–45.

set is very much the point. In a tradition authorized by reference to the past, the disjunction between ancient and contemporary that has for so long stood as a barrier to the study of this tractate may be more apparent than real.

It is in those segments of the tractate that treat of the king and his immediate family — the *edling*, 'heir', and the queen — that the political aspects of the text are most clear. Textual relationships among the redactions are very complicated, although clear differences in structure and content separate the Cyfnerth, Blegywryd and Latin family treatment of these figures on the one hand from the Iorwerth treatment on the other. The earliest, 'list-based' form of the tractate is most clearly preserved in Cyfn, Bleg and the Latin texts. Already in this early version, king, queen and *edling* are deliberately distinguished from the other inhabitants of the household by their placement in the tractate. Mini-tractates on king and *edling* follow the officer list with which the Laws of Court as a whole begin (the queen's *sarhaed* is discussed immediately after the king's *sarhaed* and *galanas* and is arguably a part of the mini-tractate on the king).¹² These mini-tractates are then in turn set off from the discussions of other court figures by a passage on proper seating arrangements within the banqueting hall.¹³

Ior's treatment of king, queen and *edling* represents a significant rewriting and restructuring of this earlier material. In it the lists of *noddau*, *sarhaed*/*galanas* and *lletyau* that are such a prominent feature of the other redactions are eliminated altogether and their contents are incorporated into the discussions of the individual officers. Ior also reconceptualizes the structure of the household in a manner designed to give greater prominence to the household of the queen (although its direct discussion of this figure is no more extensive than that of any other redaction). And its treatment of seating arrangements within the hall represents a considerably revised and expanded version of the earlier Cyfn, Bleg and Latin material. Significantly, the textual separation of the royal family from the other personages of the court that is so visible in Cyfn, Bleg and the Latin texts is maintained — indeed if anything even heightened — by Ior's streamlining of the original format of the text. The redactor was clearly aware of the structural premises underlying the earlier versions of the tractate, a fact which is evident also in one of his most visible and interesting changes: the addition to the end of the tractate of provisions on royal dues that occur in other redactions scattered throughout the

¹² Cyfn §3 = WML 2.19–3. 23 and Cyfn 4/1–14 = 3.23–4.19; Lat A 110.1–30 and 110.31–111. 6; Lat B §1.2–4 = LTWL 193.32–194.20 and Lat B §1.5/1–12 = LTWL 194.21–34; Lat C 276.27–277.26 and 277.27–278.10; Lat D 317.10–318.6 and 318.7–27; Lat E 436.9–437.5, 437. 30–438.4 and 437.6–29; Bleg 3.6–4.16 and 4.17–5.19.

¹³ Cyfn 4/15–16 = WML 4. 19–21; Lat A 111.7–13 (entitled *De Dignitate Regis*); Lat B §1.5/14–18 = LTWL 194. 35–195. 2; Lat C 278.11–16; Lat D 318.28–34 (entitled *De Rege*); Lat E 438.5–11; Bleg 5.20–8. Compare Ior §5.

lawbook (Ior §§42–3). That these passages were added not to the mini-tractate on the king but to the end of the tractate as a whole is significant. All indications are that the essential structure of the opening part of the tractate was well known by the time the Ior redactor was at work; by contrast, the various versions of the later sections diverge from one another considerably. By making his changes to the end of the text rather than to the beginning, the Ior redactor was able to incorporate additional material within his tractate while maintaining the authoritative structure bequeathed to him by his tradition.

The textual boundary established in the tractate between the treatment of king, queen and *edling* and that of the household's other occupants was probably intended to underscore the special status of the royal family within the court. All versions of the tractate remark on their being the 'most honoured' (*enrydedussaf*) of those who live there, and it is clear that the king and queen at least¹⁴ were regarded by the redactors as integral parts of the network of reciprocal gifts and obligations by which court life was defined. Their clothes could be claimed by those below them on special ceremonial occasions, as could those of other important figures.¹⁵ And the king himself was obliged to honour his officers in certain circumstances and to pay a penalty if he failed to salute their accomplishments on his behalf.¹⁶ Royals were not, of course, considered among the officers of the court. Rather, they functioned as the means by which officer status was established and proclaimed, supplying each officer with the revenues attendant on his or her position and with the outward attributes of courtly rank: livery in linen and wool, hornfuls of high-status drink, golden rings and whalebone gaming boards.¹⁷ It is no coincidence that the textual boundary between the discussion of the royal family and that of the officers *per se* is marked in all versions by a passage on seating arrangements in the hall; in it the king functions quite literally as the starting reference point for placement within the court in which his officers were to work.

¹⁴ See discussion below on the *edling*.

¹⁵ On the king: Cyfn 16/1 = WML 22.3–7; Lat A 114.33–4 and 117.15–18; Bleg 13.1–2 and 22.6–8; Ior 6/14, 7/11 and 9/13. On the queen: Cyfn 31/1 = WML 27.11–13; Lat A 114.34–6 and 117.20–1; Bleg 13.2–3 and 22.8–12; Ior 23/6, 25/1 and 26/1.

¹⁶ For example, WML 17.14–23 (shorter version Cyfn 14/1–2); Ior 9/6.

¹⁷ Livery: Cyfn 2/1 = WML 2.12–15; Lat A 109.33–5; Lat B §1.1/4 = LTWL 193.28–30; Lat C 276.23–5; Lat D 317.3–5; Lat E 436.6–8; Bleg 2.25–8; Ior 2/4 (and see opening sentences to each subsection). Drink: Cyfn 15/13 = WML 19.19–21; Lat A 117.2–4; Bleg 21.6–9; Ior 6/23. Rings and throwboards: Cyfn 12/23 = WML 16.21–5; Lat D 325.39–40; Bleg 17.11–14; Ior 10/6.

The king

Among the more striking aspects of the Laws of Court is the fact that, despite the manifestly royalist orientation of the tractate, its description of the king¹⁸ appears surprisingly undeveloped by comparison with that of other court figures. Not only is the paragraph on the king discernibly shorter in most versions than the discussions of other important court officers,¹⁹ it also gives the impression of having relatively little concrete to say. Apart from the *sarhaed* and *galanas* due to the king, and the size of the company he is entitled to take with him on the road, we learn almost nothing about him. This may be in part a reflection of the manner in which the tractate was compiled: if the paragraphs on king and *edling* were penned separately from the lists that lie at the original tractate's core, the discussion of the king may represent something of a historical afterthought.²⁰ In any case, the relative scantiness of the treatment of this central figure suggests that the primary purpose of the paragraph on the king may have been less to communicate specific information about his position than it was to root the officers whose descriptions follow on from his in a discernibly royal setting.

Silence can speak as eloquently as words, however, and in this instance what we have is not exactly silence but something even more interesting: a seeming lack of interest in the actual prerogatives and responsibilities of kingship, coupled with an intense concern with its more mythological aspects. This emphasis on the mythological is particularly characteristic of the Cyfnerth version of the text, almost certainly the earliest in character and content of the extant redactions. (Recent work has suggested that this text was redacted in the

¹⁸ *Brenin*, 'king' (Lat. *rex*), was no longer used even by the thirteenth-century rulers of Gwynedd to describe their office, but it is the term that occurs most frequently in the tractate and it is common in the court poetry, see Chap. 8, note 96. *Arghwydd*, 'lord' (Lat. *dominus*), also occurs, as in Cyfn 3/3 = WML 3.8, where it refers to the prince of Deheubarth. *Tywysog* may have been the word used in the Ior archetype for Hywel: LTMW 220 n. 102. On more usual applications of the term, see Dafydd Jenkins, 'Kings, Lords, and Princes: The Nomenclature of Authority in Thirteenth-Century Wales', (1974–6) 26 *BBCS* 451–62, and Huw Pryce, *Native Law and the Church in Medieval Wales* (Oxford, 1993), 196–8. In this chapter, I follow the lawbooks in using 'king' throughout.

¹⁹ Compare the thirty-one lines on the king in the *VW* version of Cyfn (WML 2.19–3.23 = Cyfn §3) with the 64 lines on the *distein* (WML 12.15–15.14 = Cyfn §11) and the forty-nine lines on the *ygnat llys* (WML 15.15–17.13 = Cyfn §12). Ior's account of the king consists of eight sentences (Ior 3/1–8), whereas its discussion of the *penteulu* consists of thirty (Ior §6) and the *distein* of twenty-four (Ior §8).

²⁰ They may even have been written subsequent to the joining of the lists and patterned deliberately on them. This is suggested for the paragraph on the *edling* by its structure, which replicates the order in which the lists of *nawdd*, *sarhaed/galanas* and *llety* appear in the extant lawbooks. Only *sarhaed* and *galanas* are discussed for the king; on the other hand, the omission of *nawdd* and *llety* may not be significant, since the king's *nawdd* is so great as to transcend quantification and his *llety* needs no definition.

twelfth century, either in the reign of Rhys ap Gruffudd, ruler of Deheubarth, who died in 1197, or conceivably even earlier.²¹) Cyfnerth is the only redaction to stress unequivocally in its account the 'kingliness' of *all* Welsh kings, and not merely those associated with the special sites of Aberffraw (chief seat of Gwynedd) and Dinefwr (chief seat of Deheubarth). All redactions (except Ior, which casts its remarks as pertaining to the king of Aberffraw only) prioritize kings over other non-royal individuals to some extent, stating that kings receive as their insult payment (*sarhaed*) a hundred cows for each *cantref* in their dominion. However, only in Cyfn do all kings receive as well the precious plates, goblets and rods familiar to connoisseurs of Welsh and Irish mythology as traditional Celtic symbols of sovereignty and rule. Other versions reserve these symbolic items for kings of special prominence only — or for kings whose political affiliations coincide with those of the redactor. Cyfnerth also expresses political leanings, in that it accords to the ruler of Dinefwr an additional payment of a line of white cattle stretching from Argoed²² to the court of Dinefwr. However, these cattle are characterized in Cyfn as an enhancement of the gold and silver ornaments of sovereignty that *all* kings merit, regardless of their prominence. The base assumption of the Cyfn text, in other words, is that royalty is royalty, despite differences in degree, and this is an assumption from which other redactions have visibly departed.²³

Cyfnerth's emphasis on the 'kingliness' of all may reflect the greater proximity of the Cyfn tractate (or Cyfn sources) to the many-kinged days of early medieval Wales. The mythological background of the items named is impeccably 'Common Celtic' in origin and inspiration. Golden plates as broad as the ruler's face are famous in both Goidelic and Brythonic tradition as symbols of royal honour; silver (or gold) rods are equally well-known sovereignty attributes.²⁴ Both occur in the *Mabinogi* as payment for the *sarhaed*

²¹ Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 153 and 165, dates it to the reign of Rhys; Charles-Edwards suggests it may be earlier: *Welsh Laws*, 71. Cyfn's early date is visible also in the elemental form of provisions expanded or enlarged upon in later redactions; see, for example, discussion below on what constitutes *sarhaed* to the king.

²² LTMW 221–2, n. 6.6.

²³ See references in n. 4 above, and see also Ior 110/1–5; LTMW 221 n. 5.30–6.2; and LTMW 279 n. 154.12–20. This is not to say that the other texts refuse the title of king to lesser lords and princes—as the passage on *mechdeyrn ddyled* cited below from Lat B shows, they do not. The issue is rather that of emphasis and of the general approach taken by these redactors in constructing their images of Welsh kingship.

²⁴ J. Loth, 'Un genre particulier de compensation pour crimes et offenses chez les Celtes insulaires', (1931) 48 *Revue Celtique* 332–51. In some of the Welsh lawbooks the plate (*clawr*) stands on its own as a plate (Ior 3/4); in others (Cyfn 3/2, WML 3.4–7) it represents the cover for a bowl or goblet (*ffiol*). Lat C 277.5–12 seems to envisage *both* a plate and a covered goblet, a doubling that probably resulted from an interpolation into the text of an interlinear gloss on *aurum: nid amgen na clawr eur adeo latum ut facies eius tota*. Loth suggests that the word *clawr* may itself have given rise to the idea of a goblet on which such a cover might sit: 339–40 and 339 n. 5. On the other hand, as Goetinck points out, the goblet also is a sovereignty symbol of long standing, and need not therefore derive from the *clawr*. Glenys Goetinck, *Peredur: A Study of Welsh Tradition in the Grail Legends* (Cardiff, 1975), esp. 176–85.

done by Efnisien to the Irish king Matholwch, and a rod and covered goblet are said elsewhere in the laws to form part of the compensation for the infringement of the king's honour when a virgin subject of his has been raped.²⁵ Moreover, the goblet is said to hold the king's draught, a statement that appears to link it firmly to the cup of plenty and ale of sovereignty that are so visible a part of the early Irish constellation of royal symbols.²⁶ In some versions (though not in Cyfn), the bulls or cows paid as part of the king's *sarhaed* are red and white, colours that signal Otherworld connections in many well known Celtic tales.²⁷ And even the equation of the inanimate objects with the king's own body and with the fruitfulness of the land over which he ruled (the rod as long as himself and as thick as his finger; the goblet or plate as thick as the fingernail of a ploughman who has ploughed seven years²⁸) fits neatly into the well-known Celtic tradition of conceptualizing rule as the physical mating of the king with his land.²⁹ This is good Celtic stuff — and the fact that the honour-price passage constitutes in itself half of Cyfn's entire discussion of the king suggests that it is important stuff as well. However far removed from the realities of Welsh rule golden goblets and

²⁵ PKM 33; WLW 142–3 (= 'Cyfnerth' 73/20); WLW 154–5 (= 'Latin Redaction A' 52/39); Lat B (LTWL) 224.21–6 and 243.21–2; Lat D 338.10–15; Lat E 470.33–5 and 473.11–15; Bleg 43.31–44.1. See also Morfydd Owen, 'Shame and Reparation: Woman's Place in the Kin', WLW 43 and 49–50. Rods were a sovereignty symbol also in non-Celtic traditions—a golden rod was borne at Richard I's coronation, and a *virga argentea et deaurata* formed part of the regalia of Henry III: *English Coronation Records*, ed. Leopold Wickham Legg (Westminster, 1901), 48, 55.

²⁶ For Irish tradition, see n. 29 below on the sovereignty goddess, the traditional dispenser of the ale of sovereignty. For Brythonic tradition, see the goblet of wine held by the queen in *Peredur*, which Goetinck has argued forms part of the sovereignty imagery of the tale: Goetinck, *Peredur* 176–85, and see also 137, 289–90.

²⁷ For example, in *Pwyll*, PKM 1; Ior 3/4; Lat C 277.5–6 (red or black); 317.33–6 (D); and cf. 436.17 (E). On Welsh cattle types, see Patterson, 'Honour and Shame', 81 n. 2; Ior 105 n. 10; and J. G. T. Sheringham, 'Bullocks with Horns as Long as their Ears', (1981–2) 29 BCS 691–708.

²⁸ Seven years is a significant time period in the laws, associated in the laws on marriage with the attaining of maturity and permanence in a relationship (for example, WLW 83–5; LTMW 310, note to *agweddi*). In this context, seven years presumably symbolizes either the coming to mature fruition of the cultivated land, or the ploughman's permanent relationship to the king whose land he tills, or both. Some texts have nine years, but seven is to be preferred: LTMW 221 n. 6. 1.

²⁹ R. A. Breatnach, 'The Lady and the King: A Theme of Irish Literature', (1953) 42 *Studies* 321–36; Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Aspects of the Theme of King and Goddess in Irish Literature', (1955–6 and 1958–9) 7 and 8 *Études Celtiques* 76–114 and 356–413, and 59–65 respectively; Mac Cana, 'Women in Irish Mythology', (1980) 4(1) *The Crane Bag* 7–11; James Doan, 'Sovereignty Aspects in the Roles of Women in Medieval Irish and Welsh Society', (1985) 5 *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 87–107; Patrick Ford, 'Celtic Women: The Opposing Sex', (1988) 19 *Viator* 417–33; Máire Herbert, 'Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland', in Louise Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), 264–75. On sovereignty and fertility themes in Brythonic tradition see cited works by Doan, Ford and Herbert; Patrick Ford, *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1977), 4–26; Ford, 'Prolegomena to a Reading of the Mabinogi: "Pwyll" and "Manawydan"', (1981–2) 16/17 *Studia Celtica* 110–25; and Goetinck, *Peredur*, esp. 129–55.

queueing cows may appear to us, they were clearly not viewed by the redactor as peripheral to the central concerns of his text.

Alternatively, it may be that the medieval tales themselves inspired — perhaps even dictated — what lawbook redactors found to say about the king. Any of these symbols and traditions could have originated in a narrative context and been taken from there secondarily into the lawbooks. Certain aspects of the Cyfn redactor's treatment of the king seem suspiciously close to what we read in the tales. It is, for example, very difficult to imagine actually lining cattle up from Argoel to Dinefwr; on the other hand, Walter Map's gleeful recounting of the 'mirror compensation' paid for an imagined insult (consisting of the reflections of cows lined up in the sunlight on the shores of a Welsh lake) shows that a tale of this sort was in circulation at precisely the same time as we believe the Cyfnerth version of the Laws of Court to have been redacted.³⁰ Similarly, two elements of the triad on what constitutes *sarhaed* to the queen are striking her and snatching something violently from her hand.³¹ The first of these is not at all unusual or unexpected, and is in fact mentioned elsewhere as one of the three means by which *sarhaed* is committed against any type of person.³² The second, on the other hand, seems oddly specific and most likely to have originated in the context of a narrative as a device for precipitating action; moreover, it is not to my knowledge paralleled elsewhere in the laws as an offence. Both of these forms of *sarhaed* are found together, however — and are there termed *sarhaed* — in *Peredur*, where a knight snatches a goblet of wine from Gwenhwyfar's hand, pours its contents on her and strikes her a blow on the ear.³³

The attempt to distinguish lawbook provisions grounded in genuinely continuous ancient tradition from those grounded in later reworkings of that tradition is likely in the end to prove more frustrating than fruitful. It is always difficult to distinguish between similarities arising from direct borrowing and those arising from differing interpretations of a common source. The links between lawyers and poets were close, and it is only to be expected that both lawbooks and tales would draw on the body of mythological perception

³⁰ Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, ii. 22, tr. M. R. James (London, 1923), 101–2, ed. and tr. M. R. James, *Oxford Medieval Texts* (Oxford, 1983), 186–9; and see LTMW 221–2, n. 6. 6. Lat D, drawing probably on a Cyfn text, also includes the Argoel cattle. On the link between Lat D and Cyfn, see Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 161–3, 165; Charles-Edwards, 'Heir-Apparent', 184–5; and Charles-Edwards, *Welsh Laws*, 37–8.

³¹ Cyfn 3/5 = WML 3. 13–16; Lat A 110. 22–6; Lat B §1.3 = LTWL 194.13–17; Lat C 277.13–15; Lat D 317.38–318.1; Lat E 436.32–3; Bleg 4.7–9; Ior 3/6.

³² Ior 110/10; Lat E 436. 9–10.

³³ Glenys Goetinck (ed.), *Historia Peredur vab Efraice* (Cardiff, 1976), 11.21–12.11. If Goetinck is right in her views on sovereignty themes in *Peredur*, it would not be surprising to see a redactor turn to such a text for ideas and images connected with kingship. See Goetinck's discussion of this incident in *Peredur: Study of Welsh Tradition*, 182–7.

common to them and then reshape this material for their own purposes. It is certainly worth remembering that the inclusion of symbolically charged sovereignty ornaments in a lawbook does not constitute independent testimony to their origin or long-term use in an actual legal setting. One cannot simply take 'at face value' the case recorded in one of the Llandaf charters, for example, in which an ecclesiastical synod adjudged to the *familia* of Bishop Cyfeiliog *pretium faciei suae in longitudine et latitudine in puro auro* as compensation for the *iniuria* done to him. For the offender in question was a king, and the charter itself part of a southern tradition stressing the independence of clerical from secular authorities in matters of judgement.³⁴ The synod here draws upon native tradition in order to project ecclesiastical officials into a status equivalent to that of the secular power whose actions had offended them; whether the traditions to which the synod appealed had their origins in the mythological or legal context cannot be determined from the existing evidence.³⁵

In any case, what is most important about the overlap between mythology and law in Cyfnerth is that the deployment of such symbols in a legal text dating to the late twelfth century must constitute a deliberate political choice on the part of the redactor. Such a man would have had available to him a wide variety of methods of conceptualizing rule, many of which would have been neither Celtic nor mythological. Glaringly absent, for example, is any reference to the church, or to kings ruling 'by the grace of God' — a theme pursued in the Prologues which one might have expected to find raised in some fashion here, given the perceived vulnerability of Welsh law on this point.³⁶ Also omitted entirely is any consideration of the administrative aspects of rule — and this in a century in which Rhys ap Gruffudd among others was taking deliberate steps to consolidate his authority and maximize the revenues owed to him as prince.³⁷ Instead the redactor seems to have made a deliberate decision to link Welsh rule firmly to native mythology and

³⁴ LL 233; Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, 158–62; Loth, 'Un genre particulier de compensation', 342–3.

³⁵ Similarly, provisions in many lawbooks (for example, Ior 54/4–6; Col 47) draw on traditional perceptions of virgins as the special province of the king. Ought we to understand these as ancient legal practices preserved through centuries of continuous transmission? Or might they be fictional (albeit mythologically significant) statements about kingliness inspired secondarily by the tales? Does the ring presented in *testimonium* by an *edling* who has tested the virginity of a woman reflect an actual and long-standing legal procedure (Lat E 437.21–6)? Or given that the association of *edling*, sexual innocence and a testimonial ring is unique to Lat E in the lawbooks, might it have been inspired by the ring in the 'Tale of Taliesin' that serves as testimony to the fidelity of Elphin's wife?

³⁶ Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 176–81.

³⁷ CCC, 218–24, 252–70; N. A. Jones and H. Pryce (eds.), *Yr Arglwydd Rhys* (Cardiff, 1996), esp. the chap. by J. Beverley Smith, 'Treftadaeth Deheubarth', pp. 18–52.

the past. That this should be so is not surprising: the appeal to mythical heroes and lore was always a means of expressing Welsh unity and identity in the face of English or Anglo-Norman intrusions.³⁸

When viewed in historical context, however, the form this mythology takes in the tractate is particularly striking. Pryce has argued that Cyfn's court tractate was redacted during the reign of Rhys ap Gruffudd.³⁹ Indeed, if this is right, the text's use of *arglwydd* instead of *brenin* to describe the lord of Dinefwr⁴⁰ may suggest that the text was not merely redacted during Rhys's reign, but penned with specific reference to it, since *Yr Arglwydd Rhys* was one title by which Rhys may have been known.⁴¹ In any case, the redactor's potential motives for characterizing kingship as he does become more clear when his work is considered in the context of events in twelfth-century Deheubarth. Anglo-Norman settlement was extensive and growing in the part of Wales in which the text was redacted; forms and types of jurisdiction multiplied as political authority became increasingly fractured and diverse.⁴² Moreover, even native princes like Rhys, himself named justiciar of south Wales by Henry II, were not immune to the attractions of non-native titles and offices. The Cyfn redactor's decision to employ native symbols only in his discussion of the king served in the first instance to reinforce that most basic divide between those who were Welsh and those who were not. And his emphasis on Welsh sovereignty helped to distinguish those with claims to royal status — however diminished their actual power might be — from the powerful Anglo-Norman nobles who surrounded them. Outside their tradition such princelings had little standing apart from the power they could wield; within it, they still had a place. This may also be the reason for the unusual generosity shown by Cyfn in extending the ornaments of kingship to *all* kings, regardless of degree. Regional particularism, while visible in the redactor's evident preference for the ruler of the south, was not his chief concern. Like the Lord Rhys himself, whose great *eisteddfod* at Cardigan in 1176 included poets and musicians from Gwynedd as well as from the

³⁸ CCC, 16–20, 77–80, 219–221. See below, Chapter 21.

³⁹ See n. 21 above.

⁴⁰ Cyfn 3/3, WML 3.8.

⁴¹ On the problems of the titles used by Rhys ap Gruffudd see J. Beverley Smith's remarks in Jones and Pryce (eds.), *Yr Arglwydd Rhys*, 33–7. *Yr Arglwydd* is common in the versions of the Brut, but it is difficult to be sure how far it was used in the original Latin chronicle, especially as the Peniarth MS 20 version quite often does not use *arglwydd* for Rhys when the Red Book version does, for example, s.a. 1172 in the notice of Rhys's appointment as *iustus* for all Deheubarth. Its significance would, in any case, depend upon the context: compare the distinction between Henry II as 'the Lord King' and, after his coronation in 1170, his eldest son, also Henry, as simply 'King'.

⁴² Pryce suggests Maelienydd, a particularly fractious region of the Middle March, as a likely locale: 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 154; see also below, Chapter 21.

Deheubarth he was in the process of (re)constructing, the redactor's priorities are visibly 'national' in character.⁴³

The pattern established in Cyfnerth with respect to the king tends by and large to be followed very closely in later redactions of the Laws of Court. All preserve the essential structure of the piece, although certain discrepancies, omissions and additions do occur. Some departures from Cyfn seem to reflect changing political practices and priorities. The triad on how *sarhaed* is done to the king, for example, contains an item which in its simplest form (visible only in certain Cyfnerth manuscripts) pertains merely to the killing of a king's man in the royal presence, but is revised in later versions in such a way as to situate the offence within a more forthrightly political context.⁴⁴ Latin B, C, D, E and Bleg specify that *sarhaed* occurs when one man kills another man in the presence of the company when two kings are met at their boundaries *coniurandi causa*, 'for the purpose of mutual swearing'. And Iorwerth and Latin A are even more precise in envisaging that it is the man of one king who kills the man of the other in such circumstances.⁴⁵ Killing a man in the presence of the king, or in the king's house or stronghold, is an offence with clear parallels in several early medieval legal traditions, including that of the Anglo-Saxons.⁴⁶ The practice of kings meeting on their common boundary for the purpose of swearing oaths of homage or allegiance, on the other hand, also reflects European diplomatic trends of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁴⁷

It is in their emphasis on regional politics rather than on the kingliness of all that the later redactions depart most significantly from Cyfn, although they

⁴³ The appeal to national myth was of course also part and parcel of political discourse in the early twelfth century as well. A good discussion of such matters and of Rhys's reign is CCC, 51–4, 77–81, and 218–24. For a fuller discussion of the *eisteddfod* of 1176, see J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Yr Arglwydd Rhys ac "Eisteddfod" Aberteifi 1176: Y Cefndir Diwyllianol', in Jones and Pryce (eds.), *Yr Arglwydd Rhys*, 94–128.

⁴⁴ Cyfn 3/1, WML 2.20–1, but note the addition made to this phrase by MSS V, W and Z: WML 2.21–3; GC I.ii.1.

⁴⁵ Compare Lat B §1.2/3 = LTWL 193.35–8; Lat C 276.27–277.4 (which also adds killing a messenger of another); Lat D 317.10–14; and Lat E 436.11–15; with Ior 3/3 and Lat A 110.4–8. Bleg 3.7–12 has *y vynu ymaruoll for coniurandi causa*. See also the variants noted in n. 43 above.

⁴⁶ For example, Æthelberht 2, 3, 7; Ine 6, and so on.

⁴⁷ The practice of *homagium in marchia* seems to have originated in the context of French relations with the duchy of Normandy, and the earliest examples of it date to the tenth century. By at least the mid-twelfth century, clearly subordinate vassals were required in European law to take oaths of fidelity or allegiance to their lord at his house or on his principal estate; the main point of *homagium in marchia*, in other words, was to stress the relative equality of the parties involved, and powerful vassals thus strove to retain this privilege. The high-profile struggles between the Angevin kings and their (often nominal) overlords the kings of France contributed to the increasing visibility and use of the procedure in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It disappeared sometime in the early fourteenth century: J.-F. Lemaignier, *Recherches sur l'hommage en marche et les frontières féodales* (Lille, 1945). The symbolism of the border was clearly operative in many encounters between Welsh and English kings — for example, the treaties of Woodstock in 1247 (a disaster for the Welsh) and Montgomery in 1267.

vary among themselves in the affiliations they express. With respect to the mini-tractates on the king and *edling*, Latin A and Latin B are the most similar to one another in terms of content and phrasing of all of the Latin versions; it seems likely all in all that both drew ultimately on a common Latin source. Pryce has suggested a Deheubarth origin for the Prologue to Latin A, and this is almost certainly true as well for its tractate on the court.⁴⁸ Latin A accords gold to the king of Aberffraw as well as to the ruler of Dinefwr, a bipartite vision of Welsh sovereignty that suggests that Latin A (or the source that underlies it) postdates the decline of Powys after the death of Madog ap Maredudd in 1160. More precise than this it is difficult to be. The inclusion of both kingdoms by a redactor whose sympathies were basically southern suggests that the text was redacted at a time when Gwynedd's dominance was too evident to be ignored. Gwynedd declined after the deaths of Owain Gwynedd and Dafydd ab Owain Gwynedd in 1170, and then rose again in the person of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in the 1190s, and one might therefore incline to situate the text either before or after these two dates. However, Henry II's 1177 recognition of Dafydd ab Owain and Rhys ap Gruffudd as rulers of north and south Wales respectively speaks to an image of Welsh authority fully consistent with the provision found in Latin A. Similarly, while the fortunes of Deheubarth declined precipitously after the death of the Lord Rhys in 1197, a redactor might well choose to preserve the memory of the ascendancy of that kingdom even though it was no longer important in the period in which he was writing. From this distance, we cannot easily distinguish the actual holding of power from the memory of its once having been held.

The sympathies of Latin B appear different from those of Latin A, despite the common source on which they drew. Latin B includes two statements on the political geography of Wales. The first, incorporated into its section on the king, follows Latin A (or more probably their common source) in allowing gold to the rulers of Dinefwr and Aberffraw. The second, included in the miscellaneous provisions added to the end of the tractate, also acknowledges Dinefwr as a *sedes principalis* . . . *sub rege Sudwallie*, and appears to put it on a par with Aberffraw.⁴⁹ This reasonably balanced statement is, however, preceded by a forthrightly pro-Venedotian passage:

⁴⁸ It is possible that Lat B made direct use of Lat A, but this seems less likely: Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 158–61, 165. Once one gets past the lists of *sarhaed* and *llety*, the differences become more pronounced: compare Lat A 113.33–114.31 with Lat B §1.9–10/18 = LTWL 197.17–198.18. Charles-Edwards suggests that the Latin family represents an originally southern tradition that sent offshoots into the north: *Welsh Laws*, 41–5.

⁴⁹ Lat B §2.3/4 = LTWL 207.27–9. This is essentially the same division of authority recognized by Henry II in 1177.

Si quis de aliena terra fecerit regi iniuriam, id est, *sarhaet*, reddat ei lxiii libras, et hac de causa: quia tantum est *mechteyrd delet* quod debet rex Aberffraw reddere regi Londonie cum acceperit terram suam ab eo. Postea vero omnes reges Wallie debent ab illo terras illorum accipere, id est, a rege Aberffraw, et illi reddere *mechteyrd delet* et *abediw* illorum post mortem; et verbum illius verbum est ad omnes reges, et nullius verbum est ad ipsum.⁵⁰

If someone from another land does injury to the king, that is, *sarhaed*, let him pay to him 63 pounds, and that for this reason: because such is the *mechteyrm ddylyed* [sovereign tribute, vassal tribute? ⁵¹] that the king of Aberffraw must pay to the king of London when he receives his land from him. Afterwards truly all kings of Wales ought to receive their lands from that same man, that is, from the king of Aberffraw, and ought to pay to that man *mechteyrm ddylyed* and their *ebediw* after they die; and the word of that man [that is, the king of Aberffraw] prevails over the word of all kings, and the word of no [other king] prevails over his.

This passage recognizes the suzerainty exercised by the English crown over the pre-eminent ruler of Wales, here identified as the king of Aberffraw. It does so, however, in a manner that implicitly challenges the very suzerainty it purports to acknowledge: the phrase 'king of London' is a catchword for a nationalist myth in which the ancestors of the Welsh were imagined as having once ruled over the entire island from their capital in London. The coming of the Anglo-Saxons put an end to their rule, but not to their claims to rightful possession of the throne.⁵² Even more to the point is the claim that all other Welsh kings hold their lands from the king of Aberffraw, and stand in the same juridical relationship to him that he occupies with respect to the English king.⁵³ As Davies points out, the issue of whether Welsh princes owed direct homage to the king of England, or whether their homage was to be mediated through the prince of Gwynedd, was one of the central political questions of the thirteenth century. The answer to this question varied entirely with the rise and fall of the fortunes of the Venedotian house; the claim articulated here, in other words, represents a distinctly partisan point of view.

Latin C is even more Venedotian in its sympathies than is Latin B. Not only does it also include the passage on the *mechteyrm ddylyed* cited above (added in this case to the end of its mini-tractate on the king rather than to

⁵⁰ Lat B §2.3/2–3 = LTWL 207.19–26: *mechteyrd* is an error for *mechteyrm*.

⁵¹ LTMW 279–80, n. 154.25.

⁵² LTMW 279–80, n. 154.25. This version of British prehistory is expressed in a variety of different literary genres and venues, and is even found in Ior itself (§90), and see also AL XIV.iv.1–6.

⁵³ CCC, 292–307, esp. 294. Pryce dates Lat B's Prologue to the reign of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth ('Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 160–1, 165). Charles-Edwards suggests that Lat B's Court tractate represents a layer of Venedotian material superimposed on a text redacted from a southern original: *Welsh Laws*, 43. See also pp. 418 and 473 below.

the end of the tractate as a whole), it restricts the payment of gold to the ruler of Aberffraw alone. Moreover, Latin C's definition of the heir as the person to whom all swear future obedience provides us a means by which to determine the date and provenance of this text more precisely than we can any other. For in 1226 and again in 1238, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth required the nobles of Wales to swear their future acceptance of and allegiance to Dafydd, his designated heir. This seems almost certainly the event referred to here; the Latin C tractate must therefore have been redacted in Gwynedd at some point after 1226.⁵⁴

Latin D is as discernibly southern in its sympathies as Latin C is northern. It follows Latin A and Latin B in restricting gold to the kings of Aberffraw and Dinefwr, and is sufficiently close in wording to those two texts as to make it likely that its redactor was working with a copy either of one or the other, or of the common source that lay behind them both. That Latin B (at least) was among those sources is suggested by the occurrence in Latin D's paragraph on the king of a provision that in Latin B is found in the miscellaneous section at the end of the tractate. Significantly, this provision, which restricts payment of the elaborate honour-price outlined in the text to the kings of the two *sedes principales* only (Aberffraw and Dinefwr), is found in Latin B coupled with the unquestionably pro-Aberffraw passage on the *mechdeyrm ddylyed*; Latin D includes only the *sedes principales* provision, and says nothing at all about Aberffraw's claims to suzerainty over other Welsh kings.⁵⁵ Moreover, Latin D adds, presumably from a Cyfn source, that the *breint domini Dinewr*, 'status of the lord of Dinefwr', is to be enhanced with a line of white red-eared cattle stretching from Argoel to the court at Dinefwr.⁵⁶ Latin D's redactor seems to have had access to a variety of northern sources,⁵⁷ and at the time he was

⁵⁴ Lat C 277.27–9. Pryce argues that Lat C's Prologue is earlier than Ior's: 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 160–1, 165. However, Lat C's Court tractate differs substantially from the other Latin versions and shares many similarities with Ior. Like Ior, it omits all mention of the knobs (*capita/ban*) on the rod described in Cyfn and the other Latin texts; it knows nothing of the Latin family's joining of rod and goblet; it accords sovereignty ornaments only to the king of Aberffraw; and it agrees with Ior against the rest of the Latin tradition on the amount of the king's *galanas*. Moreover, its addition of the killing of the king's messenger, which does not occur elsewhere in the Cyfn or Latin traditions, is paralleled in Ior 110/2 (on *sarhaed* to the king of Aberffraw). Lat C is the most bilingual of all the versions and its redactor was working with both Latin and Welsh sources; given the Gwynedd provenance of the text, it seems not impossible that the Welsh text in question may have been (a version of) Ior or Ior sources.

⁵⁵ Compare Lat B §2.3/1–4 = LTWL 207.18–29 with Lat D 317.30–2. Lat D may also have made use of a Lat A source, since it defines the goblet and cover as being as thick *teste ovi auce*, and this is found only in Lat A and Lat D (and Lat E following Lat D). Emanuel comments on Lat D's use of Lat B and Lat A in LTWL 54–8, and see also Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 163, 165.

⁵⁶ Compare Lat D 317.33–6 with Cyfn 3/3 = WML 3.7–11, and see Charles-Edwards, *Welsh Laws*, 37–8.

⁵⁷ Emanuel comments on this in LTWL 58–60. Perhaps the most striking instance of borrowing occurs outside the Lat D tractate in the triads, where Lat D 369.39–370.23 = Ior 42/6–13; Lat D 370.24–33 = Ior 42/2–5; and Lat D 377.4–17 and 377.22–30 = Ior 43/1–6.

writing (in the thirteenth century, but later than Latin B) Gwynedd was unquestionably dominant. His adherence to the ruler of Deheubarth in the face of such evidence to the contrary must therefore be considered an indication of his own origins and political affiliations.

Both of the other texts that pertain generally to the Latin tradition, Bleg and Latin E, draw heavily on Latin D. Bleg is in most respects essentially a translation of Latin D, although some differences occur.⁵⁸ Latin E, which was probably compiled as a lawbook in the second half of the fourteenth century, is most heavily indebted to Latin D in its account of the king. Like Latin D it includes in its paragraph on honour-price the provision on the two *sedes principalis* of Wales — a provision that is also contained in Latin B, but at the end of the tractate. It follows Latin D in mentioning the eggshell as a proper thickness for the covered goblet, in using *digitus* for *caput* to describe the protrusions from the silver rod, and in including a triad found in the miscellaneous section of Latin B within the tractate proper.⁵⁹ However, Latin E is distinctly northern rather than southern in its political orientation. Thus it pointedly omits Latin D's passage on the enhanced status of the ruler of Dinefwr (despite having had access to it), and it includes Latin B's passage on the *mechdeyrn ddyled* owed to the king of Aberffraw.⁶⁰ Latin E's redactor knew and drew upon southern sources in his work, in other words, but his sympathies lay distinctly with Gwynedd.

The Latin texts thus present a considerably more streamlined (albeit bipartite) vision of Welsh rule than does Cyfnerth: their kings are still kings, but true Welsh sovereignty is invested ultimately in the rulers of Dinefwr and Aberffraw. In this more reserved view of kingliness they are followed even further by the northern redaction of Iorwerth, a product of the reign of one of the greatest of thirteenth-century princes, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth.⁶¹ Ior addresses itself uniquely to the king of Aberffraw in its paragraph on the royal honour-price, and is simply not concerned with what might be due to any other ruler (Ior 3/4–5). What is most notable, however, about Ior's treatment of the honour-price is that it is the most minimalist one found in any of the versions, including as it does only the cows, the rod and the plate. Dafydd Jenkins suggests that the omission from Ior of all mention of the goblet and

⁵⁸ See n. 4 above, for example. On Bleg and Lat D, see H. D. Emanuel, 'The Book of Blegywryd and MS Rawlinson 821', CLP 161–70, and Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 163, 165.

⁵⁹ LTWL 81–2 on the provenance and compilation of the lawbook, and 73–5 on the redactor's use of Lat D and Lat B. The evolution of the triad is quite interesting: compare Lat B §2.4 = LTWL 207.30–4 with Lat D 318.22–7 and Lat E 437.6–10 and 437.27–9.

⁶⁰ Lat E 437.30–438.4. Lat E's (somewhat poignant, in the circumstances) retrospective nationalism is shown by its addition of the word *semel* to its description of the circumstances under which the ruler of Aberffraw owed *mechdeyrn ddyled* to the king of London.

⁶¹ LTMW 220; Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 155–8; Charles-Edwards, *Welsh Laws*, 38–9.

the king's ration of drink represents a loss of this material from the Ior tradition, which is certainly possible.⁶² It is also conceivable that the goblet was a feature of southern traditions regarding the king's honour-price that never formed part of the northern materials from which Ior was compiled. If these suggestions are correct, no particular importance need be attached to Ior's somewhat truncated version.

The addition to the end of the Ior tractate of several more hard-headed passages on royal revenues and prerogatives suggests another possible solution, however. The redactor may have intentionally chosen to downplay the mythological element of Welsh kingship in order to highlight those elements most in accordance with contemporary European standards of rule. Certainly the image of kingship that emerges from these final two paragraphs differs considerably from that constructed by the author of Cyfnerth. This is not to say that the material in these paragraphs is new or unique to the Ior tradition. In fact, it is not: all of the provisions incorporated into this section of the Ior tractate are paralleled directly in other lawbooks.⁶³ However, the decision to draw these passages together and present them at the end of a tractate on the royal court constitutes a deliberate choice on the part of the redactor. His aim, to judge from the content of the material he added, was to complicate and render more comprehensible to others the uniquely symbolic and native image of kingship that emerged from his earlier paragraph on the king. Hence a clerical component to Welsh rule is visible for the first time in the triad on the three 'indispensables' (*anhepcor*) of the king, the passage on *breint llys* and the doubling of *camlwrw* fines for offences committed in court or church.⁶⁴ Regalian prerogatives and revenues emerge as a central concern: judicial profits are reserved for the king; the king's waste is defined in specific terms; and miscellaneous sources of income are laid out.⁶⁵ The military and work service due to the king from his dependants is spelled out in detail.⁶⁶ Practicality, rather than mythology, would seem the guiding principle here.

This is not to say that native symbols and structures are simply abandoned in these paragraphs: 42 consists entirely of triads, and 43 begins with the 'eight packhorses of the king'. Moreover, many of the images employed seem likely to be Welsh in origin and appeal. But the symbolic *content* of this section is

⁶² LTMW 221 n. 5.30–6.2. As Jenkins points out, the bulls occur only in MSS B and D, and B omits even the gold plate.

⁶³ Sometimes this material is located in other versions in the sections of the tractate devoted to specific officers (particularly true of Lat B, Lat C and Lat E); sometimes it is found within the triads (particularly true of Cyfnerth, Lat A, Lat D and Bleg).

⁶⁴ Ior 42/2; 43/3; 43/9–12.

⁶⁵ Ior 42/5; 42/6; 43/1; 43/7; 43/9–12. See also Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, 114–18, 124–7, and 246–7.

⁶⁶ Ior 43/4–6. Ior 42/12–13 would appear to refer not merely to the king, but to anyone exercising any type of jurisdiction over persons of villein status.

thoroughly consonant with European ideas of rulership. The 'indispensables' of the king, relating as they do to justice, warfare and the church, speak to a vision of the royal office that would make any thirteenth-century ruler feel at home (Ior 42/2). The 'nets' (miscellaneous sources of income) associated with kings, *gurda* and villeins draw on a gendered hierarchy of animals and agriculture (horses, cows, pigs, crops/studs, herds, fields) that would likely be familiar to most contemporary Europeans (Ior 42/6–8). And the reserving of gold clothing and treasure for those of kingly status (Ior 42/5 and 43/8) would be completely in accord with general medieval sumptuary expectations. Again, none of this material is new or unique to Iorwerth; however, the deliberate positioning of it at the end of a tractate on the royal court adds a new and (intentionally) cosmopolitan element to its image of Welsh rule. The native princes to whom the text was primarily addressed may have been adherents of native tradition, but they were also aware of and concerned to emulate their European colleagues.

The redactors of Cyfn, Ior and the Latin/Bleg texts thus all take different approaches to the figure of the king. Cyfn stresses the mythological and native elements of the office. Its allegiance is clearly to the ruler of Deheubarth, but in its willingness to attribute traditional symbols of sovereignty to even minor princes it preserves the kingliness of all. The Latin versions are in most respects more similar to Cyfnerth than they are to Iorwerth. However, in their attitudes towards kingship and notions of regality they are in some ways closer to the Gwynedd lawbook. The appeal to mythology and symbol so visible in Cyfnerth is still there, but the political geography of these versions would seem to suggest that the priorities of their redactors lie less in exalting Welsh kingliness in general than in promoting the pre-eminence of their own particular ruler. Perhaps by the time these redactions were written, distinguishing Welsh princelings from powerful Anglo-Norman lords seemed a less pressing need than supporting a leader who could preserve the identity and independence of Wales itself. Ior's focus is very clearly on events in Llywelyn's reign, and its highlighting of the nuts-and-bolts aspects of Welsh kingship ought probably to be associated with the trend among even Welsh princes to opt for seemingly more practical English and continental customs in preference to native tradition.⁶⁷ It may not be coincidental that Ior's final paragraphs make use of an unusually large number of French loan-words.⁶⁸ Such borrowings are indicative not only of the outward-looking attitude of the redactor, but of his conviction that native procedures can and should be accommodated within the European vernacular of rule.

⁶⁷ Pryce, 'Prologues to Welsh Lawbooks', 176–82.

⁶⁸ LTMW 235–6.

The edling

Ior's concern with contemporary events is equally evident in its mini-tractate on the *edling*, or heir-apparent. *Edling*, a loan word from Old English *ætheling*, seems originally to have meant little more than 'prince', and was apparently applied to any close male relation of the king.⁶⁹ In the period of the lawbooks, however, the meaning of *edling* narrowed and the word came ultimately to replace earlier native terms for heir-apparent, *gwrthrych* or *gwrthrychiad*.⁷⁰ The *edling* occupies a prominent place in all versions of the tractate, and all draw ultimately on the same core of material in their discussion of this figure. The gist of this core can be summed up in the sentence with which they all begin: the *edling* is to be the 'most honoured' in the court after the king and queen.⁷¹ In most texts he is accorded a wergeld (*galanas*) and insult payment (*sarhaed*) equal to the king — albeit without the gold or silver that is the prerogative of the reigning ruler⁷² — and is said to receive all of his expenses 'honourably' from the royal coffers.⁷³

The *edling*'s honoured status is also underscored in Cyfn, Bleg and the Latin texts by the seat accorded him in the hall. He is said there to sit across the fire from the king, and Charles-Edwards has argued that the *edling*'s proximity to the royal hearth in these versions was a symbolic expression of his eventual accession to the kingship.⁷⁴ To this I would add only that in my view the lodging (*llety*) assigned the *edling* in the core tractate was also an expression of his anticipated succession to royal hall and hearth. For the *edling* is said in all

⁶⁹ David Dumville argues that this was the sense of the word in Anglo-Saxon, an argument for which Ior 4/6–9 provides indirect support: 'The *Ætheling*: A Study in Anglo-Saxon Constitutional History', (1979) 8 *Anglo-Saxon England* 1–33.

⁷⁰ Charles-Edwards argues that *gwrthrych* and *gwrthrychiad* were already obsolete by the time the lawbooks were compiled: 'Heir-Apparent', 185–6. However, the fact that the meaning of *edling* was still in dispute at the time Ior was compiled (Ior 4/7–9), and that some lawbooks use *gwrthrych* either exclusively (Lat A, Lat C) or together with *edling* (Cyfn, Lat D, Ior), suggests that the old term was still understood in this period. Only Lat E and the later Cyfn MSS *V* and *W* use *edling* exclusively. Jenkins's suggestion that *edling* replaced *gwrthrych* in the context of the dispute between Llywelyn's sons seems more probable: LTMW 222. Cyfn's use of the word *gwrthrychiad* in what appears to be a plural context (*Yr holl gwrthrychyeit* — Cyfn 4/10 = WML 4.11–12) may suggest that this word originally also could be used in the broader sense of 'potential heirs'.

⁷¹ Cyfn 4/1 = WML 3.23–4; Lat A 110.32–3; Lat B §1.5/2 = LTWL 194.22–3; Lat C 277.27–9; Lat D 318.7–9; Lat E 437.10–11; Bleg 4.17–20; Ior 4/1.

⁷² Cyfn 4/4 = WML 4.3–6; Lat A 111.1–2; Lat B §1. 5. 8–9 = LTWL 194.29–30; Lat C 278. 4–5; Lat E 437.15–16 (here departing from Lat D). Lat D and Bleg contrast his *galanas* and *sarhaed* (2/3 that of the king) with those of persons *ad regnum pertinencium* (1/3 that of the king): Lat D 318.14–17; Bleg 5.1–5.

⁷³ Cyfn 4/11 = WML 4.13–15; Lat A 111.2–3; Lat C 278.6; Lat D 318.17–18; Lat E 437.17–18; Bleg 5.6–7. Lat B (§1.5/10) and Ior (4/4) are the only versions to omit the qualifier 'honourably'.

⁷⁴ Cyfn 4/5–9 = WML 4.6–11; Lat A 110.34–8; Lat B §1.5/4–7 = LTWL 194.24–8; Lat C 277.31–278.3; Lat D 318.9–13; Lat E 437.12–15; Bleg 4.21–5; Charles-Edwards, 'Heir-Apparent', 186–90.

versions to sleep at night in the hall (*neuadd*) surrounded by other noble sons (*macwyaid* 'pages'), and to be entitled to have the king's fueller kindle the fire and close the doors before retiring.⁷⁵ It is possible that this sentence represents nothing more than a description of the *edling*'s normal nocturnal arrangements, but it seems unlikely. The symbolic potential of an heir sleeping surrounded by his future counsellors in the royal hall with royal hearth ablaze seems too patent. Moreover, the mention of the fueller kindling the fire seems unnecessary if it is not intended to be understood symbolically — especially since one would expect the fire still to be burning from the evening feast. What we would seem to have here is a sort of 'shadow court' — a dimly lit glimpse of royal splendour yet to come, and another expression of the *edling*'s honoured place.

At first glance, Ior's treatment of the *edling* appears very similar to the rest. It also contains what one might call the 'core', but with some significant changes. Perhaps the most obvious change is the *edling*'s position in the banqueting hall, where he is mentioned as but one of a number of men at the king's table. The fact that no seats are assigned in Ior to officers like the steward or butler, whereas seats *are* assigned to other lower ranking officials (Ior 4/3 and §5), suggests that the redactor is no longer working with the seating arrangements found in his source but is instead following customs current in European courts with respect to ceremonial feasts. On such occasions, hereditary officers like the butler, whose mundane duties would normally have been fulfilled by those of the serving class, assumed these duties for the evening as a symbolic declaration of their status.⁷⁶ Ior's alterations to the traditional seating pattern almost certainly reflect actual changes in practice and ought therefore to be taken as another indication of the self-consciously cosmopolitan outlook of the Venedotian princes. On the other hand, these changes serve a purpose within the text as well: the manner in which they are expressed leaves little doubt that the redactor's main priority is no longer to highlight the position of the heir, but rather to link the reigning king firmly to contemporary European standards of rule.

This subtle de-emphasis of the *edling*'s position at court is equally characteristic of the rest of the Ior text. The core provision on his expenses is rephrased in such a way as to leave the impression of an individual with no wealth or standing of his own: 'all his expenses come from the king's coffers, even including his offering; and his horses and dogs and rings and trinkets from the

king — and his weapons too'.⁷⁷ Not only is the 'honourably' of the other redactions pointedly left out, but the text then adds that the *edling* may not give anything away without the king's permission — a provision not found in any other redaction (Ior 4/5). Ior 4/11 also stipulates that the *edling* may not leave the court for even one night without the king's approval. And its *galanas* and *sarhaed* price for the *edling* is only one-third of the king's — an amount that is less than that cited in all other versions of the tractate, and no higher than that paid for any other close male relative of the king.⁷⁸ Even provisions that seem at first designed to stress the honoured position occupied by the *edling* at court in fact imply his distance from it. Servants and officers are forbidden to demand anything from the heir for the service they provide him or to claim his clothes at the three great feasts as they would those of other court residents. These exemptions may seem like special privileges, but they are accorded the *edling* not because he stands above the court, but because he stands *outside* it. He is honoured as a guest is honoured, and is simply not a part of the reciprocal obligations and gifts by which court life is defined.⁷⁹

This is not to say that the Ior redactor does not value the *edling* or recognize the importance of continuity in the royal line. The point of his revisions is not to diminish the honour due the heir, but rather to safeguard the prerogatives of the reigning king by emphasizing the extent to which the *edling*'s status derives from his. The *edling*'s glory is a reflected glory; it is not he who is served and honoured in the court, but the king in him. Even his gifts are not his own. Nor is this a purely academic concern. Ior is here addressing one of the most visible and divisive problems of contemporary European politics — the desire of royal heirs to establish and maintain their own courts independent of the ruling king. Disputes over this issue arose frequently in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe. The young King Henry, the eldest son of Henry II and heir-presumptive to England, Normandy, Anjou and Touraine, revolted against his father in large part because of the latter's refusal to allow him an independent court. Similar problems plagued the relationship between the German princes and their nominal overlord, the son of Frederick II. Courts were places in which alliances could be forged and rebellions begun; in such environments princely posturing could come all too quickly to look like royal rule. This is also why *edlings* were forbidden to leave the royal court without permission; in

⁷⁵ Cyfn 4/10 = WML 4.11–13 and Cyfn 4/12–13 = WML 4.15–18; Lat A 111.3–5; Lat B §1.5/11 = LTWL 194.31–3; Lat C 278.6–9; Lat D 318.18–20; Lat E 437.18–19; Bleg 5.7–10; Ior 4/4.

⁷⁶ For example, at the coronation banquet of Eleanor of Provence in 1236: *English Coronation Records*, 57–65.

⁷⁷ Ior 4/4; tr. LTMW 6. [*Olftrum* is the reading of B only; the others have *ffruyn*, 'bridle': LTMW 223 n. 6.30.

⁷⁸ Ior 4/12. Of the other versions, only Lat D and Bleg distinguish the *edling* from the king: see n. 71 above.

⁷⁹ Ior 4/17 (from MSS B and D: VC I.v.13) and 4/18. The contrast with the king and queen, who *do* form part of this network of giving and obligation, is significant.

contemporary European diplomatic parlance, departures of this sort constituted calculated insults and frequently marked the prelude to revolt.⁸⁰

It may be possible to contextualize the Ior redactor's remarks even more fully. One passage unique to Ior suggests uncertainty with respect to the identity of the *edling*:

Sef aylodeu y brenhyn, y ueybyon a'y neuelynt a'y keuyndyrv. Rey a dyweyt bot yn edlyg pob rey o'r rey hynny. Ereyll a dyweyt nat edlyg nep namyn y nep y rodho y brenhyn gobeyth a gvrthrych ydav.

These are the king's members: his sons and his nephews and his male first-cousins. Some say that each of them is an *edling*; others say that no one is an *edling* save him to whom the king gives hope and prospect.⁸¹

This comment may reflect nothing more than a terminological debate taking place within the juridical class — a quarrel perhaps engendered by the supplanting of *gvrthrych* with *edling*.⁸² However, the historical circumstances in which this passage was written make such a minimalist interpretation unlikely. In 1220 Llywelyn the Great declared his younger, legitimate son Dafydd heir to the principality of Gwynedd in preference to his older bastard son Gruffudd. Gruffudd did not easily accept his exclusion from the throne; attempts by Llywelyn to settle Gruffudd on compensatory apauage lands did not settle the issue, and conflicts between them continued for many years. Llywelyn proclaimed his choice of *edling* several times in many different venues over the course of his reign, and it is difficult to imagine that the Iorwerth passage could have been penned in isolation from these events.⁸³

Moreover, there are European parallels both for Gruffudd's actions and for the debate to which the Ior refers. The issue of whether kingship was an elective office or whether reigning kings had instead the right to designate their own successors was a lively topic in twelfth- and thirteenth-century political circles. ('Election' in this period could mean anything from a formal selection by peers of the realm to the securing of sufficient noble support to make possible an armed bid for the throne.) Although it may appear otherwise from our vantage point today, the right of a king to designate his

⁸⁰ W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), 117–18, 580–4; David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Harmondsworth, 1988), 229–42.

⁸¹ Ior 4/7–9; tr. LTMW 7. The failure to include the king's brothers is likely not significant: see EIWK 217–18.

⁸² Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, 138–9.

⁸³ The stages in this ongoing struggle are spelled out in J. Beverley Smith, 'Dynastic Succession in Medieval Wales', (1986) 33 *BBCS* 199–232, at pp. 218–21; CCC, 192–3, 245–50; and Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, 2, 152–5.

successor was by no means as yet universally accepted. Germany saw a resurgence of the elective principle in the first half of the twelfth century and again in the years after 1197. Election remained a viable option also in England and France: it was not until 1223 that a Capetian king succeeded to the throne without having first been crowned co-king during his father's lifetime. Similarly, the barons of England and Normandy played a substantial role in ensuring that it was John, rather than Arthur of Brittany, who succeeded Richard in 1199. And when in 1216 a portion of the English nobility deposed John and elected the future Louis VIII of France king of England in his stead, the matter had ultimately to be settled on the battlefield.⁸⁴

Ior's apparent uncertainty as to the identity of the *edling* is, I would argue, a Welsh reflex of this broader European dispute. What is at issue for the compiler is not the appropriate terminology to use in describing the heir, but rather the much larger question of whether kings could designate their successors and expect to have their wishes obeyed. We still know very little about royal succession in medieval Wales. J. Beverley Smith, in a characteristically insightful article, has taken issue with the traditional view of Welsh kingship as partible, arguing that Welsh kings did seek to pass on their kingdom to a single successor, whom they would expect — and would be expected by others — to nominate.⁸⁵ About the partibility of Welsh kingship he seems clearly right. However, the Iorwerth evidence suggests that the right of kings to determine their own successors was much less clearly established in thirteenth-century Wales than he seems to imply. The narrative sources also support such a view: most of the 'contested successions' examined by Beverley Smith stemmed from the murder of the designated heir by other potential heirs.⁸⁶ And Gruffudd's reluctance to accept his exclusion from the throne we have already seen. Apparently not all were in agreement about the designatory powers of the reigning prince.

No opinion is given in Iorwerth about the matter of succession; the redactor's views on the definition of *edling*, and by extension the manner in which royal heirs ought to be chosen, are left unexpressed, a fact that is strikingly at odds with the usual practice elsewhere in the lawbook.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Hallam, *Capetian France, 987–1238* (London and New York, 1980), 130–5; W. L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1961), 48–50.

⁸⁵ Smith, 'Dynastic Succession', 199–210, and see Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, 155–65. Stephenson also cites Ior as evidence that kings appointed their successors—first without reference to the ambiguity inherent in the text, and later with the ambiguity acknowledged: 2, 138–9.

⁸⁶ For example, the killing of Llywelyn ap Madog ap Maredudd of Powys in 1160 and of Hywel ap Owain Gwynedd in 1170. Gruffudd ap Rhys, son of Rhys ap Gruffudd in Deheubarth, was also facing a rebellion from his brother Maelgwn when he died in 1197: Smith, 'Dynastic Succession', 210–15.

⁸⁷ Ior often gives its opinions on legal controversies: for example, 61/6–7; 64/5–8; 66/1, and so on.

Moreover, a similar ambiguity obtains in another Ior passage on apanage lands. As Beverley Smith has shown, one of the ways kings tried to ensure the succession of their own candidate was to settle other possible heirs on apanage lands designed to compensate them for their exclusion from the throne. Once an heir had taken possession of such lands, he was deemed to have given up his royal aspirations; his status would no longer be that of *edling*, but would instead follow the status of the land he had received.⁸⁸ Ior records this custom, but then mysteriously implies that the *edling* himself might take lands in apanage, and that his status also might be altered by the lands he received: 'the *edling* and those whom we named above [that is, other potential heirs] will be of that status [that is, what the text has just described for the *edling*] until they take land, and after that their status will follow the status of the land they take'.⁸⁹

To my knowledge, no satisfactory explanation has been offered for this remarkable statement.⁹⁰ It is possible that *edlings* might expect to take on lands and titles in the course of their growing up that would be later added to their royal title once they succeeded, much as Henry II was duke of Normandy and count of Anjou before he became king of England. However, no hint of this appears in the sources, and such arrangements would run directly contrary to Ior's remarks about the *edling*'s dependence on the king for his material well-being. I would suggest instead that the passage ought to be read against the historical backdrop of relations between Llywelyn and Gruffudd. Llywelyn granted lands in apanage to Gruffudd several times during his reign in an attempt to get him to accept Dafydd as heir to the principality. Gruffudd accepted these lands, but not the diminution of status that went with them; instead they became the power base from which he launched his next revolt. He obviously considered himself an *edling* despite Llywelyn's proclamation of Dafydd as heir, and to judge from the difficulties Llywelyn had in squelching him, others must have done as well.

Ior's discussion of the *edling* is thus specifically tailored to these political circumstances. The redactor does not actually exclude Gruffudd from the status of *edling* by agreeing with those who would reserve that title for the prince's nominee alone. Perhaps succession mechanisms were still too much in dispute; perhaps it was still possible that Gruffudd might win. Most likely the redactor wanted to phrase his categories broadly so as to be able to argue

⁸⁸ Smith, 'Dynastic Succession,' 205–10; Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, chap. 8.

⁸⁹ Ior 4/16; tr. LTMW 7. This provision occurs also outside the tractate in Lat B (LTWL 238.25–38), and in the *edling* section in Lat D 318.23–7, Lat E 437.27–9, and Bleg 5.12–19.

⁹⁰ Stephenson notes that AL XIV.x.19 'clearly rules the *edling* out of the process of taking land' and 'makes that process a possible, but not a necessary, eventuality' for other *aelodau*: *Governance of Gwynedd*, 140 n. 12.

that, whatever Gruffudd's rightful status was, he was bound by it to show obedience and loyalty to the reigning prince. But the main point is clear. To anyone familiar with events in twelfth-century Powys, or Deheubarth, or Gwynedd itself, Gruffudd's actions in contesting the succession would have appeared a threat both to the stability of the throne and to the integrity of the principality as a whole.⁹¹ The redactor's admonition to this would-be prince is thus a simple one. Gruffudd must either accept the lands offered him together with the diminution in status and prospects such a gift entailed, or choose to remain an *edling* with all the restrictions on personal liberty and property outlined in the text as attendant on that status. In any case, the perspective articulated here is clear, consistent and unmistakably royalist.

The queen

The queen is a figure notable more for her absence from the tractate and the court it purports to describe than for anything else. One cannot fail to be struck by the apparent indifference demonstrated by all redactions towards her activities. Very little is said about her directly; even Ior, which deliberately restructures its officer list in a manner designed to elevate the number and standing of the officers attendant on her, is almost completely silent on the person of the queen herself. We are told something about her revenues: she receives a share (defined in Ior and the Latin texts as a third) of the king's earnings from his lands, but the texts are not in agreement as to whether these are his own personal patrimonial lands or lands attached to the office of king.⁹² The Latin texts, Bleg and Ior remark that she is entitled to a circuit (*cylch cum pueris et puellis*) on the villeins of the king when the king has departed from his land, although this is communicated in a provision which originally did not belong to the Court tractate.⁹³ And we are told elsewhere in the lawbooks that queens were allowed to alienate more of their casual acquisitions than were other ranks of women.⁹⁴ The only other aspect of the

⁹¹ Beverley Smith demonstrates the danger posed even to important principalities from contested successions: 'Dynastic Succession', 210–30.

⁹² Cyfn 2/2–3 = WML 2.15–18; Lat A 109.35–7; Lat B §1.1/5 = LTWL 193.30–1; Lat C 276.25–6; Lat D 317.6–7; Bleg 2.28–3.2. Latin E omits this sentence, but refers later in its tractate to the *terciam partem regis*: LTWL 505.8–9. On women and property, see Dafydd Jenkins, 'Property Interests in the Classical Welsh Law of Women', and R. R. Davies, 'The Status of Women and the Practice of Marriage in Late-Medieval Wales', WLW 69–92 and 93–114 respectively.

⁹³ Lat A 136.39–40; Lat B (LTWL) 239.39–240.2; Lat D 317.7–9 (in the tractate, and see D2's placement of this passage on 318 n. 1); Lat E 437.1–2 (in the Court tractate); Bleg 3.2–5. Ior 93/4 defines this as an annual circuit.

⁹⁴ Ior 51/6–8, and compare WML 90.17–25, 91.16–92.3; Lat B 221.24–30; Lat D 342.23–8; Lat E 470.23–8; Bleg 62.9–16 (the latter references only to *uxor optimatis* and *uxor villani*). See also Owen, 'Shame and Reparation', WLW 43–4.

queen addressed in the tractate *per se* is the matter of her *sarhaed* which, like that of all other women, is reckoned as a third of the *sarhaed* of her husband. Significantly she, like the *edling*, is denied the privileged gold and silver ornaments of sovereignty.⁹⁵

One is thus largely left to hypothesize about the queen's office on the basis of what the text says about the duties of the officers assigned to serve her. In Cyfn and the Latin texts she is hardly visible at all, even through this medium. Cyfn's officer list assigns her four⁹⁶ officers of her own — a priest, a steward, a chambermaid and a groom of the reins — and includes these officers in its lists of *noddau* and *lletyau*. A small amount of additional information on the latter three is provided in most Cyfn manuscripts in a section attached to the end of the discussion of the king's officers; given the fact that these officers had little in common apart from their service to the queen, it seems likely that this paragraph was conceived of as a section relating to the queen's officers specifically.⁹⁷ The Latin texts and Bleg manage even less than does Cyfnerth, for whereas they also assign these four officers to the queen,⁹⁸ they say very little about them. In most cases the queen's officers are not even mentioned by name in the *sarhaed* and *llety* lists, although they are generally included in the *nawdd* list. (An exception to this is the *cameraria*, 'chambermaid', who is described together with the *camerarius* in various contexts.) Even when the Latin and Bleg Redactions do provide substantive information about the queen's officers, it is generally presented as an afterthought to the corresponding officer of the king. No special section is devoted to them as it is in many of the manuscripts of the Cyfnerth tradition.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Cyfn 3/5 = WML 3.13–18; Lat A 110.22–6; Lat B §1.3 = LTWL 194.13–17; Lat C 277.13–15; Lat D 317.38–318.2; Lat E 436.32–4; Bleg 4.7–11; Ior 3/6–7. Col 305 also sets her *galanas* at a third of her husband's, which distinguishes her from women of lesser status, whose *galanas* was half that of their brother's: Owen, 'Shame and Reparation', WLW 43–4.

⁹⁶ Jenkins speaks of five in his note on p. 220 of LTMW, including in this number the *dryssaur ystafell*, 'doorkeeper of the chamber'. However, while Ior assigns this officer to the queen, Cyfn and (at least) Lat D conceptualize him as one of the king's officers. In Cyfn, it is always the queen who provides her officers with horses (Cyfn 10/1 = WML 12.7–8; Cyfn 30/1 = WML 27.4–5; Cyfn 31/2 = WML 27.13–14; Cyfn 32/1 = WML 27.17–19), and the *dryssaur ystafell* is said to receive his horse from the king: WML 24.14–15 (Cyfn 20/2, where Y alone omits the crucial phrase). Lat D actually calls him the *hostiario talami regis*: Lat D 329.32.

⁹⁷ Cyfn §§30–2 = WML 27.4–19. The queen's priest is treated along with the *effeirat teulu*: Cyfn §10 = WML 12.7–14.

⁹⁸ As Emanuel remarks, the *dapifer regine* added to the Lat B list is an 'interloper': Lat B §1.1/3 = LTWL 193.27 and note to line 27 on p. 260; the person who made the addition may not have been aware that *assecla* = *dapifer* = *destein*; the *assecla reginae* had already been listed.

⁹⁹ This probably represents the earliest structure of the tractate. Cyfn U does not create a special queen's officer section at the end of its tractate, although it does discuss the queen's steward here; in U, the groom is put together with the king's groom and the chambermaid is omitted altogether. Since all Cyfn MSS including U (the earliest) are later in date than the earliest MSS of Ior, the creation by the others of a special queen's section may have been done in imitation of Ior. Alternatively, the idea could have arisen independently, since the Latin *nawd/refugium* texts often cluster the queen's officers together.

In contrast to these stands the Iorwerth tradition, which has clearly revised the material bequeathed to it so as to give greater prominence to the queen and her household. The number of queen's officers is raised from four to eight, and these officers are expressly defined as serving the queen and depicted as forming a distinct subgroup within the court (Ior 2/3, 22/1). Three of these additional officers represent entirely new positions for which there are no parallels in the other redactions; the queen is here given a cook, a candleman (*canhwyllyd*) and a chamberlain (*gwas ystafell*) of her own to match those assigned to the king (Ior 25, 28, 29). In addition, the doorkeeper of the chamber (*dryssaur ystafell*) associated with the king in the Cyfn, Latin and Bleg versions is reconceptualized in Ior as a queen's officer specifically (Ior 27). Even the queen's groom, who is associated with the queen in the other redactions, gets a raise in status in Ior. For whereas he is characterized as a groom of relatively low status (a *gwastrawt auwyn*, 'groom of the reins') in the Latin, Bleg and Cyfn texts, in Ior he is placed on a par with the king's chief groom, the *pengwastrawt*, and shares in the latter's privileged status (Ior 24).

Ior's privileging of the queen has customarily, and I think rightly, been associated with the increasing visibility of that position under Llywelyn ap Iorwerth's consort Joan, daughter of King John of England.¹⁰⁰ Both her political connections and her high birth (she was declared legitimate by the pope in 1226) made her a more than ordinarily important figure at court; moreover, Llywelyn seems genuinely to have relied on her advice and counsel in matters of state. The addition of the officers named above to her staff, coupled with the elevation of her groom to *pengwastrawt* rank (a status that might imply the supervision by him of other here unmentioned subordinate grooms), is probably an indication that Joan frequently maintained a household separate from that of Llywelyn. This would not have been uncommon in the period,¹⁰¹ and indeed some sort of reduced-size household must have accompanied the queen when she went on circuit. The addition of the cook and candleman suggests that king and queen might dine separately on a reasonably regular basis — although the cook could alternatively be interpreted as an indication of Joan's attachment to her native cuisine. The *gwas ystafell* is the most significant addition, as he is said in the text to keep the keys to the queen's 'coffers', a statement that speaks to the existence of a separate queen's treasury (Ior 25/5).

Ior's expansion of the queen's household thus seems to reflect a significant increase in the queen's influence and prestige at court. However, the text's

¹⁰⁰ LTMW 220. On her relations with Llywelyn, see discussion below.

¹⁰¹ Jennifer C. Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1992), 50–69; Margaret Wade Labarge, *A Baronial Household of the Thirteenth Century* (New York, 1965), 57–8.

position on this issue is considerably less straightforward than the account above might tend to imply. Her household might appear more numerous and established in this text, but it is scarcely more independent. The clear presumption of even this enlarged vision of the household is that usually king and queen will be together.¹⁰² Moreover, Ior follows the other redactions in envisaging the queen's officers as persons whose authority was not only subordinate to that of the king's officers, but defined by and mediated through them as well.¹⁰³ Thus monies owed to the queen's servants pass through the hands of the king's steward first,¹⁰⁴ and even the highest of the queen's officers (the *distein*) has a *sarhaed* and *galanas* price equivalent to the lower stratum of king's officers.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the Ior redactor seems even to have revised the material found in his sources so as to emphasize the derivative nature of the authority of the queen's officers. The queen's steward, for example, who is said in Cyfn, Bleg and the Latin texts to possess his own *nawdd* independent of that of his kingly counterpart, in Ior can conduct offenders only as far as the steward of the king.¹⁰⁶ And whereas the horse given to all court officers by virtue of their position is said in Cyfn and Latin D to come from the queen if the officer in question is one of hers, in Ior it comes from the king.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² This is clear from the fact that the queen's officers shared supper money and had their lodging with the corresponding king's official: for example, Ior 22/6 (from E); 22/10; 23/3; 24/3; 25/2, and so on.

¹⁰³ All redactions that discuss the queen's officers model their accounts on their discussions of the corresponding king's officer: e.g. Lat A 117.14–21; Lat B §1.29/1–5 = LTWL 205.32–40; Lat D 328.13–32 (where king's and queen's officers have become confused with one another); Lat E 445.20–9; Bleg 21.27–22.17 (Bleg and Lat E have sorted out the confusion evident in Lat D). In Ior, 22/2=8/1; 22/3=8/15; 22/4=8/17; 22/5=8/11, and so on. The exception to this in Ior is the handmaiden (called in Ior the *llauuorven*, as opposed to the *morwyn ystafell* of the other versions, in order to distinguish her more thoroughly from Ior's new official, the *guas ystafell*), whom the redactor could not model on the *guas ystafell* because in his schema the queen has been given her own *guas ystafell*. Ior's restructuring results in a distinct downgrading of the *llauuorven*: she is not assigned the customary livery; she is not said to hold her land free as other officers do; and her *sarhaed* is calculated according to her rank rather than at the elevated rates assigned to other court officers.

¹⁰⁴ See references in n. 91 above. At least by the later thirteenth-century, such expenses would normally have come from the woman's own household: Ward, *English Noblewomen*, 50, 56, 66.

¹⁰⁵ Ior 22/12; Cyfn 6/10–11 = WML 8.21–9.7; Lat A 113.8–10; Lat B §1.7/12–13 = LTWL 196.32–4; Lat C 280.22–5; Lat E 440.32–4. Lat D and Bleg depart from the rest in including the *morwyn ystafell* in their higher range of *sarhaed* and *galanas*: Lat D 320.33; Bleg 9.3.

¹⁰⁶ Compare Ior 22/8 with Cyfn 5/11 = WML 5.15–17; Lat A 112.3–5; Lat B §1.6/10 = LTWL 195.20–2; Lat C 279.2–5 (*pincerne regine*); Lat D 319.29–31; Lat E 439.14–16; Bleg 7.6–8.

¹⁰⁷ Compare Ior 22/2, 23/1, 24/1, 25/1, 27/1, 28/1, and 29/1 with Cyfn 10/1 = WML 12.7–8, Cyfn 30/1 = WML 27.4–5, Cyfn 31/2 = WML 27.13–14, and Cyfn 32/1 = WML 27.17–19; and Lat D 328.29. She does provide linen clothing to the officers, on which see below.

That Ior's enlargement of the queen's household does not automatically translate into a more elevated view of her office is suggested also by an examination of the terminology used in the various redactions to situate the queen within the court. Already in Cyfnerth the opposition between *llys/curia* and *ystafell/camera* (court and chamber) is a visible part of the manner in which the court is conceptualized. That this should be so is not surprising: all across Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries domestic offices previously associated with the king's person began moving out of the intimate environment of the chamber to become permanent offices in the court. The chamberlain, originally a servant for whom custodianship of the royal treasure was simply a part of his larger responsibilities in the king's chamber, became over time the head of the department of the Exchequer. And the king's personal priest evolved from a cleric whose duties included handling the king's correspondence to being chancellor.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, one of the very striking aspects of the Laws of Court tractate is the extent to which the originally domestic orientation of such offices is still visible even in the Ior version. For as Stephenson's study of the administrative sources for thirteenth-century Gwynedd has revealed, the reality of Llywelyn's administration was far removed from the archaic images preserved in the Venedotian lawbooks.¹⁰⁹

The Cyfn redactor links the queen much more firmly to the realm of the chamber than to that of the court. Her officers are explicitly characterized in the text as the *sbydogyon yr ystauell*, 'officers of the chamber'.¹¹⁰ Her steward exercises his office in the chamber (*ystafell*), whereas the king's steward operates in the court or hall (*llys* or *neuadd*).¹¹¹ And her priest is called the *effeirat brenhines*, 'priest of the queen', while the king's is the *effeirat teulu*, 'priest of the household'.¹¹² Even the clothing she provides the court officers — linen, as opposed to the woollen garb given by the king — speaks to her association with the interior spaces of the household. For linen was usually worn next to the skin, as a shift or similar type of undergarment; woollen clothing, by

¹⁰⁸ The classic study of this process for England is T. F. Tout's *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, i (Manchester and London, 1920). For France, where developments of this sort lagged somewhat behind, see R. Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France*, tr. L. Butler and R. J. Adam (London, 1959); J. F. Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement royal aux premiers temps capétiens (987–1108)* (Paris, 1965); F. Lot and R. Fawtier, *Histoire des institutions françaises au moyen âge*, ii: *Institutions seigneuriales* (Paris, 1957); and Hallam, *Capetian France*, 159–61, 246 and 297–9.

¹⁰⁹ See Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, chaps. 2 and 3 particularly.

¹¹⁰ Cyfn 30/2 = WML 27.8, for example.

¹¹¹ Compare Cyfn 5/11 = WML 5.15–17 and Cyfn 30/3–4 + X = WML 27.8–10 with Cyfn 5/5 = WML 5.3–5 and Cyfn 11/4, 5, 12, 16, 17, 20 = 12. 21, 13. 2, 9, 17, 18, 20, and so on. In the Latin texts and Bleg, compare Lat A 112.3–5 with 111.28–31; Lat B §1.6/10 = LTWL 195.20–2 with Lat B §1. 6. 5 = LTWL 195.9–11; Lat C 279.2–5 with 278.23–4; Lat D 319.29–31 with 319.15–18; Lat E 439.14–16 with 439.1–2; Bleg 7.6–8 with 6.20–2.

¹¹² Cyfn 10/1 = WML 12.7 and Cyfn 9/1 = WML 11.14–15.

contrast, was outer wear and functioned in this case as the livery by which the public standing of the royal officers was made known to all.¹¹³ However, while it is true that the queen is associated in this text uniquely with the chamber, it is not the case that the chamber is associated uniquely with her. Both the chamberlain (*gwas ystafell*) and the doorkeeper of the chamber (*dryssawr ystafell*) are conceptualized as king's officers. Moreover, it is clear that the chamber in question is the same for both king and queen.¹¹⁴ The chamber in this text is much more than merely a domestic space: it is an environment in which king and queen move freely, in which people might be shown to designated places, and to which enough people come seeking admittance for the king to maintain a doorkeeper here as he does for the hall itself.

The Ior redactor not only adopts the association between the queen and the chamber, he extends it. *Brenhines* is virtually synonymous with *ystafell* in his account, while the king himself moves easily between *ystafell*, *llys* and *neuadd*. Officers are categorized as either of the court (*rey y llys*) or of the queen (*rey y brenhines*).¹¹⁵ The queen's officers are depicted as operating uniquely within the chamber, and her chamber servant (*gwas ystafell*) is said to run errands between the chamber, where she presumably is, and the hall, where she presumably is not.¹¹⁶ So thoroughgoing indeed is Ior's association between queen and chamber that what is in Cyfn and the Latin texts an opposition between the doorkeeper of the hall (who serves the hall and all in it), and the doorkeeper of the chamber (who serves the chamber and all in it), becomes in Ior a contrast between a doorkeeper of the queen, who serves uniquely in the chamber, and the doorkeeper proper, who serves 'the hall or other place in which the king may be' (Ior 19/4 and 27/3).

Ior's equation of chamber and queen is especially significant because of the manner in which the nature of the chamber itself has changed. In Ior's account, king and queen no longer share the same bedroom; rather, the queen occupies a separate room or suite of rooms and is served by her own domestic servants.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Moreover, in at least certain parts of Europe, these two types of cloth already had strong gender associations by the late eleventh century. In a humorous debate between Sheep and Flax as to whether wool or linen was the superior cloth, Sheep scores a point by pointing out that Flax was worked and 'twisted' by women — a fate to which Sheep felt itself evidently immune: David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebra: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (New York and London, 1990), 92.

¹¹⁴ This is evident from the fact that the *morwyn ystafell*, one of the queen's officers, has her lodging in the chamber of the king: Cyfn 7/10 = WML 10.10–12; Lat A 113.30–1; and cf. Lat B §1.8/9 = LTWL 197.14–15; Lat C 281.10–11; Lat D 321.21–2 (*in talamo*); Lat E 441.17–18 (*in camera aut thalamo*); Bleg 10.11–12. On chamberlain and doorkeeper, see n. 116 below.

¹¹⁵ Ior 2/3, although in 30/1 the queen's officers become once again a subsection of the officers of the court itself in order to distinguish them from those who are 'in the court' (*emewn llys*).

¹¹⁶ Ior 22/2, 22/7, 23/2, 23/7 and contrast 25/3 with 19/4.

¹¹⁷ Ior 25/6 refers to the *estauell e urenhynes*, which has a garderobe in which the *guas estauell* sleeps so as to be ready to serve queen or king, if he is staying with her (12/2 makes it clear that on such occasions the king's *guas estauell* would also be present). On a night when the queen sleeps alone, it is the chambermaid who shares her room and tends to her needs: 26/4.

The nature of her chamber is difficult to determine from the scanty evidence; food and drink would be served and blessed there (22/3–4; 23/7), and the queen's 'coffers' were kept there as well (25/5). Music would also be played, albeit softly so as not to disturb the doings in the hall, and interestingly the provision on music is phrased in Ior (though *not* in Cyfn) in a manner that seems to take for granted the queen's absence from the hall.¹¹⁸ It is true that entertainment of any kind had a political aspect in the Middle Ages, and the queen's chamber was likely no exception in this regard. But the general impression gained from this account is of a primarily domestic world: one that was visited by the king but not occupied by him, and one in which even close male personal servants were kept strictly segregated from their lady at night.¹¹⁹

Ior's association between chamber and queen therefore represents much more than a mere continuation of the pattern visible in Cyfnerth. In Cyfn, the public and private spheres of the court are imagined as already sufficiently separate that queens could be thought of as occupying a portion of the court only (the chamber) instead of the court as a whole. However, the fact that the chamber is envisaged as shared, and is not associated uniquely with the queen, suggests that for the Cyfn redactor the distinction between *llys/curia* and *ystafell/camera* did not yet constitute an opposition between the uniquely political and the uniquely domestic. The perspective of the Ior redactor, on the other hand, is very different. Ior envisages the queen as confined not merely to the private sphere, but to a particular portion only of the domestic space. The king's chamber retained some degree of political significance by virtue of its connection to the royal person; the custom whereby the judge of the court had his lodging in the king's bedchamber was probably on its way out in the thirteenth century, but is nonetheless indicative of the overlap between public and private in the immediate proximity of the king himself.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Compare Ior 13/6 with WML 34.3–5. The question of the queen's presence in the hall during feasts is an interesting one. She is depicted as giving hornfuls of drink to certain officers (Ior 6/23), and this might seem to presume her presence there. On the other hand, there is no reason why drink could not be delivered from the chamber to the hall. Moreover, no version of the seating arrangements gives the queen an established place in the hall, and the stipulation in some Cyfn MSS that she is to be seated across from her priest works best if she is imagined as dining in the chamber (WML 12.13–14; cf. GC I.xi.5). Richard I made a point of *not* having women present at his coronation banquet, which Gillingham thinks might date back to the tenth century, and Geoffrey of Monmouth cites men and women feasting separately as an ancient British custom (albeit one going back to Troy!): John Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart* (New York, 1978), 130. Contrast PKM 4, 25, 43–4, 50 (excluding wedding feasts).

¹¹⁹ Kate Mertens comments on the presence of female servants in this most intimate of domains and contrasts it with the generally 'male' nature of the rest of the household: *The English Noble Household 1250–1600: Good Governance and Politic Rule* (Oxford, 1988), 57–9, and see 42–6 on the household generally.

¹²⁰ Many versions that mention this practice record dissension or doubt about it: Cyfn 7/6 = WML 10.1–4; Lat C 281. 8–9 versus Lat D 321.19–21; Lat E 441.15–17; Ior 10/3–4. On the person of the king, see Ior 19/4.

There is no indication, however, of a similarly ongoing public role for the chamber of the queen: many a political issue might have been decided in those quiet moments shared by Joan and Llywelyn in the domestic spaces of the household, but for the Ior redactor all took place within royal court and hall.

Iorwerth's account may of course be nothing more than a reflection of practices then current in the Venedotian court. Llywelyn would not have been the only European ruler of the period to subscribe to the changes in traditional patterns of domestic architecture alluded to in the text. Henry III was the first English king to maintain sleeping quarters separate from his queen; insofar as the maintenance of separate chambers or household accounts seems to have become fashionable in noble circles all across Europe in this period, Ior's revisions might be yet more evidence of the outward-looking nature of the Gwynedd principate.¹²¹ Moreover, Marion Facinger has argued that similar attitudes towards queenship are visible elsewhere in Europe in this period. She points out that whereas queenship was not considered an office in its own right in the early Middle Ages, and queens had therefore a limited role in governing, royal women were able to exert considerable authority in political matters by virtue of their presence and visibility in the domestic sphere.¹²² Once chamber and court began to diverge, however, and government offices and officials emerged from the chamber into the court (and eventually into government buildings separate from the court itself), queens found themselves gradually removed from the places in which political decisions were made. As kings and queens began increasingly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to maintain households and chambers of their own, the relative isolation of queens from matters of the realm became even more marked. In France, this seems ironically to have happened at precisely the same time the position of queen was elevated into something grander and more visibly official than it had been in previous centuries. At least with respect to the Capetians, the elevation of the queen and her household had

¹²¹ R. Allen Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works*, i and ii (London, 1963), i, 121 and plan of the medieval palace of Westminster; Robert Stacey, *Politics, Policy and Finance under Henry III 1216–1245* (Oxford, 1987), 241–2; Labarge, *Baronial Household*, 57–8, on nobles maintaining separate household accounts in imitation of royals.

¹²² Janet Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), 31–77; Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowager: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983); Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, 'The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500–1100', and Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, 'Female Sanctity: Public and Private Roles, ca. 500–1100', pp. 83–125 of Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988); Marion Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France 987–1237' (1968) 5 *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 1–47.

less to do with the power of the queen than it did with the exaltation of French kingship.¹²³ If Facinger's work provides us with an accurate context into which to set Ior's account, the point of Ior's revisions may have been less to exalt Joan than it was to exalt Llywelyn.

The link between queen and chamber that lies at the heart of the Ior tractate is, however, so static and artificial that I would argue that the redactor's intention was less to reproduce the Venedotian court known to him than actively to comment upon it. Recent studies have considerably complicated Facinger's image of the exclusion of queens from the public sphere. Court and household were extraordinarily fluid concepts, and the division between private and public was never as stark as either her work or the Iorwerth account would seem to imply.¹²⁴ Queens were not powerless figures embroidering quietly on the sidelines while events took place around them. Henry II imprisoned his queen Eleanor because she was dangerous, not because she had ceased to perform her domestic duties. And Blanche of Castile was for all intents and purposes the actual ruler of France for nearly thirty years. There is little evidence that royal women were ever entirely, or perhaps even mostly, separated from the political arena in this period.

On the other hand, the act of *constructing* queens as individuals who moved properly within the private sphere alone — or as Jezebels who perversely chose to step out of that sphere to the detriment of king and realm — was a political tactic with a long history behind it.¹²⁵ Indeed, Blanche herself was subject to such characterizations by those who resented her influence in political affairs.¹²⁶ This is, I would argue, the context in which Iorwerth's depiction of the queen's restricted role in the Venedotian household ought to be understood. Certainly the connection with Joan and with events at Llywelyn's court would suggest that the Iorwerth account falls more into the genre of political commentary than of straightforward historical reporting. For we know from other sources that Joan was not in fact isolated from the politics of her day. She intervened frequently on behalf of her husband to make peace between himself

¹²³ Facinger, 'Medieval Queenship', 25–40.

¹²⁴ Mertes, *English Noble Household*, 11–15; John Carmi Parsons, 'Family, Sex, and Power: The Rhythms of Medieval Queenship', in Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (New York, 1993), 1–11; Louise Fradenburg, 'Rethinking Queenship'; John Carmi Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500' and Carla Freccero, 'Marguerite de Navarre and the Politics of Maternal Sovereignty', pp. 1–13, 60–77 and 132–49 respectively of Fradenburg (ed.) *Women and Sovereignty* (esp. 67–68 on the queen's bed). See also Erler and Kowaleski, *Women and Power*, 4–5, for further references.

¹²⁵ For example, Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels', 57–61; Suzanne Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900* (Philadelphia, PA, 1981), 105–6; and Schulenburg, 'Female Sanctity', 115–19.

¹²⁶ Regine Pernoud, *Blanche of Castile* (French edn. published in 1972 by Albin Michel; English version by Henry Neol and published by Collins, London, 1975), 126–30 and 148–9.

and the English crown, and was sent to England as a negotiator in the reigns of both John and Henry. Furthermore, Llywelyn appears to have trusted her judgement and to have consulted her often on political matters.¹²⁷ However, she must have been in many quarters a very controversial figure. To many partisans of Welsh independence — and, I would suggest, to the redactor of Iorwerth — Joan's influence must have seemed less salutary. Not only was she the daughter of an English king, but her very public affair with the Marcher lord William de Braose must have cast considerable doubt on her loyalty to Llywelyn and the Welsh cause. Iorwerth's image of queenship constitutes a deliberate partisan statement on the part of the redactor: Joan was to enjoy the luxuries and expanded household befitting the consort of a powerful Welsh prince, but she was not to meddle in his public affairs.¹²⁸

It may seem odd to read the lawbooks as such pointedly political documents. The temptation to regard legal texts as somehow having a greater monopoly on 'fact' than do other types of sources is a strong one. Frequently the lawbooks are cited as confirmation of the historical reality of a particular custom or set of arrangements mentioned in other more forthrightly literary sources. I ought to know; I do it myself. And I am not proposing that we should cease altogether to use them in this way. But I would like to suggest that for the lawbooks as for most other medieval genres with which I am familiar, 'fact' is a relative term. The Laws of Court may be closer in nature to the purposeful imaginings of Irish pseudo-historians than they are to the intricate accounts of the English Exchequer. But there is meaning in them. We should not be surprised that responsible jurists would choose to spend their time preserving, restructuring and even elaborating on what might seem to us the wildest of historical fantasies. They realized what we have often failed to see: the persuasiveness of the Laws of Court, as of the legal tradition as a whole, was rooted not in its proximity to Llywelyn's Wales, but in its seeming distance from it.

¹²⁷ Thomas Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicles of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff, 1955), 191–3. The document summaries provided by Stephenson in his *Governance of Gwynedd* show her accompanying Einion Fychan and Ednyfed Fychan to negotiate with English government of Henry III in 1232 (pp. 208 and 210) and writing a letter to Henry III defending the cleric Instructus from reports that he is disloyal to the king (p. 225). See also David Walker, *Medieval Wales* (Cambridge, 1990), 93, 96, 107.

¹²⁸ This would also explain why he carefully characterizes letters patent sent by the king as pertaining specifically to affairs of land and earth 'or other great matters' (*neu negesseu mawr ereyll*), while saying nothing at all about letters sent by the queen (Ior 7/9 and 23/4).