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The Where, Who, When and Why of Medieval Welsh Prose Texts: Some Methodological Considerations

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Modern scholars of medieval Welsh texts are all too familiar with the problems of interpretation caused by lack of knowledge about the context in which these texts were composed. A large proportion of the copious critical literature they have generated is concerned with the four questions of *locus*, *persona*, *tempus* and *causa scribendi*, identified as fundamental by medieval Irish scholars (Flower 1915–16).¹ In general, we have very little to work with. Graham Isaac's summary of the state of knowledge about the *Gododdin* could be adapted to suit most medieval Welsh texts:

The *Gododdin* is a medieval text. Such a statement may not say a great deal to us, but it is worth bearing in mind as a foundation nevertheless ... The *Gododdin* is a piece of literature. This statement is considerably stronger than [sic.] stating that it is a text, for the reason that we thereby say something quite definite about the function of such a text in a social context. What function? I think we have now reached a point in our chain of enquiry (and disturbingly quickly at that), where we must accept that what consensus we had ... has evaporated. (Isaac 2002a: 70–1)

In fact, with the *Gododdin*, we have more to go on than in most cases: a manuscript attribution to the sixth-century north British poet Aneirin, which at least tells us who the thirteenth-century scribe thought the author was.² (This may be more of a red herring than a clue, of course).

The lack of context is problematic for our appreciation of these texts. It is difficult to hypothesize usefully about what they would mean to a contemporary audience we cannot confidently locate in time or place. Furthermore, linguistic, historical and sociological data extracted from texts in contextual limbo must be hedged about with so many caveats as to severely limit their application outside the particular text in which they occur. For this reason, any scholar of these texts, whether of a literary, linguistic or historical persuasion, must venture some speculation on context. In the first part of this paper, I

¹ I am not the first modern commentator to note the admirable conciseness of the Irish formula and its continuing relevance to medieval textual scholarship, cf. Sims-Williams (1993: 27), and, in an Irish context, Ó Corráin (1986: 141).

² The rubric (*Hwn yw e gododin. aneirin ae cant* 'This is the *Gododdin*: Aneirin sang it' (Williams 1938: 1), in the hand of Scribe A, does not necessarily predate the

Book of Aneirin (the only independent manuscript witness to this text) which was probably compiled in the second half of the thirteenth century; see Huws (2000a: 58, 72–4). However, the so-called Reciter's Prologue also seems to suggest that Aneirin was the author of the text (Williams 1938: ll. 647–8 and 654–5). This occurs in both the A and B texts (A.52 =

shall consider two of the most ambitious attempts at contextualizing the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* and other of the so-called 'Mabinogion' tales³ in recent years and the methodological problems which they highlight. I shall then discuss the level of contextualization we can reasonably hope to achieve and what methodology we should adopt to arrive at it. I shall venture few firm conclusions of my own: this paper is more concerned with outlining the *status quaestionis*.

1. Did a woman write the Four Branches?

In 1997, Andrew Breeze published a paper arguing that Gwenllïan (c. 1098–1136), daughter of Gruffudd ap Cynan, ruler of Gwynedd, and wife of Gruffudd ap Rhys of Dyfed, was the author of the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, and specifically that she composed them in the period 1120–1136, probably between 1128 and c. 1133. This argument had already been widely disseminated in the author's book, *Medieval Welsh Literature*, published earlier in the same year (Breeze 1997a; Breeze 1997b: 74–9).⁴ This dramatic claim was met with scepticism in most quarters.⁵ Breeze is certainly correct to challenge the unspoken assumption that the *Four Branches* were composed by a man. We cannot confidently ascribe any Welsh literature to female authors before the second half of the fifteenth century, but this does not mean that they did not exist (Howells 2001: 31–2; Curtis et al. 1986; Lloyd-Morgan 1993).⁶ The work of female authors is attested from the early Middle Ages in other countries including Wales's neighbours England, France and (more tentatively) Ireland.⁷ The twelfth-century prophetesses mentioned by Gerald of Wales in his *Itinerarium Cambriae* and by the anonymous author of the biography of Gruffudd ap Cynan could well have been authors of prophetic poetry, as was Gwerful Mechain in the fifteenth century (Brewer 1861–91: VI, 108–9; Thorpe 1978: 167–8; Russell 2005: 60 (§ 11.1); Evans 1977: 7; Howells 2001: poem 11). However, the evidence advanced by Breeze to support his claim that the author of the *Four Branches* was

BI.2) and thus must have existed in their common exemplar, the date of which is notoriously elusive.

³ This title for the eleven native prose tales contained in the Red Book of Hergest (ten of which also occur in the earlier White Book of Rhydderch) is misleading but convenient. It was first employed by William Owen-Pughe at the end of the eighteenth century and popularised by Lady Charlotte Guest who used it as the title of her English translation of the tales published in three volumes between 1838 and 1849. See Davies (1990: 15).

⁴ Breeze returns to this question in *The Origins of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (Breeze forthcoming), currently in press, which I have not seen. The standard edition of the *Four Branches* is Williams (1951); see also Thomson (1957); Thomson (1961); Ford (2000); Ford (1999); Hughes (2000); Hughes (2007).

⁵ See many critical reviews of *Medieval Welsh Literature* including: Hunter (1997); Johnston (1997); Matonis (1998); Lloyd-Morgan (1998); Sioned Davies (1998); James (1998); Clancy (1998); Hemming (1999); and Nagy (2002). Ian Hughes describes Breeze's arguments as 'frail and rather fanciful' ('bregus a ffansiol braidd') (Hughes, 2000: iv, n. 7). Dr

Breeze kindly drew my attention to the reviews by Matonis and Lloyd-Morgan. He also provided me with references to reviews by Roberts (1997) and Tristram (2000), but I have been unable to consult these.

⁶ Note that Dafydd Johnston has argued on the grounds of style and language that the *englyn* attributed to one Gwenllïan ferch Rhirid Flaidd could not have been composed by a genuine daughter of Rhirid Flaidd ap Gwrgenau (fl. c. 1160), as was previously accepted. He identifies the author as Gwenllïan, daughter of the fifteenth-century poets Tudur Penllyn and Gwerful Fychan (Johnston 1997).

⁷ For a recent claim that the well-known early Irish poem 'Aithbe damsá bés mora' (commonly known as 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare') is the genuine work of the female poet Dígde (fl. c. 900), see Ní Dhonnchadha (2002: IV, 111); cf. Clancy (1996: 47 and 64). The tenth/eleventh-century Japanese authoress Murasaki Shikibu, brought to Breeze's attention by Professor Fergus Kelly (Breeze 1997a: 690), seems to me to be too geographically and culturally distant to shed any light on the question in hand.

a woman is circumstantial and entirely dependent on rather old-fashioned preconceptions about what a piece of literature by a woman would be like. He concludes that the author was a woman based on the presence in the texts of strong female characters (from Rhiannon to Blodeuedd) and on the emphasis on clothes and babies rather than weapons and fighting (Breeze 1997a: 689–90; Breeze 1997b: 74–5).⁸ In the preface to *Medieval Welsh Literature*, he notes the 'lively' response of certain 'American feminists' in the audience of his paper at the International Celtic Congress in Edinburgh in 1995 to this characterization of the female voice (Breeze 1997b: 5), but one does not have to be an American feminist to find it unsatisfactory.⁹ While few would deny that the gender of an author will be reflected to a certain extent in his or her work, i.e. that there is a *difference* between 'male' and 'female' literature, the exact *nature* of that difference is determined by variable social factors rather than by innate biological characteristics.¹⁰ Thus, while Charles Dickens correctly identified that George Eliot was in fact a woman, despite the *nom de plume*, due to the 'womanly touches' in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (Storey and Tillotson 1995: 506–7),¹¹ a 'womanly touch' in nineteenth-century England would almost certainly not be the same as a 'womanly touch' in twelfth-century Wales. At any rate, Dickens was essaying an educated guess, based on his subjective opinion, which was subsequently proved right. Others have not been so accurate, even when pronouncing on contemporary literature. One could cite, by way of a recent example, Dic Jones, one of the judges of the competition for the Chair at the 2006 National Eisteddfod, who was convinced that the winning poem, submitted under the pseudonym 'Gwenno', was the work of a woman, whereas it was in fact composed by the male poet Gwynfor ab Ifor.¹²

Painstaking analysis of the language of a defined corpus can yield more objective results. A group of researchers in Israel have recently devised an automated text categorization technique which is able to determine the gender of the author of a formal written English document (fiction or non-fiction) with an 80 per cent success rate, having compiled and analysed a database of texts the gender of whose authors is known (Koppel et al. 2002; Argamon et al. 2003). None of the texts used in the study predated 1960, with all of the non-fiction texts and 75 per cent of the fiction texts post-dating 1975 (Koppel et al. 2002: 403). Impressive and surprising as these results may be, there is still a 20 per cent failure rate. Among the authors who failed to conform to the programme's gender criteria were A. S. Byatt and Kazuo Ishiguro (Koppel et al. 2002: 408).

At any rate such a study could not be conducted on medieval Welsh literature, due to the paucity of texts ascribable to women. Some critics have attempted to analyse the

⁸ This reminds one of Walter W. Skeat's citing, in relation to the Middle English poems *The Assembly of Ladies* and *The Flower and the Leaf*, of 'minute references to colours, dresses, ornaments, and decorations' as indicators of female authorship (Skeat 1900: 140). Note that Fiona Winward considers the attitude of the author of the *Four Branches* to motherhood to be 'patriarchal': she also comments that 'affinities between mother and child are frequently weak, if not rejected altogether' (Winward 1997: 105–6).

⁹ A number of the reviewers referred to above record that it was not only Americans or feminists who challenged Breeze about this in Edinburgh. For the abstract of Breeze's Edinburgh paper, see Breeze 1999.

¹⁰ The fallacy of biological determinism with regard to gender is succinctly dismissed thus by the Belgian writer Bessora: 'the substance of the notions of feminine and masculine is in constant fluctuation because, in fact, cooking is not done with the vagina just as the home handyman does not work with his penis' (Bessora 2002).

¹¹ Dr Breeze kindly drew my attention to this reference, which was in turn suggested to him by Professor John Carey.

¹² As reported on Radio Cymru, 12 August 2006. Jones's printed comments are more ambiguous: see Hughes (2006: 5).

characteristics of the female voice in authored medieval texts by women (Dronke 1984: x), but Thomas Owen Clancy is rightly sceptical about applying such work diagnostically to anonymous texts (Clancy 1996: 51).¹³ It is perhaps worth noting that when Welsh women's literature does hove into view, it does not seem to conform to Breeze's criteria for female authorship, as outlined above. If we turn to the poems of Gwerful Mechain (c. 1460 – post-1502), the earliest Welsh female author to whom a substantial quantity of extant work is attributed, for example, we see that the subject matter tackled by her is similar to that essayed by amateur male poets of her period. Her gender is undoubtedly a vital component of her powerful individual voice, notably in her reply to Ieuan Dyfi's misogyny, but it certainly does not manifest itself in a domesticated interest in clothes and babies (Howells 2001: poem 4; Lloyd-Morgan 1990; Lloyd-Morgan 1993: 195–8; Haycock 1990)! (It would be inappropriate to apply the standards of the fifteenth century to the *Four Branches*, of course, just as it would those of the twenty-first). There is a considerable body of critical literature concerned with the question of whether anonymous medieval texts can be gendered,¹⁴ but it is a far from exact science, and generally only pieces of literature which can be confidently connected with female authors on the grounds of external evidence or which contain an explicitly female 'voice' have been interrogated in this way. Neither of these factors applies to the *Four Branches*.¹⁵

The arguments advanced by Breeze do not persuade that the author was 'almost certainly' a woman (Breeze 1997b: 74), although we would do well not to dismiss this possibility.¹⁶ As for Gwenllïan, none of the nineteen items which Breeze lists as evidence does more than prove that she *could* have been the author, and many of them are so vague as to be useless as indicators of authorship.¹⁷ Breeze's statement that 'if Gwenllïan did not write the *Four Branches* there should be clear evidence against her authorship' is methodologically unsound. He continues:

We can draw an analogy from a modern law court. Experienced lawyers there place high value on the details of evidence (the notes in a policeman's notebook, and so on) for corroboration. The information provided by the *Four Branches* certainly suggests a verdict for Gwenllïan's authorship. (Breeze 1997a: 691)

¹³ He cites a political poem by the early modern Scots Gaelic poetess Sileas na Ceapaich as an example of a piece of literature by a woman which, were it anonymous, would scarcely be gendered as female (Clancy 1996: 57; the poem is edited and translated by Ó Baoill 1972: poem IV (Clancy cites stanza 5)). But cf. Janet Nelson's attribution of a number of anonymous early medieval historical texts to female authors on stylistic grounds; Nelson (1991: 161), quoted and discussed by Clancy (1996: 51–2).

¹⁴ For an excellent consideration of this issue with regard to early medieval Irish literature with comparative examples from other medieval literatures, see Clancy (1996); cf. his comments in his review of Breeze, *Medieval Irish Literature* (Clancy 1998). Both of these articles contain useful references. Cf. also Boffey (1993: 165–72). For difficulty in identifying genuine women's voices in later Welsh literature, see Rosser (2005: 3–9); Charnell-White (2005: 24). For a discussion on gendering texts in general, see Showalter (1986).

¹⁵ A possible early Welsh candidate for female

authorship which is voiced by a female persona would be the lullaby *Pais Dinogad* 'Dinogad's Smock' interpolated into the A-text of the *Gododdin* (Williams 1938: lines 1101–17). Breeze sees this as the work of a court poet, however (Breeze 1997b: 20).

¹⁶ The words of Fred C. Robinson, speaking of the Old English poems *Wulf and Eadwacer* and *The Wife's Lament*, are equally applicable here: 'we should not pretend to know that women did *not* write them and continue to read these poems with the tacit assumption that they are the products of male authorship' (Robinson 1993: 168).

¹⁷ E.g. 'the author of the *Four Branches* had an intimate knowledge of the courts of kings and princes and a royal attitude to life' and 'the *Four Branches* emphasise royal descent and status', Breeze (1997a: 692 and 694); cf. Breeze (1997b: 76). We might also note that the supposed influence of the Irish tale *Mesca Ulad* on *Branwen*, the Second Branch of the *Mabinogi*, cited by Breeze has recently been called into question; see Sims-Williams (2005a).

Indeed, the points which he details *could* be used as corroborative evidence for Gwenllïan's authorship, *were there a solid central case to be corroborated*. But there is not. This 'corroborative' evidence is all we have. We cannot even securely place Gwenllïan at the 'scene of the crime', as it were, as we do not know exactly when or where it was 'committed'. A diligent detective would certainly keep her in mind as a suspect, but I cannot see that the case against her would stand up in court. Crucially, we have an unquantifiable number of suspects about which we know nothing. However strong a case is made for Gwenllïan, or any other individual known to us, we must accept that, in the absence of contemporary attribution, there might be dozens of candidates with stronger claims whose names and biographies have not survived the vagaries of the historical record. We should not be fooled into believing that the author of such a major piece of literature must have been important enough to have left some sort of a lasting impression on posterity. The names of the authors of much of the court poetry are known to us only through the rubrics in the manuscript collections of their poems. Prose texts apparently did not require the *auctoritas* of a named author in medieval Wales (Rowland 2003: 44), so we should not be surprised that the *Four Branches* are anonymous in the manuscripts: it is quite possible that the name of their author is nowhere recorded. Breeze overstates the case for Gwenllïan's authorship of the tales, and as a result his arguments become circular and get us no nearer to an understanding of their context. Nonetheless, we should not summarily dismiss the many interesting points that his discussion raises.

2. Common authorship for the Mabinogion tales?

R. Iestyn Daniel has suggested that a number of medieval Welsh prose texts of various different *genres* and one metrical Latin translation may have been the work of a single thirteenth-century author, probably the poet nicknamed Cnepyn Gwerthryniôn, whose real name may have been Llywelyn Offeiriad, working in a Dominican friary, probably either Rhuddlan or, more likely, Bangor.¹⁸ He considers the following texts, more or less tentatively, to be the possible work of this author: *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*;¹⁹ *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig* 'The Dream of Macsen Wledig' (Roberts 2005); *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* 'The Tale of Lludd and Llefelys' (Roberts 1975); *Owain* (Thomson 1968); *Peredur* (Goetinck 1976; Thomas 2000); *Geraint* (Thomson 1997); *Ymborth yr Enaid* 'The Nourishment of the Soul' (Daniel 1995); *Gwasanaeth Mair* 'The Service of Mary' (a translation of the Latin hymn *Officium Parvum Beatae Mariae*) (Roberts 1961); the earliest version of the bardic Grammar (Williams and Jones 1934); and *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* 'Tales of the Seven Sages of Rome' (Lewis 1925). This is a startling claim, and one which could have far-reaching implications for our understanding of Middle Welsh literature. According to Daniel's thesis, virtually all the extant original Welsh prose literature of the medieval period could be the work of this one individual. For this reason it demands close scrutiny.²⁰

The basis for his argument for common authorship of the texts is similarities of style,

¹⁸ Daniel has developed this complicated theory in a number of publications since the 1980s. These include: Daniel (1984–8: especially 237–45); Daniel (1985); Daniel (1995); Daniel (1997); Daniel (2004).

¹⁹ See above for bibliographical references.

²⁰ I have already expressed some reservations in a review of *The Journal of Celtic Studies*, 4 (Rodway 2006: 198). Reasons of space prevented me from treating the subject at length, however, and I wish to expand upon my comments there.

phrasing and philosophical background. The *tempus* is determined by his analysis of the bardic Grammar as a thirteenth-century text (Daniel 1985: 190–2).²¹ The *locus* in a Dominican friary is based on the convincing argument that *Ymborth yr Enaid* was composed by a Dominican (Daniel 1995: xix–xxxiv; Daniel 1997: 8–9). Daniel's suggestion of Bangor or Rhuddlan over one of the southern Dominican institutions (at Brecon, Haverfordwest and Cardiff) is based on the (plausible but unproved) assumption that the language of the northern friaries would be predominantly Welsh, whereas those in the south would be more linguistically mixed.²² Therefore, the exceptional *Ymborth yr Enaid*, the only extant Middle Welsh religious text which is not a translation of a Latin original,²³ would be more likely to emanate from one of the northern houses (Daniel 1995: lix–lx; Daniel 1997: 12–13). The connection with Cnepyn Gwerthrynion is circumstantial: he is recorded as an author of grammatical material in some sixteenth-century copies of the late grammatical text known as *Pum Llyfr Cerddwriaeth* 'The Five Books of Poetry' (Williams and Jones 1934: xxi), and his presumed thirteenth-century *floruit* coincides with Daniel's conclusions about the date of the bardic Grammar.²⁴ Cnepyn Gwerthrynion, the 'Little Lump of Gwerthrynion', is clearly a nickname.²⁵ Thus he could conceivably be the same person as the Llywelyn Offeiriad to whom *Saith Doethion Rhufain* is attributed in two of the three manuscript sources (Lewis 1925: 21).

The naming of the author is by far the weakest point in Daniel's thesis and he is right not to insist upon it. Llywelyn Offeiriad, aka Cnepyn Gwerthrynion, the poet and grammarian who became a priest at the Dominican friary of Bangor is a hypothetical construct, based on the most circumstantial of evidence. More worthy of consideration is Daniel's identification of these texts as the product of a single author. His methodology for determining common authorship seems somewhat inconsistent, however. He suggests a common author for *Ymborth yr Enaid* and the bardic Grammar on the grounds of stylistic, philosophical and thematic similarities and the use of similar formulae (Daniel 1995: li–lv; Daniel 1997: 9).²⁶ *Gwasanaeth Mair* is included on the grounds of metrical and stylistic similarities with three of the verse passages in *Ymborth yr Enaid* and because of its probable Dominican provenance (Daniel 1995: lv, 50, 105 and 112; Daniel 1997: 10).²⁷ The other texts are admitted on the grounds of stylistic similarities between some of them and *Ymborth yr Enaid*, and correspondences between the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* and *Owain* and *Geraint* (and more tentatively *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*) in terms of phrasing and, particularly in the case of *Pwyll*, the First Branch of the *Mabinogi*, and *Geraint*, plot (Daniel

²¹ Most critics prefer an early fourteenth-century date; see below.

²² The reason for his preference for Bangor over Rhuddlan is less clear, cf. Daniel (1997: 13); Daniel (2004: 118).

²³ Daniel's conclusion (drawing on the unpublished work of Mrs J. E. Daniel in the 1930s) that *Ymborth yr Enaid* is an original work rather than a translation of a lost Latin original is convincing; Daniel (1992); Daniel (1995: xliii–l); Daniel (1995: 5–6). But cf. the doubts raised by James (1995: 32); see Daniel (1997: 7) for a tentative response.

²⁴ He is included in a roughly chronological list of poets in a fourteenth-century poem by Gwilym Ddu of Arfon, sandwiched between Einion ap Gwalchmai (fl. c. 1216–23) and Llygad Gŵr (fl. c. 1258–93); Costigan

(Bosco) et al. (1995: poem 8, line 25). Cf. the discussion in Day (2005: 81).

²⁵ It inevitably draws comparison with Sypyn Cyfeiliog, the 'Little Heap of Cyfeiliog', the nickname of the fourteenth-century poet Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd, and indeed the two poets are sometimes confused in the manuscripts; see Daniel (1998: 3).

²⁶ Note that Saunders Lewis concluded that *Ymborth yr Enaid* and sections of the Grammar shared a philosophical outlook, both being indebted to twelfth-century Neo-Platonism (1932: 55–64), but he did not see this as symptomatic of common authorship.

²⁷ For the Dominican connection, see Roberts (1961: xxi and xxx–xxx).

2004: 131–40).²⁸ Daniel also draws attention to the fact that Caswallon son of Beli's usurpation of the throne of Britain in *Branwen*, the Second Branch of the *Mabinogi*, is reversed in *Breuddwyd Macsen* with Macsen's defeat of Beli and his sons and his restoration of the throne to a descendant of Bendigeidfran (Daniel 2004: 141).²⁹ Unsurprisingly, not all of the texts share all of the similarities. Daniel's methodology here is to take any similarity as evidence for possible common authorship.³⁰

This could certainly be the case, but there are other possible explanations for these similarities. Indeed, Daniel is selective in his choice of inter-textual similarities which he considers suggestive of common authorship. He notes stylistic similarities between *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*, *Peredur*, *Geraint* and *Ymborth yr Enaid*, specifically the descriptions in these texts. In the section of *Ymborth yr Enaid* entitled 'Pryd y Mab' ('The Beauty of the Son') in some manuscripts, we have a striking description of a vision of the twelve-year-old Jesus teaching in the temple (Daniel 1995: 17–22). His physical beauty is described in highly sensual terms: indeed, he is explicitly stated to satisfy (*kyulenui*) each of the five senses (Daniel 1995: 21.181–22.192). His rich garments and accessories are also detailed and, in some cases, their allegorical meaning explained. The passage uses strings of compound words to describe each aspect of Jesus's appearance, a rhetorical device known as *araith* in the late medieval period (Jones 1934). Daniel compares the lengthy description of Elen and her attendants in *Breuddwyd Macsen* (Roberts 2005a: lines 47–84), and also *araith*-style compounds from shorter descriptions in *Peredur* and *Geraint* (Daniel 2004: 119–22). In passing, he also mentions the use of *araith*-style compounds in *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* (Daniel 2004: 136, n. 80; Lewis 1925: 25). Extended descriptions of the appearance and dress of characters are notably rare in medieval Welsh prose, however. The *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* are famously sparse in this respect, with only occasional terse references to clothing, size or hair colour to help us visualize the characters. *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* is entirely lacking in description (Davies 1995a: 144–5). The 'Pryd y Mab' description from *Ymborth yr Enaid* is by far the longest description that I am aware of in the extant corpus of Middle Welsh prose, running to 207 lines in Daniel's edition. Of the descriptions compared by Daniel, only that from *Breuddwyd Macsen* is at all extended (running to 37 lines in Roberts's edition). It is all the more surprising, therefore, that Daniel does not mention the detailed descriptions of the protagonists in *Culhwch ac Olwen* (21 and 11 lines respectively in Bromwich and Evans's edition: Bromwich and Evans 1992: lines 60–81 and lines 487–98), or the eleven extended descriptions which make *Breuddwyd Rhonabury* impossible for poet or *cyfarwydd* to remember without a book, according to the well-known coda (Richards 1948: 21.10–14). This omission is because he does not believe (for different reasons) that these tales are the work of the same author.³¹ This exemplifies a worrying element of circularity in his

²⁸ Saunders Lewis suggested that *Pwyll* might have been modelled on *Geraint*, a suggestion adopted by Daniel, but nowhere does Lewis suggest common authorship of the tales (Lewis 1973: 1–5).

²⁹ This was first noted by Bromwich (1974: 149–50).

³⁰ He explicitly stated this to me in a personal communication.

³¹ Like a number of other critics, he sees *Breuddwyd Rhonabury* as a late satirical pastiche of the other native tales; Daniel (2004: 126–7). He is uncertain about the

authorship of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, listing both differences from and similarities with the other tales, but ultimately deciding that the theory that *Culhwch* is an earlier text which has directly influenced some of the other tales, notably *Geraint*, is 'undoubtedly ... easier to hold, but I find myself unable to accept it with complete peace of mind' (Daniel 2004: 145). This seems rather arbitrary to me, as elsewhere he is prepared to pass over substantial differences between texts in silence while accepting rather general similarities as evidence for common authorship.

argument. Elsewhere, he argues that the narrative correspondences between *Pwyll* and *Geraint* constitute evidence for common authorship, but that comparable, if less extensive, similarities between *Culhwch ac Olwen* and *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* and between *Culhwch* and *Geraint* do not (Daniel 2004: 131–6).³² This methodological inconsistency weakens his argument.

Overall, I believe that other explanations for the various similarities between these texts require less special pleading. The possibilities are either that certain of these texts have borrowed elements directly from others (as Daniel himself suggests in the case of the apparent influence of *Culhwch ac Olwen* on *Saith Doethion Rhufain* and *Geraint*) or that they were all composed independently in a similar milieu and that the authors were drawing on a common stock of stylistic and narrative devices. *Araith* must derive from the oral tradition and is comparable to the descriptive passages known as ‘runs’ in modern Irish and Scots Gaelic folk literature as well as to intricate descriptive passages in medieval Irish prose (Bruford 1966: 36–41). In a Welsh context, it echoes the dense style beloved of the Gogynfeirdd, the court poets of the twelfth, thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In other words, it is not an individual quirk, but part of the repertoire of the Welsh man (or woman!) of letters. In fact the ‘Pryd y Mab’ description is unique not only for its length, but also for its overtly allegorical nature. Many of the precious ornaments sported by Jesus in *Ymborth yr Enaid* are there simply to lend an air of splendour and exoticism to the description (note in particular his tunic and hose of asbestos and shirt and breeches of white *byssus* (Egyptian linen), Daniel 1995: 19.95–102; 19.105–20.107), but others, particularly his black Cordovan leather shoes (representing his human flesh which was taken from the dark earth), his clear white tunic (representing his virginity) and his three-pronged sceptre (representing the Trinity and heaven, earth and hell), have specific allegorical purposes (Daniel 1995: 20.107–9; 20.111–13; 21.170–5). This is more akin to Biblical exegesis (one thinks in particular of the interpretations applied to the precious stones in Solomon’s temple) than the secular world of the native Welsh tales. The wealthy accoutrements displayed by Elen or Culhwch, say, like the inevitable gold and silver trappings of the heroes of Old Irish sagas (or the ‘bling’ worn by modern rappers and footballers, for that matter!) are a symptom of a society of ostentatious consumption, a signifier of worldly importance. If they have a deeper resonance, it is not spelled out.³³ To my mind, the differences between the use of *araith* (and description in general) in *Ymborth yr Enaid* and the ‘Mabinogion’ tales are more striking than the similarities.

This is, of course, a subjective view. I cannot prove that the texts were *not* composed by a common author, nor is it likely (unless further evidence comes to light) that anyone could prove that they were. The question which needs asking is: is it possible to make a strong case for common authorship of anonymous Middle Welsh texts? This poses similar problems to the issue of gendering anonymous texts. Just as we have a paucity of texts attributed to medieval Welsh women for comparative purposes, so we have little to go on

³² For the similarities between *Culhwch* and *Saith Doethion Rhufain*, see Loth (1902). For the relationship of *Culhwch* and *Geraint*, see Bromwich (1974: 155). Daniel seems to be of the opinion that the author(s) of *Saith Doethion Rhufain* and *Geraint* drew on *Culhwch*, an earlier work by a different author.

³³ Contrast the multi-layered allegorical function of

the gold pentangle on Sir Gawain’s shield in the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Burrow 1972: lines 619–47). In this poem, Gawain is presented as a Christian paragon, quite unlike the heroes of medieval Welsh and Irish prose who frequently swear by God, but show little in the way of an overtly Christian ethos.

in the way of attributed medieval Welsh prose texts,³⁴ and no examples of more than one prose text attributed to the same author. Therefore, we cannot analyse the style, phrasing etc. of a group of prose texts known to be the product of a single author as a control. We can, however, compare the methodologies used to identify the genuine work of medieval Welsh poets in the manuscripts which abound with unsafe attributions. The *locus classicus* here is Thomas Parry’s establishment of the Dafydd ap Gwilym ‘canon’, using metrical, linguistic and stylistic criteria to decide between genuine and apocryphal poems (Parry 1952: lxxii–cv). These have not been unchallenged (indeed Parry himself admitted their subjective nature), but over fifty years after the publication of his excellent edition, his judgement in individual cases has rarely been questioned. This may be as much due to a general reluctance to challenge the authority of such an eminent scholar (and the daunting scale of the task!) as to the nature of his methodology, however.³⁵ Besides, Parry, with his attributed texts and the large corpus of contemporary poetry by named poets available to him for comparative purposes, was not working in the contextual vacuum which is the lot of students of the prose texts. Nonetheless, linguistic and stylistic analyses of the work of individual medieval poets may provide us with a yardstick with which to go about attempting to identify individual voices in the anonymous prose literature in the future.³⁶

3. The content of medieval Welsh prose tales: a status quaestionis

The methodologies employed by Andrew Breeze and R. Iestyn Daniel are insufficiently rigorous for us to accept their conclusions as more than speculation. The attribution of *The Four Branches* to Gwenllïan is unproven and almost certainly unprovable, as is the attribution of the majority of the ‘Mabinogion’ tales, *Ymborth yr Enaid*, the bardic Grammar, *Gwasanaeth Mair* and *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* to Cnepyn Gwerthrynion. Breeze and Daniel have raised interesting and suggestive questions: both the characterization of women in the *Four Branches* and stylistic, lexical and narrative similarities between medieval Welsh prose texts deserve further study. But both have chosen to narrow their discussions to one possible explanation for the aspects of the texts they describe. Claiming that the strong female characters of the *Four Branches* prove female authorship, or that the similarities between certain texts prove common authorship is putting the cart before the horse. Lack of comparative evidence means that we do not know what the work of a female author from twelfth-century Wales would be like, nor what characteristics would be most indicative of common authorship in prose from that

³⁴ *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain*, attributed to Llywelyn Offeiriad, is an exception. Although the subject matter of this text is not native, its editor considered it to be an original composition based on oral stories (Lewis 1925: 26). We have the names of two thirteenth-century translators of Latin texts, however: Brother Gruffudd Bola who translated *St Athanasius’s Credo* for Efa, daughter of Maredudd ab Owain of Ceredigion, and Madog ap Selyf who translated the *Transitus Beatae Mariae* and the *Chronicle of Turpin* for Gruffudd ap Maredudd, Efa’s brother, between 1265 and 1282 (see Williams 1930: xxx–xxxi).

³⁵ For criticism of Parry’s criteria, see Lewis (1952–3: 199–202); Fulton (1996: xiv–xvii); cf. Fulton (2003). Some of Fulton’s arguments are criticised in Thomas (2005). Dafydd Johnston summarises additions to, subtractions from and doubts concerning the Dafydd ap Gwilym canon (Johnston 2005: 110). See now <http://www.dafyddapgwilym.net>.

³⁶ Peter Busse’s pioneering study of the work of Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (Busse 2002) will hopefully set a trend for detailed studies of the work of individual poets.

period. The question of the authorship of these tales is still wide open. So what can we say for certain about them? The following *status quaestionis* is deliberately reductionist, and for that reason I have omitted any speculation about *causa scribendi*. I consider all of the 'Mabinogion' texts (including *Culhwch ac Olwen* and *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*) as well as the non-'Mabinogion' texts discussed by Daniel: *Ymborth yr Enaid*, the bardic Grammar, *Gwasanaeth Mair* and *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain*.

General remarks

(i) *locus*: It is reasonable to conclude that those texts with a detailed and realistic geography (*The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* and, to a lesser extent, *Geraint*) were composed by authors with an intimate knowledge of the relevant area. Indeed, this point is so self-evident that it hardly seems worth making. (It does not necessarily follow that the text was composed in that area, however.) Attempts to locate texts geographically with reference to perceived dialect features have proved more problematic.³⁷ We can glean some information about Middle Welsh dialects from medieval sources. Gerald of Wales, writing c. 1194, notes the difference between the language of north Wales and that of Ceredigion, and shows that the twelfth-century Welsh were as prone to proclaim the superiority of their own dialect over others as are their modern descendants (*Descriptio Cambriae* I.6; Brewer 1861–91: VI; Thorpe 1978: 231).³⁸ The Anglesey poet Dafydd Benfras (fl. c. 1220–c. 1257 / 58) refers to his language as Gwynndodeg, the language of Gwynedd (Costigan (Bosco) et al. 1995b: 28.8), while the Glamorganshire poet Casnodyn (c. 1300–1350) claims to be equally at home in Gwynndodeg and Gwenhwyseg, the language of Gwent and Glamorgan (Daniel 1999: 5.21–4).³⁹ These rather vague statements do little more than confirm that the medieval Welsh were aware of dialect differences, and suggest a rough north/south divide, with Ceredigion possibly standing out from the rest of south Wales. To what extent these differences were reflected in the literary register (or registers) is a moot point.⁴⁰ Peter Wynn Thomas made a pioneering attempt to classify Middle Welsh prose texts into dialect groups based on the occurrence of three variables with dialectal significance in Modern Welsh: presence vs. absence of stem formative yod (e.g. *meibion* 'sons' vs. *meibon*;

³⁷ Although Bromwich and Evans note phonological and lexical features in *Culhwch ac Olwen* which mirror modern south Walian dialects, particularly those of Carmarthenshire and Glamorgan (Bromwich and Evans 1992: xviii–xix): this corresponds strikingly to the internal geography of the Twrch Trwyth episode of the tale (see below).

³⁸ Note that Gerald was probably not a fluent Welsh speaker (Bartlett 1982: 14–15) and that his comments are explicitly second-hand.

³⁹ Daniel suggests that the terms *Gwynndodeg* and *Gwenhwyseg* may not have had linguistic force in this poem, however, and that Casnodyn simply meant that he could sing equally well in Gwynedd and in Glamorgan and Gwent; Daniel (1999: 119); cf. Williams (1974–81: 83). Note that Peter Wynn Thomas (1993: 24) states that the term *Deheubartheg*, meaning the language of Deheubarth, was also recorded as early as the fourteenth century, citing the authority of *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (Thomas et al.

1950–2002: 918). I cannot see that this is the case. The reference in question comes from Gwynfardd Brycheiniog's poem to St David, probably composed in the 1170s ('14g.' in the dictionary entry refers to the date of the *manuscript*, not of the poem), but here it is clearly an adjective meaning 'of Deheubarth' (as noted in the dictionary entry) and has no linguistic significance (Bramley et al. 1994: 26.148). The earliest example of *Deheubartheg* as a noun meaning 'language of Deheubarth' recorded in *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* is from John Davies's *Dictionarium Duplex* of 1632.

⁴⁰ Compare the apparent lack of dialect forms in Old Irish, discussed by Charles-Edwards (1995: 727–8). For an apparent Welsh dialect feature recorded as early as the ninth century, see Charles-Edwards (1970–2: 107–8). For an example of scribal suppression of a dialect feature in an early poem ('Seithennin' from the Black Book of Carmarthen), see Rowland (1990a); Wmffre (2003: 366–7).

ceiniog 'penny' vs. *ceinog*), stem formative <th> vs. <t> in 3rd person forms of the prepositions *gan* and *rhwng*, and 3rd singular preterite indicative ending *-awdd* (Modern Welsh *-odd*) vs. *-ws* (variant *-wys*) (Thomas 1993; cf. Thomas 1997; Thomas 2000). Interpreting the results in purely geographical terms proved insufficient, however, as Thomas admitted in dividing his 'northern' texts into early and late, depending on the incidence of *-awdd* vs. *-ws* / *-wys* in them (Thomas 1993 33–5; Thomas 2000: 33). In view of the ubiquity of *-awdd* in fourteenth-century literature, including poetry by southern poets such as Casnodyn and Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr, I would suggest that the *-awdd* vs. *-ws* / *-wys* divide in medieval Welsh texts is largely chronological rather than geographical (Rodway 1998a: *passim*, especially 79).⁴¹ Doubts could also be raised about the efficacy of the other two variables as dialect markers (Rodway 1998a: 83–5; Rodway 2004: 116–19).⁴² If we accept Thomas's variables as reliable dialect markers for the medieval period, we may nonetheless be tempted to conclude, with R. M. Jones (2000: 12–13), that they are only applicable to *manuscripts* rather than *texts*. On examining the Red Book of Hergest copy of *Breuddwyd Macsen*, for instance, Thomas concluded that it was a south-eastern text (Thomas 1993: 35), but an examination of Peniarth 16iii, the earliest manuscript to contain the text, revealed that this version displayed northern features (Thomas 1997: *passim*, esp. 97–8). Clearly, caution needs to be exercised here, as with the use of linguistic features as an aid to dating texts, but the analysis of dialect features in the language of the texts can be suggestive, and potentially enlightening.

(ii) *persona*: I cannot see that, in the absence of manuscript attributions, any ascription of a text to a named individual is going to be convincing. Even in the few cases of prose texts for which we do have manuscript attributions, these are often either unenlightening due to lack of information about the named author (*Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain*), or late and mutually contradictory (the bardic Grammar, *Gwasanaeth Mair*).⁴³

(iii) *tempus*: The date of the earliest extant manuscript provides a useful *terminus ante quem*. This is generally only approximate, however, although the peerless work of Daniel Huws allows us to tread more confidently than ever before in this field.⁴⁴ Most of the texts are certainly copies of lost exemplars, however, which could predate the extant versions by a considerable period of time.⁴⁵ So we must turn to the internal evidence of the texts themselves. Unfortunately, most of them are works of fiction which do not contain datable historical characters or events. (The exception which proves the rule is *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* which features Madog ap Maredudd of Powys (d. 1160).) Some critics have identified characters in the tales with historical figures, e.g. Bendigeidfran with Henry II of England; Gwilhenin king of France from *Culhwch ac Olwen* with William the Conqueror (Lewis 1973: 6–14; Bromwich and Evans 1992: 98). This is surely legitimate (we have no

⁴¹ Note that Casnodyn boasts of his fluency in 'Gwynndodeg', however (see above).

⁴² The case is a little overstated in Rodway (1998a). For further criticism of Thomas's methodology, see Russell (1999: *passim*, esp. pp. 80–2).

⁴³ For the medieval concept of 'authorship' in the Welsh context, see Fulton (2003); Davies (2005). For the wider European context, see Minnis (1984). I would like to thank Dr Andrew Breeze for drawing my attention to Minnis's excellent work.

⁴⁴ Two fourteenth-century manuscripts have dated colophons, and a handful of others can be dated on external grounds. Otherwise, we are dependent on the rather blunt instrument of palaeography. See Huws (2000a: 46–8).

⁴⁵ On the poor survival rate of vernacular manuscripts in Wales in the Middle Ages, see Sims-Williams (1998).

Middle Welsh disclaimers stating that any resemblance to real life persons is accidental, after all), but subjective. Others have attempted to find echoes of contemporary events in the tales, but this too is a risky enterprise. The tales were consciously set in the past, as can be seen, in the case of *The Four Branches*, for instance, in the fact that both Pryderi and Blodeuedd are baptised 'according to the baptism that was practised at that time' (Williams 1951: 23 and 83), and from the cameo by Caswallon, i.e. Cassivellaunus who fought against Julius Caesar. When we encounter an archaic custom such as rulers undertaking circuits of their territory rather than their officers (the situation described in the law books (e.g. Wiliam 1960: §§ 6, 9, 15, 91 and 96), this does not necessarily reflect the usage of the author's period, as argued by some scholars (Williams 1951: xxxiv–xxxvi; Charles-Edwards 1970): it is likely to be a deliberate anachronism to lend an air of veracity to a historical fiction.⁴⁶ Linguistic and orthographic evidence have featured surprisingly rarely in discussions of the date of the tales, aside from rather vaguely formulated references to perceived archaisms or the incidence of French loan words in a given text.⁴⁷ Both are so beset with problems that Iestyn Daniel has dismissed them entirely as an aid to dating (Daniel 1995: cv, n. 238).⁴⁸ This is an extreme view, but the paucity of securely datable comparanda and problems of probable scribal alteration require us to tread carefully in this matter. I shall further discuss aspects of the use of linguistic evidence as an aid to dating in the final part of this paper.

The Four Branches of the Mabinogi

(i) *locus*: Probably Gwynedd, or less persuasively Dyfed, on the evidence of the detailed geography of the tales.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ We might compare anachronisms such as war chariots and headhunting in the Old Irish sagas of the Ulster Cycle, introduced to lend an exotic and archaic air consistent with their internal dating to around the time of Christ. See Mallory (1992: *passim*, esp. 151–3). The medieval authors did not trouble themselves overmuch with consistency, any more than the directors of modern films in which fifth-century Saxons wield eleventh-century crossbows, and thirteenth-century Scots don ancient British woad and play sixteenth-century bagpipes!

⁴⁷ It is universally agreed that the language of *Culhwch ac Olwen* is more archaic than that of the other tales, and this has contributed to the conventional date of c. 1100, but cf. below. Ifor Williams did use linguistic criteria to formulate his eleventh-century date for *The Four Branches*, but his survey was far from comprehensive, including a mere three features. The Peniarth 6 forms *stlys* 'side' and *stryw* 'trick' without prosthetic <y> (contrast the place name *Ystradai* from the anonymous poem to Hywel ap Goronwy from the Black Book of Carmarthen, c. 1096; Williams et al. (1994: 1.10); for the date, see Jones (1998)) and *makwyf* 'young lad' written with a final /v/ (contrast three instances of *macwy*, all in rhyming position, from the poetry of Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (fl. c. 1155–c. 1195); Jones and Parry Owen (1991), 5.95, 29.19; Jones and Parry Owen (1995), 16.185) can be

accounted for by scribal conservatism. The disyllabic *maes* in one of the *englynion* from *Math* (contrast disyllabic (rather than trisyllabic) *uaessyt* in Meilyr Brydydd's elegy for Gruffudd ap Cynan of 1137; Williams et al. (1994: 1.117) is more suggestive, but the *englynion* could be older than the tale itself, as Charles-Edwards pointed out (1970: 265).

⁴⁸ On orthography as an aid to dating texts, see Rodway (2005: 32–8).

⁴⁹ See Roberts (2001: 65–8); Sims-Williams (2001: 124–5). Both argue persuasively but circumstantially in favour of St Beuno's *clas* at Clynnog Fawr (Sims-Williams argues merely that the material of the *Four Branches*, not necessarily the text itself, emanates from here). Meinir Harris argues that the *Four Branches* show the influence of the Gwynedd redaction of the laws, represented by the thirteenth-century *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Harris 2003). Ifor Williams's championing of a Dyfed origin for the tales was partly based on the now discredited view that Pryderi, lord of Dyfed, was the 'real' hero of the *Four Branches* (Williams 1951: xxii). If the tales were not all the product of the same author (see below), they need not all originate from the same place. For a convenient map of the Welsh place-names of the *Four Branches* and beautiful photographs of many of the places by Anthony Griffiths, see Bollard (2006: *passim*, map on p. 12).

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the manuscripts.⁵⁰ Most commentators have considered the individual Branches to be the work of a single author, but this has been challenged (Davies 1986).

(iii) *tempus*: Fragments of *Branwen* and *Manawydan*, the Second and Third Branches, occur in NLW Peniarth 6, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, which provides a *terminus ante quem* (for these two Branches at least; Huws (2000a: 58)).⁵¹ This is the only fixed point. Various dates in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been proposed on circumstantial evidence, but none are conclusive.⁵²

Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig

(i) *locus*: Probably Gwynedd (and more specifically the Caernarfon area) on the grounds of geography (Roberts 2005a: lxxvi–lxxviii; Roberts 2005b: 305–8).⁵³

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the manuscripts.

(iii) *tempus*: The earliest extant manuscript to contain this text is NLW Peniarth 16iii, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century (Huws 2000a: 58). Macsen Wledig, like Geoffrey of Monmouth's Maximianus, is based on the Roman official Magnus Maximus who was proclaimed emperor by the Roman army in Britain in 383, but the accounts of his career in *Breuddwyd Macsen* and Geoffrey's *Historia Regum Britanniae* differ significantly enough for us to doubt that the former was based on the latter (*contra* Loth 1913: I, 30). Therefore, we cannot take c. 1138 (the date of the *Historia*) as a *terminus post quem*.⁵⁴ A possible *terminus ante quem* is provided by a triad in the ?mid-twelfth-century Early Version of *Trioedd Ynys Prydain* 'The Triads of the Island of Britain', which seems to derive from *Breuddwyd Macsen*.⁵⁵ But even if we accept the mid-twelfth-century date for the redaction of the Early Version, individual triads could have been altered at any stage up until the

⁵⁰ Proinsias Mac Cana's tentative suggestion that Sulien of Llanbadarn Fawr (c. 1010–91) or his son Rhygyfarch (c. 1056–99) might have been the author of *The Four Branches* (Mac Cana 1958: 180–7) is highly speculative. (It is taken seriously by Davies (1995b: 787), however). The authorship theories of Breeze and Daniel are discussed at length above.

⁵¹ The earliest extant manuscript to contain complete copies of all of the Branches is the White Book of Rhydderch (now bound in two volumes as NLW Peniarth 4 and 5), dating from the mid-fourteenth century. See Huws (2000a: 59).

⁵² Ifor Williams's date of c. 1060 (Williams 1951: xii–xx and xxii–xli) and Saunders Lewis's dates in the 1170s and 1180s (Lewis 1973: 1–33) were rejected by Charles-Edwards (1970). His suggested period of c. 1050 X c. 1120 was in turn rejected by Sims-Williams (1991). Daniel mentions a number of authors who consider a thirteenth-century date for *The Four Branches* (2004: 127–8), but these are either throwaway remarks with no corroborative evidence (Lloyd 1939: II, 692; Evans 1970–1: 139) or highly problematic (Watkin 1962: 294).

⁵³ R. M. Jones's argument in favour of Monmouth provenance is less convincing: he proves the existence of the Macsen *legend* in the Monmouth area, but this does not mean that the *text* was produced there (Jones 2000: 14–15; Jones 2001: 8–10).

⁵⁴ Most commentators have suggested a composition date in the second half of the twelfth century for *Breuddwyd Macsen* (see Williams (1927: xxi); Bromwich (1974: 143); Bromwich (2006: 343); Miller (1979: 97). Brynley F. Roberts's argument in favour of a date during the realm of the aggressively expansionist Llywelyn ap Iorwerth of Gwynedd (d. 1240), more specifically in the period 1215–17 when his campaign in south-west Wales was at its zenith, is compelling, but circumstantial (Roberts 2005a: lxxxi–lxxxvi; 2005b: 310–12). Morgan Watkin's date in the first half of the fourteenth century, on the grounds of supposed French linguistic and stylistic influence (1962: 295–352), is impossible bearing in mind the date of Peniarth 16iii.

⁵⁵ Triad no. 35, edited by Bromwich (2006: 81–9). On the date of the Early Version of the Triads, see Bromwich (2006: xci–xcvii).

earliest extant manuscript (NLW Peniarth 16iv), which dates from the second half of the thirteenth century.⁵⁶

Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys

(i) *locus*: No internal evidence.⁵⁷

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the manuscripts.

(iii) *tempus*: The earliest manuscript in which *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* occurs is NLW Llanstephan 1, which dates from around the middle of the thirteenth century (Huws 2000a: 179–82). Here it is inserted into a text of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the Welsh adaptation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. I think it unlikely to have been the scribe of Llanstephan 1 himself who undertook to add *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* to Geoffrey's work, as he also copied another version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, which does not contain this piece of native *cyfarwyddyd* in Peniarth 44. Rather it must have been present in his exemplar, possibly dating from the early thirteenth century (Roberts 1972–4). Whether or not it had a prior existence as an independent tale is a moot point.⁵⁸

Culhwch ac Olwen

(i) *locus*: The hunting of Twrch Trwyth shows a detailed knowledge of the geography of south Wales, from Pembrokeshire to the Severn estuary. The editors also note linguistic features typical of the modern dialects of Carmarthenshire and Glamorgan (Bromwich and Evans 1992: xviii–xx).

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the manuscripts.

(iii) *tempus*: A *terminus ante quem* is provided by the earliest extant manuscript, the White Book of Rhydderch, dated to the mid-fourteenth century. The consensus has been to date the tale to c. 1100, but the external evidence for this is flimsy and the linguistic arguments open to question.⁵⁹

Breuddwyd Rhonabwy

(i) *locus*: Probably Powys, the setting not only of the frame-story, but also of the Arthurian dream sequence (Richards 1948: xxxviii).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ For the date of the manuscript, see Huws (2000a: 58). For possible late features in Triad 35, see Bromwich (2006: xcv); Roberts (2005a: lxxxviii); Roberts (2005b: 313).

⁵⁷ Andrew Breeze assigns this tale to Gwynedd (Breeze 1997b: 83), seeing a bias towards this kingdom in the text (personal communication). I do not see such a bias. The reference to Dinas Emrys in Snowdonia probably came from the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* along with the tale of the fighting dragons, and cannot be used in evidence.

⁵⁸ J. Visser argued that *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* must post-date the *Historia Regum Britanniae* or Geoffrey would have included the story (Visser 1936: 261), but this does not follow: Geoffrey could have been unaware of it, or might have deliberately left it out.

⁵⁹ See Rodway (2005) with references to earlier scholarship on p. 21, n. 1. Ned Sturzer (2005: 165–7) also concludes that the date of the tale is still an open question.

⁶⁰ Cf. Roberts (1965: 42), who tentatively suggests the abbey of Strata Marcella.

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the manuscripts.

(iii) *tempus*: The earliest manuscript source is the Red Book of Hergest (Jesus College, Oxford, MS. 111), which dates from the period 1382 X c. 1410 (Huws 2000a: 254; Huws 2003: 1–2).⁶¹ A *terminus post quem* is provided by the inclusion of the historical character, Madog ap Maredudd who ruled Powys from 1132 until his death in 1160.⁶² The influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* of c. 1138 is also detectable in this text. Various dates, ranging from the mid-twelfth century to the late fourteenth have been proposed, but none of the evidence is conclusive.⁶³

Owain, Peredur and Geraint (the 'Three Romances')⁶⁴

(i) *locus*: The geography of these texts is vague and of little use in locating them. The author of *Geraint* clearly had some knowledge of the geography of south-east Wales, however.⁶⁵

(ii) *persona*: All three tales are anonymous in the manuscripts. There are no grounds for supposing that they were the work of a single author, as some critics have done.⁶⁶

(iii) *tempus*: The earliest extant manuscript to contain *Owain* is the mid-fourteenth-century White Book of Rhydderch. A version of *Peredur* occurs in NLW Peniarth 7, dating from the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Huws 2000a: 58; Huws 2000b: 2–3). Two fragments from a version of *Geraint* are preserved in NLW Peniarth 6iii, which dates from the second half of the thirteenth century (Huws 2000a: 58). All three 'romances' show influence from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* of c. 1138, which gives us a *terminus post quem* (Bromwich 1974: 154–5). Unfortunately, the nature of the relationship of these texts to three metrical romances written by Chrétien de Troyes c. 1170 X 1181 is unclear and of little help in dating them.⁶⁷

⁶¹ There is no reason to assume, as many have done, that it occurred in the lost portion of the mid-fourteenth-century White Book of Rhydderch.

⁶² Madog's presence in the tale does not necessitate a date during his lifetime, as argued by Thomas Charles-Edwards (1970: 266, where he erroneously gives the date of Madog's death as 1159; followed by Hamp (1972–3; reprinted with corrigenda (Hamp 1999)); see Slotkin (1989: *passim*, esp. 89–91).

⁶³ For a convenient summary of the various arguments with bibliographical references, see Koch (2006b: 281). To this should be added Fulton (1999).

⁶⁴ I consider these three texts together because they share many of the same problems with regard to contextualisation, and because they are often discussed together in the critical literature. Discussing them separately would therefore involve a considerable amount of repetition. On the artificial modern designation 'The Three Romances', see Lloyd-Morgan (2004).

⁶⁵ This may not have been first-hand: see Middleton (1991: 150–1). R. M. Jones's argument for a Monmouth origin for the 'romances' (Jones 1960:

xiii–xiv; Jones 2001: 10–11) is circumstantial. The location of Arthur's court at Caerleon is doubtless borrowed from Geoffrey of Monmouth and does not imply first-hand knowledge of south east Wales. For further suggestions of the south-eastern affinities of the romances, particularly (but not exclusively) *Peredur*, see Breeze (2003: 61–2) and references there cited. Peter Wynn Thomas (2000: *passim*, especially 41–2) and Morfydd E. Owen (2000: 110–11) provide suggestive evidence to link *Peredur* with Gwynedd, but do not prove Gwynedd *provenance*.

⁶⁶ *Peredur* is unique among the 'Mabinogion' texts in that there are significant material differences between the extant manuscript versions, which call into question the concept of 'authorship'.

⁶⁷ For a useful summary of the various theories concerning the relationship of Chrétien's poems and the Welsh tales, see Koch (2006c: 1648–51). Andrew Breeze argues for a thirteenth-century date for *Peredur* on the basis of the mention of windmills, first recorded in England in 1170 (Breeze 2003: 59–61). It is worth noting that *Peredur* encounters the windmills on his trip to India: perhaps the author included

Ymborth yr Enaid

(i) *locus*: No decisive evidence.⁶⁸

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the manuscripts.

(iii) *tempus*: The earliest manuscript witness to *Ymborth yr Enaid* is the Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi (Jesus College, Oxford, MS. 119), one of only two fourteenth-century Welsh manuscripts with a dated colophon, stating that it was copied in 1346.⁶⁹ If *Ymborth yr Enaid* is indeed the work of a Dominican, we have a *terminus post quem* of some time after 1221, the date at which the Dominicans arrived in England.⁷⁰ If Daniel's suggestion that it was influenced by the Anglo-Norman treatise the *Merure de Seinte Eglise* ('The Mirror of the Holy Church') of St Edmund of Abingdon, probably composed c. 1233, is correct, this moves the *terminus* forward accordingly (Daniel 1995: lvi–lvii; Daniel 1997: 10).⁷¹

The Bardic Grammar

(i) *locus*: No contemporary evidence.⁷²

(ii) *persona*: The Grammar is anonymous in the four earliest manuscripts which contain it,⁷³ but the sixteenth-century humanist Robert Vaughan ascribed his two copies of it in NLW 3029 (Mostyn 110) to Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug and Einion Offeiriad respectively.⁷⁴ Both men were connected with the Grammar at an earlier stage, with one or other being credited as the creator of three metres in three of the earliest manuscripts: Dafydd Ddu in Peniarth 20 (Williams and Jones 1934: 51.26–8) and Einion Offeiriad in the Red Book and Llanstephan 3 (Williams and Jones 1934: 11.23–4 and 30.13–14).⁷⁵ Many scholars have accepted that Einion Offeiriad was the original author of the Grammar, with Dafydd Ddu producing a later adaptation (Morris-Jones 1923–4: 5; Gruffydd 1995; Gruffydd and

them as a piece of exotica precisely because they would not have been familiar to his audience (Breeze mentions a reference to Persian windmills by the tenth-century Arab geographer Al-Mas'Udi), in which case the late twelfth-century English windmills would be irrelevant to the date of the tale.

⁶⁸ Daniel's argument for the Dominican priory of Bangor is circumstantial: see above.

⁶⁹ Daniel Huws sees no reason to doubt the authenticity of the colophon (Huws 2000a: 46, 212, n. 27 and 239, n. 15); contrast Evans (1960–1: 114 and 115–16).

⁷⁰ It is not known exactly when they arrived in Wales: in April 1237 two Dominicans are recorded in Anglesey. See Easterling (1914: 326–7 and 331).

⁷¹ On the date of the *Merure*, see Legge (1950: 96).

⁷² In the light the sixteenth-century attribution of different versions of the Grammar to Einion Offeiriad and Dafydd Ddu Hiraddug, it is interesting to note that we have four references to an Einion Offeiriad in the 1340s and 50s, two of them located in the commote of Mebwynion in Ceredigion, one in Llanrug in Arfon and one relating to the ownership of

land in the commote of Gwidigada in Carmarthen-shire (Smith 1962–4; Gruffydd and Ifans 1997: 3). They do not necessarily all refer to the same person. We have no dependable contemporary information about Dafydd Ddu, but since the sixteenth century he has been connected with Hiraddug in the commote of Rhuddlan and with the cathedral of St Asaph's (Gruffydd 1995; Gruffydd and Ifans 1997: 103–4).

⁷³ NLW Peniarth 20 (c. 1330); The Red Book of Hergest (1382 X c. 1410); NLW Llanstephan 3 (first half of the fifteenth century); University of Wales, Bangor 1 (mid-fifteenth century); see Williams and Jones (1934: xiii–xiv). On the dates of the manuscripts, see Huws (2000a: 59–61).

⁷⁴ Note that J. Gwenogvryn Evans mistakenly ascribed NLW 3029 to Thomas Wiliems (Evans 1898–1910: I, 23). This error was repeated by subsequent commentators until corrected by Daniel Huws in the late 1990s; see Gruffydd and Ifans (1997: 3, n. 3); Huws (2000a: 298, n. 35).

⁷⁵ Neither is mentioned at this point in Bangor 1; see Jones (1925: 198).

Ifans 1997: 3; Lynch 1998; Johnston 2005: 27). This is speculative: the recensions attributed to Dafydd Ddu and Einion by Vaughan (which correspond to the versions in Peniarth 20 and the Red Book respectively) are not radically different from one another, and I do not see any grounds for awarding primacy to one or the other.⁷⁶ In other words, the Grammar could have been composed by Dafydd Ddu or by Einion Offeiriad, by both, or by neither.⁷⁷

(iii) *tempus*: The earliest extant manuscript to contain a copy of the Grammar is NLW Peniarth 20, dated to c. 1330 (Huws 2000a: 47, 59 and 76; cf. Charles-Edwards and Charles-Edwards 1994). The identifiable exemplary verses in the Grammar give us a *terminus post quem*. Of particular interest for the dating of the work is an extract from Gwilym Ddu of Arfon's *awdl* to Sir Gruffydd Llwyd (Williams and Jones 1934: 91.33–6, 28.28–31 and 49.40–3; Jones 1925: 195; Gruffydd and Ifans 1997: Appendix C, poem 19 = Costigan (Bosco) et al. 1995a: poem 6), which can be dated with a degree of confidence to the period December 1316 X April 1317 (Costigan (Bosco) et al. 1995a: 67–8).⁷⁸ As we have seen, however, Iestyn Daniel argued that the Grammar was composed in the thirteenth century, holding that the fourteenth-century exemplary verses were late additions (Daniel 1985: 195–205). But while it is true that parts of the Grammar reflect more nearly the practise of thirteenth-century poets than those of the fourteenth century,⁷⁹ this does not necessarily argue for a thirteenth-century date. The Grammar is prescriptive rather than descriptive, and like its modern counterpart, John Morris-Jones's *Cerdd Dafod* of 1925, it encapsulates a conservative ideal rather than a contemporary reality (Morris-Jones 1925).⁸⁰ Judging by the extant poetry, a fourteenth-century grammarian would have more motivation to prescribe on such matters as *trwm* and *ysgafn* rhymes than his thirteenth-century counterpart.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Cf. the doubts expressed in Williams and Jones (1934: xxiii–xxiv).

⁷⁷ Daniel attributes the Grammar to Cnepyn Gwerthrynion, as we have seen above. Several versions of the grammatical text *Pum Llyfr Cerdduriaeth* 'The Five Books of Poetry' (c. 1570) name Cnepyn, along with Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug, as the author of grammatical material (see above), but this is not the same as stating that he was the author of the extant Grammar.

⁷⁸ See Smith (1974–6) for the background.

⁷⁹ The Grammar's perfunctory treatment of *cyngannedd* and *cymeriad*, two of the most characteristic features of fourteenth-century poetry is notable, as is the prohibition of *trwm* 'heavy' and *ysgafn* 'light' rhymes, i.e. between syllables originally ending in double and single consonants respectively. The pre-Conquest Gogynfeirdd tended to avoid such rhymes, but by the early fourteenth century, even a snob like Casnodyn was committing this fault; cf. Daniel (1999: 7.67–8, rhyming *cân* 'song' (: Latin *cano* = *ysgafn*) with *calan* 'first day of the month' (< *calends* = *trwm*)). Possibly relevant from the point of view of the authorship debate is the fact that Einion Offeiriad also

rhymes *trwm* (*calon* 'heart', plural *calonnau*) with *ysgafn* (*pendragon* 'chieftain', *dragon* from an oblique or plural form of Latin *draco* (*draconem* or *dracones*) cf. Sims-Williams (1984: 189)) in the only surviving poem that can be definitely ascribed to him: Gruffydd and Ifans (1997: 1.128–9). The poem also makes extensive use of *cyngannedd* and *cymeriad*.

⁸⁰ Cf. the measured criticism of T. Gwynn Jones in his review (Jones 1926: *passim*, esp. 37–8). See also James (1987: 36–42); Johnston (1998a: 8–10).

⁸¹ In the same way, modern Welsh complaints about the literal translation of English idioms (a good recent example being a letter in *Golwg* by Thomas Davies (2006) complaining of such monstrosities as 'arwyddo chwaraewyr pêl-droed' = 'signing football players') can only be taken as evidence of the prevalence of this phenomenon. In an English context, the point of Lynne Truss's lively invective (Truss 2003) is that written English at the beginning of the twenty-first century no longer conforms to the standards current forty years ago, to which she obstinately (and rightly, in the subjective view of the present author) clings.

(i) *locus*: No contemporary evidence.⁸²

(ii) *persona*: Anonymous in the earliest manuscripts, but attributed to Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug by John Davies, Mallwyd (NLW 4973 C, dated 1631). In NLW Peniarth 53 (c. 1485 X 1510), the translation of one of the hymns, *Tē Deum*, but not the whole text, is attributed to the fifteenth-century amateur poet Ieuan ap Rhydderch (Roberts 1961: lxxv–lxxx).

(iii) *tempus*: The *terminus ante quem* is provided by the earliest extant manuscript, Shrewsbury School 11, which dates from the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Huws 2000a: 60). If we accept that it is a text of Dominican provenance, then we have a *terminus post quem* of some time after 1221 (see above). If we accept the late attribution to Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug, as the editor is inclined to do, we are looking at a period of before c. 1330 X ?before 1371.⁸³ If we extrapolate from the attribution of the translation of the *Tē Deum* to Ieuan ap Rhydderch in Peniarth 53 that he was responsible for the entire text, then we must date it to the early fifteenth century.⁸⁴

Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain

(i) *locus*: No evidence.

(ii) *persona*: In the earliest manuscript of the Middle Welsh version of this international folktale (the Red Book of Hergest), it is attributed to one Llywelyn Offeiriad ('Llywelyn the Priest'), but nothing further is known about this character.⁸⁵

(iii) *tempus*: The Red Book of Hergest (1382–c. 1410), the earliest extant manuscript to contain this text, gives a *terminus ante quem*. There is no evidence to provide a *terminus post quem*.⁸⁶

This *status quaestionis* can be summarized thus:

⁸² Like the Grammar, *Gwasanaeth Mair* was attributed to Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug in the early modern period: on Dafydd Ddu's geographical connections, see above. In the light of the late fifteenth-century attribution of part of the text to Ieuan ap Rhydderch, it is worth noting that his connections were with Ceredigion, most securely with Glyn Aeron. See Daniel (2003: 3–4).

⁸³ Dafydd Ddu must have been an established poet by c. 1330 when Peniarth 20 was compiled, as he is named as the inventor of three metres in the copy of the bardic Grammar found in this manuscript (Williams and Jones 1934: 51.26–8). If we accept the tradition noted by John Davies, Mallwyd, in 1632 that he became archdeacon of St Asaph's, he was probably in his grave by 1371 when Ithel ap Robert is recorded in this position (Gruffydd 1995; Gruffydd and Ifans 1997: 103).

⁸⁴ Daniel gives c. 1390–c. 1470 as Ieuan's dates (2003: 16–17), but the earliest manuscript to contain *Gwasanaeth Mair* probably dates from the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which would mean that were Ieuan responsible for the translation, he would have to have produced it early in his career.

⁸⁵ Daniel draws our attention to a Llywelyn Offeiriad ap Gruffudd ab Owain of the line of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn of Powys in the genealogies, estimated by P. C. Bartrum to have been born c. 1300, but, as he notes, Llywelyn was a popular name which could have been borne by many priests in the Middle Ages; Daniel (2004: 146, n. 132); cf. Bartrum (1974: I, Bleddyn ap Cynfyn 20).

⁸⁶ Cf. Lewis (1925: 21); Daniel (2006). The grounds for the mid-fourteenth-century date given in Stephens (1998: 108) are unclear.

	<i>locus</i>	<i>persona</i>	<i>tempus</i>
<i>Four Branches</i>	?Gwynedd / ??Dyfed	?	before 2nd half of 13th century
<i>Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig</i>	?Gwynedd	?	before 2nd half of 13th century
<i>Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys</i>	?	?	before mid-13th century
<i>Culhwch ac Olwen</i>	South Wales: ?Carmarthenshire / ?Glamorgan	?	before mid-14th century
<i>Breuddwyd Rhonabwy</i>	Powys	?	c. 1138–1382 / 1410
<i>Owain</i>	?	?	c. 1138–mid- 14th century
<i>Peredur</i>	??South-east Wales / ??Gwynedd	?	c. 1138–turn of the 13th and 14th centuries
<i>Geraint</i>	?South-east Wales	?	c. 1138–2nd half of the 13th century
<i>Ymborth yr Enaid</i>	?	?	post c. 1221 (?post c. 1233)–1346
Bardic Grammar	?	?Einion Offeiriad / ?Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug	December 1316 / April 131– c. 1330
<i>Gwasanaeth Mair</i>	?	?Dafydd Ddu of Hiraddug / ??Ieuan ap Rhydderch	post c. 1221–turn of the 14th and 15th centuries
<i>Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain</i>	?	Llywelyn Offeiriad	before 1382–1410

4. Some tentative steps forward

Thus far I have concentrated on enumerating perceived defects in other people's valiant attempts to wrestle with this intractable problem, and as the above survey shows, returned a fairly open verdict. Indeed, I have done little more than conclude, as did Donald Rumsfeld about something very different, that 'there are known unknowns ... But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know'.⁸⁷ It is, of course, easier to criticise existing theories than to roll up one's sleeves and attempt to tackle the issues oneself. Clearly if nobody were prepared to venture an opinion, however, we would have to content ourselves with labelling our subjects 'medieval Welsh texts' and saying no more about them. But I hope that I have shown above that establishing a consistent and rigorous methodology is crucial if we are to do more than indulge in fruitless speculation.

⁸⁷ US Department of Defence news briefing, 12 February 2002; interpreted as poetry, and compared to William Carlos Williams by Hart Seely (<http://www.slate.com/id/2081042>)!

Many of us would love to be able to state confidently who wrote the 'Mabinogion' tales, where, when and why, just as we would love to prove or disprove the existence of the historical Arthur or the Loch Ness monster. But we must recognize our limitations. We cannot confidently put names to anonymous texts, nor are we likely to be able to do that unless more evidence comes to light. The *locus* of those texts with vague or non-existent geography is likely to remain obscure, although linguistic evidence (problematic though it undoubtedly is) may yet shed some light on this. I also believe that language can help us with the question of dating, and here I get down from the fence to venture a few cautious remarks.

A valuable source of datable linguistic material with which we can compare the language of the prose tales is the court poetry of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Unlike the prose tales, most of this poetry is ascribed to named authors in the manuscripts, and most of it refers to externally datable people and events. Thus we have a considerable corpus of datable texts covering the majority of the period within which the 'Mabinogion' tales must have been composed. Furthermore, metrical considerations mean that poetry is unlikely to have been substantially altered by successive scribes during the transmission process.

It might be questioned whether it is appropriate to apply data taken from poetry to prose texts, however. It has often been assumed that the language of the poets was considerably more conservative than the language of the prose texts. The poets may well have used archaic forms which had long since disappeared from prose literature. This is not *a priori* unlikely, but in the case of the twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century poets, we have no securely datable contemporary prose texts with which to compare their language, and so it remains an assumption. It is certainly true that the work of the court poets makes for a difficult read, and at times, when struggling with a particularly dense line, it is impossible not to conclude that they were being deliberately obscure for the sake of it, like the poets in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*.⁸⁸ However the deliberate deployment of certain archaisms for stylistic or metrical purposes does not mean that poetic language as a whole lagged far behind prose. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poets employed both archaisms and colloquialisms, as Peter Busse has shown (Busse, 2003). Certainly they were not utilizing the sort of static, artificially created and maintained literary language that we see in the Irish and Scottish bardic poetry of the Early Modern period, which remained virtually unchanged throughout the Gaelic world over a period of some five hundred years (McManus 1994; Bergin 1970).

Having said this, there are differences between the language of the poets and that of the extant prose texts. Certain features of verbal morphology, for instance, which are well-attested in the court poetry (e.g. 1st singular present indicative forms in *-if*, 3rd singular present indicative absolute forms in *-id*, *-yd* and *-awd*, 3rd singular present indicative relative forms in *-ydd*, 3rd singular imperfect indicative forms in *-i* and 3rd singular present subjunctive forms in *-wy*), are virtually or completely absent from the prose texts (Rodway 2000: chapters 3–6; 1998b; 2003a; 2003b). I think we should remain open-minded about the reasons for this, however. As the court poems comprise the only securely datable twelfth- and early thirteenth-century texts that we have, it would be

⁸⁸ 'Ac nyt oed dyn a adnapei y gerd honno, namyn Kadyrieith ehun, eithyr y uot yn uolyant y Arthur' ('And there was not a man who might understand that

poem, save Cadriaith himself, except that it was praise to Arthur'), Richards (1948: 20.14–16).

foolish to conclude that these features were archaic or non-standard in this period (except insofar as this is implied by internal evidence from the court poetry itself).⁸⁹ The occurrence of present indicative absolute forms in *-awd* (3rd singular) and *-awr* (impersonal) and 3rd singular present subjunctive forms in *-wy* in *Culhwch ac Olwen* shows that these were not the sole preserve of poets in the Middle Welsh period.⁹⁰

Happily there is at least one morphological feature which occurs in both poetry and prose and which seems to have clear chronological implications: the incidence of 3rd singular preterite indicative *-awdd* vs. *-ws* / *-wys*.⁹¹ The innovative ending *-awdd* seems to have developed by analogy from the form *lladdawdd* 'killed, struck' < **llawdd* and to have almost completely ousted the most widespread *s*-preterite ending *-ws* / *-wys* in the literary language by the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁹² The other 3rd person preterite indicative forms (the other *s*-preterite endings *-as*, *-es* and *-is*, *t*-preterites such as *cant* 'sang' and *cymyrth* / *cymerth* 'took', and suffixless preterites such as *dyward* 'said' and *ciglau* 'heard'), all of which were largely confined to relatively small groups of specific verbs, were left largely (although not entirely) untouched by *-awdd* at this period. Thus we are dealing with a relatively simple case of one ending replacing another, etymologically unrelated and quite distinctive. The earliest securely datable examples of the ending *-awdd* (outside the verb *lladd* 'to kill, to strike' which invariably takes the ending *-awdd* even in the earliest poetry; Rodway 1998a: 74–5 and 92–4) occur in the poetry of Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (c. 1155–95).⁹³ There are also a handful of examples from the largely undatable corpus of early poetry known as the *hengerdd*, which could date from the Old Welsh period.⁹⁴ We do not see significant incidences of *-awdd* before the second half of the

⁸⁹ Note the evidence presented in Rodway (1998b) that the absolute / conjunct system in the 3rd person singular present indicative was still functional until the first half of the thirteenth century.

⁹⁰ Examples of *-awd* at Bromwich and Evans 1992: lines 99, 108, 109 and 151; *-awr* at lines 98, 100, 383 and 475; *-wy* at lines 484, 768 and 774. Elsewhere, I have entertained the notion that *Culhwch ac Olwen* might have been composed by a poet, thus explaining its linguistic similarities to the court poetry (Rodway 2005: 43–4). This is, of course, exactly the sort of speculation I have dismissed as 'fruitless' in the present paper!

⁹¹ Peter Wynn Thomas considered the dialectal implications of this variable (1993); see above for discussion.

⁹² *-ws* has survived as a spoken form in certain southern dialects, but has never reclaimed the literary respectability it enjoyed in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Thomas and Thomas 1989: 67; William 1990: 11). On the derivation of *-awdd*, see Rodway (1998a: 91–4) and references there cited. *-ws* and its variant *-wys* are more problematic: see Rodway (1998a: 73, nn. 7–9) and references there cited; Schrijver (2003: 71–4). The latter reference was kindly pointed out to me by Professor Patrick Sims-Williams, who also commented on other aspects of this paper.

⁹³ *kyrchawd* 'went', Jones and Parry Owen (1991: 3.21; 4.8); *kerytawd* 'blamed', Jones and Parry Owen (1991: 5.62); *rachydawt* 'merited', Jones and Parry Owen (1995: 6.112) (also *ladaut* 'killed', Jones and Parry Owen (1995: 7.23). For doubts about the

authenticity of the poem in which the second example of *kyrchawd* occurs, see Johnston (1994–6: 138); Rodway (1998a: 76–7).

⁹⁴ *karawd* 'loved' (confirmed by internal generic rhyme with *y sawl* 'those') in 'Cân yr Henwr' from the Llywarch Hen cycle (Williams 1935: II.18c; Rowland 1990b: 418, 18c); *ellygaut* and *gollygaut* 'released' in the 'Seithennin' poem from the Black Book of Carmarthen (Jarman 1982: 39.5 and 39.8; Rowland 1990b: 464, 2b and 3b). Note that 'Seithennin' shows evidence of later scribal alteration (see n. 40 above): the forms in *-awdd* need not be much older than the mid-thirteenth-century manuscript. R. L. Thomson notes that the imperfect *karei* would be expected instead of the preterite *karawd* in the first example (1978: 197), but it would be too drastic to emend the text on these grounds. Two examples not mentioned in Rodway (1998a) are *dhisgynnyawd* 'attacked' (confirmed by internal generic rhyme with *ysgawl* 'young champion' and internal full rhyme with *wlawd* 'turmoil, terror, battle') in 'Gwarchan Maeldderw' (Williams 1938: 1477; Isaac 2002b: 83, line 61) and (possibly) the obscure *cwddedawd* (confirmed by internal rhyme with *ymadrawd* 'speech'; ?emend to *cw dechawd* 'when he fled', cf. Lloyd-Jones (1931–63: 188)) in 'Marwnad Cunedda' (Williams, 'Marwnad Cunedda' o Lyfr Taliesin' in Bromwich and Jones 1978: 212, line 17). John Koch tentatively suggests that *cwddedawd* represents an ablauting preterite form (< Celtic **ko(m)-wāde*) meaning 'spoke', in which case this would not be an example of *-awdd* after all; Koch (2003: 195–6). None of these poems can be securely dated.

thirteenth century, however, when there is a dramatic increase at the expense of *-ws* / *-wys*. If we express the ratio of *-ws* / *-wys* vs. *-awdd* in percentages (ignoring examples of *lladdawdd*),⁹⁵ the court poetry breaks down as follows (Rodway 1998a: 73–9):

	<i>-ws</i> / <i>-wys</i>	<i>-awdd</i>
First half of the twelfth century:	100%	0%
Second half of the twelfth century:	93%	7% ⁹⁶
First half of the thirteenth century:	92%	8%
Second half of the thirteenth century:	18%	82%
Fourteenth century:	0.1%	99.9% ⁹⁷

In considering the incidence of this variable in medieval prose, I used date of manuscript rather than date of text, aware that this was not comparing like with like. The earliest manuscripts (from the mid-thirteenth century and the second half of the thirteenth century) invariably display a high incidence of *-ws* / *-wys*, with only Llanstephan 1 (22 per cent) and Peniarth 16.iii (11 per cent) showing more than 4 per cent *-awdd* (Rodway 1998a: 80).⁹⁸ From the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries onwards, the statistics show that a majority of *-awdd* is the norm, with most manuscripts having over 90 per cent (Rodway 1998a: 80–1).⁹⁹ This suggests that the switch from *-ws* / *-wys* to *-awdd* happened at approximately the same time in poetry and prose, i.e. in the second half of the thirteenth century (considering that most of the prose texts were probably composed some time before the earliest manuscript attestation).

In the light of this, I have considered the incidence of *-ws* / *-wys* vs. *-awdd* in all the texts considered above. As in the statistics quoted above, I have excluded the form *lladdawdd* from my figures. In his *-ws* / *-wys* vs. *-awdd* statistics for the different versions of *Peredur*, Peter Wynn Thomas leaves out all verbs with stems in <o, oe, a, aw> (Thomas 2000: 33). While it is true that verbs with stems in <o, oe> tend to form the 3rd singular preterite indicative in *-es*, and those with stems in <a, aw> in *-is* (Evans 1964: 122–3; Isaac 1996: 358–9), this is not universally the case. By the Middle Welsh period, *-ws* / *-wys* had undoubtedly spread at the expense of other forms (Sims-Williams 2005b: 84–6). The following verbs are left out of Thomas's analysis of 3rd singular preterite forms in *Peredur* on the grounds of stem vowel, despite the fact that some of them occur in this and / or in other texts with the ending *-ws* / *-wys*: *cyfarch* 'to greet', *darogan* 'to prophecy', *deall* 'to understand', *diflanau* 'to disappear', *dywanu* 'to come', *gadu* 'to leave', *graesawu* 'to welcome', *gwahardd* 'to forbid', *gwasgu* 'to crush', *gwrthnau* 'to reject',¹⁰⁰ *llafasu* 'to dare',

⁹⁵ But not its compounds (*ymladd* 'to fight', *gwrthladd* 'to expel' etc); examples of *ymladdws* are listed in n. 110 below. For an example of *gwrthladdws*, see Williams (1912: 240).

⁹⁶ Representing the four examples from the work of Cynddelw mentioned above.

⁹⁷ There is at least one example of *-ws* in fourteenth-century poetry (*adeilws* 'built', confirmed by rhyme with *thws* 'pretty', Parry (1952: 105.28)); cf. *humrws* 'hummed, called softly' and *plygwys* 'bent' in an anonymous satire from the Red Book of Hergest, Edwards (2000: 10.19 and 10.20)). This poem cannot be dated with any certainty. In addition to the sources cited in Rodway (1998a: 78–9, n. 42), I have included the poetry edited in Johnston (1998b), Daniel (1998),

Edwards (2000), and Ifans (2000). The work of Casnodryn is now edited in Daniel (1999) and new editions of the work of Gruffudd ap Maredudd have now appeared (Lewis 2003, Lewis 2005 and Parry Owen 2007).

⁹⁸ I am discounting Peniarth 6.iii, which only contains four tokens (three *-awdd*, one *-wys*).

⁹⁹ The only manuscripts from this period which I have examined in which *-awdd* is in a minority are Peniarth 16.i (0%, but only six tokens), Peniarth 8.i (22%) and Peniarth 8.ii (42%).

¹⁰⁰ I fail to understand why Thomas excluded this verb (containing the root **neu-* 'push', see Thomas et al. (1950–2002: 1729)).

llamu 'to leap', *lledu* 'to spread',¹⁰¹ *peri* 'to cause', *ymchoelyd* 'to turn', *ymladd* 'to fight', *ymwanu* 'to fight'.¹⁰² In the cases of *cyfarch*, *deall*, *diflanau*, *dywanu*, *gadu*, *gwahardd* and *gwasgu*, J. Lloyd-Jones only records forms in *-ws* / *-wys* or *-awdd* (Lloyd-Jones 1931–63: 202, 406, 339, 430, 517 and 629).¹⁰³ He lists only forms in *-awdd* for *daroganu* and *graesawu* and directs the reader to *neuaw* for forms of *gwrthnau* (Lloyd-Jones 1931–63: 300, 586 and 718).¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, his invaluable Middle Welsh vocabulary, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg*, which, despite its misleading title, contains citations from poetic and prose texts, only ever reached *heilic*. Thus this resource is not readily available for verbs from the further reaches of the alphabet (including *neuaw*).¹⁰⁵ Checking my lists of 3rd singular preterite indicative forms in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry and in the major collections of *hengerdd* in my doctoral thesis (Rodway 2000: 32–66), I find that *peri* (root *par-*) regularly forms the 3rd singular preterite in *-is*.¹⁰⁶ The 3rd singular preterite indicative of the verb *ym(c)hoelyd* only occurs once in this corpus with the expected ending in *-es* (Haycock 1987: 30.1 = Evans 1910: 65.25).¹⁰⁷ There are two 3rd singular preterite indicative forms of *lledu* in the corpus: the expected *lled6ys* (Costigan (Bosco) et al. 1995b: 19.29) and the rather less expected *ledas* (Haycock 1983–4: 60.2 = Evans 1910: 54.17). For the other verbs excluded by Thomas which feature neither in the published volumes of Lloyd-Jones's *Geirfa* or in the corpus of poetry examined in my thesis (*llafasu*, *llamu*, *ymladd* and *ymwanu*), I can provide less information. I ignored endings other than *-ws* / *-wys* and *-awdd* in the texts examined in the present paper and in the prose texts from thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts surveyed in my thesis (Rodway 2000: 67–130), so I cannot venture a judgement on which endings occurred most frequently with these verbs. I have found examples of *-ws* / *-wys* with *llafasu*,¹⁰⁸ *llamu*,¹⁰⁹ and *ymladd*.¹¹⁰ I suspect that *ymwanu* would regularly take a *t*-preterite

¹⁰¹ I am equally mystified by the exclusion of this verb, a denominative containing the Celtic root **let-* < Indo-European **plet-*: see Thomas et al. (1950–2002: 2126–7 and 2128).

¹⁰² Note that Thomas does not explicitly state which verbs he excluded from his figures: I have inferred that he left out those listed above by comparing his lists (Thomas 2000: 46–7) with mine (see appendix below). Note that Thomas does not include a list of forms from the Peniarth 7 version of *Peredur*.

¹⁰³ In addition to the examples cited by Lloyd-Jones, note *chyvarchus*, Jones (1971: 78.2); *di6lann6s*, Peniarth 14, 10.9, 25.27 and 28.19 (available at Isaac and Rodway (2002)); *gad6s*, Peniarth 44, 48.16 and 60.6 (available at Isaac and Rodway (2002)), Lewis (1942: 143.2); *gad6ys*, Lewis (1942: 46.27 and 192.30).

¹⁰⁴ For *daroganu*, note *darogann6ys*, Evans and Jones 1973: 144.36 (= *darogan6ys*, Rhys and Evans 1887: 215.4); *daroganus*, Evans (1977: 5.22), Lewis (1942: 206.26).

¹⁰⁵ Lloyd-Jones's unpublished slips are housed at the University of Wales, Bangor where they can be accessed by researchers: I have not checked them for the purposes of this paper.

¹⁰⁶ *peris*, Williams and Williams (1968: IV.14); Evans (1910: 27.23 and 28.12); Haycock (1994: 14.51) = Jarman (1982: 12.51); Haycock (1994: 12.21 and

12.34) = Jarman (1982: 29.21 and 29.34); Williams et al. (1994: 27.55); Jones and Parry Owen (1991: 3.15 and 3.208); Jones and Parry Owen (1995: 10.6 and 16.108); Costigan (Bosco) et al. (1995b: 9.14, 30.47 and 31.51); Andrews et al. (1996: 23.21 and 23.22). Cf. the innovative 3rd singular preterite indicative absolute form *perissit* at Haycock (1994: 11.14) = Evans (1910: 46.17–18). For such forms, see Rodway (2003a: 76) and references there cited.

¹⁰⁷ A rather perfunctory glance at the prose texts suggests that the ending *-es* occurs regularly with this variant, e.g. Rhys and Evans (1887: 63.15 and 97.22). The historical form of this verb is *ymchwelyd* < **ambi-swel-*, and this form regularly takes *-ws* / *-wys*, e.g. *ymchwel6ys*, Evans and Jones (1973: 43.11); *ymh6el6ys*, Evans and Jones (1973: 87.8); *emchelus*, Llanstephan 1, 46.4, 46.5, 51.28–9, 54.2–3 and 87.27 (available at Isaac and Rodway 2002); *emchwel6s*, *ibid.*, 62.26 etc.

¹⁰⁸ *lafass6ys*, Evans and Jones (1973: 176.18) = *lyuass6ys*, Rhys and Evans (1887: 241.17); *llauassus*, Lewis (1942: 33.6, 130.2, 137.2 and 202.19).

¹⁰⁹ *llam6ys*, Evans and Jones (1973: 131.19).

¹¹⁰ *emladus*, Llanstephan 1, 27.4, 96.21 and 97.8 (available at Isaac and Rodway 2002); *ymladuys*, *ibid.*, 184.19; *emladus*, Evans (1977: 18.24 and 20.18); *emladus*, Lewis and Diverres (1928: 111.1); *ymladus*, Lewis (1942: 20.22); *emladus*, Roberts (1964–6: lines 47 and 50).

form like its simplex *gwanu* 'to stab'.¹¹¹ There are grounds, therefore, for excluding *peri* and *ymchoelyd* and possibly *ymwanu*, but not, I think, the others. I have appended a list of all the forms I have collected from the texts to this paper, so should anyone wish to adjust the statistics by excluding these or other verbs, he or she has the raw materials to do so.¹¹² I am confident that this would not seriously affect my conclusions.

I have based my statistics on the earliest manuscript copy of each text, except in the cases of fragments which do not contain sufficient numbers of tokens for analysis. If we take these statistics at face value, imagining texts containing 100 per cent *-ws* / *-wys* to be the earliest and those containing 0 per cent *-ws* / *-wys* to be the latest, we can create a relative chronological table:

1. *Manawydan* (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 31–41)¹¹³ (100%)
2. *Culhwch ac Olwen* (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 226–44) (95%)
3. *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* (Llanstephan 1; Isaac and Rodway 2002: Llist 1, 59.5–64.13) (94%)
4. *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig* (Peniarth 16; Evans and Jones 1973: 90–4; Isaac and Rodway 2002: Pen 16 ff. 40v.27–45v.30) (86%)
5. *Branwen* (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 19–31)¹¹⁴ (82%)
6. *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* (Red Book; Rhys and Evans 1887: 144–61) (80%)
5. *Pwyll* (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 1–19) (72%)
6. *Math* (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 41–56) (71%)
7. *Owain* (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 114–16 and 125–8) (67%)
8. *Peredur*, White Book recension (White Book; Evans and Jones 1973: 59–89) (37%)
9. *Geraint* (Peniarth 6iv; Evans and Jones 1973: 204–25)¹¹⁵ (11%)
10. *Peredur*, Peniarth 7 recension (Peniarth 7; Evans and Jones 1973: 291–312; Goetinck 1976: 160–81) (3%)
11. *Ymborth yr Enaid* (Book of the Anchorite; Morris-Jones and Rhys 1894: 86–104); *Gwasanaeth Mair* (Shrewsbury School 11; Roberts 1961); Grammar (Peniarth 20; Williams and Jones 1934: 39–58); *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* (Red Book; Lewis 1925) (0%)

bold + underlined = 76–100% *-ws* / *-wys*

bold = 51–75% *-ws* / *-wys*

underlined = 26–50% *-ws* / *-wys*

normal = 0–25% *-ws* / *-wys*

The majority of the 'Mabinogion' tales form a group at the 'early' end of the table with 67%+ *-ws* / *-wys*. The White Book recension of *Peredur* is stranded in the middle with 37% *-ws* / *-wys*, while *Geraint* and the Peniarth 7 recension of *Peredur* lurk near the 'late' end, with 11% and 3% *-ws* / *-wys* respectively. All of the non-'Mabinogion' tales register as 'late', with 0% *-ws* / *-wys*. This is suggestive, but over simplistic. For a start, statistics can be notoriously misleading, even mendacious as famously claimed by Disraeli. This is particularly true when we are dealing with low numbers of tokens. Four of the texts considered above (*Manawydan* (9), *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* (10), *Ymborth yr Enaid* (5) and the bardic

¹¹¹ The only 3rd singular preterite indicative form recorded by Lloyd-Jones for *gwanu* is *gwant* (1931–63: 613).

¹¹² Another strong candidate for exclusion would be *go(r)ddiweddyd* 'to overtake' where the innovative form *gorddiweddawdd* replaced the historical ablauting form *goddiwawdd*. I know of no examples of ***gorddiwedd(y)s*. The same is true of *ymorddiweddyd*.

¹¹³ There is one example of *-ws* (*gyrchus* 'went') and none of *-awdd* in the fragment in Peniarth 6.ii (printed

in Evans and Jones 1973: 281–82 (282.2), also reproduced on Isaac and Rodway 2002: 4.2).

¹¹⁴ There are no tokens in the fragment in Peniarth 6.i (printed at Evans and Jones 1973: 279–80; also reproduced in Isaac and Rodway: 2002).

¹¹⁵ The fragment in Peniarth 6.iii has only four tokens (one *-wys* and three *-awdd*); printed at Evans and Jones (1973: 283–5); also reproduced in Isaac and Rodway (2002).

Grammar (5)) display ten or less tokens, and only two (the Peniarth 7 and White Book recensions of *Peredur* (67 and 99 respectively)) have more than fifty. More fundamental is the question of scribal alteration. Scholars have noted a tendency for scribes to modernize prose texts so that the language generally reflects the date of the manuscript rather than that of the text (Charles-Edwards 1989: 21–2).¹¹⁶ This is clearly not the case with most of the 'Mabinogion' tales, however. Nonetheless in some cases a degree of alteration may well have taken place. Certain orthographical, lexical and morphological features of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, for instance, were consistently modernized in the Red Book version, but retained in the White Book version. However, the 33% *-awdd* in the Red Book version is far from the 100% we would expect at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The modernizer of the Red Book version of *Culhwch* was clearly selective about which features he modernized (Rodway 2004: *passim*, especially 129–31). Who knows what the White Book scribe might have changed from his exemplar? In the above table, the texts are taken from different manuscripts whose scribes might have had very different philosophies concerning modernization of their exemplars. However, many of these texts occur in the two great medieval literary collections, the White Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest. I shall now compare the incidence of *-ws* / *-wys* vs. *-awdd* in the versions of the texts contained in these manuscripts, thus eliminating certain variables.

The White Book of Rhydderch

Manawydan (Hand D); *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* (Hand D; Evans and Jones 1973: 96) (100%)

Culhwch ac Olwen (Hands E and D) (95%)

Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig (Hand D; Evans and Jones 1973: 89–96) (89%)

Branwen (Hand D) (82%)

Pwyll (Hand D) (72%)

Math (Hand D) (71%)

Owain (Hand D) (67%)

Peredur (Hand D) (37%)

Geraint (Hand E; Evans and Jones 1973: 193–226) (3%)

Red Book of Hergest

Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig (Rhys and Evans 1887: 82–92) (83%)

Branwen (Rhys and Evans 1887: 26–43) (81%)

Breuddwyd Rhonabwy (78%)

Pwyll (Rhys and Evans 1887: 1–25) (71%)

Culhwch ac Olwen (Rhys and Evans 1887: 100–43) (67%)

Math (Rhys and Evans 1887: 59–81) (62%)

Manawydan (Rhys and Evans 1887: 44–58) (58%)

Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys (Rhys and Evans 1887: 93–9) (56%)

Owain (Rhys and Evans 1887: 162–92) (55%)

Peredur (Rhys and Evans 1887: 193–243) (29%)

Geraint (Rhys and Evans 1887: 244–95) (3%)

Grammar; *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* (0%)

¹¹⁶ Cf. the correspondence in the incidence of *-ws* / *-wys* vs. *-awdd* in the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century court poetry and in the prose manuscripts of the same period referred to above. But

cf. Peter Wynn Thomas's distinction between 'form-orientated' and 'content-orientated' scribes; Thomas (1993: *passim*, esp. 20–1).

In the case of the three 'Mabinogion' tales of which significant portions survive in early manuscripts, these do not greatly differ from the White Book versions, thus *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* shows 94% *-ws* / *-wys* in Llanstephan 1 and 100% in the White Book,¹¹⁷ *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig* has 86% *-ws* / *-wys* in Peniarth 16 and 89% in the White Book, and *Geraint* has 11% *-ws* / *-wys* in Peniarth 6iv and 3% in the White Book. In terms of scribal practise, it is noteworthy that the only White Book text in the above table with a single figure percentage of forms in *-ws* / *-wys*, *Geraint* (3% = two tokens) was copied by Hand E, whereas Hand D was responsible for all the others except *Culhwch ac Olwen*, which was also mainly copied by Hand E.¹¹⁸ However, the latter text contains only one example of *-awdd* (accounting for 5%), and this, allied with the low *-ws* / *-wys* score (11% = four tokens) in the earlier Peniarth 6iv version of *Geraint*, suggests that it was not the White Book scribe who was responsible for the low incidence of *-ws* / *-wys* in the latter text.

Of the ten texts preserved in both the White and Red Books, five have similar percentages: *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig* (White Book 89%; Red Book 83%); *Branwen* (White Book 82%; Red Book 81%); *Pwyll* (White Book 72%; Red Book 71%); *Math* (White Book 71%; Red Book 62%) and *Geraint* (White Book 3%; Red Book 3%). *Owain* should probably also be classed here: although the incomplete White Book version displays 67% *-ws* / *-wys* as opposed to 55% in the Red Book, if we examine only the portion of text common to both versions (Thomson 1968: lines 35–201 and lines 538–717), we find that the Red Book also has 67% *-ws* / *-wys*. Perhaps, therefore, the Red Book's overall 55 per cent is more representative. In the case of the other four texts, however, there is evidence of considerable, but not complete modernization in the Red Book versions: *Manawydan* (White Book 100 per cent; Red Book 58%); *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* (White Book 100%; Red Book 56%–60% in the portion of the text common to both manuscripts; Roberts 1975: lines 1–29); *Culhwch ac Olwen* (White Book 95%; Red Book 67%–60% in the portion of text common to both manuscripts; Bromwich and Evans 1992: lines 1–823); *Peredur* (White Book 37%; Red Book 29%). All of the texts in the above table are in the hand of the Red Book's principal scribe, Hywel Fychan, characterized by Peter Wynn Thomas as a 'form-orientated' scribe (Thomas 1993: 42–3). I suspect, therefore, that it was the scribe(s) of the exemplar(s) from which Hywel copied these four texts who was / were the modernizer(s) (Rodway 2004: 97).¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, despite the modernization of these texts, a pattern is still discernable. The three modernized texts with high *-ws* / *-wys* scores in the White Book (*Manawydan*, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* and *Culhwch ac Olwen*) still all have 51% + *-ws* / *-wys* in the Red Book, while *Peredur* is still in the middle, between these high *-ws* / *-wys* texts and *Geraint* (3% *-ws* / *-wys*).

Thus we have a sizeable group of high *-ws* / *-wys* texts: *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*

¹¹⁷ The extant White Book text is only a fragment containing only five tokens.

¹¹⁸ Daniel Huws has argued that part of the White Book text of *Culhwch ac Olwen* was copied by Hand D (starting in column 485, printed as lines 727–55 in Bromwich and Evans 1992); Huws (2000a: 231 and 232, n. 9). I was unable to discern the point where the hands change when I examined the manuscript on microfilm (Rodway (2004: 94, n. 3). On the similarity of Hands D and E, see Huws (2000a: 234, 237 (plates), 239–40 and 241).

¹¹⁹ The fact that *Manawydan*, alone of the *Four Branches* in the Red Book, shows significant evidence of modernisation (with regard to this variable at least) suggests that Hywel Fychan might have taken it from a different source manuscript from the other Branches. This is interesting in view of the differences between *Manawydan* and the other Branches (e.g. the lack of opening formula and the political geography which recognises the existence of England in place of the anachronistic Brittonic 'Island of the Mighty' of *Branwen*).

and *Owain*. These have 51% + *-ws* / *-wys* in all the manuscripts I have examined. Returning to the earliest manuscript table (largely vindicated by the White Book), we can further subdivide them into a 76% + group (*Branwen*, *Manawydan*, *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, *Culhwch ac Olwen* and *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*) and a 51–75% group (*Pwyll*, *Math* and *Owain*), although I would be loath to put too much emphasis on this. I think it fair to categorize all of these texts as relatively 'early', however. The White Book recension of *Peredur* is something of an anomaly with a significant minority of tokens in *-ws* / *-wys* (37% in the White Book, 29% in the Red Book). Peter Wynn Thomas analyses the difference between this and the Peniarth 7 recension (3% *-ws* / *-wys* = one token), which is generally considered to be earlier, in terms of geography (Thomas 2000).¹²⁰ All I wish to say on this matter at present is that it might bear further investigation. I shall categorize *Peredur* as a 'fairly late' text. *Geraint* is certainly a low *-ws* / *-wys* text (11%, 3% and 3% in Peniarth 6iv, the White and Red Books respectively). It must be 'late'. Finally, *Ymborth yr Enaid*, *Gwasanaeth Mair*, the Grammar and *Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain* all display 0% *-ws* / *-wys*. They can perhaps be classed as 'very late'. This may not be conclusive in the case of *Ymborth yr Enaid* or the Grammar (both of which have only five tokens), however.

It will come as no surprise perhaps that the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* and *Culhwch ac Olwen* are in the 'early' category. That they are categorized with *Breuddwyd Macsen*, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* and *Owain* may be more surprising. *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, in particular, has generally been classified as a late text, a sort of pastiche of the other native tales (Lloyd-Morgan 1991: 183–93). The high incidence of *-ws* / *-wys* in it need not hinder this view, however. The author may well have deliberately used archaic sounding forms to ape the usage of the tales he was satirizing.¹²¹ Another surprise is that the 'Three Romances' are all in different categories, with *Owain* seemingly earlier than the others, and *Geraint* almost as late as the non-'Mabinogion' texts.

Needless to say, my categories are loose and subjective. If we compare them to the data from the court poetry and from the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts, we might suggest that the texts in the 'early' group date from before the middle of the thirteenth century, with *Peredur* and *Geraint* belonging to the second half of the thirteenth-century, and the non-'Mabinogion' texts being fourteenth-century. This is frustratingly imprecise, but study of other linguistic data, less amenable to statistical analysis might narrow the dates down for individual texts.¹²²

5. Conclusion

This paper did not set out to make any concrete assertions about the where, who, when and why of the texts considered. If we have got any closer to an understanding of their context, it can only be measured in inches. What I hope that I have done, however, is to clear the decks a little and suggest some of the limitations which we must accept when

¹²⁰ Daniel Huws tentatively suggests that Peniarth 7 was a Gwynedd manuscript (2000b: 4–5) while the White Book is undoubtedly southern, quite possibly emanating from the scriptorium of Strata Florida (2000a: 252–4).

¹²¹ For an entertaining modern example of this, see

<http://kymrokanol.blogspot.com>. I believe 'Y Kymro Kanol' has missed a trick by not including any verbs in *-ws* / *-wys* in his posts to date (checked 24 July 2006).

¹²² See, for example, my study of the language of *Culhwch ac Olwen* (Rodway 2005 and 2004).

working in this field. Hopefully my tentative analysis of one aspect of the linguistic evidence of the texts will provide a starting point for more in-depth examination. Ultimately, however, we should not get unduly bogged down in intractable questions of location, authorship and date, to which incontestable answers are likely to remain elusive. By far the most interesting question, and one which I have barely considered in this paper, is that of *causa scribendi* (if we widen this sufficiently to admit literary criticism in general). We do not need to know the exact circumstances of a text's composition in order to appreciate it as literature. I am not exactly advocating a Barthesian approach here: we must never forget that these are medieval texts and their original audiences would have reacted differently to them than we do.¹²³ The purpose of the satire in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, for instance, is frustratingly elusive without context. But the pathos of Branwen's death, the knockabout humour of Arthur's encounter with the Very Black Witch, the sensual mysticism of the 'Pryd y Mab' description and countless other passages in these texts which have thrilled, moved or disappointed modern readers, as they no doubt did their original medieval audience, demand a creative critical response that transcends sterile repetition of unanswerable questions about context.¹²⁴

Appendix: The verbal forms in -wys / -ws and -awdd

Pwyll (White Book)¹²⁵

canlyn6ys 4.5; *gerd6ys* 8.33–4; *gych6ynn6ys* 1.9; *kych6ynn6ys* 37.16–17; *gytsynny6ys* 34.26; *kynynd6ys* 37.36; *gyrch6ys* 5.14, 9.32; *diffygy6ys* 12.23–4; *dyuynn6ys* 30.12–13; *eisted6ys* 26.11; *g6ledych6ys* 37.32; *mag6ys* 36.34; *uedyly6ys* 10.2; *medyly6ys* 10.29; *mynn6ys* 37.22; *ball6ys* 14.20; *dreul6ys* 9.25, 22.35; *thygy6ys* 15.36–16.1; *ymyrr6ys* 37.15
kerdaud 9.16; *gerda6d* 22.32; *gymhellaud* 17.22; *hebryghaud* 5.1; *llunnya6d* 25.31; *ynna6d* 38.6; *barhaud* 26.32–3; *thygya6d* 29.15

Total: 29 tokens – 21 -ws / -wys vs. 8 -awdd (= 72% -ws / -wys)

Pwyll (Red Book)¹²⁶

kanlynnwys 3.11; *gerd6ys* 6.6; *gychwynnwys* 1.5; *kychwynn6ys* 24.28–9; *gytsynny6ys* 22.26–7; *kynnyd6ys* 25.11; *kyrchwys* 4.4; *gyrchwys* 6.23; *diffygywys* 8.11; *dyuynn6ys* 19.26; *eistedwys* 17.2; *g6ledych6ys* 25.9; *mag6ys* 24.17; *vedyly6ys* 6.26; *medyly6ys* 7.9; *mynnwys* 25.2; *ballwys* 9.15; *dreulwys* [sic] 6.20; *dreul6ys* 14.21; *ymyrr6ys* 24.28
kerda6d 6.15; *gerda6d* 14.19; *gymhella6d* 11.9; *hebrygya6d* 3.27; *llunya6d* 16.23; *ynna6d* 25.16; *barhaa6d* 17.15; *thygya6d* 19.6

Total: 28 tokens – 20 -ws / -wys vs. 8 -awdd (= 71% -ws / -wys)

¹²³ On the 'alterity' of medieval texts, see Jauss (1979).

¹²⁴ I am very grateful to Dr Andrew Breeze and Dr R. Iestyn Daniel for their helpful comments on drafts of this paper. They are not responsible for any of the conclusions reached in it, however, nor for any remaining errors.

¹²⁵ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹²⁶ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

Branwen (Peniarth 6i)

No tokens.

Branwen (White Book)¹²⁷

amla6ys 50.20; *kerd6ys* 50.22; *kych6ynn6ys* 48.1; *gych6yn6ys* 60.24–25; *gynsyn6ys* 55.32; *kyrch6ys* 47.14; *kysc6ys* 41.6; *gysc6ys* 41.21; *dam6ein6ys* 48.16; *edrych6ys* 60.4; *oreskyn6ys* 50.21; *nessa6ys* 39.20; *drig6ys* 50.11; *ymch6el6ys* 43.11
kyrcha6d 55.9; *gisca6d* 39.8; *barha6d* 45.8

Total: 17 tokens – 14 -ws / -wys vs. 3 -awdd (= 82% -ws / -wys)

Branwen (Red Book)¹²⁸

amylha6ys 35.17–18; *kerd6ys* 35.18; *kychwynn6ys* 33.18–19; *gychwynn6ys* 42.30; *gyngytywys* 39.13; *kyrch6ys* 33.4; *kysc6ys* 28.15; *gysc6ys* 28.24–5; *damwein6ys* 33.27; *edrych6ys* 42.18; *wisc6ys* 27.1; *nessawys* 27.8; *dricywys* 35.12
kyrcha6d 38.30; *gordiweda6d* 29.17; *barhaa6d* 31.16

Total: 16 tokens – 13 -ws / -wys vs. 3 -awdd (= 81% -ws / -wys)

Manawydan (Peniarth 6ii)¹²⁹

gyrchus 282.2

Manawydan (White Book)¹³⁰

kerd6ys 75.8; *gych6ynn6ys* 73.7; *gyrch6ys* 69.35; *kyrch6ys* 76.12; *datrith6ys* 80.35; *diua6ys* 74.10; *dygy6ys* 67.2; *l6yd6ys* 66.32; *dreul6ys* 72.33

Total: 9 tokens – 9 -ws / -wys vs. 0 -awdd (= 100% -ws / -wys)

Manawydan (Red Book)¹³¹

kerd6ys 54.7; *gychwynn6ys* 52.22; *kyrch6ys* 55.2; *datrith6ys* 58.15; *diuawys* 53.16; *l6yd6ys* 48.8; *treul6ys* 52.16

gyrcha6d 50.16; *dygyda6d* 48.11; *edrycha6d* 58.18–19; *gellynga6d* 58.14; *ymauaela6d* 50.25

Total: 12 tokens – 7 -ws / -wys vs. 5 -awdd (= 58% -ws / -wys)

Math (White Book)¹³²

wyry6ys 94.8; *chanlyn6ys* 97.20; *canlyn6ys* 107.18; *gerd6ys* 101.34, 109.2; *kyuanhed6ys* 101.12, 101.15; *kyrch6ys* 87.29; *gyrch6ys* 89.21, 89.26, 93.36, 94.20, 109.33; *edrych6ys* 107.24;

¹²⁷ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹²⁸ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

¹²⁹ Reference to page and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹³⁰ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹³¹ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

¹³² References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

ellyng6ys 97.26; *all6ys* 97.36, 102.24; *oreskynn6ys* 111.10; *g6ledych6ys* 101.15–16, 111.11; *gystl6ys* 88.5; *hud6ys* 85.5; *lauwry6ys* 104.33; *ludy6ys* 103.18; *luny6ys* 96.23; *medr6ys* 97.14; *synny6ys* 94.31; *syny6ys* 102.22; *ymh6el6ys* 87.8

byrya6d 110.6, 110.25, 111.2; *cama6d* 93.19; *cara6d* 94.33; *gerda6d* 95.2; *cudya6d* 93.29, 93.30; *dechrea6t* 85.4; *dyg6yda6d* 108.17; *gasca6d* 102.2; *ymgeneuina6d* 94.32–3

Total: 41 tokens – 29 -ws / -wys vs. 12 -awdd (= 71% -ws / -wys)

*Math (Red Book)*¹³³

canlyn6ys 71.8; *kanlyn6ys* 78.18; *gerd6ys* 74.14, 79.21; *kyuanhed6ys* 74.1, 74.2; *kyrch6ys* 63.27; *gyrch6ys* 65.7, 65.10, 68.17, 68.30, 80.8–9; *ellyg6ys* 71.12; *allwys* 71.17; *all6ys* 74.30; *oresgynn6ys* 81.9; *g6ledych6ys* 74.3, 81.9; *g6ystl6ys* 64.5; *hud6ys* 61.28; *lauwrywys* 76.20; *lludywys* 75.18; *lunywys* 70.16; *medr6ys* 71.4; *synny6ys* 69.6, 74.29

uyrya6d 68.22; *byrya6d* 80.14, 80.26, 81.4; *cama6d* 68.8; *cara6d* 69.7; *gerda6d* 69.10; *cudya6d* 68.13 (2); *dechreuawd* 61.28; *dyg6yda6d* 79.9; *edrycha6d* 74.27, 78.22; *gordiweda6d* 79.28; *wasca6d* 74.16; *ymgeneuina6d* 69.6

Total: 42 tokens – 26 -ws / -wys vs. 16 -awdd (= 62% -ws / -wys)

*Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig (Peniarth 16iii)*¹³⁴

gerdus 90a.9; *kerdus* 91b.34, 92a.40, 92b.9; *kerd6s* 93b.38; *kych6ynn6s* 92b.23; *kyscus* 90a.28; *kysc6s* 94a.23; *esgynn6s* 91b.31–2; *goresgynn6s* 94a.2–3; *gyrr6s* 94a.5; *medylyus* 94b.10
dewissaud 94a.34; *esgynnaud* 91b.20

Total: 14 tokens – 12 -ws / -wys vs. 2 -awdd (= 86% -ws / -wys)

*Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig (White Book)*¹³⁵

kerd6ys 182.33, 183.36, 186.24–5, 188.30; *gychwynn6ys* 179.4; *kychwynn6ys* 184.11–12; *kysc6ys* 179.23, 187.11; *eisted6ys* 190.28–9; *escynn6ys* 182.30; *g6ed6ys* 190.30; *g6erescynn6ys* 186.29, 188.31; *gyrr6ys* 186.31; *medyly6ys* 187.40; *trigy6ys* 191.13

dewissa6d 187.22; *eisteda6d* 188.33

Total: 18 tokens – 16 -ws / -wys vs. 2 -awdd (= 89% -ws / -wys)

*Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig (Red Book)*¹³⁶

kerdwys 85.15, 90.4; *kerd6ys* 86.10, 88.14; *kychwynn6ys* 86.19; *kysc6ys* 82.18; *kysg6ys* 88.29; *eistedwys* 91.20; *esgynn6ys* 85.14; *goresgynn6ys* 88.17, 90.5; *g6edwys* 91.20; *gyrr6ys* 88.18; *medylywys* 89.16; *trigrywys* 92.3

gychwynnawd 82.6; *dewissa6d* 89.6; *eisteda6d* 90.6

Total: 18 tokens – 15 -ws / -wys vs. 3 -awdd (= 83% -ws / -wys)

¹³³ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

¹³⁴ References to page, column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹³⁵ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹³⁶ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

*Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys (Llanstephan 1)*¹³⁷

atnewyd6s 59.9; *kwdy6s* 63.13; *kychwynn6s* 63.25; *kytsynnyws* 59.27; *kynn6ll6s* 61.5; *damkylchyn6s* 59.10; *dy6ynn6s* 62.27; *dygwyd6s* 60.5; *orchymynn6s* 59.11; *gwledychws* 64.13; *gwyly6s* 63.17; *lywy6s* 60.3; *parha6s* 60.4; *peydy6s* 63.13; *plyg6s* 63.11; *emchwel6s* 62.26

gressaa6d 61.12

Total: 17 tokens – 16 -ws / -wys vs. 1 -awdd (= 94% -ws / -wys)

*Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys (White Book)*¹³⁸

atnewyd6ys 191.35; *gytsynhy6ys* 192.27; *damgylchyn6ys* 191.36–7; *orchymynn6ys* 191.38–192.1; *ly6ywys* 192.39

Total: 5 tokens – 5 -ws / -wys vs. 0 -awdd (= 100% -ws / -wys)

*Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys (Red Book)*¹³⁹

atnewydwys 93.6; *kudywys* 98.11; *gychwynn6ys* 99.1; *damgylchyn6ys* 93.7; *dywynn6ys* 97.23; *dyg6ydwys* 94.15; *orchymynn6ys* 93.8; *g6ylwys* 98.19; *peidywys* 98.14; *blyg6ys* 98.9

gytsynnya6d 94.5; *diffetha6d* 97.27; *dysga6d* 97.25; *ressawa6d* 95.26; *g6areda6d* 99.18; *lywya6d* 94.13; *llywya6d* 99.20; *barhaa6d* 94.14

Total: 18 tokens – 10 -ws / -wys vs. 8 -awdd (= 56 % -ws / -wys)

*Culhwch ac Olwen (White Book)*¹⁴⁰

amdiu6yn6ys 473.13–14; *anwayd6ys* 471.22; *ars6yd6ys* 471.15; *ass6yn6ys* 462.9; *hass6yn6ys* 470.15; *cheiss6ys* 463.24; *drychau6ys* 469.20; *all6ys* 463.17; [*gor*]yskynn6ys 463.34¹⁴¹; *lygr6ys* 488.26; *uynn6ys* 452.4¹⁴²; *olrebys* 469.21; *flyg6ys* 463.30; *rith6ys* 481.2; *syrth6ys* 478.34; *thrig6ys* 463.39; *tyu6ys* 464.2; *dygwys* 454.25–6; *yscar6ys* 463.5

darda6d 478.19

Total: 20 tokens – 19 -ws / -wys vs. 1 -awdd (= 95% -ws / -wys)

*Culhwch ac Olwen (Red Book)*¹⁴³

anwaedwys 114.9; *ars6yd6ys* 114.6; *ass6yn6ys* 107.21; *hass6yn6yn6ys* [sic] 113.8; *cheiss6ys* 108.20; *kych6ynn6ys* 138.6, 138.15, 142.20; *kynnnull6ys* 136.18; *kysc6ys* 143.3; *digriby6ys* 139.10; *dyg6yd6ys* 129.27, 141.12; *dygyrch6ys* 141.3; *esgynn6ys* 135.4; *all6ys* 108.16; *gouynn6ys* 137.6; *oresgynn6ys* 108.24; *gyrr6ys* 113.15, 135.13; *yr6ys* 130.29; *lygr6ys* 115.21; *olrewys* 112.18; *fflyg6ys* 108.22; *rith6ys* 129.19, 130.1, 137.8; *tyfwys* 129.27; *tyu6ys* 130.8; *tynn6ys* 130.25; *dyngh6ys* 102.7; *ymyrr6ys* 133.30–134.1

¹³⁷ References to page and line in Isaac and Rodway (2002), Llanstephan 1.

¹³⁸ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹³⁹ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

¹⁴⁰ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹⁴¹ The beginning of this word is illegible in the manuscript.

¹⁴² Evans and Jones (1973; cf. Bromwich and Evans (1992) 1, n. 2) print *ffynn6ys* here (with dots under the <ff> to indicate uncertainty), but cf. Jones (1948: 84).

¹⁴³ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

disgynna6d 105.8; *dyg6yda6d* 118.20; *dyrchaua6d* 112.18; *ochela6d* 133.7; *llathruda6d* 101.19; *vynna6d* 100.2; *darda6d* 119.14; *thrigya6d* 108.27; *tyua6d* 108.27; *ymaua6d* 142.29–30; *ymlada6d* 137.3, 137.5; *ymordiwe6d* 135.23, 138.24, 138.30, 139.27, 141.15

Total: 51 tokens – 34 -ws / -wys vs. 17 -awdd (= 67% -ws / -wys)

*Breuddwyd Rhonabwy (Red Book)*¹⁴⁴

kerd6ys 155.22; *kyuarch6ys* 153.26; *kynnigywys* 144.11; *kysg6ys* 146.17; *disgynn6ys* 146.13; *govynn6ys* 158.30; *g6asg6ys* 158.26; *ysgein6ys* 149.30

gyuarcha6d 156.29; *gordiwe6d* 147.9

Total: 10 tokens – 8 -ws / -wys vs. 2 -awdd (= 80% -ws / -wys)

*Owain (White Book)*¹⁴⁵

gyrch6ys 250.23; *diarchen6ys* 226.17; *6yly6ys* 256.25; *g6yly6ys* 256.27; *myn6ys* 254.18; *bebylly6ys* 254.9; *drigy6ys* 250.3; *yspeil6ys* 232.30

canyhada6d 249.38; *kyuarcha6d* 225.38; *peidya6d* 231.37; *dyua6d* 250.27

Total: 12 tokens – 8 -ws / -wys vs. 4 -awdd (= 67% -ws / -wys)

*Owain (Red Book)*¹⁴⁶

kerd6ys 192.13; *kych6ynn6ys* 180.5; *gyrch6ys* 183.20, 191.10; *kyweiry6ys* 188.15–16; *diarchenwys* 164.22; *dyg6yd6ys* 190.5; *goleuha6ys* 180.20; *g6isg6ys* 178.8; *wyl6ys* 188.14; *g6yl6ys* 188.15; *mynn6ys* 186.21; *nerth6ys* 190.21; *pall6ys* 190.13; *bebyllywys* 186.15; *trigrywys* 183.7, 192.18; *yspeil6ys* 169.15–16

adeua6d 170.4; *atteba6d* 176.18; *byrya6d* 189.27; *kanhada6d* 183.4; *kerda6d* 171.1; *kerd/da6d* 188.16; *gl6yfa6d* 172.13; *kyuarcha6d* 164.11; *dywana6d* 170.28; *edrycha6d* 172.4; *wisga6d* 181.11; *medra6d* 172.21–2; *mynna6d* 190.6; *neidya6d* 190.1–2; *ymlada6d* 191.8

Total: 33 tokens – 18 -ws / -wys vs. 15 -awdd (= 55% -ws / -wys)

*Peredur (Peniarth 7)*¹⁴⁷

gyhyrdws 609.20; *disgynnws* 606.1

argywedawd 622.28–9; *atebawd* 622.25–6; *attebawd* 631.33; *uwryawd* 609.23, 614.19; *uyreawd* 609.27; *vyryawd* 610.1; *byryawd* 618.22, 618.24, 619.6, 632.22; *bwryawd* 623.1, 632.27, 644.17, 646.21; *gerdaw[d]* 610.1; *kerdod* 619.29, 620.20; *gerda6d* 625.24; *kerdawd* 631.9, 640.29, 645.4; *gyuarchawd* 641.16; *daroganawd* 626.5; *diwlannawd* 640.27–8; *digwydawd* 627.13–14; *dymchwelawd* 632.9–10; *dywanawd* 622.3, 626.5, 631.11; *edrychawd* 645.35; *eistedod* 612.2; *estedawd* [sic] 628.8–9; *gellynghawd* 610.3; *govynnawd* 610.26, 613.3, 614.7, 619.7, 625.10, 628.13, 631.31, 639.31, 644.20, 645.13, 645.20; *wassanaethawd* 628.10; *wisgawd* 648.23; *gyrrawd* 630.13, 631.1–2; *ledawd* 621.16; *llewygawd* 613.27; *medrod* 616.10;

¹⁴⁴ References to page and line in Rhŷs and Evans (1887).

¹⁴⁵ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹⁴⁶ References to page and line in Rhŷs and Evans (1887).

¹⁴⁷ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

vedeginaethawd 623.15–16; *nacaod* 646.34; *ssymudawd* 623.25; *symudawd* 623.25; *trigawd* 621.34–622.1; *tstawd* [sic] 628.13–14; *dynnawd* 637.34; *ymwana6d* 625.3; *hynienyawd* [sic] 639.21; *ystyngawd* 605.8

Total: 67 tokens – 2 -ws / -wys vs. 65 -awdd (= 3% -ws / -wys)¹⁴⁸

*Peredur (White Book)*¹⁴⁹

byry6ys 126.12, 137.22, 141.14; *uyry6ys* 126.29, 126.32, 132.9, 136.19, 137.6, 137.19, 138.24; *vyry6ys* 132.16, 163.23; *gerd6ys* 125.34, 132.36; *gychwynn6ys* 126.23; *gychwyn6ys* 126.36; *gyhyrd6ys* 126.8; *gyrch6ys* 122.11, 127.11–12, 129.5, 129.7, 136.14, 137.4, 139.26, 151.4–5; *darogann6ys* 144.36; *diffann6ys* 157.4; *dilyn6ys* 145.25–6; *dyg6yd6ys* 119.16, 135.16; *ellyg6ys* 176.27; *gofynn6ys* 130.25; *wasg6ys* 119.23; *g6ledych6ys* 165.23; *lafass6ys* 176.18; *llam6ys* 131.19; *trigy6ys* 152.2

vyrya6d 126.17, 163.17, 163.22–3; *byrya6d* 136.18, 151.20, 163.16, 173.15; *uyrya6d* 161.2, 161.4; *gerda6d* 121.28, 126.26, 138.30, 145.23–4, 149.20, 170.6, 170.24, 177.4; *kerda6d* 150.2, 156.20, 171.14; *kych6ynna6d* 155.25–6; *gyfarcha6d* 157.30, 159.7; *gyhyrda6d* 161.36; *gymhella6d* 118.2; *kyrcha6d* 151.15; *gyrcha6d* 151.24, 176.26; *gyt tunna6d* 167.18–19; *gywira6d* 172.35; *wharya6d* 163.39; *dealla6d* 146.24; *edrycha6d* 152.17–18, 163.7, 164.29; *eisteda6d* 130.13; *heneina6d* 155.36; *ada6d* 121.2; *ellyga6d* 152.5, 172.14; *ofynna6d* 152.19, 164.2, 172.17; *gofyna6d* 156.8–9; *ofyna6d* 161.7; *ordina6d* 151.14–15; *graessa6a6d* 171.33; *g6aharda6d* 178.17–18; *wisca6d* 147.28; *6rthneua6d* 172.22; *leda6d* 139.27–8; *mynna6d* 168.6; *parana6d* [sic] 149.12; *bara6d* 163.40; *symuda6d* 141.27, 142.8–9; *tynna6d* 154.10; *ymchoela6d* 119.13, 151.21; *ymhoela6d* 141.18; *ymlada6d* 175.23; *ymwana6d* 143.35

Total: 99 tokens – 37 -ws / -wys vs. 62 -awdd (= 37% -ws / -wys)¹⁵⁰

*Peredur (Red Book)*¹⁵¹

vyrywys 200.11, 204.24; *vyry6ys* 208.30; *byrywys* 200.18, 209.2, 212.5; *gych6ynn6ys* 199.30, 200.16; *gychwynn6ys* 200.14–15, 200.22–3; *gychwynnwys* 203.20, 205.7; *gehyrd6ys* 200.6; *gymhell6ys* 194.3; *gyrch6ys* 197.12, 208.4; *gyrchwys* 200.30, 210.25; *kyrch6ys* 202.10; *gyrch6y[s]* 208.19; *darogan6ys* 215.4; *diffann6ys* 224.29; *dilyn6ys* 215.20–1; *dyg6ydwys* 207.7; *ellygh6ys* 241.22; *wasg6ys* 195.9; *g6ledych6ys* 232.4; *lyuass6ys* 241.17; *trigrywys* 220.23

vyrya6d 200.8, 204.19, 208.7, 208.20, 228.3, 230.9, 230.12; *uyrya6d* 209.29,¹⁵² 228.2; *byrya6d* 230.8, 238.28; *gerda6d* 210.4, 215.19, 218.24, 236.4, 236.16, 242.3; *kerda6d* 219.6, 224.15, 237.5; *gychwynna6d* 196.30; *kychwynna6d* 223.24; *gyuarcha6d* 225.17; *gehyrda6d* 228.27; *gyrcha6d* 220.1, 220.13, 241.22; *kyrcha6d* 220.8; *gyttuuna6d* 233.21; *gywira6d* 238.14; *wharya6d* 230.22; *dyalla6d* 216.15; *dineua6d* 197.7; *dyg6yda6d* 195.4, 201.22; *edrycha6d* 230.3; *etrycha6d* 231.12; *ellyga6d* 220.26; *ellyngha6d* 238.1; *eheneina6d* 224.1; *ffusta6d* 205.12; *ada6d* 193.13; *gofynna6d* 203.13; *ovynna6d* 221.5, 228.6, 230.24, 238.3;

¹⁴⁸ 3.33% (i. e. 96.67% -awdd) according to Thomas (2000b: 34). See above for Thomas's criteria for inclusion of verbs in his statistics which differ from mine. He notes 60 tokens from the Peniarth 7 version of *Peredur* (2000b: 34) but does not list them.

¹⁴⁹ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹⁵⁰ 40.51% (i. e. 59.49% -awdd) according to Thomas (2000b: 34). He has a sample of 79 tokens (see Thomas 2000b: 46–7 for a complete list).

¹⁵¹ References to page and line in Rhŷs and Evans (1887).

¹⁵² Not 209.28 as recorded in Thomas (2000b: 44).

govynna6d 224.7; *ordinhaa6d* 220.8; *gressawa6d* 237.17; *g6aharda6d* 243.7; *wisga6d* 217.11; *6rthneua6d* 238.6; *leda6d* 210.26; *mynna6d* 234.10; *neidya6d* 204.1; *para6d* 218.19, 230.23; *symuda6d* 212.13, 212.24; *dala6d* 228.17; *trigya6d* 209.7; *tynna6d* 222.19; *ymchoela6d* 211.28, 220.11–12; *ymhoela6d* 212.8; *ymlada6d* 240.24; *ymwana6d* 214.7

Total: 96 tokens – 28 -ws / -wys vs. 68 -awdd (= 29% -ws / -wys)¹⁵³

*Geraint (Peniarth 6.iii)*¹⁵⁴

gynhad6ys 285.2

byrrya6t 283.5; *gerta6t* 284.13; *ph[ar]haa6t* 283.4

*Geraint (Peniarth 6.iv)*¹⁵⁵

ganhad6ys 225.23; *kychwynn6ys* 206.17; *kyrch6ys* 210.19; *gorchymynn6ys* 204.2

arofuna6d 207.36; *byrya6d* 210.20, 216.28, 217.39; *kanhada6d* 206.34; *gerda6d* 216.2–3, 217.20, 220.36; *kychwyna6d* 220.33; *kyrcha6d* 208.7, 210.21; *disgynna6d* 211.21; *dyg6yda6d* 217.38–9, 221.26; *eheda6d* 208.15; *eisteda6d* 224.17; *escynna6d* 219.18; *herbynya6d* 210.14; *ffr6ynglyma6d* 211.22–3; *odefa6d* 225.16; *ofynna6d* 214.24; *gofynna6d* 215.32; *orffowyssa6d* 208.15; *g6assanaetha6d* 213.23; *hebryga6d* 215.40; *llonyda6d* 205.2; *mynna6d* 213.39, 219.24; *r6yma6d* 211.22; *tauella6d* 213.22; *thygya6d* 211.14; *tynna6d* 222.40

Total: 38 tokens – 4 -ws / -wys vs. 34 -awdd (= 11% -ws / -wys)

*Geraint (White Book)*¹⁵⁶

kerd6ys 402.40; *dechreu6ys* 413.40

hadilya6d [sic] 394.32; *arouuna6d* 414.28–9; *byrya6d* 420.2, 432.15, 434.39; *canyhadada6d* [sic] 412.19–20; *canhyada6d* 440.23; *kerda6d* 388.14, 445.21; *gerda6d* 431.3, 431.25, 433.40, 440.29.30; *kychwyna6d* 411.26; *gyhyrda6d* 445.21; *kymhella6d* 404.33; *kyrcha6d* 415.11, 419.21, 420.4; *diala6d* 404.2; *dilyna6d* 440.30; *diskynna6d* 422.3–4; *dyg6yda6d* 434.37, 442.7, 442.11–12; *edrycha6d* 431.8; *eisteda6d* 394.24, 400.41; *herbynya6d* 419.29–30; *fr6ynglyma6d* 422.6; *gada6d* 399.7; *galla6d* 437.8; *odeua6d* 449.32–3; *ouyna6d* 428.6; *gorchymynha6d* 406.39–40; *orfywyssa6d* 415.28; *wasanaetha6d* 394.25–6; *gwassanaetha6d* 426.4; *wisca6d* 400.36, 430.15–16; *gyrra6d* 414.17; *hebrygha6d* 430.40; *heda6d* 415.29; *hella6d* 402.15; *llonyda6d* 408.36; *mynha6d* 426.38–9; *mynna6d* 436.6, 437.12; *barha6d* 432.12; *r6yma6d* 422.4–5; *ssymuda6d* 438.41; *dauella6d* 426.2; *thygya6d* 421.30–1; *dyna6d* 444.35; *ymhoela6d* 441.33; *ymordiweada6d* 403.42–404.1, 405.2, 434.8–9; *ymyra6d* 405.14; *yskynna6d* 437.30–1

Total: 62 tokens – 2 -ws / -wys vs. 60 -awdd (= 3%)

¹⁵³ 32.05% (i. e. 67.95% -awdd) according to Thomas (2000b: 34). He has a sample of 78 tokens (see Thomas 2000b: 46–7 for a full list).

¹⁵⁴ References to page and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹⁵⁵ References to page and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

¹⁵⁶ References to column and line in Evans and Jones (1973).

*Geraint (Red Book)*¹⁵⁷

kerd6ys 258.20; *dechreu6ys* 267.4

hadeila6d 252.1; *arouuna6d* 267.21; *byrya6d* 271.17, 280.25, 282.27; *kanhada6d* 265.29, 287.6–7; *kerda6d* 246.26, 268.3, 291.20; *gerda6d* 279.26, 280.9, 282.3; *kych6ynna6d* 265.10; *gyhyrda6d* 290.28; *kymhella6d* 260.2–3; *kyrcha6d* 271.16, 271.18; *diala6d* 259.15; *diodeua6d* 294.1; *disgynna6d* 273.3; *dyg6yda6d* 282.26, 288.14; *edrycha6d* 279.30; *eheda6d* 268.12; *eisteda6d* 251.30, 257.3; *herbynna6d* 271.10; *esgynna6d* 285.1–2; *ffr6ynglyma6d* 273.4; *gada6d* 255.22; *ouynna6d* 277.18; *gorchymynnawd* 261.20; *orffowyssa6d* 268.12; *wassanaetha6d* 252.1; *g6assanaetha6d* 276.2; *wisga6d* 256.30; *gyrra6d* 267.14; *hebryngha6d* 279.24; *hel/la6d* 258.6; *llonyda6d* 263.5; *mynna6d* 276.20, 283.24; *barhaa6d* 280.24; *r6yma6d* 273.3; *saua6d* 254.23; *symuda6d* 285.30; *dauella6d* 276.1; *tynna6d* 290.13; *ymchoela6d* 288.5; *ymordiweada6d* 259.14, 260.9, 282.9; *ymyra6d* 260.15

Total: 58 tokens – 2 -ws / -wys vs. 56 -awdd (= 3% -ws / -wys)

*Ymborth yr Enaid (Book of the Anchorite)*¹⁵⁸

dechreva6d 92.8; *alla6d* 92.17; *galla6d* 92.18; *godeua6d* 90.29; *syrrhya6d* 91.9, 97.29

Total: 6 tokens – 0 -ws / -wys vs. 6 -awdd (= 0% -ws / -wys)

*Gwasanaeth Mair (Shrewsbury School 11)*¹⁵⁹

vendigawd 6.7; *goffaawd* 36.10; *greawd* 18.12, 18.14, 23.4; *kyweiryawd* 5.8; *discynnawd* 38.18, 38.19, 38.20; *drychafawd* 16.23, 17.4, 19.7, 36.6; *edrychawd* 35.27; *eistedawd* 23.27; *escynnawd* 23.25; *gobeithawd* 30.26; *gowryawd* 19.6, 19.26; *gorchymynnawd* 16.7, 38.21; *gwarandawd* 22.17; *waredawd* 18.14; *gwascarawd* 36.4; *wiscaawd* 11.21; *gwiscawd* 11.22; *wledychawd* 11.21; *wyrawd* 30.9; *uagawd* 18.12; *vawrhaawd* 27.22; *mawrhaawd* 27.23; *barawd* 19.11; *phrynowd* 19.6; *ranghawd* 17.3; *safawd* 37.18; *seilyawd* 1.25, 5.7; *sychawd* 12.24, 13.13; *drywanawd* 25.27; *trywanawd* 25.28; *dyghawd* 19.15; *tyghawd* 37.7; *tygawd* 37.25; *tynnawd* 36.5; *ymdrychafawd* 4.7, 35.26; *ymwregyssawd* 11.22; *ymkynhalyawd* 30.25

Total: 49 tokens – 0 -ws / -wys vs. 49 -awdd (= 0% -ws / -wys)

*Bardic Grammar (Peniarth 20)*¹⁶⁰

dychmygawd 51.26; *llifawd* 47.34, 52.48; *llithrawd* 51.32; *lludyawd* 52.49

Total: 5 tokens – 0 -ws / -wys vs. 5 -awdd (= 0% -ws / -wys)

*Bardic Grammar (Red Book)*¹⁶¹

lliawd 13.8; *llithrawd* 11.36; *lludyawd* 13.9; *uedylyawd* 11.23

Total: 4 tokens – 0 -ws / -wys vs. 4 -awdd (= 100% -awdd)

¹⁵⁷ References to page and line in Rhys and Evans (1887).

¹⁵⁸ References to page and line in Morris Jones and Rhys (1894).

¹⁵⁹ References to page and line in Roberts (1961).

¹⁶⁰ References to page and line in Williams and Jones (1934).

¹⁶¹ References to page and line in Williams and Jones (1934).

Chwedlau Saith Doethion Rhufain (Red Book)¹⁶²

adolygawd 844, 879; hagreithawd 866; amgreffinnawd 1121; barnawd 1078; vyryawd 222, 321; kanhadawd 876; caplawd 245; geissawd 1102; gerdawd 658, 782; gredawd 449; grinawd 106; gychwynnawd 824; kynnigyawd 490; gyrchawd 631, 785; kyrchawd 781; gysgawd 199; damweinawd 732; datkanawd 909; dyfynnawd 3; ehedawd 1083; fflemychawd 77; adawd 364, 537; gadawd 908, 1101; gofynawd 231; ofynnawd 619, 828; ovynawd 698; gwerthawd 1048; haedawd 1133; hwydawd 899; iachawd 232; lidyawd 917; managawd 926; raculaenawd 863; rwydawd 972; symudawd 864; tremygawd 80; drigyawd 1070; thygyawd 423; tynnawd 1121; tygawd 92, 586; tyngawd 166; tyghawd 918

Total: 50 tokens – 0 -ws / -wys vs. 50 -awdd (= 0% -ws / -wys)

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¹⁶² References to line in Lewis (1925).

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