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XIII

EARLY STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE MYRDDIN LEGEND¹

A. O. H. JARMAN

IN previous discussions of the Myrddin legend I have attempted to treat it either descriptively and analytically,² or antichronologically, that is by working backwards in time from the forms it assumed in the Middle Ages to its origins.³ This method was adopted in view of the incomplete form in which the legend has been preserved in the Welsh sources, and the consequent necessity of attempting to reconstruct it conjecturally from the fragments which have survived. The principal Welsh sources are the poems *Yr Afallennau* ('The Apple-trees'), *Yr Oianau* ('Greetings'), *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin* ('The Dialogue of Myrddin and Taliesin'), *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* ('The Conversation of Myrddin and his Sister Gwenddydd'), *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd* ('The Song uttered by Myrddin in the Grave') and *Peirian Faban* ('Commanding Youth'), together with the material found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and *Vita Merlini* and a few references in the Triads and in the works of Giraldus Cambrensis. There is also some closely relevant Scottish material in the tales concerning Lailoken, and in Ireland there occurs a parallel tale, that of Suibhne Geilt, which has links with the Welsh and Scottish forms of the legend. This paper will attempt to trace the development of the tale from its most primitive forms to those which occur in the Middle Ages. Much of the discussion will of necessity be speculative but it is to be hoped that the reconstructions proposed will be accepted as at least feasible, and will also be seen to be consistent with the known evidence.

Five stages can be discerned in the development of the legend. These follow each other in chronological order, but it

¹ A lecture delivered in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern European Languages and Literature of the University of Oxford on June 2nd, 1976, under the chairmanship of Professor Idris Ll. Foster.

² 'The Welsh Myrddin Poems', chapter 3 in R. S. Loomis (ed.), *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1959, 20-30.

³ *The Legend of Merlin*, Cardiff, 1960.

would be an over-simplification to treat their relationship as exclusively chronological. They are as follows:

1. The stage of the basic themes before their association with the characters, localities and events which later became the constituent elements of the legend.

2. The stage when these basic themes were linked with the battle of Arfderydd, with Llallogan (Lailoken), and with St. Kentigern.

3. The stage of the transfer of the legend from northern Britain to Wales and the identification of Llallogan with Myrddin.

4. The stage of the development of the legend in Wales, including its assumption of literary form and its attachment to the national tradition of prophecy.

5. The stage of the intervention by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the development of the legend, leading to Myrddin's new career in international literature under the name 'Merlin'.

This division into stages gives a satisfactory general idea of the way the legend developed, but when we come to examine its various elements in detail we may find that their relationship was more complicated than the above classification suggests. Let us, however, begin with the basic legendary material. The tales of Myrddin and Lailoken and Suibhne Geilt are examples of the literary elaboration of the theme of the Wild Man of the Woods. This portrayed a man living in a wild state in the forest, far from human habitation and society, associating only with the beasts, growing hairy like them and subsisting on fruits and herbs. No full anthropological study of the theme has as yet been undertaken, but in 1952 R. Bernheimer published a descriptive study of its manifestation in the artistic and literary culture of medieval Europe.⁴ He devoted much space to the use made of the theme in tapestries and illuminated manuscripts, dance and pageantry, and ecclesiastical sculpture, but observed that it was among Celtic-speaking peoples that the theme first took literary form in Europe, and that this occurred centuries before it began to be used in the visual arts. In the broadest sense, of course, the theme of the Wild Man enjoyed

⁴ *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, Harvard University Press.

a much wider distribution than the Celtic and medieval European instances suggest, and its origins reach far back into the pre-Christian period. In 1925 and 1926 C. A. Williams published a study of these origins in which he declared that he was discussing 'material from a period of over three thousand years'.⁵ In this work he dealt with examples of legends about hairy hermits or anchorites living in the desert which occur in sources such as the Indian tale of Rishyasninga and the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh. Another well-known example to which he refers is Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it was reported that he was changed into a beast-man as a punishment for his arrogant pride. The Old Testament account states that a voice from heaven spoke to the king and rebuked him and prescribed his punishment:

And he was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.⁶

Nebuchadnezzar was a popular subject among medieval artists; they portrayed him as bearded, hairy and bent.

In the early Asiatic sources a religious element tended to attach itself to the legends of the hairy hermit. Indeed, as C. A. Williams says, 'the solitary beast-man of the ancient tradition had a tendency to coalesce with the holy man, the religious recluse'. Examples of this development in an early Christian context may be found in accounts of the lives of saintly hermits dwelling in the Egyptian desert.⁷ In medieval Europe tales were composed about penitent hairy anchorites and a study of one of these, the German legend of St. John Chrisostom, was published in 1935, again by C. A. Williams.⁸ Of course, none of these legends, or of the oriental traditions mentioned above, have a direct link with the Myrddin legend, but nevertheless the tales of wild men in Celtic countries normally contain a religious element, including a strong expression of penitence for wrong-doing. Thus in the Scottish

⁵ 'Oriental Affinities of the Legend of the Hairy Anchorite', *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, 10 (1925), 189-242; 11 (1926), 429-510.

⁶ *Book of Daniel*, iv, 31-3.

⁷ See Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 73, cols. 1004-14.

⁸ 'The German Legends of the Hairy Anchorite', *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, 18 (1935), 1-79.

tale Lailoken confesses his guilt to St. Kentigern and asks him for the Sacrament, while two saints, Ronan and Moling, play an important part in the Irish tale of Suibhne Geilt.

In the remains of the Myrddin legend which have survived in medieval Welsh verse there are no traces of this kind of relationship between Myrddin and a saint, but a religious element nevertheless finds expression in the wild man's soliloquies. At the close of a stanza of the *Afallennau*, which probably formed part of the poem's original nucleus, Myrddin asks to be received into bliss by the Lord of Hosts:

Buyf guas guinwydic. gan guledic gorchortion.⁹

In the *Oianau*, too, he expresses a similar sentiment:

Oes imi gan iessv gaffv guaessaf
Brenhinoet newoet achoet uchaf.
Ny mad rianed o plant adaw. ar ny creddoe
y dovit in dit diwethaf.¹⁰

[May there be for me from Jesus to receive the support of the king(s) of heaven of the highest lineage(?). He was not fortunately born, of the children of Adam, who believes not in God in the last day.]

At the end of the *Cyfoesi* the conversation turns to religious considerations. Gwenddydd says to her brother:

Gorchymyn[naf] vy eirioes vrawt
yn y gaer wertheuin,
gogelet duw o verdin.¹¹

[I commit my brother in faith to the fortress on high. May God protect Merddin.]

and Myrddin replies to her in similar vein. It is not easy to suggest a date for the introduction of this ingredient into the legend. Some references of a religious character in the poems cannot be much older than the manuscripts in which they are contained. Such are the lines in the *Oianau* which speak of bishops who give support to robbers¹² and monks who gain a

⁹ BBC 51.6-7.

¹⁰ BBC 53.13-16.

¹¹ B iv, 121.

¹² BBC 56.12, *escib. lluch lladron*.

burden of sin,¹³ and in particular the following declaration by Myrddin in the *Cyfoesi* which has a very late ring:

Ny chymeraf gymun gan ysgymun veneich
ac eu twygeu ar eu clun.
am kymuno duw e hun.¹⁴

[I will not take Communion from loathsome monks, with their pouches on their thighs; may God himself communicate me.]

Apart from references such as these, however, there is no reason to doubt the antiquity of the tradition that Myrddin made a religious end to his life. There is a feeble echo of it at the end of Geoffrey's *Vita Merlini*, and in his edition of this work Basil Clarke expresses the view that 'this "saintly resolution" is a hagiographical device which was probably grafted on to the Arfderydd tale through its later association with Kentigern'.¹⁵ This seems reasonable in view of the consciousness of guilt present in the minds of both Lailoken and Myrddin, and of the link this has with their madness and, apparently, with the battle of Arfderydd itself. Lailoken tells Kentigern that he, and he alone, had been the cause of the slaughter, and that he had heard a voice from heaven saying to him that, because of this, he alone would be punished; henceforth he would 'be given over to the angels of Satan' and until the day of his death he would 'have communion with the creatures of the wood'.¹⁶ He also saw a vision, 'numberless martial battalions in the heaven like flashing lightning, holding in their hands fiery lances and glittering spears which they shook most fiercely' at him. This was accompanied by a 'brightness too great for human senses to endure'.¹⁷ It was this that brought about his

¹³ BBC 56.13, *myneich a obrin beich o bechodev*.

¹⁴ B iv, 121.

¹⁵ Basil Clarke, *Life of Merlin*, Cardiff, 1973, 2.

¹⁶ Ibid., 227. For the original text see *Romania*, xxii, 514-25; quoted in B ix, 16, Et audiui quasi fragorem maximum. vocem de celo mihi dicentem. Lailochen. Lailochen. quia tu solus omnium istorum interfectorum reus es sanguinis, tu solus cunctorum scelera punies. Angelis etenim Sathane traditus vsque in diem mortis tue. conuersacionem habebis inter bestias siluestres.

¹⁷ Cum autem ad vocem quam audiui meum direxi intuitum, vidi splendorem nimium quem natura humana sustinere non potuit. Vidi etiam innumerabiles phalanges exercitus in aera fulguri similes chorusco. lanceas igneas. et tela scintillancia in manibus tenentes, que crudelissime in me vibrabant.

madness and drove him to the forest.¹⁸ The vision is mentioned in only one Welsh source, the *Itinerarium Kambriae* of Giraldus Cambrensis.¹⁹ Giraldus, however, does not refer to any consciousness of guilt on the part of Myrddin (whom he calls *Merlinus Celidonius* or *Silvester*); his emphasis is on the dreadful character of the vision, which he regards as the cause of Myrddin's lapse. The Welsh poems, on the other hand, attribute a more specific guilt to Myrddin. In the *Afallennau* he is made to say:

Och iessu. na dyffv wy nihenit.
kyn dyffod ar wi llav e lleith mab guendit.²⁰

[Oh Jesus, would that my end had come, before I was guilty of the death of the son of Gwenddydd.]

And again:

Nu nym car i guendit ac nim eneirch.
Oef kas gan gwassauc guassaf Rydirch.
Ryrewineis y mab ae merch.²¹

[Now Gwenddydd loves me not and does not greet me. I am hated by Gwasawg the supporter of Rhydderch. I have killed her son and her daughter.]

In the second quotation the order of the lines seems to be confused and the third should probably be read second. The reference to both a son and daughter of Gwenddydd is also dubious and it may be suggested that the daughter has been introduced here in order to meet the demands of the rhyme. In neither the *Afallennau* nor the *Oianau* is it actually stated that Gwenddydd was Myrddin's sister²² but in the *Cyfoesi* she is so described, as is he, several times, as her brother.²³ In the

¹⁸ Vnde extra meipsum conuersum, spiritus malignus me arripuit. ferisque siluestribus sicut ipse contemplaris predestinauit.

¹⁹ *Itin. Kamb.*, Rolls ed., vol. vi, 133, . . . cum inter acies bellicas constitutus monstrum horribile nimis in aera suspiciendo prospiceret, dementire coepit, et ad silvam transfugiendo silvestrem usque ad obitum vitam perduxit.

²⁰ BBC 50.13-14.

²¹ BBC 50.1-3.

²² Some critics have chosen to regard her as his mistress, cf. R. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, Cardiff, 161, 470: 'One poem, the *Cyfoesi* . . . is in the form of a dialogue between Myrddin and a certain Gwenddydd, who is here represented as his sister, but elsewhere is apparently his mistress.' For *chwaer* with this latter meaning, see GPC.

²³ B iv, 120-1, *Vy vn brawt, vy eirioes urawt, vy eirioes chwaer*. Cf. RP 577.2, *Kyuoessi myrdin a gwenddyd y chwaer*.

Vita Merlini, which calls her Ganieda, Gwenddydd is introduced as sister to Merlinus, *Merlini soror*,²⁴ and this relationship is confirmed by many later references such as that by the fifteenth-century poet Gutun Owain to 'Merddin . . . and his sister Gwenddydd'.²⁵ In the *Afallennau* mention is made of the 'fair wanton maiden'²⁶ who in earlier days had been Myrddin's companion near the apple-tree, and of the *gordderch* or 'mistress' who does not now visit him in the Forest of Celyddon,²⁷ but they are not named and there is no reason to think that the references here are to Gwenddydd.²⁸ It is clear, therefore, that Myrddin has slain his nephew, his sister's son, and that having repented of his misdeed he now wishes he had died before incurring the guilt of it. Whether this had occurred before the fateful battle, or was one of the events of the battle itself, is not certain. In the *Vita Merlini* it is stated that Merlinus became mad from grief after hearing that three of his brothers had been slain.²⁹ A possible source of this statement could be the reference in *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thalesin* to the fall in battle of 'three men of note':

Truyuir. nod maur eu clod. gan. elgan.³⁰
[Three men of note greatly praised by Elgan.]

While it would be venturesome to maintain that Geoffrey actually knew the *Ymddiddan* it is noteworthy that in the *Vita* he makes Telgesinus visit Merlinus and conduct a conversation with him. Telgesinus was, of course, Taliesin; and it is thus probable that Geoffrey had heard of the existence of the *Ymddiddan*, and may have been informed that it contained a reference to the fall of three notable warriors in battle.³¹ The

²⁴ Clarke, op. cit., 58, line 124.

²⁵ E. Bachellery, *L'Oeuvre Poétique de Gutun Owain*, XXVI, 60; TYP 473.

²⁶ BBC 50.18, *Bun wen wariu*.

²⁷ BBC 50.6, *nym goffuy gortech*.

²⁸ It may be fairly argued that the erotic allusions in the Myrddin poems represent late accretions to the legend.

²⁹ Clarke, op. cit., 54-7. It should be noted that Clarke shows, p. 137, that the text can be understood as referring to three brothers, not of Merlinus, but of Peredur.

³⁰ BBC 3.5-7; YMT 57.16.

³¹ The first part of the *Ymddiddan*, in which the reference to the three warriors occurs, deals not with the battle of Arfderydd but with an earlier battle fought in Dyfed; the last fourteen lines describe the battle of Arfderydd, see YMT passim. Clearly, Geoffrey's informant thought that the entire poem dealt with the northern battle.

fact that the *Vita* makes the three men brothers of Merlinus may possibly reflect an awareness on Geoffrey's part that some family tragedy had been enacted in connection with the battle of Arfderydd.³² Be that as it may, the point is made by Basil Clarke that the relationship between uncle and nephew, a sister's son, is sacred in many societies.³³ Dr. Rachel Bromwich has drawn attention to a number of Celtic examples of this relationship, such as Math/Gwydion, Brân/Gwern, March/Drystan, Conchobor/Cú Chulainn.³⁴ According to Tacitus the Germans held that the relationship between a man and his sister's son was closer than that between him and his own son, and use was made of this bond in taking hostages.³⁵ In Clarke's view, the cause of Myrddin's lapse into madness and flight into the forest was his sense of responsibility for the death of the son of his sister Gwenddydd; that is, the realization of the wickedness of his deed would have been a sufficiently traumatic experience to lead to mental derangement.

These, then, are the basic themes of the legend: (1) the wild man of the woods, originally the hairy anchorite dwelling in the wilderness; (2) the general theme of penitence, frequently associated with the solitary life of the wild man; and (3) more specifically, a sense of guilt on the part of the wild man for having been the cause of the battle at which he lost his reason (Lailoken), or for having killed his sister's son (Myrddin). The first and second of these are of wide distribution and occur quite independently of the Myrddin legend. For example, in the romance of *Owain*, which corresponds to Chrétien's *Yvain*, the hero's lapse into the wild state is thus described:

And on the morrow early he arose, and it was not for Arthur's court that he made but the bounds of the world and desolate mountains. And he was wandering thus till his clothes perished, and till his body was nigh perished, and till long hair grew all over his body; and he would keep company

³² R. Vaughan of Hengwrt in the 17th century recorded a tradition that four brothers of Merlin Caledonius fell at Arfderydd, namely Llywelyn, Gwgawn, Einiawn and Rhiwallawn, see Clarke, op. cit., 137; TYP 209; B xiv, 105.

³³ Clarke, op. cit., 2; see also B. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Early Britain*, Cardiff, 1975, 36.

³⁴ TYP 371. On Brân and Gwern cf. Rhys and Jones, *The Welsh People*, London, 1923, 39.

³⁵ *Germania*, 20; see G. C. Homans, *The Human Group*, London, 1951, 252-4.

with wild beasts and feed with them till they were used to him. And therewith he grew so weak that he might not keep up with them.³⁶

Owain lacked Myrddin's resilience and failed to endure the rigours of the wild life. Ultimately, in a semi-conscious state, he had to be rescued and it took three months to remove the hair from his flesh. It should be noted that madness is not attributed to him and that his retreat into the forest was caused by remorse for having forsaken a lady. The third theme, involving responsibility for having committed a definite crime, points in the direction of the Myrddin legend as we know it, for it was not until the wildness and madness of the central character had been attached to the battle of Arfderydd that the tale can be said to have crystallized. This point represents the beginning of the second stage in its development, during which it acquired a geographical location, a date, and a historical setting, together with a series of characters, Gwenddolau, Rhydderch, Llallogan, Kentigern, Gwenddydd, Gwasawg, of whom some had been authentic living persons, while others were legendary.

The battle of Arfderydd is recorded in the oldest text of the *Annales Cambriae* as having occurred in the year 573. The entry is simply *bellum arfterid*.³⁷ The early entries of the *Annales* referring to events in northern Britain are generally accepted as dependable, and historians do not deny that Arfderydd was a historical battle. Its location has also been determined beyond reasonable doubt. In 1865 Skene showed that the name Arfderydd survives as *Arthuret* in northern Cumberland, and this is now the general view, even if uncertainty remains about the exact spot where the encounter took place.³⁸ Nearby is

³⁶ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion*, Everyman, 1974, 174. The Welsh text (for which see R. L. Thomson, *Owein*, Dublin, 1968, 21) reads: A thrannoeth y bore y kyfodes ac nyt llys Arthur a gyrchwys namyn eithaued byt a diffeith vynyded. Ac ef a vu y velly ar dro hyny daruu y dillat oll, ac hyny daruu y gorff hayach, ac yny dyuawd blew hir trwydyaw oll; a chytgerdet a bwystuilet gwyllt a wnaï, a chytymborth ac wynt yny oedynt gynefin ac ef. Ac ar hynny gwanhau a oruc ef hyt na allei eu kanhymdeith.

³⁷ *Cy.*, ix, 155; YMT 2. According to J. E. Lloyd, HW² 166, 575 would be more accurate; cf. H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *Growth of Literature*, Cambridge, 1932, i, 147.

³⁸ W. F. Skene, 'Notice of the Site of the Battle of Ardderyd or Arderyth', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vi, 91; Forbes, *Lives of S. Ninian and S. Kentigern*, Edinburgh, 1874, 360.

Carwinley, a name almost certainly derived from *Caer Weneddolau*, 'The Fortress of Gwenddolau'.³⁹ It preserves the name of one of the leading participants in the battle, and probably the local ruler. When, however, we attempt to determine the cause or occasion of the battle, and which parties fought on either side, we find ourselves in some difficulty. Later tradition, such as that enshrined in *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin*, testify to its importance and ferocity, and the poem declares that the warriors had throughout their lives been preparing for the battle of Arfderydd, —o *hid y wuchit y darparan*.⁴⁰ According to Sir J. E. Lloyd, Gwenddolau ap Ceidio was defeated at Arfderydd by Rhydderch Hael ap Tudwal and this victory was probably the turning-point in Rhydderch's career.⁴¹ Sir J. Morris-Jones also thought that Rhydderch fought in the battle.⁴² Some scholars, including Skene, have argued that Arfderydd was 'a great struggle between the supporters of the advancing Christianity and the departing paganism, in which the former were victorious'.⁴³ This view was based mainly on the portrait of Rederech (Rhydderch) as a Christian king in the *Life of St. Kentigern*, the description of him as *ruyfador fit* ('defender of the Faith') in the *Oianau*, and the references of a pagan character to Gwenddolau which occur in one of the Triads.⁴⁴ No substantial evidence, however, can be adduced in support of this view. Indeed, many scholars maintain that Rhydderch was not present at the battle of Arfderydd, and it must be admitted that not one of the historical or legendary sources which we use as evidence for the battle actually state that he participated.⁴⁵ It appears that the first writer to assert that Rhydderch fought in the battle was Geoffrey of Monmouth. In the *Vita Merlini* he tells how Merlinus lost his reason in a battle (admittedly not named in the poem) fought between Peredurus, king of the Venedoti or North Welsh, Merlinus, king of the Demetae or South Welsh, and Rodarchus,

³⁹ For the medieval forms *Karwindelhou*, *Karwendelowe*, *Kaerwyndlo*, *Carwendlow*, etc., see Loomis, ALMA 27.

⁴⁰ YMT 57.

⁴¹ Lloyd, op. cit., 166.

⁴² *Cy.*, xxviii, 48.

⁴³ Skene, op. cit., 95; cf. Forbes, op. cit., 365.

⁴⁴ See Forbes, op. cit., 88–9, 213; Clarke, *Life of Merlin*, 161; TYP 68–9; BBC 52.11, *ritech hael ruyfador fit*.

⁴⁵ This view is strongly expressed by R. Bromwich in TYP 209 and 504–5.

king of the Cumbri or Cumbrians, on the one hand, and Guennolous, king of Scotland, on the other. This must be understood as Geoffrey's interpretation (or that of his informants) of the references to Rhydderch in the *Afallennau*, or possibly as traditional information known in Geoffrey's day but since lost. Geoffrey's readiness as a writer to take liberties with his source-materials must also, of course, be borne in mind. I think, however, that the references to Rhydderch in the *Afallennau* and *Oianau* can be taken as meaning that, when these poems were composed, Arfderydd was regarded as a battle at which Gwenddolau was overthrown by him. The poems are soliloquies in which Myrddin mourns for his 'lord Gwenddolau', described by him as 'chief of the kings of the North' and 'greatest in generosity', who is now 'silent' 'beneath the brown earth'.⁴⁶ The only other ruler mentioned by Myrddin is Rhydderch, and his references to him are full of fear and hostility. He believes that he is being persecuted by Rhydderch and contrasts his present wretched condition amid the wolves and snows of the Caledonian Forest with the luxury enjoyed by 'Rhydderch Hael tonight at his feast'.⁴⁷ Referring to the apple-tree which grows in the forest he describes its peculiar power as follows:

Awallen peren atif in llanerch.
y hangert ae hargel rac riev Ryderch.
amsathir in y bon. maon yn y chilch.⁴⁸

[Sweet-apple tree which grows in a glade, its peculiar power hides it from the men of Rhydderch, a crowd by its trunk, hosts around it.]

These lines can be elucidated with the help of the Irish tale of the wild man, *Buile Shuibhne* or 'The Frenzy of Suibhne'. In this tale Suibhne is a retainer of Congal Claon and the relationship between the two corresponds to that between Myrddin and Gwenddolau. Congal is slain at the battle of Moira (Magh Ráth) by Domnall son of Aed, whereupon Suibhne loses his reason and flees to the forest. Domnall and his men pursue

⁴⁶ BBC 51.4-5, *Vy argluit guendoleu*; 53.19, *Pen teernet goglet llaret myrhaw*; 53.18, *y dan vyguerid rut nw neud araf*.

⁴⁷ BBC 56.15-57.2, *Bychan a wir ryderch hael heno y ar y wlet. a portheise neithuir o anhunet. Eiri hid impen clun. gan cun callet*.

⁴⁸ BBC 49.15-17.

him and, finding him perched on a tree in Tir Conaill, try to persuade him to descend. They encircle the tree but Suibhne escapes from them by ascending towards the heavens and flying away.⁴⁹ One of the powers acquired by him in his madness was that of levitation. Myrddin did not possess this power but we gather that he depended for his safety on the property of invisibility, which was possessed by the apple-tree and could (presumably) be extended to cover him if he chose to hide in its branches. Here the men of Rhydderch correspond to Domnall's men and it seems reasonable to conclude that Rhydderch has vanquished Gwenddolau just as Domnall has vanquished Congal. This conclusion, of course, presupposes that a close parallelism existed between the Welsh and Irish forms of the legend. This has now been denied by Clarke, who maintains that it is probable that the British and Irish wild-man traditions spring from different bases, although he allows that 'there is much that is common in the legend-form'.⁵⁰ It would, however, be impossible to make any kind of sense of the first four lines of the fifth stanza of the *Afallennau* without the aid of the Irish tale.

Such, then, is the evidence of the *Afallennau* and *Oianau* poems. Contradictory evidence is found, however, in the thirteenth-century text of the *Annales Cambriae* which, after the entry *bellum armterid*, adds the words: *inter filios Elifer et Guendoleu filium Keidiau; in quo bello Guendoleu cecidit: Merlinus insanus effectus est*.⁵¹ The form *Merlinus*, used here, derives from Geoffrey's *Historia*, but the information contained in the statement does not in its entirety come from either of Geoffrey's works. As has already been observed, at the beginning of the *Vita Merlini* Geoffrey describes a battle in which Peredurus fought against Guennolous, and in Welsh tradition Gwrgi and Peredur were the sons of Eliffer.⁵² But the *Vita* does not mention Gwrgi or Eliffer or Ceidio, and does not name the battle. Neither does it state that Guennolous (i.e. Gwenddolau) was slain in it. It may therefore be assumed that the entry in the *Annales* was composed by someone writing later than the

⁴⁹ J. G. O'Keeffe, *Buile Shuibhne*, Irish Texts Society, xii (1910), 17.

⁵⁰ Clarke, op. cit., 22.

⁵¹ *Annales Cambriae*, Rolls, 5; YMT 14.

⁵² TYP 391, 491.

publication of the *Historia* (1136) and probably the *Vita Merlini* (c. 1148–50) but also familiar with independent Welsh tradition. One wonders whether this tradition contained at one time an account of a clash between Gwenddolau and the sons of Eliffer. The Myrddin poems do not mention the latter, apart from one reference in the *Ymddiddan*:

Seith meib eliffer. seith guir ban brouher,
Seith gwaew ny ochel in eu seithran.⁵³

[The seven sons of Eliffer, seven proven warriors, who will not avoid seven spears in their seven battle-sections.]

Here the rhetorical use of the number *seven* is suspect, but the reference may reflect a tradition of participation by the sons of Eliffer in the battle of Arfderydd. No early reference to them occurs outside the Genealogies with the exception of the entry in the oldest text of the *Annales Cambriae* under the year 580: *Guurci et peretur moritur*.⁵⁴ We gather from this that they did, at least, survive the battle. However, in the triad of the *Three Horses who carried the Three Horse-Burdens*, found in a thirteenth-century manuscript, we are told that

Corvan, horse of the sons of Eliffer, bore the second Horse-Burden: he carried on his back Gwrgi and Peredur and Dunawd the Stout and Cynfelyn the Leprous(?), to look upon the battle-fog of (the host of) Gwenddolau (in) Ar(f)derydd. (And no one overtook him but Dinogad son of Cynan Garwyn, (riding) upon Swift Roan, and he won censure(?) and dishonour from then till this day.)⁵⁵

Here we have a synopsis of an event in a saga concerning Arfderydd in which two other men of the North, Dunawd and Cynfelyn, have joined company with Gwrgi and Peredur. Riding on one horse, they were overtaken by a representative of the royal line of Powys, Dinogad son of Cynan Garwyn.

⁵³ YMT 58.

⁵⁴ *Cy.*, ix, 155.

⁵⁵ TYP 109, Er eil Marchlwyth a duc Corvan march meibyon Elifer, a duc Gwrgi a Pheredur arnav, a Dunawt Vwr, a Chynvelyn Drwsgyl, y edrych ar vygedorth (llu) Gwendoleu (yn) Arderyd. (Ac nys gordiwedawd neb namyn Dinogad vab Kynan Garwynn y ar y Kethin Kyflym, ac aruidiaut ac aglot a gafas yr hynny hyt hediw.) For a different interpretation of *aruidiaut* see YMT 12, and pp. vi–vii of the second edition.

Other triads associated with Arfderydd are the *Three Faithful War-bands*, which states that the war-band of Gwenddolau 'continued the battle for a fortnight and a month after their lord was slain',⁵⁶ and the *Three Noble Retinues*, which names 'the Retinue of Dreon the Brave at the Dyke of Ar(f)dery(dd)'.⁵⁷ In the triad of the *Three Futile Battles* the battle of Arfderydd is described as one 'which was brought about by cause of the lark's nest', and the triad adds that the Futile Battles were so called 'because they were brought about by such a barren cause as that'.⁵⁸ The triad of the *Three Men who performed the Three Fortunate Assassinations* refers to Gall son of Dysgyfawd 'who slew the Two Birds of Gwenddolau. And they had a yoke of gold on them. Two corpses of the Cymry they ate for their dinner, and two for their supper'.⁵⁹ Clearly the act of slaying the birds was deemed praiseworthy, so that here we have a triad hostile to Gwenddolau. Of the other four triads quoted the only one which seems to have bias is the *Three Faithful War-bands*, and this we may take to be favourably disposed towards him. It is evident that at one time there existed a saga concerning the battle of Arfderydd and the part played in it by Gwenddolau and other characters associated with him. This was quite separate from the tale of Myrddin, for in none of the triads mentioned above is there reference to Myrddin, Rhydderch, Gwenddydd, Gwasawg, Coed Celyddon or the theme of madness. It is fair to assume that at some stage the tale of Myrddin, or at least a tale of a wild man, had become attached to the Arfderydd saga and continued to exist for a period as an episode within it, but later disengaged itself and developed again as an independent tale. A close parallel is found to this in Irish, where the story of Suibhne is told both as an episode

⁵⁶ TYP 57, Teulu Guendoleu mab Keidav yn Arderyd, a gynhalyassant y vrwydyr pythewnos a mis wedy llad eu harglwyd.

⁵⁷ TYP 65, Gosgord Dreon Lev yn Rotwyd Arderys.

⁵⁸ TYP 206, Gweith Arderydd, a wnaethpvyt o achaws nyth yr Ychedydd; . . . Sef achaws y gelwit y rei hynny yn ouer: vrth y gwneuthur o achaws mor ddirfvyth a hynn. On the 'lark's nest' cf. Clarke, op. cit., 160: 'A boundary dispute is possible, whether or not related to Caerlaverock ("lark-fort") at the mouth of the Nith.' On the possible association with Caerlaverock see further N. K. Chadwick, *The British Heroic Age*, Cardiff, 1976, 99; K. Jackson, 'O achaws Nyth yr Ychedydd', *Tsgrifau Beirniadol*, X, 1977, 45–50.

⁵⁹ TYP 68, Gall mab Dysgyfawt a ladawd deu ede(ryn) Gwendoleu, ac yeu o eur a oed arnadunt: dwy gelein o'r Kymry a yssynt ar eu kinyaw a dwy ar eu kwynos.

in the *Battle of Magh Rath*⁶⁰ and as a fully developed independent tale in the *Buile Suibhne*.

In a recent article⁶¹ Dr. Molly Miller of Glasgow has used the evidence of the triads, together with information preserved in the early genealogies,⁶² to attempt a reconstruction of the political and military situation in the North at the time of the battle of Arfderydd, and more specifically to determine who fought on which side in the battle. She maintains that it was an encounter between branches of the Coeling, and this would tend to confirm the view that the tale of Myrddin was an intrusive element in the saga of Arfderydd, for Rhydderch Hael was a descendant not of Coel but of Dyfnwal Hen.⁶³ If we are to conclude from the evidence of the *Afallennau* and the *Oianau* that Rhydderch fought and defeated Gwenddolau at Arfderydd, this can be regarded as a legendary development within the context of the tale itself for, if Dr. Miller is right, Rhydderch was not present at the battle. In her interpretation Arfderydd was the final battle of a war, in which Gwenddolau's enemies from north and south joined forces to overthrow him. From the direction of Lancashire or Yorkshire came his most powerful adversaries, Gwrgi and Peredur, sons of Eliffer Gosgorddfawr, accompanied by Dunawd of Cumberland; from Strathclyde to the north came Cynfelyn Drwsgl. While the battle was in progress the leaders of the confederacy opposing Gwenddolau withdrew temporarily to confer about the way the fighting was going, whereupon Dinogad the son of Cynan Garwyn seized the opportunity to escape from the battle, thereby attaching undying shame to his memory.

There is no need here to examine the evidence about Arfderydd in greater detail. It is itself very largely of a legendary character and many would perhaps not be prepared to accept it as a basis for firm historical conclusions. Our present concern, however, is with the development of another legend, that of Myrddin, which apparently attached itself in popular

⁶⁰ See J. O'Donovan, *The Banquet of Dun na nGeadh and the Battle of Mag Rath*, Dublin, 1842, 231.

⁶¹ 'The Commanders at Arthuret', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society*, lxxv (1975), 96-118.

⁶² For a discussion of the genealogies see Dr. Miller's article, 'Historicity and the Pedigrees of the Northcountrymen', B xxvi (1975), 255-80.

⁶³ TYP 238.

tradition to the battle of Arfderydd, thenceforth using it as a part of its own background. Dinogad son of Cynan Garwyn was not the only fugitive who is reported to have fled from this battle. Another was Lailoken, an account of whose lapse into madness during battle, and subsequent life and adventures in the forest, derived probably from an early life of St. Kentigern, is found in a fifteenth-century manuscript.⁶⁴ As we have already seen,⁶⁵ Lailoken describes a dreadful vision which he saw in the heavens and declares that he heard a voice accusing him of having been the cause of all the slaughter, and prescribing his punishment. He thereupon lost his reason and fled to the forest. The tale *Lailoken and Kentigern* tells of his appearances before St. Kentigern and his clerics, and of the annoyance he caused them with his demands for the Sacrament before he died a triple death, namely through beating, piercing and drowning. This latter theme attached itself at an early date to the legend of the wild man. It is found associated with Suibhne as well as with Lailoken, and was used by Geoffrey in the *Vita Merlini*.⁶⁶ It does not appear in any of the Myrddin material found in Welsh and need not therefore be considered as a part of the development here being traced.

The name *Lailoken* (var. *Lailochen*) occurs also in the form *Laloecen* (var. *Laloicen*) in the twelfth-century *Life of St. Kentigern* by Joceline of Furness.⁶⁷ The corresponding forms *llallogan*, *llallawc* occur in Welsh as epithets of Myrddin in the *Cyfoesi*.⁶⁸ Some problems arise in connection with the name, not the least of which is the fact that it occurs in references, not in any way associated with Myrddin, in the Llywarch Hen poems.⁶⁹ It is also found in Brittany as *Lalocant*, *Lalocan* and in Ireland as *Lallóc* (fem.), again referring to persons unconnected with the Myrddin legend.⁷⁰ Apparently the name became detached

⁶⁴ Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of MSS. in the British Museum*, 1883, i, 290; B ix, 14; N. K. Chadwick (ed.), *Studies in the Early British Church*, Cambridge, 1948, 329.

⁶⁵ See supra, footnotes 16-18.

⁶⁶ K. Jackson, 'The Motive of the Three-fold Death in the Story of Suibhne Geilt', in Ryan (ed.), *Essays and Studies presented to Eoin MacNeill*, Dublin, 1940, 535-50; Clarke, op. cit., 12, 139.

⁶⁷ Forbes, op. cit., 241; B ix, 13.

⁶⁸ B ix, 9.

⁶⁹ I. Williams, CLIH, Cardiff, 1935, 22; B ix, 8.

⁷⁰ B ix, 25.

from its origins and received a wide distribution in the Celtic countries. Meanings such as 'twin brother' and 'friend' have been suggested for it by lexicographers, but attempts to find a derivation for it have not hitherto been very successful. In his recent edition of the *Vita Merlini*, however, Basil Clarke has suggested a derivation which, if a trifle daring, appears reasonable and disposes of the problem of attributing a 'meaning' to the element *Lal-* or *llall-*.⁷¹ He points out that in Gaul the form *Laliacensis* occurs as the name of a village so called after one of the family of Lollius Urbicus. Lollius, a native of Roman Africa, pursued a successful career in Gaul and elsewhere in the Roman Empire in the second century A.D. and was Governor of Britain from 139 till 142, during which period he was associated with the 'pacification' of northern Britain and the building of the Antonine Wall.⁷² Clarke's suggestion is that there existed a 'northern Romano-British estate settlement called after one of the Lollius family' and bearing, presumably, a name commencing with *Lalāc-*. Llalawc or Llallogan or Lailoken could therefore have been a man connected with this settlement, and known by some form of its name, more than four centuries later. It should also be noted that Alladhán, the British wild man whom Suibhne meets during his visit to northern Britain, describes himself as the 'son of a landholder' (*mac brughaidh*).⁷³ Clarke's view is, therefore, that Llallogan, or the 'Myrddin-original' as he calls him,⁷⁴ was a real person who

⁷¹ Clarke, op. cit., 195.

⁷² For Lollius Urbicus see R. G. Collingwood and J. N. L. Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, Oxford, 1937, 140; S. Frere, *Britannia*, Cardinal, 1974, 165.

⁷³ O'Keeffe, *Buile Suibhne*, 102.

⁷⁴ Clarke, op. cit., 160. Dr. Miller, 'The Commanders at Arthuret', loc. cit., 96-7, is not prepared to regard the content of the Myrddin poems as a continuation of the Lailoken traditions. Noting that 'the elements of [Myrddin's] story—of a man maddened by slaughter and so given foresight of his own and others' deaths—have been . . . correlated with the surviving fragments of the story of Lailoken' she gives the Myrddin poems, no doubt correctly, a ninth to twelfth-century dating and adds: 'The new features of warfare—surprise, ferocity, and shock—introduced by the Vikings . . . limit the ancestry of the Myrddin story to that time: its only relevance to the battle of Arthuret is then that some poet used it to emphasize the importance and terror of that conflict, and at the same time to place the psychological fact in a bearably remote context.' This hardly seems a tenable position in view of the close links and correspondences between the Lailoken traditions and the Myrddin poems, e.g. the relationship of the forms *Lailoken* and *Llallogan*, and the location of the fateful battle in *campo inter Lidel et Carwanolow situato*, see B ix, 22.

lost his reason at Arfderydd and fled from the battle, and that this was the genesis of the tale concerning him. No doubt this is possible, if speculative. If we reject the explanation, we must think in terms of the theme of the wild man attaching itself in popular imagination to the memory of the historical battle of Arfderydd, possibly in the seventh century, a generation or two after the encounter was fought.

Mention should here be made of the problem of the relationship of the tale of Llallogan or Myrddin to that of Suibhne Geilt, although it does not constitute an essential part of the theme of this paper. O'Keeffe referred to the tales as cognates in 1913,⁷⁵ and this was the assumption underlying Ifor Williams's pioneer discussion of the forms *Gwyllon*, *Geilt*, etc., in 1922.⁷⁶ Carney has expressed the view that the theme of the tale was borrowed by the Irish from the Strathclyde Britons⁷⁷ and Jackson has argued for the contrary view that it was borrowed by the Britons from the Goidels of Scottish Dalriada.⁷⁸ Clarke, as we have already seen, thinks that 'the British and Irish wild-man traditions spring from different bases', but nevertheless discerns late influences on the *Buile Suibhne*; in his opinion the twelfth-century writer of the Irish tale had probably seen and used both the Lailoken material and the *Vita Merlini*.⁷⁹ A comparison of some of the ingredients of the Irish and Welsh-Scottish forms of the legend would, in my opinion, suggest that their bases are not as far apart as Clarke maintains. As we have seen, both Myrddin and Lailoken have incurred the guilt of causing the deaths of other people. Suibhne also has killed one of Ronan's psalmists and attempted to kill Ronan himself, and the madness which he subsequently suffered is represented as a punishment brought upon him by the saint.⁸⁰ As has already been pointed out, there is a close similarity between the account of Congal and his men encircling the tree in which Suibhne is sheltering and the reference in the *Afallennau* to Rhydderch's men encircling

⁷⁵ *Buile Suibhne*, xxxv.

⁷⁶ B i, 228.

⁷⁷ *Eigse*, vi, 100.

⁷⁸ Jackson, op. cit., 550.

⁷⁹ Clarke, op. cit., 22, 140, 195, 205.

⁸⁰ *Buile Suibhne*, 10-13.

the apple-tree which protects Myrddin. A relationship is further suggested by the account of Suibhne's visit to the land of the Britons, where he met the 'Man of the Wood' (*Fer Caille*), mentioned above, called Alladhán.⁸¹ In Clarke's opinion the author of the *Buile Suibhne*, late in the twelfth century, assimilated the name Lailoken to the Irish adjective *allaidh*, 'wild', and thus produced the form *Alladhán*.⁸² A similar suggestion was made by Carney in 1950, but with the difference that he gave the assimilation an eighth-century dating, i.e. at the time when in his opinion the tale was borrowed by the Irish from the Britons.⁸³ Again, the vision in the heavens is a feature common to the Irish and British forms of the legend, although the content of the vision differs somewhat in the respective sources. Suibhne's vision consisted of 'huge, flickering, horrible aerial phantoms' and 'fiend-like hosts . . . shrieking and howling . . . in every direction' so as to frighten cowards but to inspire champions and warriors to great deeds;⁸⁴ Lailoken, as we have seen, after hearing a voice condemning him, saw 'numberless martial battalions in the heavens like flashing lightning, holding in their hands fiery lances and glittering spears which they shook most fiercely' at him.⁸⁵ The Welsh poems do not mention a vision but Giraldus Cambrensis, writing about the two Merlins, states that Merlinus Celidonius, when he had been placed between two armies in a battle, looked up at the heavens and saw a dreadful apparition, *monstrum horribile nimis*, and that this brought about his madness.⁸⁶ Giraldus does not tell us what this vision consisted of, and we do not know the source of his reference. He knew, of course, of the *Vita Merlini*, but no vision occurs in that work. It is possible that he had come across the Lailoken tales and had arrived at the conclusion that Lailoken was to be identified with the Merlinus of the *Vita*. On the whole it is probable that these similarities between different forms of the legend represent

⁸¹ Ibid., 100–5.

⁸² Clarke, op. cit., 195.

⁸³ *Éigse*, vi, 101: 'The name *Alladhan* . . . is possibly a derivative of the adj. *allaidh*, wild, and if so, would convey roughly the same idea as Ir. *geilt* or Wl. *gwyllt*.' He adds that 'it is not impossible, however, that the name rests ultimately upon that of *Lailoken* (*Llallogan*). This is, in fact, my personal belief.'

⁸⁴ O'Donovan, op. cit., 231–2; B ix, 12.

⁸⁵ Clarke, op. cit., 227.

⁸⁶ See supra, footnote 19.

borrowings from one country to another, rather than that they have all developed independently from an original parent form of the tale in the remote Celtic past.

This concludes our survey of the second stage of the development of the legend. All the essential ingredients are now present, — the man who lost his reason in battle, the guilt of having caused bloodshed, the association with Rhydderch, and with the historical and geographical background of Arfderydd and the forest of Celyddon. It may be conjectured that during this stage the wild man was converted into a retainer of Gwenddolau (if this was not his original status) and Rhydderch, allowing that historically he was not at the battle of Arfderydd, was brought in as a participant, hostile to Gwenddolau and to the wild man, and victorious at the end of the battle. The main feature of the next and third stage will be the transfer of all this material to Wales, resulting in its eventual absorption and integration into the body of Welsh legendary and pseudo-historical tradition.

It is well known that much legendary and literary as well as historical material migrated to Wales from the North after the extinction of the kingdoms of Rheged and Gododdin in the first half of the seventh century. The triads show that as a part of the migration the saga of Arfderydd arrived in Wales, bringing with it names such as Gwrgi, Peredur, Cynfelyn and Gwenddolau. The tale of the wild man came in association with it, but probably already as a separate tale, rather than as an integral part of the Arfderydd saga. This is strongly suggested by the fact that the only personal name which occurs both in the poems *Yr Afallennau*, *Yr Oianau* and *Y Cyfoesi*, and in the Arfderydd triads is Gwenddolau. Any attempt to assign a firm date for these developments must be very speculative. There were military contacts between Wales and the North until the beginning of the second half of the seventh century,⁸⁷ and perhaps at least three quarters of a century would be needed after the battle of Arfderydd for the legend to have developed as outlined above. A later date for the migration would also be perfectly feasible. Jackson has expressed the view

⁸⁷ In 655 Welsh forces under Cadafael marched with Penda against Bernicia, see J. E. Lloyd, op. cit., 191–2.

that the *Gododdin* was brought to Wales in manuscript form between the end of the eighth century and the end of the ninth.⁸⁸ He refers to an entry in the Welsh 'Chronicle of the Princes' which records that in 890 a body of Strathclyde exiles was settled in parts of North Wales and comments that 'this would have been a favourable opportunity for Northern poems, traditions, and MSS. to reach Wales'.⁸⁹ Unfortunately the entry is found in an unreliable source, *Brut Aberpergwm*,⁹⁰ but Dr. Miller, in a recent discussion of the transfer of the Strathclyde material to Wales, has shown that it could have a genuine historical basis, and she furthermore cites the *llwyth Marchudd* as a possible example of a Strathclyde family which migrated to Wales in the ninth century.⁹¹ It may be objected that this is rather late for the migration of the Myrddin legend to Wales, in view of the occurrence of the words *dysgogan Myrdin*, 'Myrddin foretells', in the poem *Armes Prydain*, dated c. 930.⁹² If we accept the reference as part of the original text of the poem, it is clear that by the early tenth century Myrddin was regarded as a respected authority and source of prophecy. The question whether this could have happened if his legend had only arrived in Wales during the previous century brings up the whole problem of the origin of the name *Myrddin*, and of the relationship of Myrddin to Llallogan.⁹³

In the northern sources the wild man's name is always *Lailoken* (var. *Laloecen*), a Cumbric form corresponding to the Welsh *Llallogan*. The name *Myrddin* (var. *Merddin*) does not occur in any northern source, and *Merlinus* is only found in documents later than Geoffrey's *Historia*.⁹⁴ Philologists are agreed that the form *Myrddin* is regularly derived from the Brythonic *Moridunon*, the ancient name of Carmarthen, which meant 'Seafort'. A parallel is the Cornish *Merthen*, probably of the same derivation. By the middle of the sixth century

⁸⁸ K. H. Jackson, *The Gododdin*, Edinburgh, 1969, 66.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁹⁰ MA², 688.

⁹¹ B xxvi, 273–80.

⁹² Ifor Williams, *Armes Prydein o Lyfr Taliesin*, Caerdydd, 1955, 1, line 17. For the date see p. xvii.

⁹³ What follows is a summary of a much more detailed discussion of the problem published in my article 'A Oedd Myrddin yn Fardd Hanesyddol', SC x/xi, 182–97.

⁹⁴ E.g. the tale of Lailoken and Kentigern refers to the former as *Lailoken* . . . *quem quidam dicunt fuisse Merlynium*, B ix, 16.

Moridunon would have given the form *Mer-ddin*/*Myr-ddin*, and the significance of its two component elements, clear in Brythonic, would have become obscured. *Moridunon* was a Roman town and fortress and in popular usage the prefix *Caer*-, 'fort', was then attached to the new Welsh name, thus giving the form *Caerfyrddin* in which the tautology of the roughly equivalent first and third elements *Caer*- and *-ddin* went unnoticed. The next step in the development was the conversion of *-fyrddin*/*-ferddin* into a proper name. Names of persons, often legendary or mythical, were frequently combined with *Caer*-, and formations such as *Caer Aranrhod*, *Caer Dathal*, *Caer Gai*, *Caer Garadawg*, *Caer Einawn*, etc., provided the inhabitants of Dyfed with a model for interpreting *Caerfyrddin* as the 'Fortress of Myrddin'. Thus was created, out of a place-name, an eponymous founder, an indistinct figure living in the distant past, of whom no legend was told initially but to whom it would be easy and natural to attribute extraordinary powers such as those of vaticination or divination. This person could lie behind the Myrddin of *Armes Prydain*, a poem with a Dyfed background, and could also be referred to in the obscure title *Clas Merddin*, given in a medieval text as an ancient name for Britain.⁹⁵ Here Merddin is presumably envisaged in the role of an original founder of the state or community rather than as the legendary figure which he later became. When the northern legend of the wild man arrived in Wales, however, it is clear that it took root in Dyfed, and we can only conclude that Llallogan was identified with Myrddin, that the latter name displaced the former, and Myrddin acquired the whole of Llallogan's history, attributes and geographical background. Why this took place, we do not know. Other examples of northern figures who were transferred to new backgrounds in various Welsh localities are Llywarch Hen in Powys and Taliesin in Degannwy, Bala and Ceredigion, but in these cases there was no question of the conflation of two characters, one northern and the other Welsh. From early times it is probable that both Myrddin and Llallogan had one trait in common, namely the possession of the power of prophecy. The identifica-

⁹⁵ TYP 228–9, *Kyntaf henn a uu ar yr Ynys Hon, kyn no'e chael na'e chyuanhedu: (C)las Merdin*, 'The first name that this Island bore, before it was taken or settled: Myrddin's Precinct'.

tion of the two is in a sense well 'documented', for in the *Cyfoesi* the actual linking can be seen in the line which Gwenddydd addresses to her brother:

Kyuarchaf ym llallogan vyrdin.⁹⁶

[I ask my Llallogan Myrddin.]

Thenceforward in the poem she sometimes calls him *Llallawc* and at other times *Myrdin*. Later the name *Llallawc*, -ogan disappeared from the legend. The northern associations remained, however, and one of the most striking characteristics of the Welsh forms of the legend is the dual nature of their geographical background. The tale seems invariably to have one foot in Dyfed and the other in northern Britain. In the *Ymddiddan* we first have a section in which Myrddin speaks on behalf of the men of Dyfed, and refers to old heroes of the area such as Elgan and Dywel ab Erbin; and this is followed by another section concerned with the battle of Arfderydd and mentioning northern warriors such as the sons of Eliffer and Cynfelyn. In Geoffrey's *Historia* the boy Merlinus is discovered at Carmarthen, and in the *Vita Merlini* Merlin is king and prophet to the Demetae, but he fights against Guennolous, king of Scotland, and flees in his madness to the Caledonian Forest. In the *Afallennau* and the *Oianau* the prophecies refer to Welsh affairs, but all the geographical allusions in the legendary sections of the poems are to the North.

The fourth and fifth stages of the development of the legend lie outside the scope of this paper. Briefly, the fourth stage was that of the legend's literary expression in Welsh. It has not survived as a prose narrative, but the fifth, sixth and seventh stanzas of the *Afallennau* probably represent its earliest crystallization into metrical form. This may be tentatively dated in the ninth or tenth century. Another, and later, development was the attachment of the legend to the tradition of political prophecy.

The fifth stage was that of the intervention of Geoffrey of Monmouth in the development of the legend, and this has been fully elucidated by the Chadwicks.⁹⁷ Geoffrey attributed the

⁹⁶ R 577.12.

⁹⁷ H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, vol. i, Cambridge, 1932 (reprinted 1968), 123-32, 'Merlin in the Works of Geoffrey of Monmouth'

exploits of Ambrosius, as narrated in the *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius, to Myrddin, thereby creating the character of Merlinus Ambrosius, or Merlin—famous in medieval literature as a prophet and magician. He did this in ignorance of the content of the Welsh Myrddin legend; but later, after learning more about the native tradition, he wrote the *Vita Merlini*, in which he portrayed Merlin living as a wild man of the woods in the Caledonian Forest. But it was Geoffrey's other Merlin, the Merlin of the *Historia* and the Arthurian Legend, that subsequently achieved world-wide fame.