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E. L. Harris

The Catalogues in *Culhwch ac Olwen* and Insular Celtic Learning¹

PERHAPS the most serious obstacle for the student of *Culhwch ac Olwen* is the isolated position of the text, caused by the lack of narrative material from the preceding centuries. It is true that in the early Welsh poetry, the *Triads*, and not forgetting the Latin sources of Celtic Britain, there are a great many allusions to a body of narrative literature before our tale,² but these scattered remarks cannot give a coherent picture, only tantalizing glimpses.

Until now attention has been called mainly to the affinities of *Culhwch ac Olwen* with folktales.³ As the extant version has all the trappings of a narrative text which stems from an oral background,⁴ and as it is built from traditional themes and motives, international popular tale can be regarded to a certain degree as a secondary context for our tale.

There is, however, one important factor that tends to be overlooked by the folkloristic approach: the place of a traditional literature within its society.⁵ When, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Romantic movement became interested in oral traditions, oral storytelling in the urban and bourgeois societies of Western Europe had become restricted to the lower social classes.⁶ In early Celtic Britain, on the other hand, as in Celtic Ireland before the

¹ A version of this article was read at the sixth meeting of the *Cylch Trafod Rhyddiaith Gymraeg* on 31 October 1981 at Jesus College, Oxford. For a full discussion of the tale as a component of the heroic-epic and the intellectual tradition of the insular Celts, see Doris Edel, *Helden auf Freiersfüßen. 'Tochmarc Emire' und 'Mal y kavas Culhwch Olwen'—Studien zur frühen inselkeltischen Erzähltradition (Verhandelungen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, N.R. cvii; Amsterdam, 1980)*. The text of *Culhwch ac Olwen* will be cited from *The White Book Mabinogion* (= WM), ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Pwllheli, 1907), reprinted, with an introduction by R. M. Jones, under the title *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch: Y Chwedlau a'r Rhamantau* (Cardiff, 1973). For convenience's sake, I also refer to WM for the part of the tale not preserved in the White Book which Evans in his edition completed from the Red Book of Hergest, but I mark these references with an 'r': WM^r. The English translation will be cited from Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion* (Everyman, 1949).

² These allusions have been discussed by Rachel Bromwich, 'The Character of Early Welsh Tradition', *Studies in Early British History* (= SEBH), edd. H. M. Chadwick et al. (Cambridge, 1954), 111 ff.

³ See, for example, Josef Baudiš, 'On Tochmarc Emere', *Ériu*, ix (1923), 98; W. J. Gruffydd, 'Mabon vab Modron', *Y Cymmrodor*, xlii (1930), 131 f.; Thomas Parry, *A History of Welsh Literature*, trans. H. I. Bell (Oxford, 1955), 75–80; Bromwich, 'The Character of

Early Welsh Tradition', 106 f.; Idris Ll. Foster, 'Culhwch and Olwen and Rhonabwy's Dream', *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Roger S. Loomis (Oxford, 1959), 32–8; Kenneth H. Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff, 1961), 71–81; id., 'Some Popular Motifs in Early Welsh Tradition', *ÉC* xi (1964–5), 92–4; Gwyn Jones, *Kings, Beasts and Heroes* (London, 1972), 68 ff.

⁴ It contains elements characteristic of the repertoire of the oral story-teller such as set descriptions for typical scenes and stereotyped pieces of dialogue: for examples see Edel, *Helden auf Freiersfüßen*, index, s.v. 'Stereotype Erzählelemente'. Moreover, it reduces some of its parts, not only the ending, but also the various quests undertaken by Arthur and his men, to mere summaries and in some cases even to a dry enumeration of facts, while others are told quite elaborately.

⁵ Starting in countries which still have, or until very recently had, an active story-telling tradition, there has been in recent decades a growing interest in the cultural and social aspects of oral literatures and the relation between story-teller and audience. For Ireland, see e.g. J. H. Delargy, 'The Gaelic Story-teller', *Proceedings of the British Academy* (= PBA), xxxi (1945), 177–221; for Hungary, Linda Dégh (trans. Emily M. Schossberger), *Folktales and Society* (Bloomington, 1969) [= *Märchen, Erzähler und Erzählgemeinschaft* (Berlin, 1962)].

⁶ This particular situation has strongly influenced the methods as well as the terminology of the folklorists.

loss of the native nobility, oral literature covered the whole spectrum of society. Both countries maintained a professional class of highly trained performer-composers which had as their audience the native warrior aristocracies.

Irish literature contains an old aristocratic-pagan literature which is aristocratic-heroic as well as aristocratic-intellectual.¹ In its oral stage this literature was transmitted by a learned class of a very privileged position, the so-called *filid* (sg. *fili*), who were not only the composers of panegyric verse, but also the custodians of traditional lore in all its aspects: history (including genealogy), law, toponymy, and so forth. Although the body of texts preserved in the Welsh manuscripts is less conservative² and at the same time much more limited—not only in size, but because of the loss of the early narrative material also in subject-matter—it contains traces of an older stratum which, together with the supplementary evidence from the Irish sources, enable us to piece together a fuller picture of the early traditions of Celtic Britain.

For the interpretation of *Culhwch ac Olwen* two questions are of foremost importance: (1) who performs the tasks set by the bride's father, and (2) what are these tasks?

In answering them, scholars have tended to focus their attention on the two enormous catalogues which together take up more than a quarter of the extant text of the tale: the roll-call of Arthur's warriors and the list of the conditions named by the bride's father, Ysbaddaden. Starting with the men who perform the tasks: as early as 1915 Johannes Bolte and Georg Polivka, in their discussion of the *Märchen* 'Sechse kommen durch die ganze Welt' in their monumental *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, pointed to the presence of a great runner, seer, leaper, eater, drinker, hearer among the people at King Arthur's court in *Culhwch ac Olwen*.³ In 1961 Kenneth Jackson, who also understood our tale as a variant of 'Six go through the World', put forward the view that the wonderful men of this type 'must be the original nucleus of Culhwch's Helpers, to whom dozens of others became added in time, including the prototypes of some of King Arthur's Knights'.⁴ This same opinion has been expressed by Gwyn Jones.⁵ Regarding the tasks, W. J. Gruffydd has stressed the sophistically logical order of their enumeration, calling attention to 'the discrepancy between the Naming of the anoethu and their Performance'.⁶ In this he was followed by Idris Ll. Foster⁷ and again by Gwyn Jones.⁸

However, turning to the narrative parts of the tale for an answer to our two questions, we get a different picture. Firstly, none of the folk-tale helpers that appear in the roll-call of Arthur's warriors is ever mentioned outside this list. All the quests are either accomplished by Arthur, who—with one exception—acts as the commander of the troops of the Island of

¹ A. M. E. Draak, *Ierse letterkunde als toetssteen* (Amsterdam, 1946), 9.

² The contrast which D. A. Binchy has noted between Irish and Welsh law is also evident between the literatures of the two islands.

³ Op. cit. (Leipzig, 1913-32), ii. 95: '... die alt-irischen [!] Mabinogion, wo unter den Hofleuten des Königs Arthur ein ausgezeichnete Läufer, Scharfsichtiger, Springer, Esser, Trinker, Horcher aufgezählt werden.'

⁴ *The International Popular Tale*, pp. 74f.

⁵ *Kings, Beasts and Heroes*, p. 98.

⁶ 'Mabon vab Modron', pp. 134f. *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language* (= GPC), edd. R. J. Thomas et al. (Cardiff, 1950-), gives the following translations for *anoeth* (pl. *anoethu*): 'wonder, something difficult to acquire, jewel.' In the opinion of Gruffydd our tale uses the word as a technical term meaning 'marvel' (op. cit. 132); I prefer the meaning 'something difficult to acquire'.

⁷ 'Culhwch and Olwen and Rhonabwy's Dream', pp. 35f.

⁸ *Kings, Beasts and Heroes*, p. 82. Similarly R. M. Jones in his introduction to the reprint of *WM* p. iii.

Britain and as such shows much strategic insight,¹ or by the famous heroes of his court under the leadership of Cei. That the names of these heroes belong to the literary tradition of Celtic Britain is corroborated by the fact that they also occur in the early poetry and in the *Triads*. Secondly, the majority of the tasks that are actually dealt with in the performance stories are directly connected with the conquest of three tusks which are necessary to make the razor, comb, and shears needed by the bride's father to prepare himself for his daughter's wedding-feast, and, as becomes apparent at the end of the tale, Ysbaddaden's combing and shaving is nothing but a preliminary to his killing. In the course of their efforts, Arthur and his warriors liberate the realm of destructive animals and other enemies, e.g. the outlaw Dillus, who threatens Arthur's order by not submitting to his authority.² Nothing is ever said about the objects of plenty and the legendary beings and oxen which are named in the first third of the list of Ysbaddaden's conditions (see below, p. 263).

In the course of my research I have been led to the conclusion that the two voluminous catalogues in *Culhwch ac Olwen* are typical products of native learning. Enumerations of this sort are not part of one particular tale, but can appear in various contexts and represent semi-independent elements within the story-teller's repertoire.³ Even in conservative Ireland, learned catalogues, with their tendency to become more impressive, could absorb material from widely divergent sources (in this process association, verbal and otherwise, played an important role). This has also happened to our two lists: as will be shown, a large part of their content represents later accretions.

What was this insular Celtic learning like? As it was essentially oral, the evidence which has survived is confused and fragmentary. In Celtic Britain it is extremely scarce; in Celtic Ireland a wealth of material has been preserved, but for the greatest part in Middle Irish compilations. These pose a twofold problem: firstly, when the compilers began their work, part of the traditional knowledge of the *filid* had become unintelligible to them; secondly, they ordered their material according to principles taken over from the written Latin learning—alphabetical, chronological—and in this process they also borrowed other elements from this same culture. A thorough investigation of these learned collections and their successive layers is needed before the valuable information on native learning contained in them can be used profitably.

Concerning the native intellectuals, at first sight the conditions on either side of the Irish Sea seem to have differed substantially. While the Irish *fili* encompassed virtually all learning within his repertoire, the highest grade in the learned classes of Celtic Britain, the *pencerdd*, apparently concerned himself with praise-poetry only and left the learned lore in prose to a functionary of a lower standing, the *cyfarwydd*. This at least seems to be suggested by the extant texts, although there are some allusions to an older situation in which the two functions were not so strictly separated.⁴ The reason that the word *cyfarwydd* has only been preserved

¹ The one exception is the encounter with Gorddu (*WM* 505. 24-506. 26), during which Arthur is only assisted by some servants. Arthur's strategic insight is evinced by the pincer movements used by him on various occasions: see Edel, *Helden auf Freiersfüßen*, pp. 188, 198.

² For this interpretation of the Dillus episode and possible Irish parallels, see Edel, *Helden*, pp. 188f.

³ For examples, see Edel, *Helden*, index, s.vv. 'Aufzählung', 'Aufzählungen', 'Aufzählungsgedichte'. Cf. Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Significance of the Irish Personal Names in *Culhwch ac Olwen*', *BBCS* xxix (1982), 602.

⁴ See Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein. The Welsh Triads*² (Cardiff, 1978), pp. lxxxiii f. and 527 (= TYP).

with a lowered meaning may have been that by the time narrative prose was written down, native learning—with the exception of panegyric verse and genealogical lore—had ceased to be part of the intellectual life of the aristocracy. Proinsias MacCana in his recent book on *The Learned Tales of Ireland* calls attention to the fact that both the semantic range and the etymology of the term *cyfarwydd* point to an intellectual of the type of the Irish *fili*. After a re-examination of the evidence, he arrives at the conclusion that the learned classes in both countries once functioned in a similar way.¹

What evidence, then, do we find in the Welsh manuscripts that the native intellectuals of Celtic Britain had a range of learning comparable to that of the Irish *fili*?² Apart from praise-poetry and genealogical matter, both well represented, this evidence, owing to the lack of early narrative, is very scarce. Occasionally a historical tale—in the sense of the Irish *senchas*—seems to have found its way into the new, written, Latin learning of the monasteries. Possibly the best-known example for this is to be found in the *Historia Brittonum* in the chapters on Vortigern into which, according to Sir Ifor Williams, the translation of a *cyfarwydd*, a native tale on this ruler, was incorporated.³ Place-lore is attested, for instance, in *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* and in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, although on a much more modest scale than in Ireland.⁴ The mutual relations between the traditional jurists and the learned storytellers are evinced in stylistic features used by both and in the expert handling of the legal vocabulary in the prose tales.⁵

So much for the range of learning of the native intellectuals. What about their methods? Here again the knowledge gained from the study of the Irish sources is indispensable to the assessment of the few survivals on the British side. Let me give an illustration. In *Culhwch ac Olwen* the names of the suitor and the bride are analysed as *cul + hwch* 'pig-run' and *ol + wen* 'white track'. In the case of *Culhwch* this analysis provides the *cyfarwydd* with a suitable story of the hero's birth, in the case of *Olwen* with the charming detail that

Pedeir meillonen gwynnyon a dyuei yn y hol mynyd elhei.⁶

As folklorists point out, similar explanations occur in popular tales up to modern times. However, this type of etymological speculation is amply represented in Ireland, where the so-called *bélre n-etarscartha* or 'language of separation' had been elevated into a science, to use D. A. Binchy's words.⁷ The jurists were among its leading exponents, but it also contributed extensively to other fields of learning, e.g. place-lore.⁸ To resolve a word into its 'original' elements, each of them a separate word—even monosyllables were not safe from this

¹ Op. cit. (Dublin, 1980), 16–18 and 132–41. There has been much speculation about the affinity of *Culhwch ac Olwen* to Irish saga literature. It seems to me that one of the causes for this affinity was the presence of comparable classes of tradition-bearers in the warrior aristocracies on either side of the Irish Sea.

² See p. 254 above.

³ Ifor Williams, 'Hen Chwedlau', *Trans. of the Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion* (= *THSC*), Sessions 1946–47, pp. 44–58.

⁴ For example, the onomastic scheme underlying the hunt of *Twrch Trwyth* in our tale (see John Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore, Welsh and Manx* (Oxford, 1901), 512ff.) can only be guessed at. Native place-name speculation is

already attested in the two Arthurian passages in the *Mirabilia* which are added to the *Historia Brittonum*: see Thomas Jones (trans. G. Morgan), 'The Early Evolution of the Legend of Arthur', *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies*, viii (1964), 11f. [= 'Datblygiadau Cynnar Chwedl Arthur', *BBCS* xvii (1958), 235–52].

⁵ In some instances we have to turn to the prose tales for the older meaning of a legal term.

⁶ *WM* 476. 15f.: 'Four white trefoils sprang up behind her wherever she went.'

⁷ For this and what follows see D. A. Binchy, 'The Linguistic and Historical Value of the Irish Law Tracts', *PBA* xxix (1943), 211f.

⁸ On this see Edel, *Helden*, pp. 214–16, 217–19, 221ff.

approach—a superficial similarity in sound or meaning was sometimes enough. This method of interpretation seems to have had its roots in the pre-Christian tradition,¹ although in later times it must have gained additional prestige from the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, which had a great impact on insular thought. What we are dealing with here is basically a primitive sort of learning which survived outside the Roman *imperium* and was dominated by magical beliefs. Within this intellectual horizon, correspondences between words pointed to correspondences between the objects they named, and so language itself was seen as a source of knowledge. For the initiated, this juggling with synonyms and homonyms (or near-synonyms and near-homonyms), punning, even a slip of the tongue, represented indispensable instruments of inspiration. The magical aspects of these verbal associations manifest themselves in the verbal techniques with the help of which information about the future seems to have been obtained through the utterance of a string of highly rhetorical verse.² In the course of time the magical dimension evidently became lost, and in the Middle Irish period, e.g. in the learned compilations of *dinnshenchas* material and in the equally learned compendium of personal names, the *Cóir Anmann* ('Fitness of Names'), we find examples of the same type of late and fanciful explanations as the ones in *Culhwch ac Olwen*.³

In this kind of intellectual tradition in which association played such a dominant role, catalogues served as exercises in mnemonic orientation. With their help the tradition-bearers kept a grip on their (oral) repertoire. *Culhwch ac Olwen* contains quite a few of them,⁴ but all the other elements of learned provenance that have been mentioned—place-lore, legal terms, punning, etymological speculation—are also represented in our tale.

Let us turn now to the first of the two catalogues which will be examined in this article, the list of warriors in whose name *Culhwch* invokes his boon. It is not the only enumeration of Arthurian heroes in extant medieval Welsh literature, but it is by far the longest. In poem no. XXXI of the Black Book of Carmarthen, *Pa gur* ('Which man?'), Arthur names ten companions of whom only two, his own son *Llacheu* and a certain *Cysteint* son of *Banon*, are not included in the roll-call in *Culhwch ac Olwen*.⁵ The younger of the two native Arthurian tales, *Breudwyt Ronabwy* ('Rhonabwy's Dream'), enumerates forty-one names, two-thirds of

¹ This is suggested by the fact that this etymological interpretation was also used in other early learned traditions, e.g. by the Hindu law schools: see Binchy, loc. cit.

² To give two examples from the Old Irish epic tradition: the prophecy of *Cú Chulainn*'s future deeds by his heroic foster-mother *Scáthach* in *Verba Scáthae*, ed. Rudolf Thurneysen, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* (= *ZCP*), ix (1913), 487f. (recent translation by Garrett S. Olmsted, *The Gundestrup Cauldron* (Brussels, 1979), 229–38); and the foretelling of the hardships that await the invading armies in the 'Cattle-raid of Cuailnge' by the woman poet *Fedelín*, *Táin Bó Cuailnge: Recension I* (= *TBC I*), ed. and trans. Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin, 1976), lines 40ff.

³ Examples from place-lore speculation are discussed in Edel, *Helden*, pp. 217ff. The *Cóir Anmann* derives the epithet of Emer's father *Forgall*, Monach, from *mon* (= *cleas*) 'feat, trick' and interprets it as 'featful, wily':

see *Irische Texte*, edd. and trans. Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch, iii/2 (Leipzig, 1897), 372f. For the apparently older meaning 'Forgall of the Manapii', see Julius Pokorny, 'Spuren von Germanen im alten Irland vor der Wikingerzeit', *ZCP* xi (1917), 182f.; Edel, op. cit. 103–5.

⁴ Besides the ones already mentioned, the roll-call of Arthur's warriors and the enumeration of *Ysbaddaden*'s conditions, it contains the list of foreign countries enumerated by Arthur's porter (*WM* 457. 26–458. 5), the list of Arthur's possessions (see p. 264 n. 7 below), and the catalogue of *Gwenhwyfar*'s ladies (*WM* 469. 24–470. 14).

⁵ *The Black Book of Carmarthen*, ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Pwllheli, 1906), 94. 3ff. See now Brynley F. Roberts, in *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, edd. Rachel Bromwich and R. Brinley Jones (Cardiff, 1978), 296–309.

which are also given in *Culhwch*,¹ and the romance *Chwedyl Gereint vab Erbin*, which already shows continental influence, has a list of nineteen names nearly half of which appear in *Culhwch*.² Intentionally or unintentionally, our tale with its *tour de force* of more than 220 names comes remarkably close to the regular number of a *teulu* or war-band, which seems to have been about 300.³ Yet in spite of its extraordinary length the roll-call is not complete: among the names that are omitted is that of Hygwydd, whose office it is always to carry Arthur's cauldron and who participates actively in two of the performance stories.⁴

As our knowledge of Celtic Britain suggests, a fair number of these names could have belonged to a *teulu* of epic-heroic tradition. The body of the war-band of a native chieftain was made up of the sons of the local nobility (who in this manner completed their education as members of the warrior aristocracy), but the early poetry contains a number of allusions to the fact that the rulers also made use of renowned fighters from other lands in order to strengthen their military force.⁵

Cei is the leading hero of Arthur's court, and so it is his name together with that of his inseparable companion Bedwyr which heads the roll-call in *Culhwch ac Olwen*. Then, as is befitting for the *penn teyrned yr ynys honn* ('the sovereign prince of this Island'), the catalogue continues with the names of heroic figures from all parts of the island, the north, Wales, the south-west.⁶ Among these there are numerous sons of famous heroes.⁷ Regarding the strangers among Arthur's warriors, much attention has been given to the five names from early Irish heroic saga,⁸ but the list mentions a number of other figures from the countries on either side of Britain.⁹ It is also in accordance with the social reality underlying Welsh heroic literature that the list contains relatives of Arthur's,¹⁰ court-officials,¹¹ and servants.¹² Nearly half of the names of the roll-call either appear in extant texts of the pre-Norman period outside it—in the narrative parts of our tale, in the early poetry, and in the *Triads*—or they belong to relatives of figures mentioned in these texts.

¹ WM 220. 35–221. 30.

² WM 411. 28–412. 3.

³ See for this Ifor Williams, *Canu Aneirin* (Cardiff, 1938), p. lv; Kenneth H. Jackson, *The Gododdin* (Edinburgh, 1969), 14. Cf. Leslie Alcock, *Arthur's Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 335f.

⁴ The conquest of Diwrnach's cauldron and the encounter with Gorddu (WM 498. 28–33; 505. 34–506. 7).

⁵ See Ifor Williams (trans. J. E. Caerwyn Williams), *The Poems of Taliesin* (Dublin, 1968), p. lvi [= *Canu Taliesin* (Cardiff, 1960), p. xxxvii].

⁶ From the north come the numerous sons of Caw of Prydein, here Pictland (WM 461. 35–462. 10), Drustwrn Hayarn, 'Iron-fist' (WM 461. 8), and, if they are identical with the persons mentioned in the *Gododdin*, Bradwen with his father Moren Mynawg (WM 460. 33–5) and possibly also the sons of Nwython (WM 464. 18ff.). Wales is represented by Teyrnon Twr Bliant (WM 464. 14), by Teithi Hen, 'the Old' (WM 463. 32–464. 4), and by Hyfeidd (see p. 259 n. 3 below); the south-west by Gereint ap Erbin with his relatives (WM 462. 20f., 460. 31f.), etc.

⁷ To give just a few examples: the son of Cei (WM

465. 34f.), of Bedwyr (WM 465. 35f.), of Gereint (WM 460. 31f.), of Greidawl Gallddofydd, 'Enemy-subduer' (WM 460. 22f.), the sons of Caw and of Nwython (for these see n. 6 above).

⁸ Conchobar, Fergus, Conall Cernach, Loegaire Búadach and CúRoi. See WM 460. 26–9. For a discussion of the Irish and pseudo-Irish names in our list, see Sims-Williams, 'The Significance of the Irish Personal Names in *Culhwch ac Olwen*'.

⁹ From Ireland Gwitart ap Aedd, apparently the brother of Odgar, king of Ireland (WM 466. 14f.), Garselit, the chief huntsman of the island (WM 466. 16), and Llenlleawg (see p. 260 n. 9 below); from France, the kings Iona (WM 461. 28) and Paris (WM 465. 19–21), etc.

¹⁰ Among these a number of uncles of Arthur's on his mother's side (e.g. WM 464. 7–10, 466. 4–8).

¹¹ For instance, the head huntsmen Eli and Trachmyr (WM 465. 38f.).

¹² Cacamwri, Hygwydd's brother (WM 467. 24–32; the latter is omitted in the list, see above), Hir ('Long') Amren and Hir Eiddil (WM 467. 34–6). Cacamwri, Hygwydd, Hir Amren, and Hir Eiddil assist Arthur in the encounter with Gorddu: cf. p. 255 n. 1).

But whoever was responsible for our version of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, he was not content with the kind of enumerations customary in epic-heroic tradition. In order to achieve his impressive piece of showmanship, he had to borrow from many sources, historical, ecclesiastical, mythological, popular, and so forth.

If Gwilenhin, king of France, and Sberin ap Fflergant really are Anglo-Normans,¹ this only means that in the twelfth century it was still possible to introduce new names into our list.² Behind Hyfeidd Unlenn ('One-cloak') Rachel Bromwich has detected a historical Welsh king of the ninth century;³ according to E. K. Chambers Maelwys ap Baeddan has to be the same as the king Melvas who in Caradoc's *Vita* of Gildas abducts Arthur's queen.⁴ With the exception of the poet Taliesin—who, however, in Welsh tradition was not only the famous *cynfardd*, but also developed into a purely legendary figure⁵—the learned class is represented by names connected with the Christian church: by Gildas, one of the sons of Caw of Prydein (here Pictland), who in the *Vita* mentioned above makes peace between Arthur and Gwenhwyfar's ravisher,⁶ by Bidwini, who is named last in the roll-call in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, but heads the younger list in *Breudwyt Ronabwy*,⁷ and by an otherwise unknown priest Cethtrwm.⁸ From an originally mythological background comes Manawydan ap Llyr⁹ and possibly also Gwyn ap Nudd.¹⁰ Popular story-telling contributed the wonderful helpers who have attracted so much attention.

Like comparable catalogues in Irish literature,¹¹ the roll-call of Arthur's warriors in our tale contains several triads, for instance the three men who escape from the battle of Camlan,¹² or the three brothers Bwlch, Cyfwlch, and Syfwlch, who also appear in the enumeration of Ysbaddaden's conditions.¹³ Another trait it shares with its Irish counterparts is the possibility of listing a number of persons who all have the same name.

To give a few examples: especially frequent is the name of Gwyn (maybe because it was also a frequent name or nickname in everyday life). Besides the Gwyn ap Nudd mentioned above, Gwyn Godyfrion, one of Arthur's companions in the poem *Pa gur*,¹⁴ and Gwyn Hyfar ('the Irascible'), overseer of Cornwall and Devon, one of the nine men who plotted the battle of Camlan,¹⁵ three more warriors with the name Gwyn are enumerated: Gwyn ap Esni and Gwyn ap Nwyfre, who together with

¹ WM 466. 13f.; 462. 14f. See on them TYP, pp. cxivf. and 270. If this Gwilenhin is identical with William the Conqueror, as has been suggested, there is apparently a satirical undertone to his appearance in our tale. Although he is named by Ysbaddaden as one of the men who are indispensable for the hunting of Twrch Trwyth, his actual contribution is very modest: in the course of the events he loses his life at an early stage without having killed even a little piglet (WM 502. 15).

² In the opinion of Sims-Williams, it is not impossible that new names were added as late as the mid fourteenth century: see his 'The Significance of the Irish Personal Names', pp. 606f.

³ WM 462. 23f. See TYP, pp. 410f., where Hyfeidd is identified with the king Hemeid of Dyfed who submitted to king Alfred.

⁴ *Arthur of Britain* (Cambridge, 1927), 84f., 212f.

⁵ WM 462. 11f. Taliesin is called *Penn Beirdd* ('Chief of Bards'). For the legendary Taliesin, see Ifor Williams, *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin, 1944), 55–63; id., *Chwedl Taliesin* (Cardiff, 1957); Juliette M. Wood, 'A Study of the Legend of Taliesin' (M.Litt. dissertation; Oxford 1979).

⁶ WM 462. 7f. On the role of Gildas in the *Vita*, see Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, pp. 84f.

⁷ For *Culhwch ac Olwen* see WM 469. 23f., for *Breudwyt Ronabwy* WM 220. 35. It need not surprise us that there are some clerics at Arthur's court, because he already appears as a Christian leader in the earliest documents.

⁸ WM 469. 5f. Perhaps Calcas ap Caw, who is named after the Greek soothsayer and appears in the catalogue immediately after his brother Gildas (WM 462. 8), also belongs to this category of learned men.

⁹ WM 462. 12f.

¹⁰ WM 460. 30f. However, in our tale and related traditions Gwyn appears as a heroic figure: see Edel, *Helden*, pp. 170f.

¹¹ For instance, TBC I, lines 3454ff.; *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* ('The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel'), ed. Eleanor Knott (Dublin, 1936), lines 667ff.

¹² WM 462. 33–463. 7.

¹³ WM 468. 15–30 (roll-call of warriors); WM 485. 9–27 (list of conditions).

¹⁴ WM 466. 3. For the poem see p. 257 n. 5 above.

¹⁵ WM 466. 18–20.

Gwyn ap Nudd form another triad,¹ and Gwyn ap Ermid.² The name Gweir occurs four times;³ Uchdryd three times, Uchdryd Ardwyd Cad ('Host-sustainer'),⁴ Uchdryd ap Erim,⁵ Uchdryd Varyfdraws ('Cross-beard');⁶ Gwrhryr twice, Gwrhryr Gwarthegwras ('Fat-kine'),⁷ Gwrhryr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd ('Interpreter of Tongues').⁸

Obviously duplication and multiplication have contributed to the growth of the roll-call to a considerable extent. The easiest manner of duplication is that of simple repetition, and this is what has happened in some cases. Wittingly or unwittingly, the names of Llenlleawg Wyddel ('the Irishman')⁹ and of Gormant ap Rica¹⁰ are given twice.

But the *cyfarwydd* had more subtle methods at his disposal. From the material that has been preserved in the manuscripts we get the impression that Celtic Britain had a great liking for nicknames. Now, as can be seen in the genealogies, epithets are sometimes taken as independent personal names. In our tale, apparently out of the epithet of Cilydd Canhastyr ('Hundred-holds') there emerged a Canhastyr Canllaw ('Hundred-holds Hundred-hands'), and in a further stage the pair by analogy expanded into a triad through the addition of a certain Cors Cant Ewin ('Hundred-claws').¹¹ It is not at all unlikely that epithets which had thus developed into personal names underly some of the fictitious names like Gorasgwrn ap Nerth ('Big-bone son of Might'),¹² Nerth ap Cadarn ('Might son of Strong'),¹³ and Digon ap Alar ('Enough son of Surfeit').¹⁴

A second possibility—and an extremely productive one in our roll-call—is that of the reinterpretation of existing epithets. To avoid a tedious jingling with names, again I confine myself to a few illustrative examples. As the new meanings are often humorous, all sorts of people with fantastic qualities or talents are added to the original band of heroic figures.¹⁵

Persons with extraordinary qualities fit into the traditional retinue of a chieftain in that at a time which had to do without our modern technological support a ruler needed people with special talents to control his realm: swift runners to act as messengers,¹⁶ people with a sharp eye-sight as watchers, strong men like Hygwydd¹⁷ for the transportation of equipment.

Frequently nicknames allude to the appearance of a person, for instance to his beard. In our catalogue we have a Llawnrodded Varvawc ('the Bearded')¹⁸ and a Nodawl Varyf Trwch

¹ WM 460. 29–31. Gwyn ap Nwyfre is named a second time: see WM 462. 19.

² WM 462. 22.

³ WM 466. 3–8.

⁴ WM 460. 37f.

⁵ WM 463. 7f. On the sons of Erim see p. 261 below.

⁶ See p. 261 n. 2 below.

⁷ WM 460. 38f.

⁸ WM 469. 3–5.

⁹ WM 464. 11f. and 466. 11.

¹⁰ WM 461. 21f. and 462. 25–7.

¹¹ WM 461. 5f. They are also mentioned in the list of Ysbaddaden's conditions: see WM 483. 20–7.

¹² WM 468. 31f. *Merch* erroneously for *mab*: see Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion*, 279.

¹³ WM 461. 25.

¹⁴ WM 461. 23.

¹⁵ The most prominent example of this type of reinterpretation is *Cei*. I mention it in the notes, because the relevant passage occurs outside the catalogue (WM 471. 4–6: *Kyhyt ar pren uchaf yn y coet uydei pan uei da ganthaw*, 'When it pleased him he would be as tall as the tallest tree in the forest'). Although the idea that *Cei* was a giant underlies several place-names (see Melville Richards, 'Arthurian Onomastics', *THSC*, Session 1969, pp. 262f.), it seems to me that this is a secondary development and that the hero's traditional epithet *hir* simply alluded to the fact that he was tall. See on this also Edel, *Helden*, pp. 164, 172.

¹⁶ Mac Roth, the messenger of Ailill and Medb in the Irish Ulster cycle, can go all round Ireland in one day: see *TBC I*, lines 1246f.

¹⁷ See p. 258 above.

¹⁸ WM 462. 28f.

('Cut-beard')¹ besides the Uchdryd Varyfdraws already mentioned. In the case of the latter the attributive *traws* has been reinterpreted with the result that it is said of this Uchdryd

uyryei y uaraf goch seuydlawc a oed arnaw dros dec trawst a deugeint oed yn neuad Arthur.²

Thus, besides Anwas Edeinawg ('the Winged'),³ who is also mentioned among Arthur's companions in *Pa gur* and whose epithet in my opinion alludes to the hero's lightfootedness and leaping power in combat,⁴ there appears a marvellous runner, Henwas Edeinawg, who is quicker than any four-footed creature.⁵

In the case of Anwas-Henwas, verbal association, this juggling with sound and meaning, seems to have been extremely fruitful. Apparently the variant form Henwas is analysed as *hen* + *gwas* 'old servant', because the marvellous runner acquires a companion Henbeddestyr ('Old Walker'). Three more names are added to this pair, among them Sgilti Scawntroet ('Light-foot'), who can walk on the tips of reeds without bending them (and whom Cecile O'Rahilly identified as the Irish Fenian hero Cailte),⁶ and all five are called *mab Erim*.⁷ Kuno Meyer suggested more than eighty years ago that this Erim derives his name from the Irish verbal noun *érim* ('course, career'),⁸ but now scholars regard Erim as Welsh and take it either as an older spelling of the personal name Eiryf or Erw, which also occurs in our catalogue,⁹ or as a miscopying (through confusion of insular *n* and *r*) of Enim, an Old Welsh spelling of the Welsh name Heinif.¹⁰ About two dozen names later a triad of old men is formed around this same name Henwas: Henwas ('Old Servant'), Hen Wyneb ('Old Face'), and Hen Gedymddeith ('Old Comrade').¹¹

Etymological speculation may also lie behind two figures with the practically identical names Gallgoid and Galgoig. The first, Gallgoid Gofyniad, is a great warrior; his epithet is derived from the verb *gofynu* ('kill, slay') and means 'the Hearer'.¹² The other, Galgoig un arall ('the other Gallgoig'), is depicted as a man of insatiable needs:

y dref y delhei idi kyt bei trychantref yndi or bei eisseu dim arnaw ny adei ef hun uyth ar legat dyn tra uei yndi.¹³

Is it not very likely that he, too, was called *gofyniad*—hence the words *un arall*—but that in his case the *cyfarwydd* connected the nickname with the verb *gofyn* ('demand')?

The scribe who tried to fill in the lacuna in our roll-call at the bottom of col. 467 and the top of col. 468 of the White Book may even have been inspired by monastic learning. Although

¹ WM 462. 29f.: *uaryf twrch*. For the emendation *uaryf twrch* see Jones and Jones, *The Mabinogion*, p. 279.

² WM 468. 3–8: '[He] would throw the bristling red beard he had on him across fifty rafters which were in Arthur's hall.' See p. 260 above.

³ WM 461. 11f.

⁴ How important these talents are is evinced by a hero like Cú Chulainn. See, e.g., *TBC I*, lines 741–5; Edel, *Helden*, p. 120.

⁵ WM 463. 17–21.

⁶ WM 463. 11 (var. *yscawntroet*). See C. O'Rahilly, *Ireland and Wales* (London, 1924), 115 n. 3.

⁷ WM 463. 7–32.

⁸ 'Early Relations between Gael and Brython', *THSC*, Session 1895–96, p. 73 n. 5.

⁹ WM 462. 17: Llawr eil Erw. See on this name *TYP*, pp. 338, 341, 419.

¹⁰ Sims-Williams, 'The Significance of the Irish Personal Names', p. 611. Heinif is an appropriate patronym for a group of runners in our catalogue (see *GPC*, s.v. *heini*).

¹¹ *WLM* 465. 11f.

¹² WM 461. 1: *Gallcoit gouynhat*. For this epithet see *GPC*, s.vv. *gofynaf*: *gofnyu*; *cymynaf*: *cymynu*, *cymyniad*; *gomynaf*: *gomynu*, *gomyniad*.

¹³ WM 465. 13–18: '... whatever township he came to, though there were three hundred homesteads therein, were he in need of aught, he would never leave sleep on man's eye whilst he was there.'

behind the figure of Gwefyl ap Gwastad ('Lip son of Flat') just another of those native nicknames ('Flatlip') may be suspected, the grotesque commentary

y dyd y bei drist y gellyngei y lleill weuyl idaw y waeret hyt y uogel ar llall a uydei yn bennguch ar y benn¹

strongly resembles the descriptions of the monstrous, big-lipped creatures of the East in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville.²

Thus, the presence in our catalogue of numerous figures with fantastic and burlesque qualities seems to have been inspired by methods current in the intellectual tradition of Celtic Britain. These methods—etymological speculation, juggling with multiple meanings and multiple names, and so forth—having lost their primitive dimensions, are used by the *cyfarwydd* above all to entertain, to amuse, and baffle his audience with his unrestrained imagination.

This brings us to the problem of the marvellous helpers of folk-tale who have been held by some scholars to be characteristic of the tale as a whole.

To this category belong Drem ap Dremidydd ('Sight son of Seer'),³ Sugyn ap Sugnedydd ('Suck son of Sucker'),⁴ Clust ap Clustfeinad ('Ear son of Hearer'),⁵ Medyr ap Medredydd ('Aim son of Aimer'),⁶ Ôl ap Olwydd ('Track son of Tracker').⁷ On the other hand, Gwiawn Llygad Cath ('Cat-eye'),⁸ who is enumerated together with Clust, Medyr, and Ôl, has more affinities with the figures discussed above; possibly a marvellous seer like Drem was ousted by him from this section of the catalogue.⁹

Two things should be noted. Firstly, as has been stated earlier, these figures never occur outside the roll-call. Secondly, within the roll-call, they are only a limited group and as such must be compared with other categories like, for instance, the Irish saga heroes, the ecclesiastical or the contemporary names. In my opinion, they merely represent a further stage in the development of the catalogue: to the people with extraordinary qualities of the type of Uchdryd Varyfdraws or Henwas Edeinawg the *cyfarwydd* finally added some figures from popular story-telling to show that he also felt at home in this branch of the (oral) tradition.¹⁰

While the growth of the roll-call of Arthur's warriors is to a considerable extent inspired by the techniques of verbal association, in the list of Ysbaddaden's conditions¹¹ it is more the

¹ WM 467. 36-468. 3: '... on the day he was sad, one of his lips he would let down to his navel, and the other would be as a cowl on his head.' Cf. Sims-Williams, 'The Significance of the Irish Personal Names', p. 606 and n. 7.

² Op. cit. xi. 3. 18. Underlying Isidore's descriptions of these fantastic beings are apparently classical descriptions of negroids, for example by Strabo.

³ WM 464. 25-30.

⁴ WM 467. 19-24.

⁵ WM 469. 6-10.

⁶ WM 469. 11-14.

⁷ WM 469. 17-23.

⁸ WM 469. 15-17.

⁹ It seems not unlikely to me that the list contains a

number of 'floating sections' from various traditions. An example is the Irish saga heroes (see p. 258 n. 8 above); another example could be this group of folk-tale figures who appear at the very end of the list between the priest Cethrwm (see p. 259 n. 8 above) and the bishop Bidwini (see p. 259 n. 7 above). This problem needs further investigation.

¹⁰ Regarding the naming of the two whelps of the bitch Rhymhi in the roll-call of Arthur's warriors (WM 467. 17 f.): as the hunting of Rhymhi and her whelps is part of the performance stories, they undoubtedly belong to the list of conditions. See Idris Ll. Foster, 'Culhwch ac Olwen', *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol*, ed. Geraint Bowen (Llandysul, 1974), 67; Edel, *Helden*, pp. 85, 178.

¹¹ WM 479. 36-485. 31.

affinities between the different objects and categories of objects which have contributed to its expansion.

As this catalogue is much shorter than the first one, a survey of it is given below. For convenience's sake I have numbered the *anoetheu*¹ and shall use these numbers in referring to them. Moreover, the items which are only mentioned in the list are distinguished from the ones that occur also in the other parts of our tale. Those which are treated more or less completely in the performance stories are marked with three asterisks, those which seem to be connected with Arthur's court before the quests start are marked with two, and those which are restricted to the catalogue itself with one asterisk.

- 1* The clearing, ploughing and sowing of a piece of woodland, so that the harvest will be ready the following morning;
- 2* the farmer Amaethon ap Dôn to till and prepare that piece of land;
- 3* Gofannon ap Dôn to set the irons (i.e. the plough);
- 4* the two oxen of Gwlwlydd Wineu, both yoked together, to plough the ground;
- 5* the Melyn Gwanwyn ('Yellow-Palewhite') and the Ych Brych ('Speckled Ox'), both yoked together;
- 6* the two horned oxen, Nyniaw and Peibiaw, whom God transformed into oxen for their sins, together in one plough;
- 7*** nine hestors of flax seed which had been sown when Ysbaddaden first met Olwen's mother, but which have never borne any fruit, to be sown again in another piece of new-broken land, so that a white veil can be made for Olwen;
- 8* honey to make bragget for the wedding-feast;
- 9* the cup of Llwyd ap Llwyryon, in which is the best of all drink;
- 10* the hamper of Gwyddneu Garanhir ('Long-shank'), in which everybody can find the meat he wishes for;
- 11* the horn of Gwlgawd Gododdin to pour out the night of the wedding-feast;
- 12* the harp of Teirtiu to entertain Ysbaddaden that night;
- 13* the birds of Rhiannon to entertain Ysbaddaden that night;
- 14*** the cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel ('the Irishman'), the overseer of Odgar ap Aedd, king of Ireland, to boil meat for the wedding-guests;
- 15*** the tusk of Ysgithyrwyn Pen Beidd ('Chief Boar') for Ysbaddaden wherewith to shave himself;
- 16*** Odgar ap Aedd, king of Ireland, to pluck the tusk from the boar's head;
- 17** Cadw² of Prydein to keep the tusk;
- 18*** the blood of Gorddu to dress Ysbaddaden's beard;
- 19* the bottles of Gwyddolwyn Gor ('the Dwarf') to keep Gorddu's blood warm;
- 20* the bottles of Rhynnon Rhyn Barfawd ('Stiff-beard') to keep the milk for the wedding-guests from turning sour;
- 21*** the comb and shears that are between the two ears of Twrch Trwyth wherewith to dress Ysbaddaden's hair;
- 22*** Drudwyn, the whelp of Greid ap Eri, to hunt Twrch Trwyth;
- 23*** the leash of Cors Cant Ewin to hold that dog;
- 24** the collar of Canhastyr Canllaw to hold that leash;
- 25** the chain of Cilydd Canhastyr to hold that collar along with the leash;
- 26*** Mabon ap Modron, who was taken from his mother when he was three nights old, to act as houndsman to that hound;

¹ For the meaning of *anoetheu* see p. 254 n. 6 above.

² The form Cadw for Caw, which only occurs in the

White Book, may be the result of a pun on the verb *cadw* 'keep': see Edel, *Helden*, p. 194.

- 27*** Gwyn Myngdwn ('Dun-mane'), the steed of Gwedd, for Mabon;
 28*** Eidoel ap Aer, Mabon's kinsman, to find Mabon;
 29** Garselit Wyddel, chief huntsman of Ireland, to hunt Twrch Trwyth;
 30*** a leash made from the beard of Dillus Varvawc to hold those two whelps;
 31*** Cynedyr Wyllt ('the Wild') to hold those two whelps;
 32** Gwyn ap Nudd to hunt Twrch Trwyth;
 33* Du, the horse of Moro Oerfeddawg, for Gwyn;
 34** Gwilenhin, king of France, to hunt Twrch Trwyth;
 35** the son of Alun Dyfed to act as unleasher;
 36* the dogs Aned and Aethlem;
 37** Arthur and his huntsmen to hunt Twrch Trwyth;
 38** Bwlch and Cyfwlch and Syfwlch to hunt Twrch Trwyth;
 39*** the sword of Wrnach Gawr ('the Giant').¹

This second catalogue shares a number of characteristics with the first one. In spite of its length, it is incomplete, notably in the section dealing with the hunt of the boar Ysgithyrwyn;² it contains two triads (nos. 23-5 and no. 38), both of which appear in the roll-call of Arthur's warriors as well, and it duplicates the themes of the boar-hunt (nos. 15 and 21) and of the sowing of a field (nos. 1 and 7).

Here our attention will be focused on those *anoetheu* that do not occur outside Ysbaddaden's enumeration: the supernatural beings and oxen needed for the cultivation of a piece of wilderness so that the harvest will be ready the following morning (nos. 1-6), and the various objects for the provision of food, drink, and entertainment to the wedding-guests (nos. 8-13).

Besides catalogues of traditional heroes, Celtic Britain also had lists of famous animals and objects. Even the earliest extant redaction of the *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* ('The Triads of the Island of Britain') contains a group of triads naming horses of famous owners, the so-called *Trioedd y Meirch*, and to these are added one triad of oxen and one of cows.³ The evidence for the great antiquity of the 'Triads of the Horses' is discussed by Rachel Bromwich, who finds additional support for this view in the existence of a catalogue poem enumerating the horses of traditional heroes.⁴ Now both horses (nos. 27 and 33) and the first two pairs of oxen mentioned by Ysbaddaden (nos. 4-5)⁵ also occur in these triads of animals.

Famous objects are listed in (*Henwae y*) *Tri Thlws ar Ddeg Ynys Brydain (a oedd yn y Gogledd)*, 'The (Names of the) Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain (that were in the North)', a text which in the manuscripts cannot be traced back beyond the mid fifteenth century.⁶ Some of the material is old, although the presentation of the various elements is in accordance with the late date of the extant redaction. The longer and earlier title and some of the owners' names suggest that the text originally belonged to the old British north.

Like the possessions Arthur explicitly reserves for himself when he grants Culhwch his boon,⁷ the *Tri Thlws ar Ddeg* strikes me as being at bottom a list of *regalia*. But in this text to

¹ For the older meaning *cawr* 'champion' see Edel, *ibid.* 172, where it is discussed in connection with Ysbaddaden's epithet Pennkawr ('Chief Giant' or 'Chief Champion').

² TYP, pp. 97-121, 536f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. xcvi-cvii.

⁴ See pp. 265-6 below.

⁵ TYP, pp. 240-9, cxxx-cxxxv, 529f.

⁶ *WM* 459. 31-7.

the ceremonial possessions of a traditional ruler—sword, knife, whetstone, drinking-horn, cauldron, draughtboard, mantle, and the like—have been added objects of a different sort such as the hamper of Gwyddno Garanhir, and within this combination the old heroic possessions have also acquired some marvellous traits.

Two of the objects named in the *Tri Thlws ar Ddeg* occur in Ysbaddaden's enumeration with the same owners' names: the hamper of Gwyddneu Garanhir (no. 10) and the cauldron of Diwrnach (no. 14). The latter, however, has in *Culhwch ac Olwen* no magical qualities.¹ Moreover, the drinking-horn may originally have been identical in both lists, as Sir Ifor Williams has already suggested.² In our list of *anoetheu* its owner is Gwlgawd Gododdin (no. 11), apparently the same person as the Gwlyged Gododdin who in Aneirin's poem is said to have provided the great feast in Din Eiddyn and who was therefore probably Mynyddog's steward. This name would fit well into an early northern redaction of the *Tri Thlws ar Ddeg*, and it seems quite likely that the name given in the extant versions of this text, Bran Galed, is a later replacement.³

The enumeration of the *anoetheu* in *Culhwch ac Olwen* thus draws on the same reservoir as learned catalogues like the *Trioedd y Meirch* and the *Tri Thlws ar Ddeg*. The list in our tale may have developed in the following way: because in native tradition Arthur was already connected with the conquest of a cauldron,⁴ this theme was well suited to be part of the performance stories.⁵ To the cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel named in Ysbaddaden's enumeration of conditions, the *cyfarwydd* by analogy added the rest of the objects needed for supplying food, drink, and entertainment to the wedding-guests (nos. 8-13). The hamper and the drinking-horn have already been discussed; the latter, which has early heroic associations, was accompanied by the cup of Llwyd ap Llwyryon and further by the honey for making the bragget; and the *cyfarwydd* ended with two traditional objects for the musical entertainment.⁶

Two *anoetheu* which are closely related to this group are the two sets of bottles (nos. 19-20). In my opinion they belong to the same late stage in the expansion of this list as the wonderful helpers of folk-tale within the list of Arthur's warriors.

The introduction of the six *anoetheu* at the beginning of our list was rendered doubly easy: firstly, they have to do with the provision of food and drink just like the majority of the items just dealt with; secondly, the *cyfarwydd* could draw for this group on the same reservoir which had already supplied him with so much material. The names of the two oxen of

¹ See Edel, *Helden*, p. 199. In 1978 a very large drinking-cauldron was found in a Celtic warrior grave near Stuttgart: see *National Geographic*, March 1980.

² *Canu Aneirin*, p. 166; Jackson, *The Gododdin*, p. 20.

³ On Bran Galed, see further TYP, pp. 245, 286, 545.

⁴ In the poem *Preiddeu Annwfn* ('The Spoils of Annwfn'), *Facsimile and Text of the Book of Taliesin*, ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Pwllheli, 1910), 54-6.

⁵ I have interpreted *Culhwch ac Olwen* as consisting of a series of (originally independent) Arthurian adventures, the majority of which stem from native heroic-epic tradition. This Arthurian material, with some later

accretions, has been brought together within the framework of the story of Olwen's wooing by Culhwch; as is only to be expected, the fusion of the two elements resulted in a necessary modification of both. See Edel, *Helden*, p. 92 and second part, B, especially pp. 202ff.

⁶ The birds of Rhiannon appear in a comparable manner in the story of *Branwen* (*WM* 58. 31-59. 2). Although in the older period wonderful harps are only mentioned in Irish texts, there they occur so frequently that they may also have belonged to insular Celtic tradition in general. Cf. Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (London, 1967), 369.

Gwlwlydd Wineu as well as those of the Melyn Gwanwyn and the Ych Brych occur in the triad of oxen attached to the *Trioedd y Meirch*.¹

The third pair belongs to a different category: the names of Nyniaw and Peibiaw both appear in the genealogies of Gwent; so probably we have here a satirical allusion to historical characters.²

The cultivation of a piece of land is an appropriate task for the admission of a young man to the adult world in a farming community, and as such this group of *anoetheu* fits into a series of marriage tasks (its obvious affinities with the legends of the supernatural origin of farming cannot be entered upon here).³ Yet like the objects needed for the supply of food and entertainment for the wedding-guests (with the exception of Diwrnach's cauldron)—and like the non-heroic figures in the roll-call of Arthur's warriors—they could not be integrated into the narrative parts of our tale because within the Arthurian tradition they represented an alien element.

The fact that learned catalogues are governed—at least to a certain degree—by laws other than those of the tales into which they are incorporated, manifests itself in various ways. For example, it has been noted that, compared with the sophisticatedly logical order of Ysbaddaden's enumeration, the performance stories follow each other in an arbitrary fashion.⁴ This is only to be expected: while it can be said that the items in the list are arranged by sorts, from the manner in which Arthur regularly consults with his men as to which of the *anoetheu* to seek next we may conclude that the sequence of the quests is dictated by the opportunities offered by the narrative reality.

As semi-autonomous elements our catalogues on the one hand absorbed material which is quite unrelated to the tale itself, while on the other they ignored matter which is actually a part of it.⁵ Now, I think it very likely that the *cyfarwydd* could use this flexibility to adapt his lists to the taste of his various audiences by expanding or reducing certain categories in them.⁶

A similar tendency has been observed by the Dutch scholar Jan de Vries in the Greek Argonaut tale, a tale that has been compared with *Culhwch ac Olwen*.⁷ In the opinion of De Vries, the reason why the poets kept adding new names to the crew of the ship Argo was their wish to let all the regions of Greece participate in the legendary voyage⁸ (probably with the purpose of pleasing audiences throughout the country).

In this article I have tried to sketch how methods current in insular intellectual tradition contributed to the growth of the two long catalogues in our tale. The fact that the *cyfarwydd* used these methods above all to *amuse* has to do with the way in which the tradition in his time functioned. Taking into account the marked differences between the manuscript materials of

¹ TYP, pp. 117f. For the two oxen of Gwlwlydd Wineu which in the triad appear as one, see *ibid.* for a suggestion by Idris Ll. Foster.

² See on them H. M. Chadwick, 'The Foundation of the Early British Kingdoms', *SEBH*, pp. 50f. For allusions to historical persons in our tale, see Foster, '*Culhwch and Olwen and Rhonabwy's Dream*', pp. 38f.; TYP, pp. cxivf.; Edel, *Helden*, index, s.v. 'Historische Anspielungen'.

³ For some remarks on this, see Edel, *ibid.* 252.

⁴ See p. 254 above.

⁵ On the incompleteness of the catalogues, see pp. 258

and 264 above.

⁶ Especially the roll-call of Arthur's warriors. The list of Gwenhwyfar's ladies, which follows immediately afterwards (see p. 257 n. 4 above), may have been added to please the female element in the audience.

⁷ e.g. by Foster, '*Culhwch and Olwen and Rhonabwy's Dream*', p. 32; Jackson, *The International Popular Tale*, pp. 73f.; Sims-Williams, 'The Significance of the Irish Personal Names', p. 612.

⁸ Jan de Vries, 'Betrachtungen zum Märchen', *Folklore Fellows Communications*, cl (Helsinki, 1954), 88f.

the two islands,¹ it seems justified to conclude that Celtic Britain once had a learned tradition comparable in range to that of Celtic Ireland, although the British evidence is much too scanty to allow conclusions as to the intellectual level some of its branches had reached. In any case, when the prose traditions were finally written down, the status of their custodians was lower than that of their Irish colleagues, and this meant that the boundary between their repertoire and that of the popular story-teller began to become blurred.

Utrecht

DORIS EDEL

¹ See pp. 254 and 255 f. above.