

found irresistible. There must have been other examples but the two poems by Iorwerth Fychan ab Iorwerth ap Rhotbert (*fl.* c. 1250) preserved in Hendregadredd Manuscript, ff. 123^r, 123^v and 124^r, one to Gweirful and the other to Gwenllïant, show us how successful the poets could be in describing feminine charm and the effect it had on its admirers.³¹⁶ In all probability they also reflect the fact that as the womenfolk of the nobility became more literate and better educated, the poets found in them greater appreciation of their art and culture, and were able to establish with them a special rapport.

CYNDDELW BRYDYDD MAWR

Several of the poets of the Princes merit separate treatment but none more so than Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr who stands head and shoulders above the others in poetic genius as much as he did, apparently, in physique.³¹⁷ He is by far the most prolific of the court poets: he has left us some 3847 verse-lines in forty eight songs. He sang to the most important princes of his age, Madog ap Maredudd, prince of Powys (*ob.* 1160), Owain Gwynedd, (*ob.* 1170), Rhys ap Gruffudd, Lord of Deheubarth (*ob.* 1197), possibly Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (*ob.* 1240), as to lesser princes, Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd (*ob.* 1170), Owain Cyfeiliog (*ob.* 1197), Cadwallon ap Madog ab Idnerth of Maelienydd (*ob.* 1179), Iorwerth Goch, Madog ap Maredudd's brother, and Gwenwynwyn ab Owain Cyfeiliog (*ob.* 1216) as well as to noblemen such as Rhirid Flaidd and Arthen his brother, Einion ap Madog ab Iddon, Ednyfed, Lord of Crogen, Heilyn ap Dwywg and Ithel ap Cedifor. He sang also to the *teuluoedd* or *gosgorddau*

(retinues) of the three provinces Powys, Gwynedd and Deheubarth although his principal attachment was to the court of Powys. Among his less official poems there is an elegy to his son, Dygynnelw, an *awdl* to a young girl who apparently preferred a jealous lover's bed to his, an *englyn* to a monk at Ystrad Marchell who refused him permission to be buried there, and if the attribution is genuine, *englynion* in which he elegized his dead cockerel.

It is important to remember that Cynddelw began his bardic career in Powys, presumably as a native of that principality and as the pupil of a bardic teacher who had himself been born and trained there. We know more of the early court poets of Gwynedd than we do of those of Powys, but this is partly because Gwynedd under Gruffudd ap Cynan was in the van of the successful opposition mounted against the Normans in north Wales and because Powys had not been able to rival Gwynedd in this respect on account of its geographical position, vulnerable as it was to attacks both from its Welsh and its Norman neighbour. It is not without reason that Madog ap Maredudd, apparently Cynddelw's first, and during his early career, foremost patron, allied himself to Henry II against Owain Gwynedd, Gruffudd ap Cynan's son, and that he was regarded as a very successful ruler of his kingdom. The author of 'Breuddwyd Rhonabwy' informs us that Powys was his in its entirety *yn ei theruyneu ... o Porford hyt yg Gwauan yg gwarthaf Arwystli*.³¹⁸ In such a period of prosperity we would expect Powys to become especially conscious of its traditions and to take pride in them, and there is a certain amount of evidence that Madog ap Maredudd's court promoted an active interest in them.

These traditions must have been very rich. At one time and before the erection of Offa's Dyke, Powysian territory must have extended well beyond its later boundaries to the north and to the east: indeed in earlier times, it may have had common borders

³¹⁶ On Iorwerth Fychan ab Iorwerth ap Rhotbert, see Daniel Huws, 'Llawysgrif Hendregadredd', NLWJ (1981), 1-26, esp. 20, and GBF 307-43.

³¹⁷ See GCBM i, i-1, for an account of Cynddelw's life and work, including references to his genealogy and to lands held by him and his descendants. Needless to say, I am indebted to the edition of Cynddelw's work by N.A. Jones and A. Parry Owen and to the articles written by them on some of his poems.

³¹⁸ M. Richards, *Breudwyd Ronabwy* (Caerdydd, 1948), 1.

with Rheged and Elfed. If it had a common border with Rheged in the sixth century, that would render more plausible Ifor Williams's theory that Taliesin was court poet to Cynan Garwyn, Prince of Powys, before he migrated northwards to become the court poet of Urien Rheged, and it would add significance to the poem composed to Cynan Garwyn by Taliesin according to Ifor Williams: it would make it the earliest extant Welsh poem composed in Powys as well as in Wales. As its contents show, Cynan Garwyn was a most aggressive prince.

To this poem we can link the poetry produced in Powys in the ninth century, a very critical time in the province's history, and the legends which form its background. In these legends Llywarch Hen, Urien's cousin, has been made a poet, hence the 'Llywarch Hen Cycle', and together with Urien, has been relocated in Wales. Urien's son, Owain ab Urien, seems to have figured even more than his father in the Powysian traditions. There is direct evidence of this in 'Breuddwyd Rhonabwy' and indirect evidence in the romance 'Owain a Luned'. Whatever the latter's connections with Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* (or *Le chevalier au Lion*) may be, it seems safe to assume that it started its career on the lips of the storytellers of the Welsh marches who had become bilingual and entertained both Norman and Welsh lords with stories of Franco-Cambrian origin.

Various dates have been assigned to 'Breuddwyd Rhonabwy' ranging from the middle of the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century, but it locates itself in Powys during Madog ap Maredudd's reign and it sets out to satirize society and the Arthurian legends by contrasting the men of the narrator's age who are dwarfs, with the alleged giants who peopled the province in the past. In the story Owain ab Urien is anachronistically depicted as playing chess with Arthur and his ravens play havoc with Arthur's men.

As we have seen, one of the characters in the story is *Cadyryeith* ('He of the fine language'). He praises Arthur using a

language no one else could understand. Following others we have suggested that *Cadyryeith* was intended to be identified with Cynddelw and the suggestion deserves serious consideration.

Cynddelw's *arwyrain* and elegy to Madog ap Maredudd concentrate on his virtues and achievements as a warrior-prince, and apart from telling us that he was a friend of poets and bestowed gifts on them, it gives no prominence to his culture and intellectual gifts, but this does not mean that he could not have done so had he thought it necessary. For Cynddelw in praising Owain Cyfeiliog, Madog ap Maredudd's nephew, did not dwell on his intellectual gifts whereas Giraldus Cambrensis went out of his way to record that he had an eloquent tongue, an intelligent mind and that he was one of the three Welsh princes who were illustrious for their justice, their wisdom and their moderation. It may very well be that Cynddelw took for granted some degree of culture in his patrons, and we need to recall that about this time a Welsh nobleman was expected to have a harp and some proficiency in playing it. Of Owain Cyfeiliog's artistic accomplishment we need have no doubt, if the two poems traditionally attributed to him are actually his and not Cynddelw's, as Professor Gruffydd Aled Williams has argued forcibly. One is the series of *englynion*, sung, according to the Red Book of Hergest, by his retinue as they progressed through Wales, though actually only through Powys and Gwynedd. The other is the still more illuminating 'Hirlas Owain' ('The long grey [drinking-horn] of Owain [Cyfeiliog]'). The main importance of the 'Hirlas', as we shall see, lies in the fact that it is patently based on Aneirin's 'Gododdin', and shows that the sixth-century poem was sufficiently well-known to become the model of a poem composed in the twelfth century. Can we also assume that, as the note in the manuscript 'Book of Aneirin' tells us, the memorization of the poem earned marks for any contender in a poetic contest in the twelfth century and in Powys in particular? If we can, we can also reasonably conclude that Cynddelw, at some

stage of his training memorized the song for which Aneirin is famous and possibly some of Taliesin's songs since they also earned marks in a poetic contest.

One striking feature of Cynddelw's poetry is the immense learning it displays. It shows that Cynddelw was steeped in the history of his people. He refers to the battles of Arfderydd, Argoed Llwyfain, Meigen, Cogwy, Camlan and Baddon. He mentions Urien Rheged and his son Owain; his reference to *branhes Owain* suggests that he knew more about it than we can ever gather from 'Breuddwyd Rhonabwy'. His reference to *Pasgen wrys* 'Pasgen's battle' may be to Pasgen, another son of Urien, although it is more likely a reference to the Pasgen whose name occurs on the Valle Crucis Pillar. He mentions the various rulers of Gwynedd, Hiriell, Maelgwn, Rhun ap Ieuan, Caswallon, Cadwaladr, &c. For him the men of Powys are *canawon Selyf* 'Selyf (ap Cynan)'s brood'. He shows familiarity with the various story-cycles, e.g. with the 'Mabinogi' by mentioning Brân, Llŷr, Pryderi, Lleu, Maxen, Gwenddolau ap Ceidiaw and possibly Elen, though she may be the Helen of Troy rather than Elen Luyddog, for he knew of the international or classical heroes Hector, Hercules and Alexander. He knew of the heroes of the Arthurian legends, of Llachau, the son of Arthur, of Myrddin, of Cai, of Medrawd, of Culfanawyd, father of Esyllt, of the Twrch Trwyth and of Celliwig. Not surprisingly he was familiar with the triadic mnemonic classification of bardic lore: he alludes to the *tri diwair deulu*.

It could, of course, be argued that we have a slightly exaggerated idea of Cynddelw's knowledge since he was for the most part merely following the practice of other court poets in joining his heroes' names with those in the past who were regarded as incorporating certain virtues to such an extent as to be regarded as standard, and of using such words as *hafal*, *hefelydd* ('like'), *moes* ('custom'), *eisor* ('similar') in the process. Incidentally, this practice is deeply rooted in the Welsh poetic tradition and is not

to be taken as due to the influence of the medieval books of *artes poeticae* which drew on Aristotle's treatise on classic *Rhetoric*. But there are indications that Cynddelw was more than a student of the past, that he could almost be said to be obsessed with it. For instance he called his son Dygynnelw, presumably after Owain ab Urien's bard.

Was it Cynddelw, we wonder, who was responsible for naming after his son a kind of *englyn unodl union* with no rhyme to which 'Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid' (GP 218) refers as *dull dygynelw*? It was not Cynddelw, but poets of a later age in all probability, who called the *clogyrnach* metre (a couplet of *cyhydedd fer* and *traeanog*) 'dull Cynddelw'.³¹⁹

The outstanding feature of the so-called 'Llywarch Hen and Heledd Poems' was that they used the *englynion* metres exclusively, metres admirably suited to the expression of powerful but not related emotions with little or no regard for the thought sequence. Cynddelw's *englynion*, 'Godwrf a glywaf ...', appear to reproduce their style in that they ignore the need for consecutive thought, and that their appeal is to the resonance of place-names, Maelienydd, Ieithon Hir, &c., and hero-names such as Benlli Gawr, Cynon and Arthur, not to visual impressions. And Cynddelw's art does not achieve maturity until it succeeds in subordinating learning to the charms of form, in making knowledge an intrinsic part of the poetic structure.

The 'Ym maes Bryn Actun' sequence of *englynion* marks a definite advance on the 'Godwrf a glywaf ...' sequence, precisely because it is so structured, possibly the first structured sequence composed by a court poet. It should be noted that the first nine *englynion* in 'Ym Maes Bryn Actun' are *englynion unodl union* and that each refers to a battle won by Madog ap Maredudd. The next *englyn* is not an *englyn unodl union* but an *englyn* of heptasyllabic lines on one rhyme and it deals with Llywelyn ap Madog's contribution to Madog ap Maredudd's success. There then follow

³¹⁹ CD 336.

an *englyn unodl union* on the deaths of the father and the son and two *englynion cyrch*. And here Cynddelw shows that he is not merely learned but percipient in his awareness that their deaths mark the end of a period in the history of Powys, that things will never be the same again. Myrddin Lloyd rightly drew attention to the significance of the verb *ystyried* in the line *Yn Ystrad Langwm ystyriais ein glyw* as revealing that Cynddelw was a deeply thoughtful poet, that he looked beyond events to their significance although *glyw* here probably means 'host, retinue' and not 'lord'.

A notable example of Cynddelw's success in using his vast knowledge of Welsh antiquity in the service of his bardic art is the first of his three *arwyreiniau* to Owain Gwynedd. It is obvious from the beginning that Cynddelw wished to endow his contemporary, Owain, Prince of Gwynedd, with the majesty of his precursor, Owain, son of Urien, Prince of Rheged, and not only with his actual majesty but also with the majesty which he had acquired during the centuries that had elapsed since his death. Owain Gwynedd's victories at Tegeingl and Aberteifi re-enacted for Cynddelw the ancient victories at Baddon and Argoed Llwyfain.

Here is Professor J.P. Clancy's translation of Cynddelw's first *arwyrain* to Owain Gwynedd:

In Praise of Owain Gwynedd

I praise a patron high-hearted in strife,
 Wolf of warfare, challenging, charging,
 Singing the pleasure of his presence,
 Singing his power, mead-nourished worth,
 Singing his fervour, swift-winged falcon,
 Singing a lofty soul's lofty thoughts,
 Singing daring deeds, lord of war-hounds,
 Singing of one who inspires high praise,
 Singing a song for my lavish lord,
 Singing words of praise to praise Owain.

In arms against Angles in Tegeingl's lands,
 Blood spilling in streams, blood pouring forth.
 Dragons encountered, rulers of Rome,
 A prince's heir, red their precious wine.
 In strife with the Dragon of the East,
 Fair Western Dragon, the best was his.
 Ardent the lord, sword bright above sheath,
 Spear in strife and outpouring from sword,
 Sword-blade in hand and hand hewing heads,
 Hand on sword and sword on Norman troops,
 And constant anguish from the sight of death,
 And swilling of blood and revelling,
 Blood covering men, their skulls bloodied.
 For flesh I heard a pledge to the birds,
 In the piercing thrust of spear in hand,
 In the blood-trail inviting ravens.
 They rode on corpses for a thousand crows,
 Brynaich's riders, Owain's war-ravens,
 Slaughter by the barrel, carcasses stiff,
 A tidbit for them, dead men's entrails.
 In hosts we went, for his prize, for his praise,
 Many minstrels for Owain's bounty,
 To Cadell Hiriell Hiriein's bold offspring,
 To Coel's line's guardian, for their reward.
 Battlefield's spear-thrust, lavish with praise,
 Buckler-bearing, onrushing eagle,
 Court's courageous, alert defender,
 Three-coloured his spear, savage assault.
 At Aberteifi they cut through falling spears
 As at Badon Fawr, valiant war-cry.
 I saw war-stags and stiff red corpses,
 It was left to the wolves, their burial;
 I saw them routed, without their hands,
 Beneath birds' claws, men mighty in war;

I saw their ruin, three hundred dead,
 I saw, battle done, bowels on thorns;
 I saw strife cause a dreadful uproar,
 Troops contending, a rout collapsing.
 I saw struggle, men falling from sea-cliffs,
 I saw their fortress, enemy slain,
 I saw soldiers' spears round a stone wall,
 I saw lances red from Owain's rush,
 I saw for Saxons sorry corpses,
 Long day at an end, princes' reaping.
 Battle won, prince of his country's sons,
 Battle dear-bought, he may scorn pursuit.
 I saw at Rhuddlan a bright red tide,
 Hero's host, for a man, for glory,
 I saw in Penfro a flawless ruler,
 I saw in Penardd a lord roving,
 I saw their brave slaughter, brave troops down
 That a brave land bears, seagull's bounty.
 I saw fierce throngs, I saw scurrying,
 I saw zeal cry, resounding signal,
 I saw rout of troops, of comrades,
 I saw strife round Caer, round Coed Llwyfain.
 They were not, Gwynedd's valour, mere boys:
 You were fearless, shepherd of Britain.³²⁰

There are two ways of explaining Cynddelw's poetic career. According to the first, he began as court poet to Madog ap Maredudd in Powys. After the latter's death he became Owain Gwynedd's court poet but when Owain and his son died he returned to the court of Owain Fychan ap Madog in Powys, and it

³²⁰ J.P. Clancy, *The Earliest Welsh Poetry* (London, &c., 1970), 145–6; see also GCBM ii, poem 1.

was during this last period that he sang to Owain Cyfeiliog and his son Gwenwynwyn and to Lord Rhys of Deheubarth.³²¹

The second way is to assume that Cynddelw never left the court of Powys, that he started his poetic career as Madog ap Maredudd's court poet and that he remained with him until he died (1160), thereupon becoming the court poet of his son, Owain Fychan. When Owain was murdered in 1187, Cynddelw became court poet to Owain Cyfeiliog, a nephew of Madog ap Maredudd. It was as official poet to the court of Powys that Cynddelw sang to Owain Gwynedd and to Lord Rhys. This was possible because, although there was intermittent war between the three provinces, there were times when they were allies as in 1164 when they presented a common front against the threat mounted by Henry II, or as in 1187 when Owain Gwynedd and Lord Rhys attacked Cyfeiliog and won Caereinion for Owain Fychan. Moreover some of these princes were connected by marriages, and, as we have seen, there is evidence that poets were sometimes employed as envoys or ambassadors and it is not impossible that Cynddelw was visiting Owain Gwynedd and Lord Rhys as an envoy when he sang to them.³²²

Whichever way we look at Cynddelw's career it illustrates many features which must have been characteristic of the bardic sodality to which he belonged. He attained his position *pencerdd* to Madog ap Maredudd as the result of a poetic contest with Seisyll Bryffwrch and there is a poem purporting to be made up of the verses uttered in turn by them.³²³ It has been shown that the

³²¹ The late D. Myrddin Lloyd in *The Dictionary of Welsh Bibliography down to 1940*, s.n. Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, seems to favour this alternative, and it should be noted that Cynddelw claims that Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd had granted him his *cadair ymryson*, i.e. the *pencerdd*'s chair, at his court.

³²² For example, Lord Rhys's mother, Gwenllïan, was Gruffudd ap Cynan's daughter and hence Owain Gwynedd's sister. His wife, Gwenllïan, was Madog ap Maredudd's daughter. Madog ap Maredudd's wife was Susanna, daughter of Owain Gwynedd.

³²³ See GCBM ii, poem 12 and N.A. Jones, 'Cerdd Ymryson Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr a Seisyll Bryffwrch', YB xiv (1988), 47–55. There is a

verses transmitted to us cannot be regarded as an actual record of the contest; they are hardly a display of poetic pyrotechnics, and perhaps they are to be regarded simply as testifying to a tradition that Cynddelw won his position as *pencerdd* to Madog ap Maredudd as the result of a poetic contest. Although it is generally taken for granted that both were at the time competing for a vacant post on the assumption that a *pencerdd*'s office was for life, it is not self-evident that Seisyll was not displaced by Cynddelw. Seisyll claims:

'Tis for me to be a *pencerdd*,
For me and the lawful line of the lawful tribe of
Culfardd;
As for the ancestors of Cynddelw, that giant of song,
From them no bards are descended.³²⁴

In other words, for Seisyll Bryffwrch, Cynddelw's claim to be a *pencerdd* would have been stronger had he been descended from poets. But Cynddelw is by no means dismayed by that fact.

I should (demand to) be a *pencerdd*, head of a bardic
assembly ...
I should (demand to) be a *pencerdd*, head of a bardic
throne ...
I am called (*Rym gelwir*) ...
A poet and chief poet of learning (*yn brydyt yn brifuart
dysc*).³²⁵

memorable scene of poetic contest before a prince between Hrafn and Gunnlaugr in *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*. Competition is explicit in *Deor* where the hero is displaced by a rival singer, in comic form in the Old Icelandic story of Sneglu-Halli, and perhaps in a poem on the coronation of Athelstan in 925 preserved in a twelfth-century source (*ille strepit cithara, decertat plausibus iste* 'one makes the harp resound, another contends with praises'); J. Opland, *op.cit.* (footnote 67), 176.

³²⁴ H 180.29–32; GCBM ii, 12.20–4.

³²⁵ H 180.17, 181.2, 6–8; GCBM ii, 12.12, 20, 25–8.

In his elegy for Cadwallon ap Madog ab Idnerth (*ob.* 1179) he says that his song is accustomed to prevail in competition:

Customary (for me it is) by my song to win in a contest
As when learning (*leg. llên*) wins in (/by) the book of
rules.³²⁶

This suggests that Cynddelw was involved in several poetic contests but it is difficult to find a context for such contests. Indeed, Cynddelw's claims raise several questions. In praising Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd he maintains that the prince had granted him his *cadair ymryson*. Is *cadair ymryson* here just another name for *cadair pencerdd*? And what does the poet mean when he asserts that he will keep it? Does he mean more than that he will never relinquish the privilege to another poet?

We assume that it was after Madog ap Maredudd's death he became Owain Cyfeiliog's *pencerdd*. After all, by becoming Madog ap Maredudd's *pencerdd* he had become the *pencerdd* of his domain, and though Owain Cyfeiliog did not succeed to the whole of that domain, he succeeded to an important part of it, and we can assume that Cynddelw had a right to hold his official position in Owain Cyfeiliog's court, although that court was no longer the court of the whole of Powys. When, however, Cynddelw praised Owain Gwynedd and his son Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd, did he arrogate to himself a privilege which was by right Gwalchmai ap Meilyr's? Was the *pencerdd* like a modern professor? Once given a chair and the title, could he expect to be respected throughout the country as the holder of that chair? We recall J.E. Lloyd's ecclesiastical analogy. According to him, the *bardd teulu* was like the court chaplain, the *pencerdd* like the bishop of the diocese, and perhaps we can add, recognized as a bishop outside his diocese. It is interesting to note that a distinction was made between *ollam fláthe* 'a chief's poet' and

³²⁶ H 131.15–16; GCBM i, 21.184–5.

ollam cuarta 'a visiting poet' in Ireland, although it is often difficult to decide in which capacity a poet is composing.

It should be noted that Cynddelw is content on occasions to be called the *bardd* (bard) of his patron. He was proud to call himself Llywelyn ap Madog ap Maredudd's bard (H 125.11) and Einion ap Madog ab Iddon's bard (H 142.18), and not without reason, for *bardd* was the generic term which included the species *pencerdd*. *Cerddawr* does not carry for us the same resonance as *bardd*, but in his song of praise to Lord Rhys of Deheubarth, Cynddelw calls himself *cerddawr*. However, we can be certain that he would have objected to being called *purawr*, for he boasted that the Lord of Heaven had made a *prydydd* of him out of a *purawr* 'a songster' or perhaps in this case 'a poetaster' (H 81.29–30) and we can assume that *prydydd* was as honourable a title as *bardd* or *pencerdd*, else he would have not been content with the sobriquet 'Cynddelw Brydydd' in his song of praise to Efa, and he must have been called *Brydydd Mawr* at a very early date. The titles *Cynddelw Fawr* and *Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr* both occur in the Black Book of Carmarthen.

As we shall see, Cynddelw seems to have had a feeling for the original meaning of words and it would be hazardous to assume that he was not aware that *prydydd*, from *pryd-u*, *pryd*, meant 'the one who shapes or forms', in other words a 'creator'. The Old Irish cognate to *pryd* is *creth* which occurs in the sense of 'poetry' and survives only in glosses.

Cynddelw refers to himself as one who instructs would-be bards—some of them brilliant,

I am the instructor of brilliant bards.³²⁷

They appreciated his knowledge,

³²⁷ H 105.17; GCBM ii, 6.236. Llygad Gŵr also refers to his own gift as a teacher: he declares that he will praise his patron like a teacher of understanding, perhaps, rather than of genius, as the word *ethrylithawc* is generally understood (*mal athro ethrylithawc*, H 64.5; GBF 28.21).

Our pupils know our learning.³²⁸

It is no wonder that he can take a superior attitude to other poets. Thus, in praising Madog ap Maredudd, he dismisses other poets as outsiders, outlanders,

Arise, sing, I will sing of my chief,
While I am inside, bards, and you outside!³²⁹

and calls on them to be silent, while he sings,

Court-silentiaries, demand silence.
Silence, bards! you shall hear a bard!³³⁰

Cynddelw seems to take a special pride in his name for he refers to himself by name time and again. He seems to play on the literal meaning of *Cynddelw*, *cyn-d(d)elw* 'proto-type', 'archetype', and one should not put it past him to have known or guessed that *cynddelw* was related to *cynnelw*, also from *cyn* and *delw*, and its derivative *cynhelwaf*, key-words for the understanding of the relationship between the bard and his patron. A glance at the dictionary will show that *cynnelw* has two distinct meanings, namely 'support, succour, protection', &c., and 'praise, favour, eulogy (of benefactor or patron)'. In other words, *cynnelw* expresses on the one hand what the poet expects from his patron, support, succour, protection, and on the other what the patron expects from his poet, praise, eulogy. As we should expect, *cynnelw*, like its derivative *cynhelwaf*, is found with the prepositions *o* and *gan*. The first examples of *cynnelw* apparently occur in the Black Book of Carmarthen and the Book of Taliesin, both with the preposition *o*. My reason for suggesting that Cynddelw knew or guessed the connection between his name and *cynnelw* is that he links them together several times:

kyndelw (ae) kynnelw yn y kynnhor.³³¹

³²⁸ H 131.18; GCBM i, 21.187.

³²⁹ H 117.29–30; GCBM i, 1.33–4.

³³⁰ H 151.3–4; GCBM ii, 11.16.

mi gyndelw a gynnelw gennwch.³³²

kyndelw wyf kynhelwaf o vreint.³³³

cann gyndelw kynnelw kannhorthwy.³³⁴

The reason for this may, of course, be the demands of alliteration, but why should not the reason be twofold? (I note that Old Irish has *condalb*, *condolb* 'mindful of kin', and *condalbae* 'affection for kindred, love', &c.). One might suggest that the explanation of the second meaning of *cynnelw*, 'praise, eulogy' lies in the idea that the *laudandus* to merit praise (*laus*) is first identified with the exemplary type, the prototype (*cyn-ddelw*, *cynnelw*) of the hero. Mircea Eliade has reminded us that the 'mythicization of the historical prototypes who gave the popular epic songs their heroes takes place in accordance with an exemplary standard: they are "formed after the image" of the heroes of ancient myth'.³³⁵

Cynddelw's verses show profound knowledge of the traditions relating to the bardic profession. It is to him we owe the information or confirmation that Morfran composed an elegy on some Einiawn (? Yrth), that Afan Ferddig and Arofan composed panegyrics. It is not surprising that Dr Rachel Bromwich has argued persuasively that he had a hand in drawing up the original text of 'Trioedd Ynys Prydain'. He has added to our precious scraps of information about Cyridwen, her cauldron, and about Ogrfen, all regarded as sources of inspiration by the Welsh poets. His song is a 'cerdd Ogrfen', he himself is one of the poets of Ogrfen. He is familiar with all the intricate subtleties of the Cyridfen Muse: *Mor wyf gyfrin fyrt kyrt Kyrriduen*³³⁶ 'so privy am I to the secrets of the myriad hosts of Cyridfen', i.e., of the Muse

³³¹ H 86.30; GCBM ii, 2.54.

³³² H 112.12; GCBM ii, 9.150.

³³³ R 1166.34; GCBM i, 3.80.

³³⁴ R 1176.30-1; GCBM ii, 16.194.

³³⁵ M. Eliade, *op.cit.* (footnote 183), 42.

³³⁶ GCBM i, 24.8.

Cyridwen and her cauldron of knowledge, although he is more than willing to acknowledge that his inspiration is derived ultimately from God.³³⁷ In his elegy to Cadwallon ap Madog ab Idnerth he prays to God for the *awen* of unfailing talent,

Dymgwallouwy duw diheudawn awen³³⁸

and in his elegy to Madog ap Maredudd he asks the King (of Heaven) as he has done a hundred times—*kyuercheis ganweith*—

y broui prydu om prifyeith eurgert.—
ym arglwyt gedymdeith³³⁹

To prove the composing of an excellent song in my superior language

For my companion lord.

If Cynddelw arrogates to himself superiority over his fellow poets, he does not regard himself as inferior to any of his patrons. If they are essential to him, so is he indispensable to them. To Lord Rhys his words are:

Ti hebof nyd hebu oet teu.
mi hebod ny hebaf uinheu.³⁴⁰

Without me, thou couldst not speak
Without thee, I will not speak.

To Owain Fychan ap Madog:

hael hebod ny hebaf nosweith.
O honawd handid uy gobeith.
O honaf hanbych well ganweith!³⁴¹

³³⁷ Llywarch ap Llywelyn 'Prydydd y Moch' also has a reference to Cyridwen: *Kyuarachaf ym ren kyuarchuawr awen. / kyfreu kyrriduen rwyf bartoni*, H 278.7-8; GLIL 25.1-2.

³³⁸ H 125.22; GCBM i, 21.1

³³⁹ H 118.5-6; GCBM i, 7.3-4.

³⁴⁰ H 113.3-4; GCBM ii, 9.173-4.

³⁴¹ H 121 8-10; GCBM i, 58-60.

*Generous one, without thee I will not speak any night,
My hope comes from thee,
On account of me mayest thou fare well a hundred times!*

The reciprocity in the relationship between patron and poet is admirably stated in Cynddelw's verses to Owain Fychan ap Madog. After saying:

*yt wyf penn prifueirt om prifyeith,³⁴²
by virtue of my great diction I am head of the chief bards,*

he goes on to say:

*Delw yt wytt wawr toryf koryf (corr.) kyureith.
yt wyf dann deduryd wyd oleith.³⁴³*

*As you are lord of a host, upholder of the law,
So am I bound to avoid fault.*

There is not the same explicit insistence in Welsh as in Irish literature that a *pencerdd* deserves the utmost respect from his patron. We do not have the equivalent of such statements as *dlighidh ollamh urraim ríogh* 'a poet has a right to a chief's respect' or *mór an t-ainm ollamh flatha* 'great is the title a chief's poet'. Cynddelw's attitude to his patrons, however, implies that he is entitled to their respect, indeed that he should be highly honoured as well as greatly rewarded.

Apparently the bond between patron and poet is not broken by the former's death. In his elegy on Rhirid Flaidd Cynddelw asserts that his attitude to him remains unchanged in spite of death.

*Delw yt oet wrthyf y yt wyf wrthaw.³⁴⁴
As he was to me, so I am (remain) to him.*

³⁴² H 120.30; GCBM i, 13.48.

³⁴³ H 120.31-2; GCBM i, 13.49-50.

³⁴⁴ H 143.14; GCBM i, 24.92.

Among Cynddelw's contributions to the relationship between his patron and himself, his primary contribution is to bestow praise and fame. The words *moli*, *moliant*, *molawd*, *clod* occur again and again

*As molaf mal yt adroter.³⁴⁵
I shall praise him so that it shall be recited.
Molaf y lyw ae dyrlyt.³⁴⁶
I praise the leader who deserves it.*

Cynddelw refers more than once to the gold he has received.

*Kelennic ruteur am rotei ririd.³⁴⁷
A gift of red gold Rhirid would give me.*

*Am rotes (sc. Owain Gwynedd) rut eur gymyrret.³⁴⁸
He (Owain Gwynedd) gave me honour in red gold.*

The reference to *kelennic* (from *calan* 'calends') in the first of these quotations reminds us that there were specified times such as New Year's Day when a poet could expect gifts and when no one except the niggardly would dare absent himself from home and be inaccessible to the poets with their poems and requests. But the gifts Cynddelw received were of various kinds: he mentions gifts of food, of drink, spirits and mead (including the finest), clothes of different materials (*brethyn*, *pali*) and of different colours (including the most honourable, purple), cattle (once a hundred kine) horses fed on the pasture of the fields and others fed on corn in stables, and all in full harness. Once he refers to a gift of 20 pounds³⁴⁹ in cash from Cadwallon ap Madog ab Idnerth of Maelienydd—the equivalent, so it is calculated, of £40,000 in today's money. Perhaps the strangest gift of all to our minds is

³⁴⁵ H 97.3; GCBM ii, 4.268.

³⁴⁶ H 164.20; GCBM i, 10.34.

³⁴⁷ H 179.5; GCBM i, 25.9.

³⁴⁸ H 92.31; GCBM ii, 4.137.

³⁴⁹ H 128.27, *ugein punt oe vot am rotes yn rot*; GCBM 21.101.

that of a *taeawg*, a villein. Owain Cyfeiliog, apparently, was prepared to give *taeogion* away: he did not regard them as too valuable,

Na thaeawc mygawc na mygdwn.³⁵⁰
either a long-haired or a short-haired villein.

One wonders sometimes whether the bards exaggerated the generosity of their patrons on the principle that the more their generosity was praised, the more they gave. Professor D. Ó Corráin refers to a text, to be dated not later than the eleventh century, which states that a man's wage for a year was a cow³⁵¹ and a cloak, 'a payment which was a little more generous than that of the Norse herdsman in the Orkneys in the tenth century whose yearly pay was a cow'. Llywarch ap Llywelyn 'Prydydd y Moch' tells us that Llywelyn ab Iorwerth would give him the moon if he asked for it (H 277.23-4), and the idea is echoed by Dafydd Benfras (MA 222b23-4). Put in another way, the poet's services were such that no recompense was too much. One of those services was to proclaim and propagate his patron's fame.

Ho[n]itor y glod o gyflawnder kyrt
 kertoryon ae daduer.³⁵²

*His fame will be asserted in plenitude of songs
 songsters will proclaim it again.*

Another service was to preserve his memory among people.

³⁵⁰ H 138.6; GCBM i, 16.180.

³⁵¹ D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans*, 47. In *Beowulf* there are two common synonyms for a king—'the giver of treasure' and 'the lord of songs', i.e., treasures of gold cups, gold ornaments, and of gold rings. Christopher Brooke, *From Alfred to Henry III: 871-1272* (Edinburgh, 1961), 48, observes that there was very little gold in eighth-century England: 'In this as in other respects there is an archaic flavour about the poem: it holds up the past as a mirror to the present'.

³⁵² H 138.11-12; GCBM i, 16.185-6.

Nyd adwyd hebof heb gof heb gor.
 Nyd etiw hebod raclod ragor.³⁵³

*You were not let past me without remembrance, without a
 song,
 Superior renown has not missed you.*

We are reminded of the verse of the 'Gododdin' concerning Gwenabwy fab Gwên, *Cam e adaw heb gof* (line 292), 'It is wrong to leave him without remembrance.' What is more surprising is that Cynddelw emphasizes the tangible aspect of the *cof*, the *moli*ant and the *clod*. He assumes that his poems are and will be heard (*clywed*) by the ears of men.

Yn urtyant molyant mal yd glywer.³⁵⁴
In majesty of praise so that it shall be heard.

Perhaps we should expect Cynddelw to use *clywed* 'to hear' and *clod* together frequently, because they alliterate and because of their common derivation from Indo-European **k̑leu-*, **k̑leuə-*, **k̑lū-*, &c., if he had, as we assume, an instinctive feeling for that common derivation, but he uses it with *moli*ant, *moli*, &c., and in other collocations, with the result that it seems that he wishes the aural nature of his poetry to be stressed.

In return for conferring praise and fame on his patron, the poet expects to be, and, in the event, is amply rewarded and Cynddelw would have us believe that, as he gave in great measure, so he also received in great measure

Ry dogneis uawr gert am y uawrged.³⁵⁵
I have provided a great song for his great gift.

ny tholyes uy lles llyw rybut,

³⁵³ H 86.21-2; GCBM ii, 2.45-6.

³⁵⁴ H 115.8 (cf. 103.16, 125.4); GCBM ii, 8.7.

³⁵⁵ H 130.10; GCBM i, 21.148.

ny tholyaf a ganaf hep gut.³⁵⁶

*He was not mean with my welfare, lord of menace,
I will not be mean with what I sing without concealment.*

Caffwn y radeu caffawd an gwawdeu.³⁵⁷

If we have his gifts he shall have our songs.

pan ym daw anaw o annwyd uyg kert.³⁵⁸

When wealth comes to me because of the nature of my song.

Cynddelw seems to have taken more than the usual poetic interest in military retinues, the *teuluoedd*, the *gosgorddau* of some princes. Thus he sang 'I osgordd Madog ap Maredudd pan fu farw' and 'Marwnad Gosgordd Owain Gwynedd', and although there can be no doubt that he was a *pencerdd*, he seems to qualify in this respect as a 'bardd teulu' and proves that a *pencerdd* could function as a *bardd teulu*. It would be in keeping with Cynddelw's knowledge of traditional lore that he saw the historical and deeper significance of the *teulu*. It corresponds to the *comitatus* described by Tacitus, i.e., to the German *Männerbund*, the Anglo-Saxon (*ge*)-*dryht* and the Russian *druzhina*. With regard to the German *Männerbund*, it has been suggested that its centre was in the worship of the god Woden who was or became the patron god of young warriors and that its initiation rites signified acceptance into adult society. Its origins may have been in the need to protect cattle and ward off attacks on them.³⁵⁹ As we have seen, it is

³⁵⁶ H 147.16–17; GCBM i, 26.47–8.

³⁵⁷ H 100.9; GCBM ii, 6.71–2.

³⁵⁸ H 148.5, cf. Pen. 3. 9–10; GCBM i, 26.67.

³⁵⁹ See Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1956), 79, 454. The primary authorities on the Germanic *comitatus* are Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, VI.23, Tacitus, *Germanica*, xiii–xv, Pomponius Mela, *De Choreographia / De Situ Orbis*, iii.26–8. On the Celtic *comitatus*, the *soldurii* or *ambacti*, see Polybius II.17, Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* III.22, VI.15. For the significance of the *Männerbund*, &c., see Oscar Stig Wikander, *Der arische*

dubious whether we should draw the conclusion, that J. Lloyd-Jones did, that Cynddelw was addressing different audiences in different metres.

However, if, as we have seen in the Law-texts, the *pencerdd* took precedence over the *bardd teulu* in the court, it is difficult to believe that he did not take precedence over him everywhere, and that he could not usurp the *bardd teulu*'s functions at will, and as he could use *englynion* to address his lord, there is no reason to believe that he had to use *englynion* in addressing the *teulu*. In any case there is no evidence that Cynddelw's poems to the war-bands were not delivered at a court nor is there evidence that his audience was substantially different when he celebrated his patron's mighty deeds and when he celebrated the deeds of his patron's war-band. After all, the patron's mighty deeds were performed with the help of warriors directly or indirectly under his command, some at least of whom would be well-known at his court. The men who were too old to serve as warriors would not find it difficult to identify themselves with those who were still young enough to do so. But when Cynddelw addressed the war-band of Madog ap Maredudd, did that war-band include the war-bands of those subject lords who professed allegiance to Madog ap Maredudd? And did the war-band of the subject lords have their own *bardd teulu*?

The late D. Myrddin Lloyd³⁶⁰ remarks that Cynddelw was the first poet to make extensive use of *englyn unodl union* metre and that it is in Cynddelw's work we see the *awdl* tradition of Taliesin and Aneirin coming together with the tradition of Llywarch Hen and Heledd. Later grammarians called the *clogyrnach* metres described below as *dull Cynddelw*, i.e., as Cynddelw's form or practice.

Männerbund (Lund, 1938), and Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (Frankfurt, 1934).

³⁶⁰ *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940*, s.n. Cynddelw.

Two other songs by Cynddelw are concerned with military retainues although they are called respectively 'Gwelygorddau Powys' and 'Breiniau Gwŷr Powys'. They occur together in the Hendregadredd Manuscript and in the Red Book of Hergest and it was together they were copied afterwards. They are in the same metre, stanzas made up of a combination of *toddaid byr* and *cyhydedd fer* (a couplet of rhyming octosyllabic lines) rather than the more usual combination of *toddaid byr* and a couplet of *cywydd deuair hirion* (a couplet of heptasyllabic lines with alternately accented and unaccented end-rhymes).

Both poems have an archaic flavour and for this reason they have been regarded as of only antiquarian interest: both refer to Meigen, a battle fought in the seventh century in which Cadwallon of Gwynedd was victorious. In the 'Gwelygorddau' there are references to some of the ancient heroes of Powys, some of whose names such as Cadell and Cyndrwyn are known from other sources, others with unfamiliar names such as Aroddion, Tyngorion, Cwewll Fyrion, and Gweirnon. In the 'Breintiau', the 'privileges' which men of Powys formerly enjoyed are enumerated in obscure legal language. However, close inspection reveals that the two poems deal with contemporary situations and seem to be immediately relevant. One of the meanings of 'gwelygordd' is 'retinue' and Cynddelw seems to refer to the retainues of contemporary Powys each in turn, although he links their exploits with those of past heroes.

In the second poem, the 'Privileges of the Men of Powys' are listed as privileges won at the Battle of Meigen, and Dr Thomas Charles-Edwards has suggested that Cynddelw's object was to demonstrate the injustice of the present in the light of the past in that the hard-won privileges of the past were now being taken away from the Powys retainue. For instance, the sixth *englyn* tells us that now they have to yield a third of the battle spoils to the prince whereas in the past they had a right to it all. Furthermore, it is suggested that they are to lose the status of freemen which

they had enjoyed in the past because the princes of Powys are adopting the practice of their English contemporaries. The poem states,

kynnytwys brenhinnet breinhyeu,³⁶¹

i.e., the kings or princes have augmented their own privileges at the expense of the lords under them and challenges those lords to resist this encroachment on their rights. The 'Gwelygorddau' poem has the same general theme. Unfortunately no precise date can be given to either of these poems, but the period following the division of Powys into two provinces, Powys Fadog and Powys Wenwynwyn, provides a suitable context, for at that time there would have been pressure on the princes to take advantage of the new situation to increase their own power by curtailing that of their subject lords.³⁶² It is well-known that privileges were given in the Middle Ages and jealously guarded. The men of Arfon were given at some unspecified time the privilege of being the first to attack in battle and the last to retreat. The Men of Powys must have had the same privilege, for in the twelfth *englyn* of the 'Breintiau' Cynddelw says that it was their part to lead the vanguard in battle and to defend the rearguard in any retreat.

ym blaen caduaon (*corr.*) cadw aruod
ac yn ol diwetwyr dyuod.³⁶³

Evidence that privileges of this kind were granted to certain groups of Irishmen could be quoted.

However, what is remarkable about these two poems is that Cynddelw takes it upon himself to espouse and defend the cause of the minor lords against their sovereign lord. He assumes that he has the authority to do so. We have already remarked on the knowledge of antiquarian lore which his poetry displays and we

³⁶¹ H 166.19; GCBM i, 11.12.

³⁶² HW i, 234, ii, 690.

³⁶³ H 167.25-6; GCBM 11.47-8.

know that as a poet and, like other poets, it was his duty to preserve the traditions of his people. But here he appears in the role of defender of that tradition and defender of the rights of minor lords against their lord paramount. In other words, he is taking a prominent part in the politics of his day.

OWAIN CYFEILIOG

Two compositions invite comparison with Cynddelw's poems to war-bands. They are Owain Cyfeiliog's 'Hirlas Owain' and his 'Kylchaw Kymry'. Indeed, these are so similar in diction and style to Cynddelw's poems that Professor Gruffydd Aled Williams has argued that they are his work rather than that of the traditional author.

Owain Cyfeiliog was the son of Gruffudd ap Maredudd who died in 1128, but it was not until 1149 that he was installed by his uncle, Madog ap Maredudd, as lord of Cyfeiliog, whence the by-name. In 1164 he joined Owain Gwynedd against the English, but in 1167 he changed sides and remained loyal to the English crown thereafter in all border conflicts. A man of keen intelligence and ready wit, he won the respect of his subjects as a just and enlightened ruler and remained in possession of his lordship until he decided to retire from the world and to take the habit of a monk in the monastery of Ystrad Marchell, a Cistercian abbey, which he himself had founded. He was to remain there until his death in 1197.³⁶⁴

If Owain Cyfeiliog learned the poetic art, as tradition implies, he was following in the steps of another prince, Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd, and if the poems attributed to him are his, they are characterized by the same high order of poetic genius and the same originality of approach.

'Hirlas Owain' refers to the long grey drinking-horn which Owain's *menestr* or cup-bearer is enjoined to take to members of

³⁶⁴ For Gerald of Wales's estimation of him, see *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales / The Description of Wales*, trans. L. Thorpe, 202–3.

the retinue, each in turn, now that they have returned from their foray under Owain's leadership and can relax. The members are named individually and their bravery praised, Rhys, Gwgan, Cynfelyn, Gruffudd, &c., and intermingled with their praise there are descriptions of the drinking-horn. In the course of his poem the author recalls the expedition made by the men of Mynyddawg Mwynfawr against Catraeth and celebrated in Aneirin's 'Gododdin'.

kigleu am dal med mynet pleit (*corr.*) cattraeth:
kywir eu haruaeth arueu lliweit.
Gosgord vynydawc am eu kysgeit
cawssant eu hadrawd cas vlawd vlaenyeit.³⁶⁵

*I heard that a host went to Catraeth for the reward of mead,
True was their purpose with their sharp (leg. llifeit)
weapons,*

*The war-band of Mynyddawg for their attackers (leg.
ffysgeit)*

They were acclaimed, precursors in the ugly battle-tumult

and there are other indications that the author knew Aneirin's poem, the 'Gododdin', and deliberately echoed some of its lines. Compare, for instance his line, as given in GLIF,

Nyt ynt hyll dihyll na heu diheu

with line 325 of the 'Gododdin',

ny bu hyll dihyll na heu diheu.

Whoever was the author of 'Hirlas Owain', he was exceptionally well-versed in the bardic lore of his time. If we take the poem to be the work of Owain Cyfeiliog, it gives us the clearest picture that we have of the close companionship that existed between the Welsh princes and their retinue in the twelfth century.

³⁶⁵ R 1435; GLIF 14.123–6.