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The Irish 'Royal Sites' in History and Archaeology

Bernard Wailes

Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

SINCE this article specifically addresses a topic for which there is both historical and archaeological evidence it is as well to comment briefly upon the problems of method involved, since, oddly enough, no body of substantive and critical methods for assessing the interrelationship of these two very different types of data exists as yet: the interrelationship of historical and of archaeological method and interpretation is rarely discussed analytically, and certainly not to the point of developing a generally applicable methodology (though Liam de Paor has made some useful observations).¹

I shall comment mainly on archaeology from the viewpoint of an archaeologist, recognizing clearly my inadequacies in historical training. I am most grateful to David Dumville and Patrick Sims-Williams for their help in attempting to alleviate this fault, though any historical deficiency here must be blamed on me, not them.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

1. The surviving archaeological record does not inform us directly of the economy, social organization or ideology of past societies. It does provide immediate information on many aspects of technology, from which inferences about economy may often be drawn relatively easily. In addition, since modern archaeology almost automatically uses available environmental evidence, information and inferences about technology and economy can be augmented by reference to the local or regional climate, vegetation, natural resources, and so forth. On the other hand, economy and, particularly, technology tend to be far less well represented in written sources than matters political, social, and ideological. Thus the inherent bias of the two disciplines differs considerably, and we may not assume that the patterns to be discerned from, say, political writings will correspond closely, or indeed at all, to the patterns perceived in the technology of pottery and metal or the rural economic systems inferred from

¹'The Nature of Archaeological Research', *Studia Hibernica*, 3 (1963), 101-22 (pp. 105-11).

animal bones, agricultural implements, fields, and so on. In short, the utilitarian need not conform to the ideological, and we should not assume that it will (which is not to say that it never will).

2. Much archaeological data has no evident symbolic context or intent, in that (a) many artefacts are utilitarian, rather than for display (though of course many are both); (b) many artefacts are simply abandoned or lost, rather than being deliberately placed (for example, in graves); and (c) many features of sites are simply the vestigial traces of ruined, rotted, or destroyed structures and apparatus. An abandoned farmstead, for example, was not intended to inform either contemporaries or future generations of anything; the archaeologist in this case excavates a site that is, *in this sense*, unintentional. There are of course many sites that are, again in this sense, intentional. These, which we might call monumental—for example, temples and burial mounds—were presumably designed to impress contemporary and future viewers; they have an overt and primary symbolic and ideological purpose. However, in the absence of decipherable inscriptions, or acceptable written information, we can only attempt to infer the purposes of the anonymous builders from the construction, the plan, the surviving associated artefacts, perhaps even from the measurements and orientation, of such sites. In turn, the inferred purposes may provide some inkling of the builders' ideology. Even on such sites, however, much of the evidence will be unintentional: this would include details of construction originally hidden, lost or discarded tools, and the residue of all manner of non-ideological activities. This must be contrasted with the purpose of any writing, which is by definition intentional, being designed to inform someone of something: that A has paid for item B, that Q is the Lord High Panjandrum of R, that X is the one and only deity worthy of worship by right-minded people, that theory Y explains the nature of the universe better than theory Z. In short, the historians' invariable search for the bias of the author has no regular and constant equivalent in archaeology.

3. The survival of evidence differs for historians and archaeologists, too. Few historians have any expectation that large quantities of hitherto unknown documents await discovery; archaeologists, in contrast, are confident that there is much more to be discovered and, indeed, devote a considerable amount of method and effort in this direction. On the other hand, excavation destroys as it reveals, so that this primary method of archaeological research has no counterpart for the historian. More importantly, however, the conditions affecting the survival of evidence differ greatly for the two disciplines. In the archaeologically better-known areas of the world there is a fair comprehension of the relative survival and destruction factors affecting sites and artefacts from climate, soil conditions, methods

of construction, subsequent agricultural and industrial activities, and so forth. It is far more difficult for the historian to assess the less predictable factors affecting the survival of texts.

4. It follows from the destructive nature of excavation, noted above, that competent excavation implies rigorous control and recording of the work in hand. Obviously, also, the most rigorous excavation is worthless if not published in an appropriate manner. More than this, the design and scale of the excavation must be appropriate to the problem being investigated. At an obvious (if frequently disregarded) and simple level, a small excavation on a large site is unlikely to reveal a sufficient amount of that site for useful interpretation to be made; and a series of small excavations on a large site, though often justified in terms of adequate sampling technique, in fact may provide no coherent picture of any part of the site. The contrast between the excavations at Cruachain and Uisneach, on the one hand, and at Emain Macha, Tara, and Dún Ailinne, on the other, illustrates these points well.

5. The superficial appearance of a site can provide only limited information: over and over again, excavation shows that sites are multi-period, that they have been damaged subsequent to their use, that they have eroded or aggraded through natural agencies, and so forth. Properly conducted excavation, the more extensive the better, will almost invariably modify interpretations previously based upon surface indications alone. In addition, the detailed attention that a site receives during excavation very often leads to the identification of minor surface features hitherto unnoticed, or to the interpretation of surface features hitherto unexplained.

6. Archaeology has developed or adopted a whole series of methods for classifying artefacts and sites, for dating them, and for perceiving the resultant patterns in time and space.² These methods have been developed largely in prehistoric contexts, where they were most obviously needed. Archaeological classification is based upon technology, the form and decoration of artefacts, the morphology of surviving sites, and, to a more limited extent, economic evidence (see 1. above). All of these criteria occur in historical times too, but here they have been subjected all too often to classifications derived from written evidence: for example, pots become ethnically Saxon or Jutish, burials become pagan or Christian, metalwork becomes Roman or barbarian. Sometimes these criteria for classification stand the test of time and appear justifiable, but often they simply lead to greater and greater confusion, confusion caused, in essence, by initial classification in inappropriate terms. This is not the fault of historians. It is the fault of archaeologists, who have simply assumed

²David L. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, second edition, revised by Bob Chapman (New York, 1978), Chapters 1 and 4-8.

that the availability of written evidence permits the identification of pots in ethnic or tribal terms, burials in terms of religious ideologies, or metalwork in terms of civilization or barbarism. In short, historical archaeologists in general have shown too little perception of the methodological and interpretative integrity of their own discipline. Too frequently written evidence (often pitifully scanty and difficult to interpret) is uncritically adopted to provide a classificatory-cum-interpretative template to be imposed upon the archaeological evidence, even when the archaeological evidence bears no clear or direct relationship to the written sources.

7. It follows that each range of evidence—written and archaeological—must be considered by the methods appropriate to itself before attempts to interrelate the two can be made safely. Otherwise, there exists a very strong risk that assumptions will be imposed, distorting the process of objective interpretation. For the archaeologist, then, archaeological information must be processed and interpreted *archaeologically*, not according to the (real or supposed) dictates of the historians. It would be nonsensical to suppose that written evidence is somehow more real or more true than archaeological evidence. They are different types of evidence, more often than not providing different types of information about different types of human activity, and certainly requiring different methods of assessment.

8. Archaeology, therefore, cannot be regarded as mere illustration of the written record, or more dangerously, potential validation for historical interpretation. The constructive interrelationship between history and archaeology is more subtle and more complex, and each set of evidence must be treated separately and appropriately, as indicated in 7. above. Following this, the interpretation from each process may be compared, and inconsistencies considered critically. It is my own experience that archaeological and historical *data* rarely if ever directly conflict, perhaps mainly because each usually reflects quite different aspects of human life and society. But archaeological and historical *interpretations* conflict much more commonly and, where this is so, historian and archaeologist may then profitably re-examine their own and each other's data, analyses, and interpretations in an attempt to discern how and why the conflict arose.

9. The process suggested in 8. above seems to advocate the separation of archaeologist and historian until each has arrived at an interpretative conclusion. This, of course, would prevent mutual collaboration at all stages of the process, which is really what is wanted. The critical thing is that each scholar be well aware of the nature of the other's data, the way in which his analysis proceeds, and the types of interpretation that can result. This also implies that each will recognize the limitations of the other's discipline. The

following assessment of Irish royal sites is something of an experiment, in which an amateur review of the salient written evidence about these sites is used to develop a series of hypotheses, or propositions, which can be posed in realistic archaeological terms, and assessed as such.

THE IRISH 'ROYAL SITES': HISTORICAL

Tara, Cruachain, Dún Ailinne, and Emain Macha are associated in the Martyrology of Oengus,³ where they are collectively identified with paganism, and each *borg* or *cathair* is contrasted with a well-known monastery flourishing at the time of the composition of the Martyrology, c. A.D. 800.⁴ The primary inferences from the passage are that the sites were pre-Christian in origin, and that they were abandoned before A.D. 800.

The clearly retrospective nature of the passage, its recognizably conventional elegaic form,⁵ and its hyperbolic style, should urge caution both in attempts to develop secondary inferences from these two primary ones and in efforts to use other elements in the passage to interpret the sites. However, these can be used at least to develop propositions for further enquiry, as I shall attempt to do in the next section.

Most general and most important of these secondary inferences is that the four sites were abandoned around the time of the conversion of Ireland to Christianity in the fifth century A.D.⁶ Binchy has argued that St Patrick chose Armagh for the site of 'his principal church' because of its proximity to Emain Macha, still a major royal centre at the time, and that Emain Macha was not conquered by the northern Uí Néill until later.⁷ Written sources suggest that Tara was abandoned in the sixth century A.D.⁸ By extension, Cruachain and Dún Ailinne are also presumed to have been abandoned at or shortly after the adoption of Christianity in Ireland. This interpretation stems from the general context of Oengus's paean of praise to triumphant Christianity, and his collective identification of these sites as pagan:

³A *Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry A.D. 600 to 1200*, edited and translated by David Greene and Frank O'Connor (London, 1967), pp. 61–66. ⁴So dated by Strachan, followed by Whitley Stokes, *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 29 (London, 1905), p. vii. ⁵P. L. Henry, *The Early English and Celtic Lyric* (London, 1966), pp. 228–34. ⁶For example, see Francis John Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London, 1973), pp. 49 and 71; and Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: An Introduction to the Sources* (London, 1972), pp. 205–206. ⁷D. A. Binchy, 'Patrick and his Biographers, Ancient and Modern', *SH*, 2 (1962), 7–173 (pp. 149–54). These views will be strongly challenged by Richard Sharpe, 'St Patrick and the See of Armagh', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 4 (Winter 1982). ⁸Byrne, pp. 94–96.

Old cities (*cathraig*) of the pagans to which length of occupation has been refused are deserts without worship like Lugaid's place. . .

Paganism has been destroyed though it was splendid and far-flung; the kingdom of God the Father has filled heaven and earth and sea.⁹

Thus, while Oengus's words do not explicitly identify the sites as pagan religious centres, the inference is plausible on the basis of the quotations above and the contrasting of each abandoned site with a famous monastery.

The sites are also referred to as 'fort' (*dún*), 'fortress' (*ráith*), and 'settlement' (*borg*) by Oengus, and it is clear from a variety of early medieval Irish sources that they were regarded as having been residences and forts. These functions are most clearly demonstrated in *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, where Cruachain and Emain Macha are the 'capitals' of two of the major kingdoms of Ireland, Connacht and Ulaid—both sites are represented as royal residences and centres of political power. Similarly, Tara is widely associated with the high kingship of Ireland (legendary or fictitious though that office may have been for most of protohistorical and early historical times).¹⁰ Dún Ailinne is also identified as a former royal site in the poem to St Brigit thought to have been written by Orthanach, Bishop of Kildare (d. c. A.D. 840):¹¹ here 'Ailenn' is reputed to have been a royal cemetery, a wealthy residential site, an assembly place, and a fort.¹²

Cashel and Uisneach must be mentioned briefly at this point, before proceeding. Cashel does not appear in Oengus's list of pagan royal sites, and there is no acceptable written evidence to suggest that its use precedes the Christian period in Ireland.¹³ Archaeologically there are no indications of pre-ecclesiastical occupation or use, though this is hardly surprising in view of the overburden of ecclesiastical buildings and the graveyard; moreover, there have been no excavations at the site. There are some clusters of unusually elaborate ring-forts within a few miles of Cashel, and it is possible that one (or more) of these might be analogous to the cluster of sites that constitute Cruachain (see below and Fig. 4).¹⁴ The Rock of Cashel

⁹Greene and O'Connor, p. 65. ¹⁰Byrne, pp. 48–69. ¹¹*Hail Brigit: An Old-Irish Poem on the Hill of Alenn*, edited and translated by Kuno Meyer (Halle and Dublin, 1912); Greene and O'Connor, pp. 67–71. For the attribution to Orthanach see Meyer's addendum in *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 8 (1912), 600; also his 'Orthanach Ūa Cōillāma Cecinit', *ibid.*, 11 (1917), 107. ¹²Greene and O'Connor, p. 70. ¹³D. A. Binchy, 'The Date and Provenance of Uraicecht Becc', *Ériu*, 18 (1958), 50–51, infers that the kingship of Cashel began as early as the sixth century A.D. Byrne concurs, pp. 177–78. ¹⁴That is to say, the Rock of Cashel might have had a restricted function—perhaps inauguration—prior to the twelfth century, and perhaps even had no enclosure or structures upon it, though note that the name is an early loan from Latin *castellum* (D. A. Binchy, 'Old Irish *axal*', *Ériu*, 18 (1958), 164).

itself might have been simply an inauguration site, unadorned by any structures or enclosure. Uisneach is included in this paper not because of any clear traditional historical association with Emain Macha, Cruachain, Tara, and Dún Ailinne, but because of its identification as the geographical centre of Ireland in medieval texts and its association with Lughnasa celebrations. The extensive excavations at Uisneach in the 1920s also prompt its inclusion in an article devoted primarily to a consideration of archaeological evidence.

Returning to our four main sites, we must remember that our sources of historical information are retrospective, written after the abandonment of the sites. Indeed, we can be reasonably certain of two things only: that the sites were in use in the pre-Christian period, and that they were abandoned before c. A.D. 800. More cautiously, it may be proposed that they were the 'capitals' or primary royal sites, in the later pagan period, of Ulster (Emain Macha), Connacht (Cruachain), Midhe (Tara), and Leinster (Dún Ailinne), and that they were the dominant seats of political power at that time—specifically, we should say that they were the dominant seats of power *during* that time, since the 'later pagan period' might be considered lengthy and there is no guarantee from Oengus, or other sources, that the sites were occupied simultaneously during that period. Indeed, for all Oengus tells us to the contrary, some or all of the sites might have been occupied well after the conversion of Ireland to Christianity: as we have seen, the abandonment of these sites around the time of the conversion is a secondary inference, developed from interpretations of the primary inferences. Functionally, the sites may have been royal residential sites and major forts, and the locations of periodic assemblies, religious ceremonies, inaugurations, and the like.

The next section sets out a series of archaeologically testable propositions, but we must bear in mind that the interpretations upon which these propositions are based are of varying historical plausibility.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROPOSITIONS

1. On the reasonable assumption that sites of unusual importance are likely to be unusual in appearance, we might expect unusual size, or form, or both. Such unusual features might or might not be visible on the surface.

2. The sites might well be similar to each other in form and content. Regarding these two propositions, however, we may note that both Continental and British pagan Celtic ritual sites vary considerably.¹⁵ We need not expect that Irish pagan ritual sites (if such

¹⁵An authoritative, up-to-date, and critical review can be found in Stuart Piggott, 'Nemetón, Temenos, Bothros: Sanctuaries of the Ancient Celts', in *I Celti e la loro cultura nell'epoca preromana e romana nella Britannia*, Problemi Attuali di Scienza e di Cultura, 237 (Rome, 1978), pp. 37–54.

they be) will necessarily conform very closely to such sites outside Ireland, or to each other. If they do, though, a strong connection between them would be demonstrated, in archaeological terms.

3. They should provide evidence of both ritual and residential activities (assemblies and inaugurations might well leave no trace archaeologically).

4. At high-status residential sites of the period we might expect some residue of high-status living, such as gold, glass, or enamel.¹⁶ Evidence for the manufacture of such items might also be present. If the ceremonial activities at such sites included high-status burial, we might anticipate proportionately rich grave-goods.

5. The sites should date from the pre-Christian Iron Age, and artefacts of La Tène character would be particularly appropriate.¹⁷ Continued use of the sites into the Early Christian period should not be expected, but might well occur, and written references to occasional use¹⁸ allow for the possibility of slight evidence for activity in this period.

THE 'ROYAL SITES': A DETAILED REVIEW

EMAIN MACHA ('Navan Fort', Co. Armagh. Fig. 2. Ordnance Survey Grid Reference H847450)

The identification of Navan Fort with Emain (Eamhain) Macha seems not to have been a subject of any debate, but to have been accepted without question on the basis of correlation between the Irish and the anglicized forms. Thus O'Donovan writes

The greater number of the Old Irish palaces and forts have retained their ancient names more or less corrupted such as An Eamhan, now Navan Fort in Armagh. Taillteann, now Telltown, Teamhair, Tara (etc.).¹⁹

The site lies some 5 km. west of Armagh City: a roughly circular bank and ditch encloses about 4.9 ha. of a hilltop, and it is noteworthy that the bank lies outside the ditch, though this can now be

¹⁶For example, see Barry Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain*, (London, 1974), p. 303. ¹⁷cf. Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 5-7. ¹⁸Byrne, pp. 54 and 158. ¹⁹See *Ordnance Survey Letters, Meath*, p. 176 (6 August 1836), and later authorities cited by Richard Sharpe, 'St Patrick and the See of Armagh', forthcoming in *CMCS*, 4 (Winter 1982). The 'Ordnance Survey Letters' (*O.S.L.*) are manuscript letters sent to the Ordnance Survey Office in Dublin by some of its officers in the field, charged with gathering and checking information on antiquities, local history, place-names, and so forth. These letters were intended originally to form part of a comprehensive Memoir on a wide range of topics, but this ambitious scheme was cancelled (J. H. Andrews, *History in the Ordnance Survey Map* (Dublin 1974), p. 2). Though still unpublished, the 'Ordnance Survey Letters', as they are usually known, are available in typed copies at a number of libraries.

seen clearly only on the west and south sides. Within the enclosure lie two earthworks, both excavated by the late D. Waterman.²⁰ Site A was a modest ring-fort with two periods of occupation, of the Bronze Age and early medieval periods. There is nothing to indicate, archaeologically, that Site A was of any particular importance during either of these occupations.²¹ Site B, however, is very unusual and, in its later stages of construction, can be best interpreted as a major ceremonial site.

Site B was a substantial mound which, prior to excavation, could be tentatively interpreted as anything from a Neolithic passage-grave to a modern windmill tump (an artificial mound to give a windmill extra elevation). The earliest activity at Site B was Neolithic, although the Neolithic material has not been interpreted in terms of any clearly defined activity, probably owing to the interference caused by later prehistoric construction, as at Dún Ailinne (see below). These later constructions were apparently residential circular timber buildings, in several successive phases, within a shallow ditch and palisade. Eventually, the latest residential phase was dismantled and replaced by a very large structure, nearly 40 m. in diameter, composed of five concentric circles of timber posts, broken by a gap ('ambulatory' to the excavator) or passage leading from outside the structure on the west side through to the centre, where stood a single large post. The outer ring of posts was partially destroyed by fire, and the whole covered by a substantial mound.

This mound had an inner core of carefully-laid stones, and an outer layer of cut sods. It is quite clear that the mound was constructed while the posts of the large timber structure were still standing, as the voids left by the rotting posts could be clearly seen through the inner mound of stones—that is, the stone mound was constructed around the still-standing posts. The latest timber structure at Site B—the five concentric timber circles—was neither residential nor industrial; only a ritual interpretation can be considered. The pur-

²⁰At the time of writing, the only general account of the excavations available is 'Navan Fort', *Current Archaeology*, 22 (September 1970), 304–308. No authors are cited, but the article was in fact a collaboration between the excavator and the editors of *Current Archaeology*. The radiocarbon age-determinations are published in A. G. Smith, G. W. Pearson, and J. R. Pilcher, 'Belfast Radiocarbon Dates I', *Radiocarbon*, 12 (1970), 287–88, and in B. Wailes, 'Dún Ailinne: An Interim Report', in *Hillforts: Later Prehistoric Earthworks in Britain and Ireland*, edited by D. W. Harding (London, 1976), pp. 319–38 (p. 338). ²¹Clare E. Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion: Some Comparisons between the Roman Mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 14 (1980), 59–94 (p. 64 and n. 35), suggests that the second occupation of Site A at Emain Macha was as the king's residence in the fifth century A.D. In 'Navan Fort' (see n. 20 above), however, we read that 'this later house may perhaps date to as late as the 8th or 10th centuries A.D., and until the results of radiocarbon determinations are known, speculation is rash' (p. 308). [CMCS would be glad to hear if such results are available—Editor.]

pose of the covering mound was perhaps cenotaphic; certainly it too had no functional purpose.

Both artefacts and radiocarbon age-determinations show that the (post-Neolithic) residential phases at Site B began in the Late Bronze Age. The partial burning of the ritual structure of concentric timber circles occurred as early as the third century b.c.,²² and since the mound was constructed immediately after this, as we have noted, the same date must apply to that also. Thus the most unusual features revealed by excavation at Emain Macha (ritual timber circles and covering mound) are Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, of the middle to later first millennium b.c. There are artefacts of rather later date from the site—open-work fibulae and a La Tène II brooch—but these are accidental finds with no stratigraphic context.²³ Any claim that Emain Macha was a centre of importance during the La Tène period rests at present on the flimsiest archaeological evidence. The floruit of the site, on present evidence, occurred appreciably earlier.

TARA (Temair Breg, Co. Meath. Fig. 3. Grid Reference N918596)

The cluster of sites on the ridge at Tara has attracted attention for many years. Petrie and Macalister largely agree on the correlation of the visible monuments at Tara with those listed in the medieval *Dinnshenchus*, their main disagreement being over the relative positions of the 'Forradh' and 'Teach Cormaic' (the Ordnance Survey follows Macalister, see Fig. 3).²⁴ The names ascribed to the various sites are the result of this correlation.

Late in the last century a group of British Israelites dug extensively in the 'Rath of the Synods' (Ráth na Seanaidh), believing that Tea (compare *Teamhair*, Tara) and Tephí, daughters of Zedekiah, brought the pillarstone of Bethel (the Lia Fáil) and the Ark of the Covenant to Tara. These diggings, extensive in nature and appalling in conduct, were quite unrecorded by the perpetrators, although Macalister was able to salvage a limited amount of information from the accounts of people who visited the site during the course of the

²²'b.c.' and 'a.d.' are used to indicate age-determination in radiocarbon years. When these are calibrated to the calendrical chronology, 'B.C.' or 'A.D.' is substituted. See Glyn Daniel, 'Editorial', *Antiquity*, 46 (1972), 265. For the period with which we are dealing, however, the discrepancy between radiocarbon and calendrical chronologies is not great. ²³Barry Raftery, 'Irish Hill-Forts', in *The Iron Age in the Irish Sea Province*, edited by A. C. Thomas, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 9 (London, 1972), pp. 37–58 (p. 53). One might also note the four trumpets discovered in Lough-na-Shade, a small lake just below Emain Macha; the single survivor is decorated with La Tène ornament—see E. C. R. Armstrong, 'The La Tène Period in Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 53 (1923), 22–23. ²⁴G. Petrie, 'On the History and Antiquities of Tara Hill', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, Antiquities section, 18 (1839), 25–232 (p. 150); R. A. S. Macalister, *Tara: A Pagan Sanctuary of Ancient Ireland* (London, 1931), pp. 25–26. Macalister places Teach Cormaic west of the Forradh.

work.²⁵ Almost nothing coherent can be reconstructed from these limited sources, however. S. P. Ó Ríordáin commenced serious modern excavation at Tara in the early 1950s, but died before he had started publication, and there is still no complete account of his work there (although the excavation records remain, to form the basis for full publication eventually).

The Rath of the Synods was one of the sites tackled by Ó Ríordáin, in an attempt to make some sense of whatever might remain untouched by the depredations of the British Israelites. His very brief account of this excavation lacks any detail, but does provide an outline of the results.²⁶ The three concentric banks and ditches were constructed consecutively, from inner to outer, and the mound to the west ('The King's Chair') was also built in three stages, in the last of which it was enclosed by the third, outermost, of the aforementioned banks. This mound contained both burnt and unburnt burials. The enclosed central area of the site yielded evidence for a sequence of timber buildings, and there were another five burials here. Both residential and industrial (iron-working and enamelling) activities were inferred, however, as well as ritual activities. Imported Roman objects were found, including pottery of the first to the third centuries A.D., but there was no indication that use of the site continued into the Early Christian period.

Before his death, Ó Ríordáin also started excavation on the Mound of the Hostages (Dumha na nGiall); the work was completed by the late R. de Valera. This site lies inside the north end of the enclosure identified as Ráth na Ríogh. The Mound of the Hostages proved to be a passage-grave of the later Neolithic, with radiocarbon age-determinations in the third millennium b.c. There were also secondary burials of the Early and Middle Bronze Age.²⁷

In the course of these excavations, the bank and ditch of the Rath of the Kings (Ráth na Ríogh) were sectioned at the north end of the site, between the Mound of the Hostages and the Rath of the Synods, in an attempt to relate Ráth na Ríogh and the Rath of the Synods stratigraphically.²⁸ Within the inner lip of the ditch a palisade trench was found, which may be later than the bank and ditch, thus (un-surprisingly) hinting that Ráth na Ríogh may be a multi-period site.²⁹

²⁵Macalister, *Tara*, pp. 32–43. ²⁶Seán P. Ó Ríordáin, *Tara: The Monuments on the Hill*, revised edition (Dundalk, 1969), pp. 25–26. ²⁷Seán P. Ó Ríordáin, 'A Burial with Faience Beads at Tara', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 21 (1955), 163–73; Michael Herity and George Eogan, *Ireland in Prehistory* (London, 1977), pp. 144 and 158. ²⁸Ó Ríordáin, *Tara*, p. 13. I am indebted to Marcus Ó hEochaidh, one of Professor Ó Ríordáin's excavation team in the 1950s at Tara, for more details on this part of the project. ²⁹Raftery, pp. 42–43. He proposes a 'defensive significance' for the palisade, which seems to me unjustified since (a) the relationship of the palisade and the inner lip of the ditch at this one excavated point may be quite coincidental, and (b) the palisade may form part of a structure like those at Dún Ailinne (below, p. 16), which are probably ceremonial and not defensive.

No specific dating evidence is mentioned. Ráth na Ríogh is by far the largest site visible at Tara: it is an oval enclosure, about 5.9 ha. internally. The external bank and internal ditch, and the large size, make it morphologically comparable to Emain Macha and Dún Ailinne.

The limited excavations, then, do show quite clearly that Tara was of considerable importance in the Neolithic, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. Full publication no doubt will clarify the broad outlines now available in print, and perhaps permit the formulation of further hypotheses which eventually may be tested by continued excavation.

Before leaving Tara, we may note that the Claoín Fhearta, Ráth Gráinne, Teach Cormaic, Forradh, and Ráth Laoghaire all appear to have external banks and internal ditches—that is, no traces of external ditches can be seen. This is an unusual feature, indicative of ritual function (see Discussion below, p. 19). Piggott suggests that the Teach Miodchuarta ('Banqueting Hall') might be analogous to two long rectangular ritual enclosures on the Continent: Aulnay-aux-Planches (Marne) and Libenice (Bohemia), of the tenth and third centuries B.C. respectively.³⁰ Alternatively, the Teach Miodchuarta might be seen as a 'road' (compare Cruachain and Dún Ailinne).

CRUACHAIN (Co. Roscommon. Fig. 4. Grid Reference M800836)

The identification of this locality with the Cruachain of early Irish literature seems in no doubt: O'Donovan disposes of the suggestion that Croghan (M855955), some 13 km. to the north-east, was Cruachain.³¹ At Cruachain a concentration of relatively small sites covers an extensive area of the low plateau between Tulsk and Ballanagare. There is no large site comparable to Ráth na Ríogh at Tara, although otherwise the concentration of sites is not dissimilar to that on the ridge at Tara, in that few of the Cruachain sites appear to be normal ring-forts, many having no entrance, and most are likely to be ritual rather than residential.

Rathcroghan is the dominant site, visually. It is a broad, rather low mound with a flattish top. O'Donovan states:

All its circumvallations are levelled and nothing remains but a flat moat . . . This moat exhibits air holes all around it, and it is said that they admitted air to those who lived in the Round Castle which is within the moat.³²

Elsewhere he says:

This great rath is at present much effaced by cultivation; all its circumvallations (for such it originally had) are destroyed, and nothing remains

³⁰Piggott, 'Nemeton, Temenos, Bothros', p. 40. ³¹*O. S. L. Roscommon*, I, 252 (27 July 1837). ³²*ibid.*, p. 191 (14 July 1837).

of it but a flat, green moat said to be hollow in the centre, and to contain a large, round chamber with a conical room.³³

Although O'Donovan does not give his source for the original circumvallations he seems quite positive about them, while clearly cautious about the chamber inside the mound. Modern archaeologists identify a small ruined ring-barrow on the top of the mound,³⁴ and note the possibility that the mound itself was originally a passage-grave.³⁵ One could thus postulate a multi-period site at Rathcroghan, starting with a putative passage-grave covered by the mound, the whole being surrounded later by concentric banks (not likely to form a part of passage-grave layout), and at some stage a small ring-barrow being constructed on top of the mound. This is obviously very hypothetical, but does suggest the possibility of continued importance for the site from the Neolithic to perhaps the Iron Age.

Relignaree is the only site at Cruachain which has any record of excavation, and this is highly unsatisfactory. O'Donovan, in his general description of Cruachain for the Ordnance Survey, says

Roilig na Riogh. . . is the Royal Cemetery of Connaught. It is enclosed with a circular mound like a Rath and exhibits several little tumuli much effaced by time. One of these was opened by the uncle of the present Matt O'Connor and he found it in [*sic*] a square chamber and some bones. This chamber is now to be seen.³⁶

O'Donovan evidently drew upon his letters to the Ordnance Survey some years later, when he published the following account of the site:

Roilig na Riogh, i.e. the cemetery of the Kings, . . . was the royal cemetery of Connaught in pagan times, and has been much celebrated by the bards. It is of circular form, is surrounded with a stone wall now greatly defaced, and it measures one hundred and sixteen paces in diameter. It exhibits several small tumuli, now much effaced by time. One of these was opened by the uncle of the late Mr. O'Connor, of Mound Druid, who found that it contained a small square chamber of stone-work, without cement, in which there were decayed bones.³⁷

I have found no reference to the publication of this small excavation.

³³*Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, translated, edited, and with commentary by John O'Donovan, 7 vols (Dublin, 1848-51), iii. 204. ³⁴E. Estyn Evans, *Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland: A Guide* (London, 1966), p. 189; Lord Killanin and M. V. Duignan, *The Shell Guide to Ireland*, second edition (London, 1967), p. 408. ³⁵P. Harbison, *Guide to the National Monuments in the Republic of Ireland*, second edition (Dublin, 1975), p. 209. ³⁶*O. S. L. Roscommon*, i. 192 (14 July 1837). ³⁷*Annals by the Four Masters*, iii. 205.

We do not know whether the bones were human or animal, although O'Donovan's lack of comment suggests that he presumed them human—animal bones would have been inconsistent with the received interpretation of the site as a pagan royal cemetery, and so worthy of note.

Curiously, later authors do not mention O'Connor's excavation. Ferguson notes exposed stone-lined chambers at Relignaree, which he considers consistent with the tradition of royal burial at the site.³⁸ Westropp and Knox concur.³⁹ Were these chambers visible because O'Connor had cleared them? If so, O'Connor had excavated more than one, despite O'Donovan's statement, or else there had been other and unrecorded excavations in the interim. In the late 1920s two sources mention another excavation, conducted by Ridgeway and Quiggin; both state simply that this excavation showed Relignaree *not* to be a cemetery.⁴⁰ However, no reference to the publication of this excavation is given. Recent guide-books say that excavations revealed no burials;⁴¹ this information must come from one of the two sources cited above, but is not referenced. None of these later publications mention the O'Connor excavation which, as noted, suggests that the site *was* a cemetery. Some resolution of this puzzle might emerge from exhaustive library research, but none of the sources cited indicate that any excavation at Relignaree was extensive, satisfactorily conducted, or conclusive.

The Oweynagat 'cave' has ogam inscriptions on two of the roof-slabs, which according to Ferguson and Macalister were inscribed before their insertion.⁴² If this is so, the date of the inscription provides a *terminus post quem* of a general sort for the construction of the 'cave', or at least for some reconstruction of it that involved these two slabs: this construction, or reconstruction, is unlikely to have preceded the third or fourth century A.D.,⁴³ and so may have

³⁸Samuel Ferguson, 'On the Cemeteries at Rathcroghan and elsewhere in Ireland (as affecting the Question of the Date of the Cemetery at Taltin)', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, second series, 1 (1879), Polite Literature and Antiquities section, 114–28 (p. 116). ³⁹T. J. Westropp, 'The Ancient Forts of Ireland', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, 31 (1896–1901), 579–730 (p. 687); H. T. Knox, 'Ruins of Cruachan Ai', *JRSAI*, 44 (1914), 1–50 (pp. 35–36). ⁴⁰R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (London, 1928), p. 179 (p. 308 of the second edition (1949) repeats the same information); R. A. S. Macalister and R. Ll. Praeger, 'Report on the Excavation of Uisneach', *PRIA*, 38, Section C (1928–29), 69–127 (p. 115). ⁴¹Evans, pp. 184 and 228; Killanin and Duignan, pp. 408–409. ⁴²Ferguson, pp. 117–18; R. A. S. Macalister, *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1945–49), I, 16–17, nos 12–13. The form *VRAICCI* (cf. Welsh *grug*) in no. 12 suggests a rather late date; cf. Alf Sommerfelt, 'Caractère et développement du système vocalique vieil-irlandais', *Études celtiques*, 10 (1962–63), 14; Wolfgang Meid, *Die Romanze von Froech und Findabair* (Innsbruck, 1970), p. 68. ⁴³Kenneth H. Jackson, 'Notes on the Ogam Inscriptions of Southern Britain', in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe: H. M. Chadwick Memorial Studies*, edited by Cyril Fox and

taken place in the early medieval period or even later. Thus there is a possibility of activity at Cruachain after the advent of Christianity in Ireland. However, the nature and purpose of the activity at Oweynagat is unknown, whatever its date, and need have no connection with the use(s) of Cruachain as a royal site.

In his later article on Cruachain, Knox discusses the 'roads' and 'avenues', concluding that some may have been for driving cattle, while others were connected with 'undoubtedly sepulchral or ceremonial works'⁴⁴—Fig. 4 illustrates the latter observation clearly enough.

DÚN AILINNE (Knockaulin, Co. Kildare. Fig. 5. Grid Reference N818078)

The location of this site was discussed by O'Donovan, who argued for Knockaulin and against the Hill of Allen (the alternative contender).⁴⁵ This identification has not been challenged. Excavation rebuts minor details of O'Donovan's interpretations (such as the 'monument of Aengus Ossory'—see below) but supports his identification, at least in general terms, on verifiable points such as the 'deep trenches' (the enclosing ditch?) and the 'royal roads' (our 'ancient roadway'?).⁴⁶ Moreover, the Hill of Allen shows no traces of ancient earthworks whatever, nor did it in O'Donovan's time.⁴⁷

The recent excavation at the site is, at present, most conveniently summarized in an article which appeared in 1976, containing considerably more detail than need be set out here, and also a full list of earlier progress reports of the excavation.⁴⁸ However, some hitherto unpublished information, from excavation conducted after the preparation of that article, is included here: this new information mainly concerns the entrance to the site and the associated 'ancient roadway'.

The site is a hilltop enclosure of about 13.0 ha., surrounded by a

Bruce Dickins (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 199–213, suggests that the earliest ogam inscriptions might be of the fourth or third centuries A.D., possibly earlier. Macalister, *Corpus*, I, xiv, breezily suggests that ogam inscriptions probably began 'a century or two before the generally accepted date for the beginning of Christianity in Ireland: say the second century A.D. or thereabouts'. Cf. Eóin Mac White, 'Contributions to a Study of Ogam Memorial Stones', *ZCP*, 28 (1960–61), 300–302; James Carney, 'The Invention of the Ogom Cipher', *Ériu*, 26 (1975), 53–65. ⁴⁴H. T. Knox, 'Cruachain Ai Roads and Avenues', *JRSAI*, 48 (1918), 157–63 (p. 157). ⁴⁵*O. S. L. Kildare*, II, 37–38 (28 December 1837), 47–50 (30 November 1837), 119–26 (n.d., received in Dublin 4 December 1837). ⁴⁶*ibid.*, pp. 119–24 (n.d., received in Dublin 4 December 1837). ⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. 38 (John O'Donovan, 28 November 1837). In 1970 I could see no trace of either standing or eroded earthworks on the Hill of Allen. At that time much of the hilltop had been stripped of topsoil prior to an extension of quarrying. The silted ditches of eroded earthworks would have shown as darker bands against the lighter coloured subsoil, but no such indications were visible. ⁴⁸Wailes (see n. 20 above), pp. 319–38, 474–77, and 531.

substantial external bank with internal ditch—the same configuration already noted at Emain Macha and Ráth na Ríogh (Tara). The main excavation area (see Fig. 5) admittedly covers only a fraction of the site, but test excavation in other areas showed no trace of any substantial prehistoric (or historic) activity, except around the entrance.⁴⁹

The main excavation area is on the top of the hill, near the centre of the site. The occupational sequence here starts with substantial evidence for Neolithic activity, unfortunately so disturbed by subsequent Iron Age constructions and reconstructions, however, that few features can be interpreted with much certainty. A small deposit of Food Vessel sherds, with a radiocarbon age-determination in the thirteenth century b.c.,⁵⁰ showed only the slightest indication of sporadic Bronze Age activity at the site before the major sequence of Iron Age construction and use.

There were three successive circular Iron Age structures (Iron Age phases 1, 2, and 3), each consisting of trenches in which a continuous series of upright timbers had been set to form palisades. Both the phase 2 and the phase 3 structures were quite elaborate. Phase 2 had an elaborate entrance and an 'annexe' on its south side. Phase 3 contained an inner ring of very large, free-standing posts, with a small but heavily constructed circular building at the geometric centre of the whole large circular arrangement. In the subsequent phase the last timber palisades and the central structure were dismantled, leaving the circle of free-standing posts on its own. Despite intense burning around two of these posts, they remained standing until all of them were eventually extracted. The final phases of activity are marked by fires, associated with burnt stones and quantities of animal bones. Since there were no structures in these phases, and since the stratigraphy showed that activity was spasmodic, the likely interpretation is of open-air feasting, at intervals of a few years only at most.

The radiocarbon age-determinations for this Iron Age sequence indicate that it starts in about the third century b.c. and ends about the fourth century a.d.⁵¹ There are no closely-dateable artefacts (such as Roman coins), but several artefacts certainly fall within this range on typological grounds, and none are inconsistent with it. There is nothing to indicate major or substantial activity at the site after the end of the Iron Age sequence in about the fourth century a.d. O'Donovan noticed on top of the hill 'another fort, now much effaced, but from the segment of its circle remaining, I could calculate it to have been about 100 feet in diameter'.⁵² This irregularly

⁴⁹ibid, fig. 1 (p. 474), shows these test excavations. ⁵⁰ibid., p. 338. Originally published by R. Stuckenrath and J. E. Meilke, 'Smithsonian Radiocarbon Measurements VIII', *Radiocarbon*, 15 (1973), 399–400. (On the meaning of 'b.c.' see n. 22 above.) ⁵¹Wailes, p. 338. ⁵²O. S. L. Kildare, II, 120 (n.d., received in Dublin 4 December 1837).

curved bank overlies part of the Iron Age occupation, and is separated from it stratigraphically by a substantial, and archaeologically quite sterile, humus. Therefore it must be appreciably later than the end of Iron Age activity on the site, but how much later I cannot say as there are no associated artefacts. It is not the residual segment of a ring-fort, as it was never more extensive.⁵³ Within the arc of this curved bank O'Donovan saw 'another [fort] which is somewhat of a square form but of very small dimensions, and in its west mound are two rough mountain stones of considerable size'.⁵⁴ This, he suggested, might have been 'the honorary monument of Aengus Ossory'. Evans interprets it as a Bronze Age cairn with use or re-use in the Iron Age.⁵⁵ The feature is, in fact, a jumble of small spoil heaps, two of which sealed early-twentieth-century artefacts. The two large stones proved to lie on the surface, and so have been moved in the recent past. There is no indication of their original position or purpose, if any (they could be glacial erratics).

In the topsoil there are scatters of late-eighteenth-century/early-nineteenth-century artefacts (bottle-glass, musket balls, etc.), and of early-twentieth-century material which, to judge by .303 blank cartridge cases and regimental insignia, is clearly to be attributed to the British Army. In short, the evidence of excavation is that Dún Ailinne was abandoned as a major site in or around the fourth century a.d.

The 'roadway', surveyed in detailed and partly excavated in 1975, appears contemporaneous with the enclosing bank and ditch, though this cannot be conclusively demonstrated owing to recent quarrying around the original entrance to the site, through which the 'roadway' passes (see Fig. 5). A radiocarbon age-determination from the soil buried by the bank construction is roughly fifth-century b.c.,⁵⁶ suggesting that the bank and ditch are more likely Iron Age than Neolithic (though caution should be exercised in the use of buried soil for dating, particularly on the basis of one sample only). The 'roadway' consists of a shallow linear depression about 8 m. wide, deliberately cut into the subsoil, with the vertical 'kerbs' revetted by rough dry-stone walling on either side. The soil excavated from this depression was cast up on the somewhat lower, southern side of the 'roadway'. Thus, the cut-down scarp on the upper, northern side and the bank on the lower side form two parallel ridges or banks. The axis of the 'roadway' points directly through the entrance of the circular Iron Age phase 2 structure on the top of the hill, and through the geometric centre of the Iron Age phase 3 timber circle.

⁵³Wailes, p. 322. Most of this bank was excavated: only the south end now remains. ⁵⁴O. S. L. Kildare, II, 120 (n.d., received in Dublin 4 December 1837). ⁵⁵Evans, p. 137. ⁵⁶B. Fishman, H. Forbes, and B. Lawn, 'University of Pennsylvania Radiocarbon Dates XIX', *Radiocarbon*, 19 (1977), 223.

Unfortunately, circumstances did not permit excavation of the area along the line of the 'roadway' between the original site entrance and the Iron Age circular timber structures at the top of the hill—a distance of some 150 m.—so that direct structural continuity has not been determined. However, the evidence adduced briefly above suggests (a) that the 'roadway' and the Iron Age circular timber structures are approximately contemporaneous, since they bear a direct relationship of layout to each other, and (b) that the bank and ditch are approximately contemporaneous with Iron Age phases 2 or 3 on the top of the hill. Thus, at least broadly, all are probably of Iron Age date, and form part of the same overall plan, even if not necessarily constructed over a short space of time.

UISNEACH (Co. Roscommon. Fig. 6. Grid Reference N291489)

The largest site at Uisneach was extensively excavated by Macalister and Praeger,⁵⁷ and the excavated soil used to restore the site to approximately its original appearance. It is a figure-of-eight plan, with larger eastern and smaller western enclosures. The excavators identify four main periods, briefly summarized as follows:

- I An inner and outer ditch, not concentric, enclosing a series of pits and post-holes. The fill of the inner ditch contained, among other objects, the pin of a penannular brooch, with simple La Tène ornament.⁵⁸
- II A series of fragmentary constructions, and an ash layer indicating a series of fires. These fires the excavators consider part of the ritual of a 'sanctuary', since the associated animal bones were often articulated: whole limbs, or even complete carcasses, occurred.
- III The eastern (larger) enclosure and 'house' were constructed. The latest object apparently associated with this phase was a silver penny of Henry II, from the 'house'.⁵⁹
- IV The western (smaller) enclosure was added to the eastern enclosure.

Following the sequence proposed by the excavators is not an easy matter, and a number of stratigraphical questions arise bearing upon several details important to their arguments. Thus the dating and purpose (or successive purposes) of the site are unclear. There is indeed nothing to suggest clearly that any of the above phases was residential, and a general interpretation of 'ritual' function, for at least part of the sequence, may be tentatively allowed to stand. The excavators emphasize that no Christian objects occur, nor objects with Early Christian period decoration.⁶⁰ La Tène articles do occur, such as the catch-plate of a La Tène III fibula,⁶¹ and the pin men-

⁵⁷Macalister and Praeger (n. 40 above). ⁵⁸*ibid.*, fig. 12. ⁵⁹p. 101. ⁶⁰p. 116. ⁶¹pp. 120–21, plate XVIII, no. 9.

tioned above. Fragments of jet bracelets also suggest La Tène occupation.⁶² However, the various portions of penannular brooches could be later La Tène.⁶³ Fragments of horseshoe,⁶⁴ for which no provenance is given, suggest later activity at the site, as does the Henry II coin.

An archaeological assessment of Uisneach is therefore ambiguous. There is certainly no reason to compare it in design or construction with Emain Macha, Ráth na Ríogh at Tara, or Dún Ailinne, though the evidence for 'ritual' activity, probably during the Iron Age, suggests some affinity in purpose. No obvious correspondence of plan exists with the various sites at Cruachain, and the lack of excavation there permits no parallels to be drawn.

DISCUSSION

It is clear that little profit can be gained from attempting to discuss further either Cruachain or Uisneach. At Cruachain the lack of clear morphological comparability of surface features and almost entire lack of (published) excavation prevent comparison. At Uisneach the ambiguities of attempting to interpret the excavation report make further discussion fruitless. We are therefore left with three sites, Emain Macha, Ráth na Ríogh at Tara, and Dún Ailinne, which may be profitably considered in relation to each other.

Let us return to the propositions put forward earlier.

1. Sites of unusual function and importance may be of unusual form or size, or both; and
2. Such sites may be similar to one another.

All three sites are large, roughly circular or oval enclosures with external banks and internal ditches. They do not conform to common ring-forts, which are of much smaller size and have external ditches and internal banks. Nor do they conform to any one of the many varieties of hill-fort, as this term is normally used on the Continent and in Britain:⁶⁵ whatever the range in size and function of hill-forts, they are at least potentially defensible, with internal bank and external ditch. The external bank/internal ditch arrangement is characteristic of the Neolithic to Early Bronze Age henge monuments of Britain and Ireland.⁶⁶ Thus, morphologically, these three sites can be termed henges.⁶⁷ Other henges exist in Ireland, of course,⁶⁸ but

⁶²p. 118, plate XVII, nos. 9–12. ⁶³pp. 119 and 121. ⁶⁴pp. 121–22. ⁶⁵See, for example, Stuart Piggott, *Ancient Europe* (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 207 and 236. ⁶⁶*ibid.*, pp. 115–16. ⁶⁷Wailes, pp. 336–37; Piggott, 'Nemeton, Temenos, Bothros', pp. 42–43 and 50–51. ⁶⁸Ronald E. Hicks, 'Some Henges and Hengiform Earthworks in Ireland: Form, Distribution, Astronomical Correlations and Associated Mythology' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1975; available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor); Herity and Eogan, *Ireland in Prehistory*, pp. 124–25.

few approach the size of our three sites under discussion.

3. The sites should show evidence for both ritual and residential activity; and
4. there should be evidence for high-status residence (and perhaps burial).

Both Emain Macha and Dún Ailinne do indeed show evidence for elaborate ritual use. The earlier (residential) phases at Site B at Emain Macha cannot be said to show clear evidence for high-status residence, largely, however, because we have virtually no comparable sites to use as the basis for such an interpretation. At any rate, for the later, ceremonial phases at Emain Macha (Site B), and for all the Iron Age phases at Dún Ailinne, there is no evidence for any residential use. Nor is there any evidence for burial. Whether or not high status can be inferred for the artefacts associated with the ceremonial phases at these two sites is a moot point since, again, there is a lack of clearly comparable sites, so that we cannot say whether or not ceremonial sites of considerable importance *should* contain high-status artefacts. Dún Ailinne produced no examples of elaborate and costly La Tène art, but did produce a La Tène C sword, several fibulae, and numerous glass beads and portions of bracelets, all of which suggest at least modest affluence rather than poverty. But, for the moment, high status must rest archaeologically upon the unusual size of the two sites, and historically upon the retrospective written evidence for their political and religious significance.

5. A pre-Christian, Iron Age date would be expected for the sites.

Dún Ailinne conforms well enough to this expectation. Ráth na Ríogh at Tara cannot be assessed. Emain Macha presents problems, since the radiocarbon age-determinations indicate that the final, ceremonial phases at Site B ended in the third century b.c., and there is no sign of subsequent activity save for the second occupation of Site A, which seems unlikely to bear upon Emain Macha as a major royal site.⁶⁹ Interestingly, all three sites have Neolithic occupation. At Dún Ailinne and Emain Macha the nature of this Neolithic occupation cannot be properly assessed.⁷⁰ The Mound of the Hostages, within Ráth na Ríogh, is a passage-grave: if Ráth na Ríogh is of later construction, as analogy with Dún Ailinne and Emain Macha suggests, neither that construction nor the presumed activities within appear to have disturbed the Mound of the Hostages. The possibility

⁶⁹Though see Stancliffe (n. 21 above). ⁷⁰Wailles, p. 323; Anon., 'Navan Fort', p. 304 (see n. 20 above).

of some continuity of ceremonial importance at the three sites, from Neolithic to Iron Age, is an intriguing one, if currently unconfirmable. One may recall, however, the presence of Bronze Age secondary burials in the Mound of the Hostages, and the Food Vessel sherds at Dún Ailinne. There are no reports of datable activity at Emain Macha between the Neolithic and the first residential phases of the Late Bronze Age (radiocarbon age-determination: eighth to seventh centuries b.c.).

The 'royal sites' can be seen now somewhat differently from the interpretation inspired by written sources:

1. There is no evidence so far for high-status residential use contemporaneous with pagan religious (ritual, ceremonial) use. During their most impressive phases, Emain Macha and Dún Ailinne appear on present evidence to have been entirely ceremonial. There may have been contemporary residential areas within both sites, but no traces have been identified as yet. Alternatively, (a) their identification as royal residences may derive from later misunderstandings as to the original functions of the sites, or (b) any residential areas may have lain *outside* the enclosures, the names of which were perhaps used rather loosely to designate the whole locality (rather as 'Knockaulin Townland' identifies a considerably larger area than that occupied by the identifiable site of Dún Ailinne).

2. The ceremonial phases at both Emain Macha and Dún Ailinne consist of very large circular timber structures, differing in detail, it is true, but both standing apart from other known structures in Ireland.

3. Emain Macha, Ráth na Ríogh at Tara, and Dún Ailinne all resemble henges of later Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date. At the two excavated sites, the internal circular timber structures are also reminiscent of similar structures identified at several excavated henges. Since henges are very much an Insular type of monument, rather than Continental, the question of possible Insular continuity arises. While no clear case can be made, indeed, for continuous use of any of the sites from Neolithic to Iron Age, no plausible alternative exists other than derivation, by some means, from earlier Insular models. This, in turn, raises the possibility of greater continuity of Insular 'Hiberno-British' cultural tradition, from Neolithic to Iron Age, than has been considered hitherto.

4. The case for Emain Macha being an operative major site when Patrick selected Armagh⁷¹ is greatly weakened. It is of course possible that the site continued to be used, without further construction, during the seven centuries separating the latest dated activities at Site B from the initiation of Armagh as a major Christian centre,

⁷¹But see Sharpe's forthcoming paper, cited in n. 7 above.

but there is no archaeological evidence for this so far. Nor, incidentally, is there any archaeological evidence that might reflect the sacking of Emain Macha by the Uí Néill!

Some further questions can now be posed more clearly:

1. What was enclosed within Ráth na Ríogh at Tara, other than the passage-grave known as the Mound of the Hostages? The Forradh and Teach Cormaic do not have obvious parallels at either Emain Macha or Dún Ailinne, unless one or other (or both) were equivalent to the mound of Site B at Emain Macha. But the resemblances of the ceremonial timber structures at Emain Macha and Dún Ailinne encourage the notion that some similar structure may have existed within Ráth na Ríogh. The similarity of the three sites suggests the likelihood of a Late Bronze Age and/or Iron Age dating for Ráth na Ríogh.

2. Cruachain is clearly substantially different from the other three sites, despite its historical correlation with them. The only visible similarity lies in the 'ancient roads' at Cruachain and the 'roadway' at Dún Ailinne. Does the lack of a large enclosure at Cruachain suggest a lesser degree of political cohesion? Or does it signify simply a variant cultural tradition? Do any of the sites at Cruachain conceal a large circular timber ceremonial structure? Are any of the sites at Cruachain Neolithic? Clearly, excavation is needed in order to pursue these questions further, but at least some more specific questions can now be posed.

3. If these four sites were indeed pagan ceremonial sites of prime significance in pre-Christian Ireland, arguably representing the largest political groupings, are there then equivalent sites of more restricted, smaller, political units? If so, do the morphological features of the four sites considered here also occur in smaller form at a larger number of sites? (Some preliminary field-work suggests that the answer will be yes.)

These seem among the more important questions that can now be raised, though of course many others occur also, such as the significance of the 'roadways'. Certainly, the problems of the pagan 'royal sites' are not solved. Clearly, the reconciliation of written and archaeological evidence is some distance away. However, we can see at least that there is a very real archaeological dimension to these sites, and that there is a substantial degree of internal consistency in the archaeological evidence. We can see also that the consistency is not quite that suggested by the written evidence. Thus the problems are, in some sense, greater than before rather than less. Yet comprehensible archaeological evidence now exists, and cannot be ignored. To this extent we have advanced: it is now clear that interpretations based upon scanty and retrospective written evidence cannot carry much weight in the absence of properly controlled

archaeological excavation. On the other hand, very limited excavation or inadequate excavation is unlikely to provide much evidence upon which any conclusions can be legitimately founded.⁷²

⁷²Figs 2–6 are adapted from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps as follows, by kind permission of the Director of the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (Fig. 2) and the Director of the Irish Ordnance Survey (Figs 3–6): Plan 218–5, 1970 (Fig. 2); Sheet 31–16 (Meath), 1957 (Fig. 3); Sheets 22–9 and 22–13 (Roscommon), 1926 (Fig. 4); Sheets 28–7 and 28–11 (Kildare), 1974 (Fig. 5); and Sheet 24–8 (Westmeath), 1913 (Fig. 6).

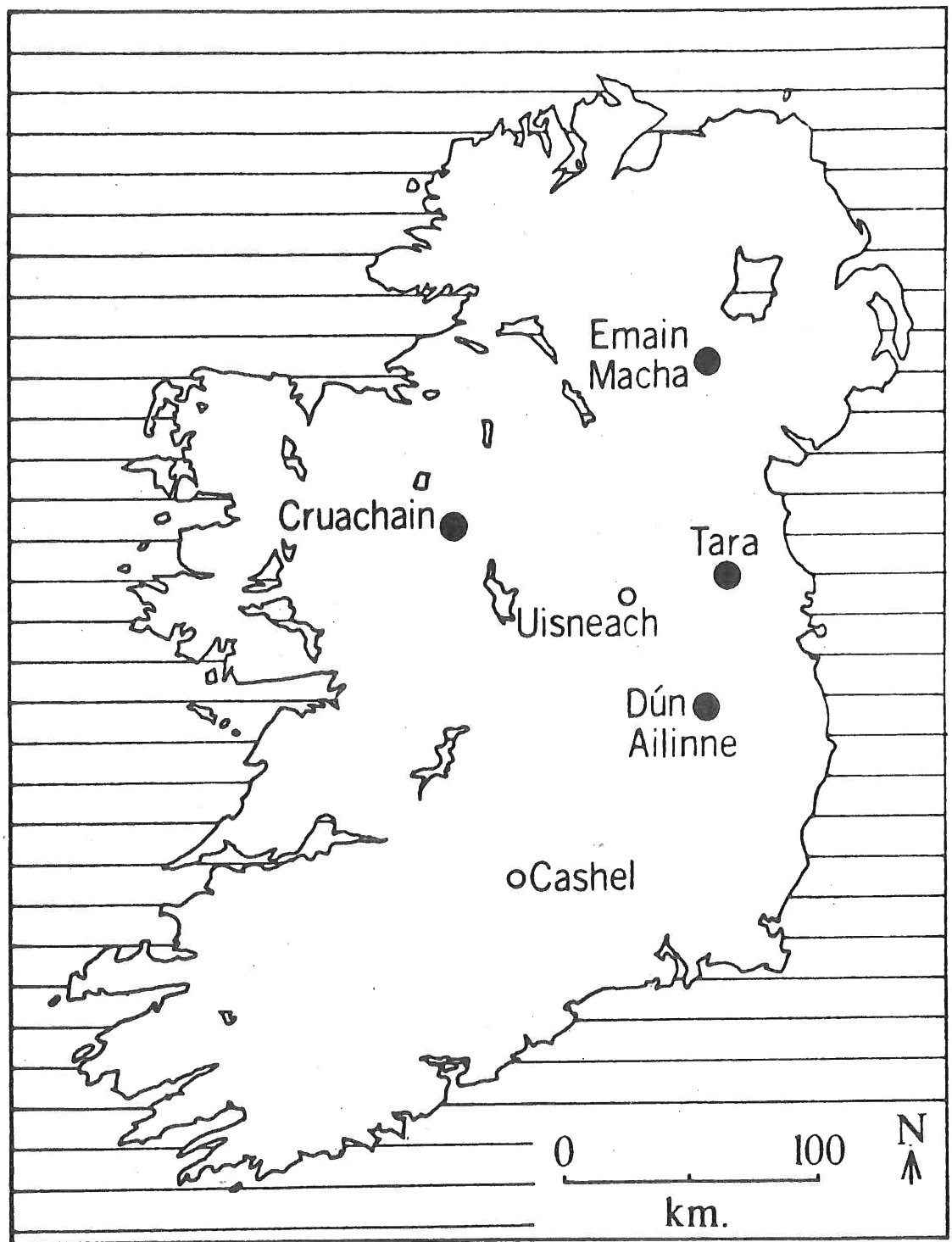


Fig. 1 Solid symbols = pre-Christian 'royal sites' mentioned by Oengus; open symbols = other sites mentioned in text of paper.

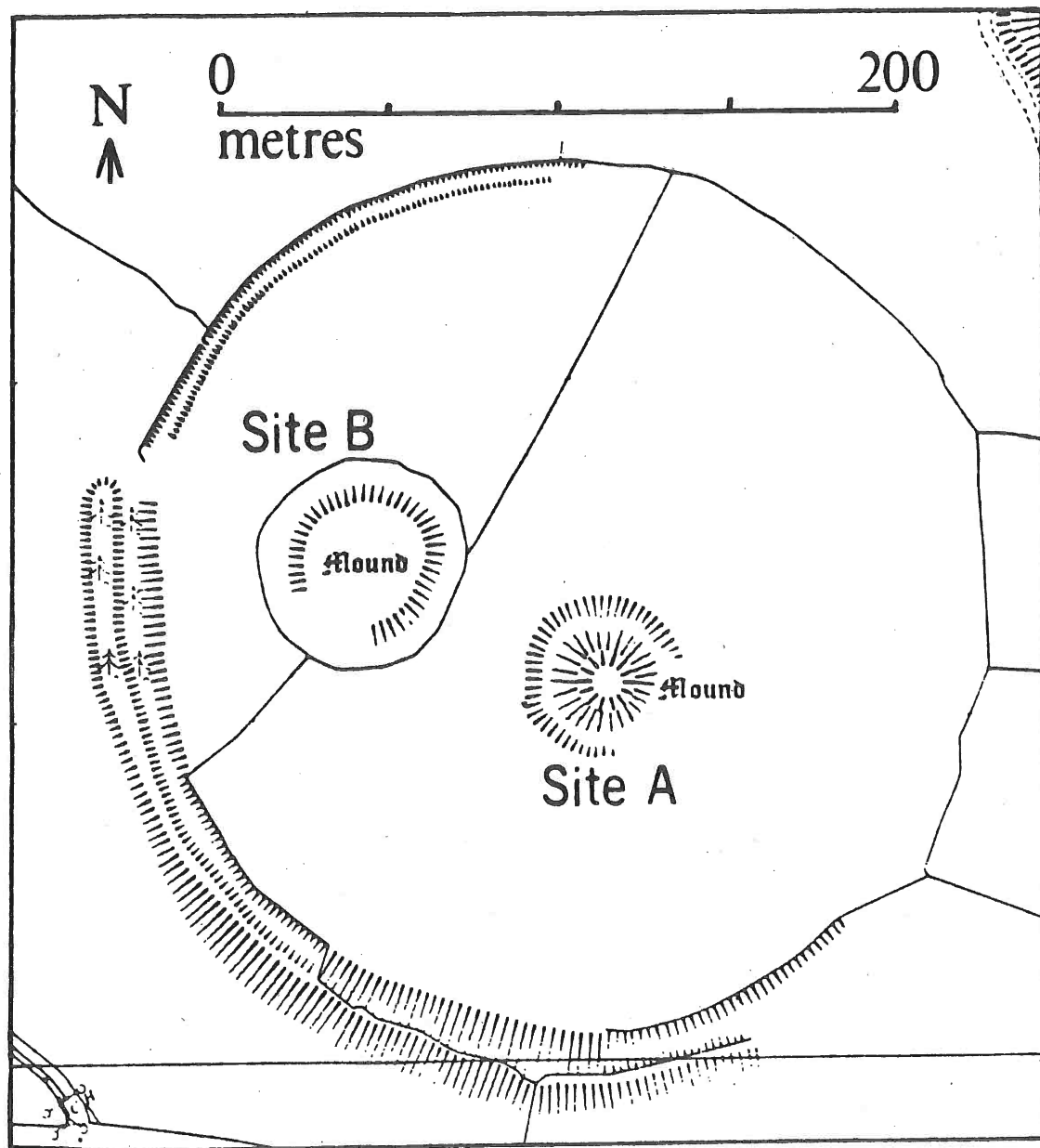


Fig. 2 EMAIN MACHA ('Navan Fort'), Navan Townland,
Co. Armagh

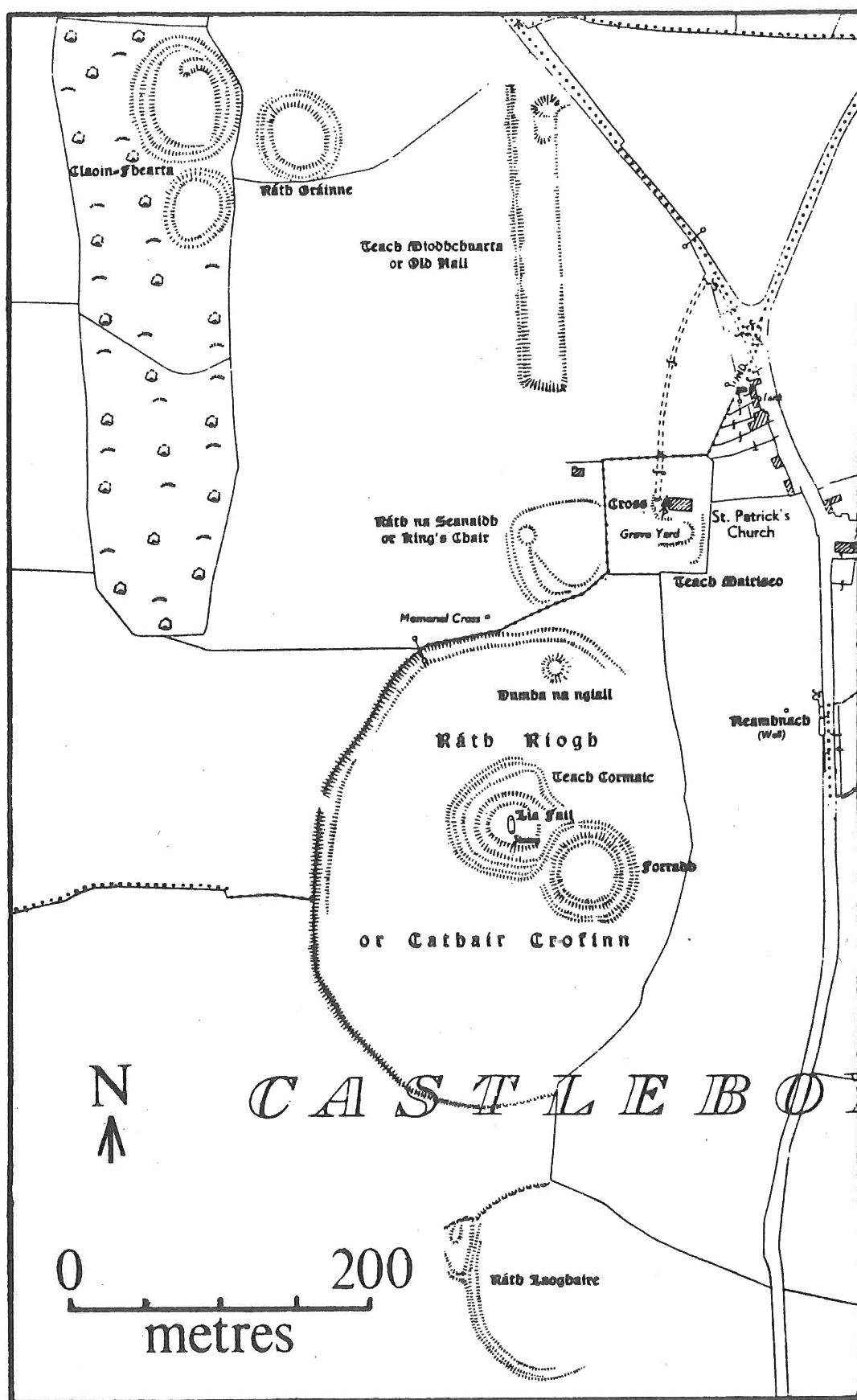


Fig. 3 TARA, Castleboy Td and Castletown Tara Td, Co. Meath

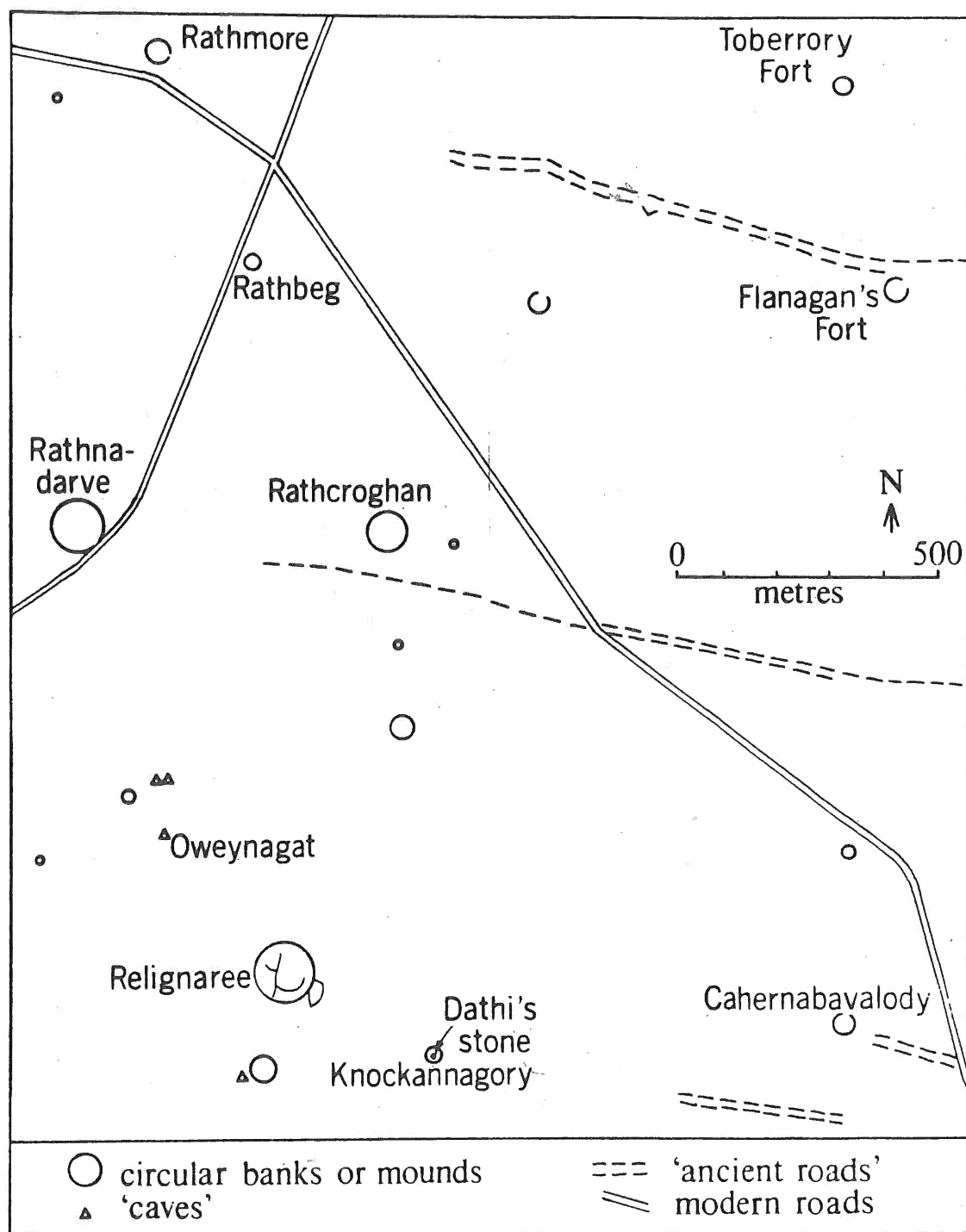


Fig. 4 CRUACHAIN, Toberrory Td, Glenballythomas Td, and Kilnanooan Td, Co. Roscommon

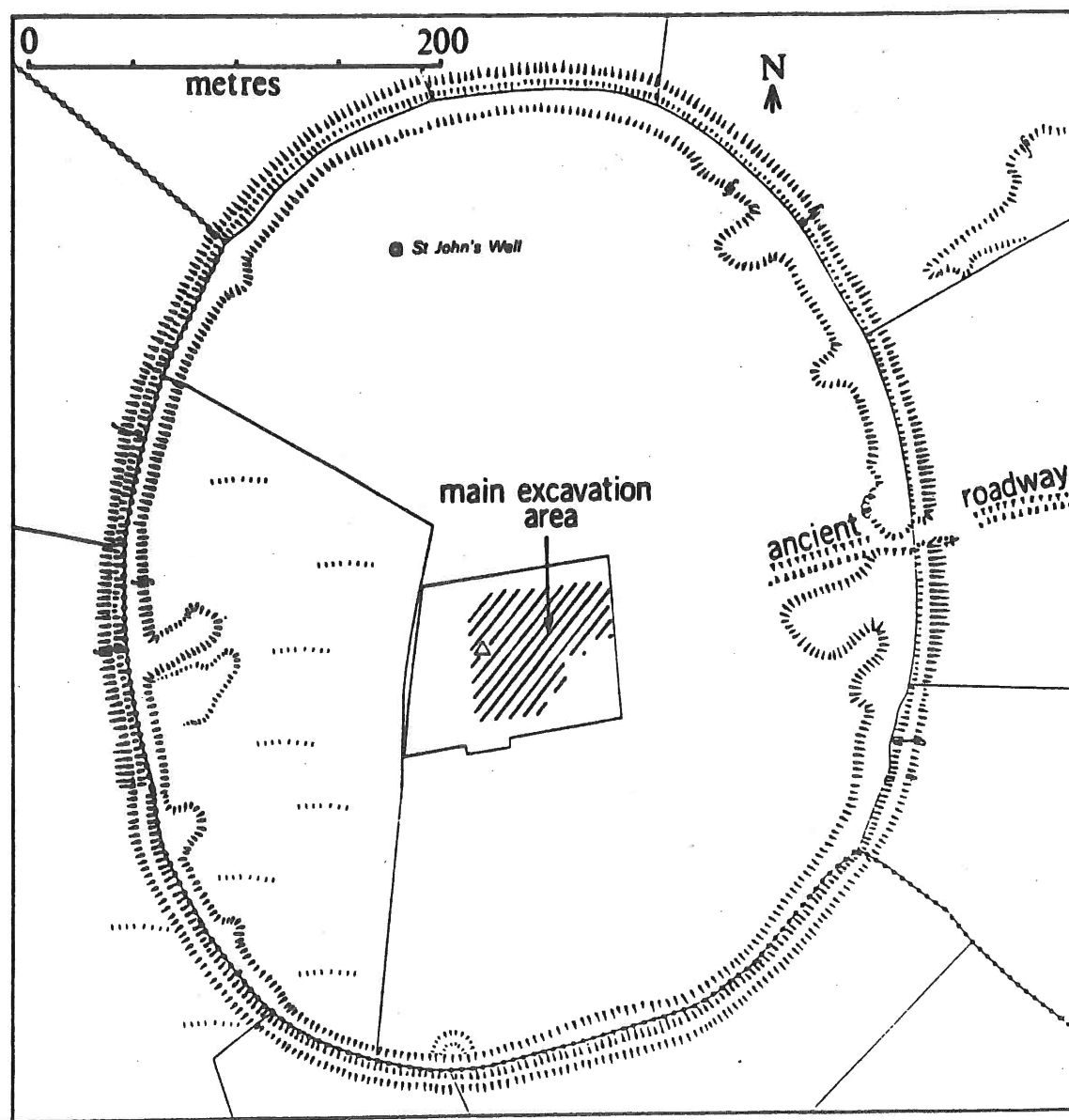
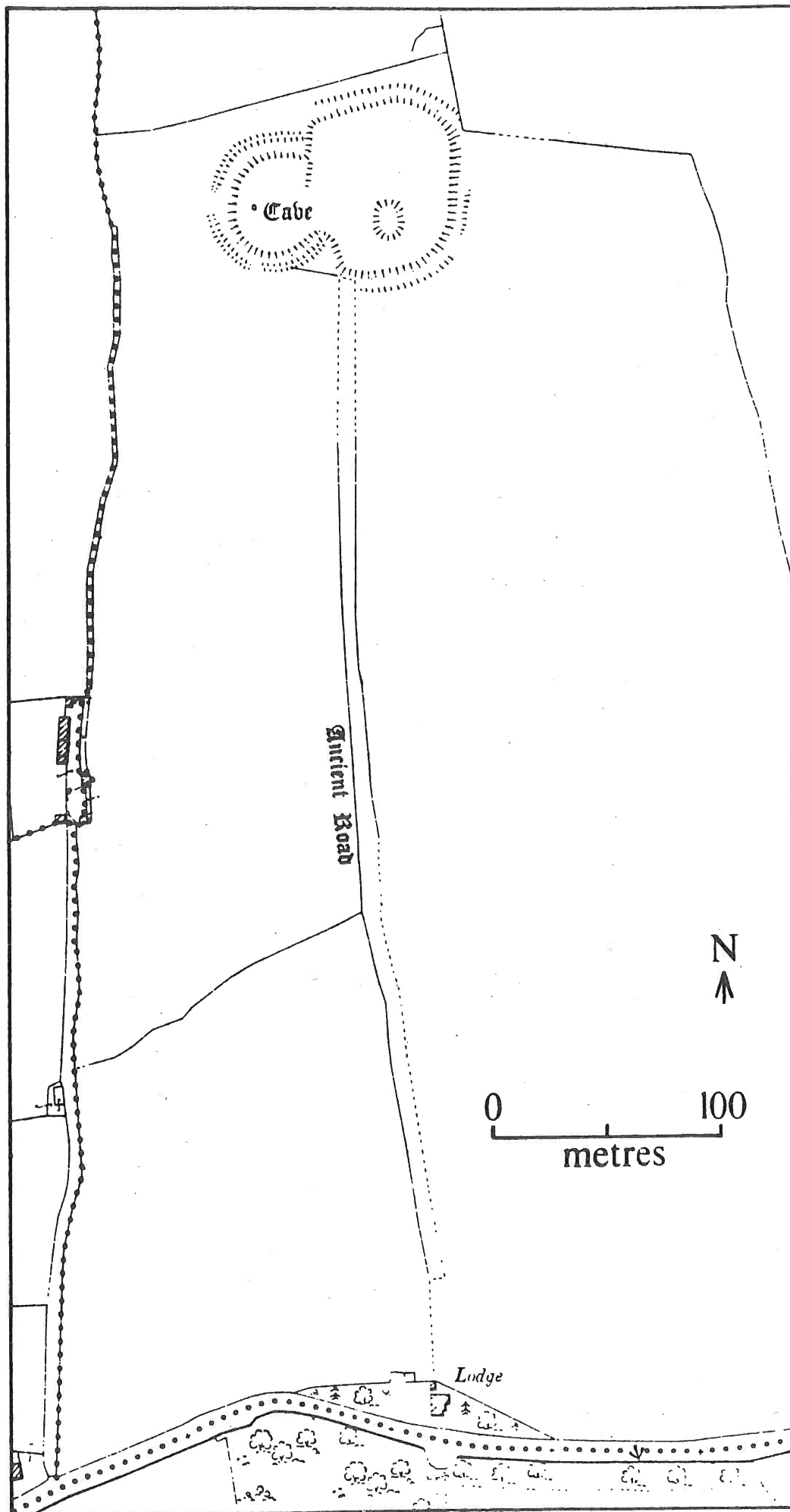


Fig. 5 DÚN AILINNE, Knockaulin Td, Co. Kildare

Fig. 6 UISNEACH, Rathnew Td, Co. Westmeath (*facing*)



Varia: II. Gildas and the Names of the British Princes

Kenneth Jackson

University of Edinburgh

IN Chapters 28–36 of his *De Excidio Britanniae* the sixth-century British writer Gildas savagely attacks, by name, five of his contemporaries, kings or princes of the Britons, for their cruelty and wickedness, and it has often been pointed out that in the case of two of them he plays on the literal meanings of their names to create hostile interpretations of them. Moreover, in Chapter 23 he refers to the treacherous king of the Britons who made treaty with the Saxons by the phrase *superbus tyrannus*, and whether he actually wrote *una cum superbo tyranno Vortigerno* (or *Vertigerno*) or merely *una cum superbo tyranno*, there is a similar play on meaning involved here. One might think there is nothing fresh to say about these matters, but the problem has not yet been fully exhausted.

Gildas's first victim is described in Chapter 28 as 'immundae leaenae Damnoniae¹ tyrannicus catulus Constantinus' 'Constantine the usurping whelp of the foul lioness² of Dumnonia' (Devon and Cornwall). There is no pun on the name here, though a sneer along the lines 'Constantine the Vacillator' might well have been expected of Gildas. However, in his eyes Constantine was conspicuous rather

¹*sic*, but for the more correct *Dumnoniae* in a lost manuscript of the *De Excidio* see Paul Grosjean, 'Remarques sur le *De Excidio* attribué à Gildas', *Bulletin Du Cange* (*Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*), 25 (1955), 174. I cite the *De Excidio* from the edition by Theodor Mommsen in *Chronica Minora*, III, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi, 13 (Berlin, 1898), pp. 25–85. [The most recent translation, accompanied by a text based on Mommsen's, is: Michael Winterbottom, *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (Chichester, 1978)—*Editor*.] ²Gildas uses *leaena* several times in a puzzling way. In Chapter 6 'leaena. . . dolosa' would seem at first sight to refer to Boudica, but it is generally held to mean Britain. Similarly the 'de cubili leaenae' in Chapter 23, 'grex catulorum de cubili leaenae barbarae' (i.e. the Saxons), does seem to mean the Saxons' Continental homeland. On this analogy *leaenae Damnoniae* is taken to mean simply 'Dumnonia'. See *Gildas*, edited and translated by Hugh Williams, Cymmrodorion Record Series, 3, 2 vols (London, 1899–1901), I, 20, n. 1. Compare E. A. Thompson, 'Gildas and the History of Britain', *Britannia*, 10 (1979), 204. All this is really not very satisfactory. At any rate, Gildas uses 'lion, lioness, leonine' in the implied sense of savagery and murderousness, not nobility.

for perjury, sacrilege, the murder of two boy princes, adultery, and sodomy, and perhaps he felt that a charge of instability would be an anticlimax. It should not be ignored, also, that a little further on he says that Constantine killed the princes with 'an impious sword and spear instead of teeth', which looks like a glance at the underlying concept that the 'lioness's whelp' was himself a cruel lion. Whether this Constantine had any connection with the *Custennin Gorneu*, 'Constantine of Cornwall', of early medieval Welsh story, may be left aside here, but Rachel Bromwich's discussion, suggesting that he 'could well be' the same person, is of great interest.³

The second king is addressed in Chapter 30 as 'tu quoque . . . catule leonine, Aureli Canine', and charged with murders of kindred, fornications, and adulteries. The significance of *catulus leoninus* here is dual. *Caninus* is the Latin word, 'dog-like', but he is not in fact likely to have had a name with such derogatory implications as Latin *canis* could have, and it is more likely that in calling him *Caninus* Gildas was punning by making a slight change in the form of what may have been his real name, British *Cunignos*, pronounced at this date something like /kunīnah/ or /kōnīnah/ [ō more or less like German ö]. This is a known one, for example, *CVNIGNI* in a late-fifth-century inscription from Carmarthenshire;⁴ Middle Welsh *Cynin*. It is a diminutive on the stem **cun-* 'hound', so common in numerous early Celtic names in *Cuno-*, Welsh *Cyn-*, Irish *Con-*.⁵ Thus when Gildas calls his victim *catulus* 'whelp, little dog' and *Caninus* 'Dog-like One', he uses the second as a play on the almost identically pronounced real name, and the first as a translation of the meaning of *Cunignos*.

It should be stressed that Celtic names in **cun-* do not carry the derogatory sense often implicit in English 'dog', which is probably less of Latin than of biblical origin; compare 'Is thy servant a dog?' etc., and the Muslim 'dog of an unbeliever'. On the contrary, it implies something much more like English 'lion', a noble and mighty animal, suggesting a wolf-hound or the like, and in fact the word was sometimes used, in Irish and occasionally in early Welsh, to mean 'wolf'. In interpreting it in the pejorative sense Gildas was no doubt influenced by the Bible, as was later Welsh usage;⁶ he often refers, for instance, to the Anglo-Saxons as 'dogs', as a term of abuse.

The third of Gildas's wicked princes is described in the opening

³*Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads*, second edition (Cardiff, 1978), pp. 315 and 358. ⁴V. E. Nash-Williams, *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff, 1950), no. 142; see also no. 172. ⁵See Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), pp. 463–64 and 466. ⁶See *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, edited by R. J. Thomas et al. (Cardiff, 1950–), s.v. *ci*.

address to Chapter 31 as 'tu quoque, pardo similis moribus. . . , canescente iam capite. . . , Demetarum tyranne Vortipori', and is accused of various murders of kindred and adulteries, as well as incest with his daughter. It is commonly agreed that 'Vortiporius',⁷ like a panther in your behaviour, your head already growing grey, despot of the men of Dyfed' was probably the same person as the Voteporix whose gravestone, with the inscription *VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS* in Latin letters and *WOTECORIGAS* in ogam, was discovered in the graveyard at Castell Dwyran, north-east of Narberth in the old Dyfed.⁸ If one accepts the usual dating of the *De Excidio*, Gildas's man would have died about 540 to 550 ('appropinquante sensim vitae limite'), and the Latin lettering is consistent with such a date. Both forms of the name are genitives ('[the tomb] of V.'), their nominatives being *Voteporix* and *Wotecorix*. There is no need to discuss here the form of this name⁹ or its meaning,¹⁰ or that of the term *protector*;¹¹ and it is hardly necessary to add that 'panther' is another of Gildas's ferocious animals, but that in this case there is no play on meanings to explain its use.

The fourth object of Gildas's invective is introduced in Chapter 32 as 'urse multorum sessor aurigaeque currus receptaculi ursi. . . , Cune-glase, Romana lingua lanio fulve'; that is, 'bear, rider upon many and driver of the chariot of the Bear's Den. . . , Cuneglasus, in the Latin tongue "tawny butcher"'. *Cuneglasus*¹² is another name in Celtic *Cuno-*, that is, **Cunoglastos*, Old Welsh *Cinglas*, Middle Welsh *Cynlas*. The use of the offensive Latin term *lanio* 'butcher',¹³ literally 'one who tears apart, cuts, mangles', to paraphrase *Cuno-*, suggests that Gildas was thinking here in terms of 'fierce, mangling hound' (or even 'wolf'). As to *-glasus*, this is the Celtic **glasto-*, later **glasso-*, 'blue', used of woad etc.; but in the neo-Celtic languages, rather like Greek γλαυκός, it meant and means 'pale blue, grey-blue, blue-green, green, grey', and even a pale brownish-grey or fawn.¹⁴ Thus *Cuneglasus* meant 'Grey' or 'Tawny Hound' or 'Wolf'.¹⁵

⁷Better, *Voteporix*. ⁸Nash-Williams, no. 138. ⁹See *Language and History*, pp. 169, 175, 598, 624–28 (including the question of Gildas's *Vor-* versus the *VO-* of the monument), and 631–32. ¹⁰The **wo-tepo-* involved here has been taken by some to be the Welsh *godeb* 'hiding place, refuge', so that the name could mean therefore 'King who is a Refuge' (cf. *protector*); see Proinsias Mac Cana, '**Votepori*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 19 (1960–62), 116–17. But there are difficulties about this. ¹¹This has been much discussed, including the unlikely proposition that Voteporix actually held an official Roman appointment and the title of *Protector*. ¹²On the *-e-* see *Language and History*, p. 645. ¹³Compare Paul Grosjean, '*Romana stigmata chez Gildas*', in *Hommages à Max Niedermann*, Collection Latomus, 23 (Brussels, 1956), p. 138, n. 1. ¹⁴Compare Welsh *gwrn* 'dark blue' and 'dark brown'. The Old Irish gloss 'croceo .i. glas' (*Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, edited by Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3), II, 361) is probably due to confusion in the glossator's mind between Latin *fulvus* and *flavus*; compare J. Loth,

In playing on it as *lanio fulvus*, 'Tawny Butcher', Gildas was clearly perverting it into 'Murderous Tawny Hound/Wolf', very much in keeping with his sarcastic interpretations of other names. One wonders whether it might really be connected with the early Irish legal term *cú glas* (literally 'grey hound'), an 'alien' who lacked legal status in an Irish kindred except by virtue of having married into it.¹⁶ Could the name be given to an infant in the sense of 'Little Stranger'? But there is nothing to correspond in early Welsh law.

What, then, did Gildas mean when he called Cuneglasus a bear, etc.? 'Bear' of course has the same implications as 'lion-like whelp', 'like a panther', and 'tawny hound/wolf', but the reason why he chose this particular savage beast lies in the words *receptaculum ursi*. Rhys noted briefly long ago that this may be *Dineirth*, 'Bear's Fortress', comparing the gloss '[guttur] receptaculi pugnae' on the Old Breton place-name [*Brehant*] *Din Cat* in the Latin *Life of Paulus Aurelianus*, the place in Britain where this Breton saint was said to have been born.¹⁷ *Receptaculum* means 'lurking-place, refuge, shelter', hence 'den', but once again Gildas is playing on meanings. As Loth showed, the writer of the *Life* took *Brehant* to be the Old Breton word meaning 'gullet',¹⁸ and *Din Cat*, literally 'fortress of battle', to be 'place of refuge from battle', so that the whole phrase would mean 'the passageway to the sanctuary from battle'. Early Welsh *din*, better known in later usage in its derivative form *dinas*, is the exact descendant of Celtic **dūnon* 'fortress' (compare Irish *dún*); but Sir Ifor Williams in his lectures to his Welsh classes quoted the passage in one of the early Welsh Llywarch Hen poems, 'oed dinas y henwred' 'he was a fortress, a place of refuge, for old folk; a protector of the old'.¹⁹ He concluded, what Rhys left unexplained, that *receptaculum* in Gildas could be a straight translation of *din*. Now 'bear' in Celtic was **artos* and its genitive singular was **artī*;

'Gloses bretonnes inédites du IX^e siècle', *Revue celtique*, 33 (1912), 429–30, and Grosjean, *Romana stigmata*, p. 138, n. 1. *Glas* could never mean 'pure yellow' or 'saffron'. ¹⁵Compare Vergil's use of *fulvus* as an epithet of a (she-) wolf's hide in *Aeneid*, 1.275 ('Inde lupae fulvo nutricis tegmine laetus | Romulus') and vii.688 ('fulvosque lupi de pelle galeras | tegmen habent'). ¹⁶See the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Dublin, 1913–76), C 566.85–567.13; and Enrico Campanile, 'Meaning and Prehistory of Old Irish *cú glas*', *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, 7 (1979), 237–47. ¹⁷J. Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, third edition (London, 1904), p. 123, n. 1. See 'Vie de saint Paul de Léon', edited by C. Cuissard, *RC*, 5 (1881–83), 418; and L. Fleuriot, *Dictionnaire des gloses en vieux breton* (Paris, 1964), p. 89. ¹⁸J. Loth, 'Brehant Dincat', *RC*, 8 (1887), 164–65. See Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 413 and n. 3, and 460. But Loth, by an extraordinary piece of fantasy, identified *Brehant* with Brycheiniog (Breconshire), the country of Brychan, reputed father of various saints—but not of Paulus Aurelianus. Even if *Brehant* were a corruption of Old Breton **Brechenioc* the phrase would still be meaningless. ¹⁹See *Canu Llywarch Hen*, edited by Ifor Williams, second edition (Cardiff, 1953), p. 13; and p. 120, where he quotes other similar passages in early Welsh poetry where *dinas* has this meaning.

the former gave Welsh *arth*, and the latter, if genitive cases had survived, as they occasionally did in petrified phrases like place-names, would have given **eirth*. Hence *receptaculum ursi* would be, as a place-name, *Din Eirth*, and this was in fact exactly the medieval name of an old parish in the cantref of Rhos, part of the kingdom of Gwynedd on the north Welsh coast east of Conway.²⁰ This would mean that Cuneglasus was lord of Rhos, and perhaps of the whole eastern division of Gwynedd known later as Gwynedd Is Conwy. In fact, one of the Old Welsh royal pedigrees of Gwynedd, evidently that of Rhos,²¹ gives a *Cinglas* near its beginning as grandson of *Enniaun girt map Cuneda*, and therefore, in early Welsh genealogical tradition, first cousin of the Maglocunus (Old Welsh Mailcun, Middle Welsh Maelgwn) who comes next here below.²²

All this strongly suggests, then, that Gildas's Cuneglasus was a prince of Rhos, with his 'capital' at *Dineirth* near Llandrillo.²³ As to 'multorum sessor aurigaue currus', it must be that he was describing him as an oppressor 'overriding and driving over many men', though Gildas being what he was, it is possible that this contains some hidden reference, now unintelligible, to sporting pursuits of which Gildas disapproved. If Cuneglasus notoriously devoted too much time to hunting and driving, it would be natural for Gildas to twist this into hunting and running over, that is, oppressing, many people.

His last and longest denunciation, in Chapters 33 to 36, is reserved for Maglocunus, whom he salutes as 'tu enim, insularis draco. . . , maior multis potentia. . . , robuste armis' etc., and he continues with numerous accusations, particularly of wife-murder and retrospective incest; but at the same time he seems to see more good in him, or potential for good, now perverted, than in the others. It appears always to have been agreed, and obviously rightly, that this was the Old Welsh Mailcun, king of Gwynedd, with his 'capital' at Aberffraw in Anglesey, well-known in Middle Welsh tradition as Maelgwn Gwynedd.²⁴ This name is another in **cun-*, with its first element British **maglos* 'prince', hence 'Princely Hound'.²⁵ This time, Gildas does not have a field day with the concept of 'dog'—perhaps he felt he had exhausted it—and instead he calls him *insularis draco*, 'island

²⁰See J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales*, third edition, 2 vols (London, 1939), I, 240. The name now appears on maps as Dinarth. ²¹See Harley Pedigree 3 in *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, edited by Peter C. Bartrum (Cardiff, 1966), p. 10, with note on p. 126; and D. P. Kirby, 'British Dynastic History in the Pre-Viking Period', *BBCS*, 27 (1976–78), 90. ²²For his pedigree see Bartrum, *Tracts*, p. 9, no. 1. ²³For Lloyd 'there is nowhere [in Gildas] any indication of the seat of his power, but the probabilities are in favour of some part of North Wales lying between Powys and the region directly ruled over by Maelgwn' (*History of Wales*, I, 133). See also Bromwich, *Trioedd* (n. 3 above), p. 438. ²⁴For him see Bromwich, *Trioedd*, pp. 437–41 and 557. ²⁵See Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 463, 465, and 644.

dragon', where 'island' must be a reference to Anglesey.²⁶ 'Dragon' is used, on the face of it, as being still another fierce, horrible monster, but Gildas would not be Gildas if he implied no other, hidden meaning. The Welsh derivative of Latin *draco* was Middle Welsh *dreic*, and from the oblique stem also *dragon*, but in early Welsh poetry both may mean 'hero', 'war-leader', etc.²⁷ One wonders, then, whether it is conceivable that Gildas, who seems to show he thought well of Maglocunus' military prowess, may for once have used, however grudgingly, an epithet which a Welsh audience might have taken as one of admiration.

The other, very well-known passage in the *De Excidio* involving a British personal name occurs in Chapter 23: 'Tum omnes consiliarii una cum superbo tyranno caecantur' ('then all the councillors, together with the arrogant usurper, became blind'). This is the reading of Mommsen's edition (p. 38), from the tenth-century Canterbury manuscript (C), the oldest known, and though it is evident that Vortigern is meant, he is not named here or anywhere else in this manuscript of the *De Excidio*.²⁸ But two other, later, manuscripts do name him; in the later-twelfth-century Avranches text (A) the reading is *una cum superbo tyranno Vortigerno*, and in the early-thirteenth-century Cambridge one (X) the reading is the same but with the name in Old Welsh guise, *Gurthigerno Brittanorum duce*. A new discovery, however, has given us a text of some chapters of the *De Excidio* still older than C, in a Breton manuscript of the ninth century, which agrees with A in almost all its readings except for scribal errors.²⁹ Unfortunately Chapter 23 is not included in it, so we cannot tell whether it did or did not contain the name. However, though it has not yet been edited, and hence the filiation of the manuscripts is still uncertain, it may well be, as David Dumville puts it, that the Avranches manuscript will have to be taken much more seriously than Mommsen did.³⁰ This requires a complete new edition, and *Vortigerno* might have to be admitted into the text of Gildas as the original reading after *superbo tyranno*.³¹ One should also remember that Bede, who knew and used the *De Excidio* in the early eighth century, must surely have had before him a text of it containing the name, because he paraphrases the passage about Vortigern in two

²⁶Some writers have preferred to take *insularis* as a reference to Britain as a whole, but this appears absurd in the historical context and that of the princes mentioned in the *De Excidio*. ²⁷See Bromwich, *Trioedd*, p. 520. ²⁸On Vortigern see particularly D. P. Kirby's important article, 'Vortigern', *BBCS*, 23 (1968-70), 37-59, and its bibliographical footnotes, especially p. 38, n. 2. ²⁹See David N. Dumville, 'Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend', *History*, new series, 62 (1977), 183-84. The Breton manuscript is Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 414. ³⁰Dumville, pp. 183-84. ³¹Dumville, p. 184.

places in his works.³² The first is in his *De Temporum Ratione* of 725: 'quos [Anglos] illi unanimo consilio cum rege suo Vertigerno [sic] quasi defensores patriae ad se invitandos elegerunt'.³³ The second, written rather later than the preceding, is *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I.14, a chapter largely paraphrased or summarized from Gildas, where Bede renders our *omnes consiliarii una cum superbo tyranno* by 'initum namque est consilium, quid agendum. . . , placuitque omnibus cum suo rege Uurtigerno. . .' That is, 'they began to hold a council about what should be done, and everyone agreed with their king Vortigern. . .' Thus Bede knew the name, and knew it both in the very early form with *Ver-* and in the later one which he Anglicized as *Uurtigernus*; and this takes us back to at least the year 725.

The phrase *superbus tyrannus*, together with the occurrence of the name twice in Bede and once in manuscript A of Gildas but not in the oldest manuscript, C, has led to a spate of speculation among historians, some of whom seem to think that the more artificial and improbable a theory is the more likely it is to be true. The common-sense interpretation is, and always has been, that British **Wortigernos* (or the earlier form **Wertigernos*) was the man's name, and it is only the fact that manuscript C, and therefore Mommsen's edition, lacks it that has led to the rise of these speculations in the first place. We have seen that Gildas may very possibly have written *superbo tyranno Vortigerno* after all, and that this may well be why it appears in Bede. Even if Gildas himself did not include it, a somewhat later copyist, knowing a little more of the story than Gildas chose to give, could have added it, as if to say '[that is, the notorious] Vortigern'. Why Gildas should have omitted it, if he did, we do not know—perhaps he lived somewhere where he was not wholly out of reach of the power of Vortigern's descendants, unlike that of Constantine and the others, and judged it politic not to be too specifically offensive, like a modern journalist not very successfully studying to dodge a libel action. In any case, the point is that in calling him 'the arrogant usurper' or 'despot' he was characteristically playing on the meaning of the British **Wortigernos* in exactly the same way as he did with that of **Cunoglasos* and the others. It is a compound of British **wor*, older **wer*, a preposition meaning 'on, over', and **tigernos* 'lord', so that the meaning is 'overlord'; and Gildas was punning on this in his usual way, and getting an offensive

³²Ferdinand Lot (*Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum* (Paris, 1934), pp. 63, n. 4, and 171, n. 4) repeats Mommsen's opinion that manuscripts X and A added the name under the influence of Bede. So Kirby, accepting the common opinion that the name in these manuscripts is a later gloss, takes it as derived from Bede ('Vortigern', p. 41). But as Lot admits, Bede could have been using as his source a manuscript of the *De Excidio* in which Vortigern was named. ³³*Chronica Minora*, III, edited by Mommsen, p. 303.

meaning out of it, by rendering **wor* not by Latin *super* but by *superbus* 'arrogant', and **tigernos* not by *dominus* 'lord' but by *tyrannus* 'despot, usurper'.

The theories referred to above may be reduced to two, though some writers seem to put forward more than one of them at once without apparently feeling the contradiction. The first is that far from *superbus tyrannus* being a Latin translation, of a sort, of a name **Wortigernos*, this was a British common-noun, **wortigernos*, inserted by a glossator to interpret the Latin phrase to the British reader who might not be sure what it meant.³⁴ But what kind of reader of Gildas would not have known what the Latin meant, and what kind of person familiar with British would take **wortigernos* as a satisfactory translation of it?

The second theory is in two parts: (a) that **wortigernos* was a title of rank similar to the Irish *ard-rí* 'high king' (or, still more broadly, to 'archduke' or 'generalissimo'), and not a name at all, his actual name not being known; and (b) that *superbus tyrannus* is a mere Latin 'translation' of this title, without any hostile implication in the least, used by Gildas as if to say 'I write *superbus tyrannus* here as a translation of our princely rank of *wortigernos*, for the sake of those who do not understand British'. Now it is certain that **wortigernos* would mean 'overlord' and that it would mean nothing else,³⁵ but to assert that there ever was such a Celtic rank is purely in the air. A good deal is known about the Celtic constitutional and social system and its terminology from the early Irish Laws, less so from the early Welsh ones, and a very little about the Gaulish system, and nowhere, anywhere, is there such an actual *rank*, a common-noun, as *wortigernos*—no Irish *foirtchern* or Welsh *gwrtheyrn* or Gaulish *vertigernos*. On the other hand, it is completely characteristic of the Celtic vocabulary of personal *names* of a very common type, though it happens that this particular one is rare.³⁶ Such are **Cunotigernos* 'Hound-like Lord' (St Kentigern); **Catutigernos* 'Battle Lord' (*CATOTIGIRNI* in a mid- to later-sixth-century inscription at

³⁴So apparently Ferdinand Lot, 'Hengist, Hors, Vortigern: La Conquête de la Grande-Bretagne par les Saxons', in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Charles Bémont* (Paris, 1913), p. 18; and *Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum*, p. 63, n. 4. Lot was anticipated chronologically by W. W. Newell ('Doubts Concerning the British History Attributed to Nennius', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 20 (1905), 655, n. 2), though it is not at all clear what Newell really meant. For C. E. Stevens's interpretation of it see below, p. 38. ³⁵'Translations' such as 'high-chief, high-king, supreme ruler, chief ruler' are all quite mistaken. ³⁶See Nora K. Chadwick, 'A Note on the Name Vortigern', in *Studies in Early British History*, edited by N. K. Chadwick (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 34–46. It is possible to make a great deal too much of this rarity; many Celtic names are rare in our sources, and the idea that the early Irish instances of *Foirtchern* and *VORTIGURN* are all derived from that of the British despot will scarcely convince, particularly in the case of the two ogams.

Margam, Glamorgan;³⁷ *Cattegirn* in the early part of two Old Welsh Powys genealogies);³⁸ **Biwotigernos* 'Lively Lord' (*BIVATIGI[RNI]* in an early-sixth-century Anglesey inscription);³⁹ **Tigernomaglos* 'Lordly Prince' (*Tigernmaglus* in the *Life of Paulus Aurelianus*);⁴⁰ **Rotigernos* 'Great Lord' (*Ritigirn* in an Old Welsh genealogy).⁴¹ Other personal names formed on words for other 'ranks' than **tigernos* are also familiar, for example **Wortamorix* 'Highest King' (Old Welsh *Guorthemir*)⁴² and **Teutorix* 'King of the Tribe', the source of the Welsh name *Tudyr*, later *Tudur*, Anglicized as *Tudor*. Professor Ellis Evans comments that this last is 'typical of a tribal, hierarchical society in which the overlordship or leadership of a tribe would have been important'.⁴³ None of these or other name compounds in **tigernos* or **rix* or the like expressed social ranks as common-nouns. Aristocratic names in *-rix* are common in early Celtic without any implication that any of the holders of them were kings. Are we then to suppose that such names, and **Wortigernos* with them, did once express this? Is it not obvious that they were all given to infants purely as names, from the start, suitable to any members of royalty and the aristocracy?⁴⁴

In fact, while some proponents of the theory '**wortigernos* a title' take the further step that the actual name of the *superbus tyrannus* is unknown, others, more cautious but less consistent, do not deny that nevertheless it was his name. The first of these known to me was C. E. Stevens, who evidently took the hint from W. W. Newell, to whose article he gives a (wrong) reference, and says that *Vortigern* 'would actually translate from Celtic much as "*superbus tyrannus*"', and that either he 'chanced to have an appropriate name' [appropriate to the Latin phrase], or it was the *title* of someone whose real

³⁷Nash-Williams, no. 408. ³⁸Bartrum, *Tracts*, p. 12, nos 22 and 23; the son of Cadell, founder of the Powys dynasty. ³⁹Nash-Williams, no. 33; see Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 446. ⁴⁰'Vie de saint Paul de Léon', edited by Cuissard, p. 437. ⁴¹Bartrum, *Tracts*, p. 10, no. 10. See other examples of names containing **tigernos* in *Language and History*, pp. 446–47. ⁴²*Historia Brittonum*, Chapters 43, 44, and 48, edited by Mommsen, *Chronica Minora*, III, 186–87 and 192. ⁴³D. Ellis Evans, 'A Comparison of the Formation of Some Continental and Early Insular Celtic Personal Names', *BBCS*, 24 (1970–72), 420. ⁴⁴In this connection, another striking example of mistakenly treating a Celtic name as a title has recently caused some surprise—Léon Fleuriot's theory (*Les Origines de la Bretagne: l'émigration* (Paris, 1980), pp. 170–73) that the fifth-century Breton leader Riothimus or Riothamus (standing probably for Late British **Rīgotamos*) was none other than his British contemporary Ambrosius Aurelianus, and that Fleuriot's 'Ambrosius Aurelianus *ri-gotamos*' means 'Ambrosius Aurelianus the Supreme King' or 'the Super King'. The refutation of this is largely a matter of the reliability of the historical sources used, and may be left to historians; but the philological reason why it is impossible is that **Rīgotamos* does not mean 'Supreme King' but 'Most Kingly, Most Royal', a personal name. In passing, the Gaulish *Bituriges*, 'The Kings of the World', was the name of a tribe; must we suppose that this too was really a title, and that they actually were or were believed to be the kings of the world?

name was perhaps different, and was mistaken for his name by Bede and Nennius. This is put tentatively, and Stevens adds, 'either supposition is somewhat difficult'.⁴⁵

H. M. Chadwick likewise hedged: 'The name *Ver-tigernus* means "over-lord", "high-lord", and may originally have been a title. But it had certainly come to be used as a personal name in Vortigern's time, if not before'.⁴⁶ Mrs Chadwick, in the same book, seems to take both views at once. She speaks of 'the *superbus tyrannus*, the *vortigern*' [*sic* the lower-case *v*-], meaning the supposed title, but all through the rest of her article she treats it as his name.⁴⁷ Some seven years later there is less hesitation: 'The name *Uurtigernus* has all the appearance of having been created from a title', and 'in title and function it seems to me that *Vortigern* [she means the 'title'] is neither more nor less than the equivalent of the . . . *Bretwalda*' (the Anglo-Saxon title).⁴⁸ At various points in these very speculative articles, which were probably the chief sources for popularizing the idea, she gives different English renderings of the 'title' and name, all of them erroneous and all repeated by later writers.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that '*vortigern* a title not a name' has since been adopted as dogma and repeated. According to S. S. Frere, 'Vortigern, indeed, is a title not a name; the word means "high-king" . . . It is significant that Vortigern [*sic*], chose a British, not a Roman, title'.⁴⁹ Thus do speculations become facts, and it is a very novel concept of Celtic constitutional terminology and practice that rulers chose their own titles. Leslie Alcock is more cautious: 'Vortigern means something like "high chief", and it may therefore have been a title rather than, or as well as, a personal name'.⁵⁰ Various other mistaken renderings occur elsewhere, such as 'high-king' and 'supreme ruler'. Objection to the facile popular idea about a 'title' is however already apparent in 1968 in D. P. Kirby's article referred to above: 'Most scholars would not agree'.⁵¹

Finally, there is the question of the meaning of *superbus tyrannus*. This has been rendered variously as 'outstanding ruler, supreme ruler, pre-eminent ruler' and 'high king', etc., which are really much more like the (supposed) meanings of **wortigernos* just mentioned than accurate translations of the Latin phrase, to which they bear

⁴⁵'Gildas Sapiens', *English Historical Review*, 56 (1941), 366, n. 3. The reference to Newell should be to *PMLA* vol. xx, not vol. xxx; see above, n. 34. This wrong reference has been repeated by subsequent writers, who evidently did not consult *PMLA*. ⁴⁶'Vortigern', in *Studies in Early British History*, edited by N. K. Chadwick, p. 27. Cf. Mac Cana (n. 10 above), p. 117. ⁴⁷N. K. Chadwick, 'Note on the Name Vortigern', in *Studies in Early British History*, p. 41. ⁴⁸Nora K. Chadwick, 'Bretwalda-Gwledig-Vortigern', *BBCS*, 19 (1960-62), 230. ⁴⁹In his *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London, 1967), p. 368 (p. 412 of the 1978 revised edition). ⁵⁰*Arthur's Britain* (London, 1971), p. 103. ⁵¹Kirby, 'Vortigern', p. 40, n. 4.

very little resemblance. Latin *superbus* means 'arrogant, overbearing, proud, haughty', and most certainly not 'superior'.⁵² The Greek word τύραννος always had pejorative implications of unconstitutionality and depotism; borrowed into Latin, it meant from beginning to end 'usurper, despot', and neutral renderings of it such as 'ruler' are mistaken and misleading.⁵³ By *tyrannus*, Gildas certainly did not mean 'ruler' or the like, as is pointed up by his 'reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos; iudices habet, sed impios' ('Britain indeed has kings, but they are usurpers; it has judges, but they are wicked men').⁵⁴

The conclusion must be as follows. First, whether Gildas did or did not name Vortigern by name—a point which may be settled by a new edition of the *De Excidio Britanniae*—he called him 'an arrogant usurper/despot'. Second, the notion that for *Vortigernus* we must read *vortigernus*, and that this was a title, not the usurper's personal name, is too far-fetched to be taken seriously. Third, that the name means 'Overlord' and means nothing else. And fourth, that in calling him *superbus tyrannus* Gildas was playing on the literal meaning of the name, with a sneer, just as he did with those of the other British princes discussed above.

⁵²The idea, probably unconscious, that *superbus* and *superior* mean the same thing because they contain the same element was perhaps what inspired the statements (Alcock, *Arthur's Britain*, pp. 320 and 357) that 'the *superbus tyrannus* was perhaps the "high king" or "supreme ruler", with the implication that there were also lesser kings', and '*superbus* implies that he held sovereignty over several minor *tyranni*'. (The fact that he held a council of state does not necessarily make him any the less a despot.) ⁵³Compare Thompson, 'Gildas and the History of Britain', p. 216, n. 69. ⁵⁴*De Excidio*, Chapter 27.

Arthur in Gaelic Tradition

Part II: Romances and Learned Lore

William Gillies

University of Edinburgh

OUR concern in Part I of this study was to establish the presence of an Arthurian strand in Modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic popular tales and in the heroic ballads.¹ It is now necessary to turn to the late medieval manuscript tradition, and in particular to the Early Modern prose romances, which, besides offering further examples of Gaelic Arthurian texts, help to explain how, when, and whence Arthurian literature came to figure in the Gaelic tradition as a whole. Although these romances will be our main concern, mention will also be made of certain other categories of Arthurian evidence occurring in Gaelic. These in their turn help to fill out the overall picture, although many questions remain unanswered.

Gaelic versions of classical literary texts, some of which date back to the Middle Irish period, testify to an interest in translating and adapting foreign works during the pre-Norman period. But the volume and range of these did not become really important until the twelfth century and later, when the Gaelic world became cognisant with the Matter of Rome and the other literary cycles then popular on the Continent and in England. As a result of this activity we find Gaelic renderings of such favourite works as the *Aeneid*, Statius' *Thebaid*, and Lucan's *Civil War*, to which were later added such texts as the travels of Mandeville and Marco Polo, and the stories of Guy of Warwick and William of Palerne.² During the same period, continuing esteem for the native cycles led to a good deal of modernizing, editing, and re-styling of selected earlier Gaelic material, together with new creations and compilations inspired by it. The two streams came together during the so-called Gaelic Revival, when Gaelic cultural influences and national sentiment were resurgent in

¹'Arthur in Gaelic Tradition. Part I: Folktales and Ballads', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 2 (Winter 1981), 47-72. ²For these and similar texts see R. I. Best, *Bibliography of Irish Philology and Literature*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1913-42), I, 123-26, and II, 90-91. On the classical texts see further W. B. Stanford, 'Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 70, Section C (1970), 33-38.

the post-Norman era, and access to European romantic literature had cultivated an appetite for such works in the native tongue. The result was the Early Modern Gaelic romantic tale, whose roots extend back to the period of the early saga literature, but which, after gathering momentum in the later fourteenth and earlier fifteenth centuries, reached its creative peak in the later fifteenth and sixteenth, and enjoyed a 'Silver Age' that lingered on into the seventeenth century and even later.³

These productions exist mainly in the paper manuscripts of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, though some are attested in the vellum tradition, while scribal colophons, literary cross-references, and other indirect evidence can guarantee an earlier date for others. They seem in at least some cases to have been composed with a view to being read aloud to an audience, and there is some evidence to suggest that longer examples might have been so constructed as to lend themselves to serialization. The large number of extant texts and wide distribution of the most popular examples argue a high degree of dissemination, as does their language, which is on the whole free from the exclusive brand of archaism affected by some other classes of prose text during the period in question. It seems clear that they were for the most part composed by and circulated among members of the professional literary order, and that they were written for the entertainment of the Gaelic-speaking nobility.⁴ Given these facts, it is not surprising to find an Arthurian element amongst these translations and romances.

There is only one example of a direct translation of a central Arthurian text; but it is an important one.⁵ According to its editor, *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha* ('The Quest for the Holy Grail') is most probably a fifteenth-century rendering of a good (and, on occasion, strikingly good) text of the Vulgate *Queste*, in an English version now lost. Of its translator we know nothing, save that he was an able and sympathetic craftsman, who contrived to capture much of the spirit and spirituality of the original. His success

³See especially Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 107–41; Gerard Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1961); J. E. Caerwyn Williams and Máirín Ní Mhuiríosa, *Traidisiún Liteartha na nGael* (Dublin, 1979), pp. 121–32; Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1980), pp. 8–10. The term 'Gaelic Revival' refers, of course, to Ireland; but it is clear that a not entirely dissimilar situation obtained in at least part of the Scottish Highlands under the Lordship of the Isles. ⁴On all these questions see Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediaeval Romances* (Dublin, 1969), Chapters 1–6 (modifying the conclusions of Murphy and other earlier writers in several important ways). ⁵*Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha*, edited by Sheila Falconer (Dublin, 1953). Another translation might perhaps be implied by the 'History of Arthur' mentioned by Douglas Hyde, *A Literary History of Ireland* (London, 1899), p. 572, n. 3. I have not seen this text.

owes much to his choice of a moderately archaic, but simple and unembellished prose, where many recent and contemporary precedents might have tempted him to a more inflated style and register.⁶ Close translation of an identifiable source is, however, exceptional. For although Gaelic Arthurian romances may very frequently contain themes and motifs familiar in non-Celtic Arthurian literature, they cannot normally be traced directly to a known original outside Gaeldom.⁷

I mention first *Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe* ('The Visit of "Grey Thigh"'), which encapsulates many of the questions to be raised with regard to these texts.⁸ It is found only in two late manuscripts, one of the seventeenth century and one of the eighteenth; but there is good reason to think that it was contained in the missing part of a fifteenth-century vellum.⁹ In brief, the text tells how a newly arrived (and, as it happens, newly married) knight at King Arthur's court comes into contact with a supernatural lady while out hunting. (She transforms herself into a beautiful hind in order to lure him to a hall in the forest.) He is captivated by her beauty, and visits her daily 'to adore her'. His wife becomes suspicious and discovers the liaison, but later realises that it is platonic, and herself comes to delight in the company of the supernatural woman. After a time they invite her to come back with them to the King's court, where Arthur and his knights are likewise captivated, and become completely devoted to her. The women of the court, however, are not so pleased; they scheme to drive the lovely visitor away by divulging that she possesses a grotesque physical blemish, whose existence she has confided to Arthur's wife.¹⁰ Unfortunately for them, when they denounce her in the presence of the whole court it is they—and not she—who are found to have the blemish (the *Iosgad Liath*, a disfiguring tuft of razor-proof grey hair at the back of the knee). Then, after an episode in which she reveals her name and parentage, and the circumstances which have brought her to Arthur's court, she banishes the women, decreeing that they shall be without men for-

⁶On the anonymous translator's method and language see especially Falconer, *Lorgaireacht*, p. xl, contrasting *Eachtra Uilliam* ('The Adventure of William [of Palerne]'), edited by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin, 1949), pp. xvii-xix. Cf. in general the remarks of Gordon Quin, *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás*, Irish Texts Society, 38 (Dublin, 1939), pp. xxv-xxxi. ⁷This independence of treatment is not confined to Arthurian material: see, for example, R. T. Meyer, *Merugud Uilix maic Leirtis* (Dublin, 1958), pp. xiv-xvi, on the Gaelic 'version' of Homer's *Odyssey*. ⁸Edited by Máire Mhac an tSaoi, in *Dhá Sgéal Artúraíochta* (Dublin, 1946), pp. 42-70. See also, for English summary and discussion, Maartje Draak, 'Sgél Isgaide Léithe', *Celtica*, 3 (1956), 232-40. ⁹See Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, II (London, 1926), p. 544; Mhac an tSaoi, *Dhá Sgéal*, p. xi; Draak, 'Sgél Isgaide Léithe', p. 232. ¹⁰So one of the two manuscripts (see Draak, 'Sgél Isgaide Léithe', p. 236); the other makes the young knight's wife the recipient of the damning information (Mhac an tSaoi, *Dhá Sgéal*, pp. 50-51).

ever, and invites King Arthur and his men to come with her: she will provide them with substitute wives from among her own 'women-folk', who will be more lovely and loving than those they have lost. They agree and set off. Arthur and his men are then made to suffer indignities and affronts at the hands of supernatural attackers, to enable them to experience some of the shame she felt when dishonoured at Arthur's court. But finally she relents, they are reunited with their new wives, and the story ends happily—for them at least.

Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe has been criticized for disjointedness and poor construction, as being a mere congeries of motifs thrown loosely together.¹¹ There is some force in this criticism; yet one could also take a more rounded view of the text, considering not so much the author's sources as his own contribution, in intention and in achievement. Such an approach might seek to show that *Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe* was composed with a view to exploring the concepts of courtly love and knightly service, as opposed to more traditional or instinctive codes of behaviour. (To sustain this view one would probably have to assume that the author was unable to assert complete artistic control over powerful traditional themes, or that such themes had tended to revert to type during the transmission of the text, or a combination of such factors.) On any approach, there are persistent indications that the testing theme, which has obvious congeners in Celtic and non-Celtic Arthurian literature, is at the heart of this text.¹²

An Arthurian tale in some ways more typical of Gaelic romance is *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*. It tells how Melóra, daughter of King Arthur, falls in love with Orlando, son of the King of Thessaly, who has come to join her father's knights; and how, when he is enclosed in an enchanted dungeon by the machinations of Merlin and Sir Mador (a jealous rival to Orlando), she takes the initiative to discover the magical objects which alone can disenchant him, and then sallies forth in knight's attire to procure them, returning successfully after great adventures in Asia and India to release Orlando and bring about a happy conclusion.¹³ Like *Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe*, this text survives only in late paper manuscripts. In this case, however, there is no testimony to an earlier tradition, and the text

¹¹Thus Mhac an tSaoi, *Dhá Sgéal*, p. xii; Draak, 'Sgél Isgaide Léithe', p. 237. ¹²On ballad evidence for tests by supernatural visitants see 'Part I', pp. 64–70. If I am correct about the general import of this text, R. W. Ackerman's characterization of *The Carl of Carlisle* could be applied to it, mutatis mutandis: 'a tale, composed of traditional matter, which was converted . . . into a sort of tract on knightly virtues' ('English Rimed and Prose Romances', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, edited by R. S. Loomis (Oxford, 1959), pp. 493–94.) ¹³Edited by Máire Mhac an tSaoi, in *Dhá Sgéal*, pp. 1–41; see also the English summary and discussion in Maartje Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', *Béaloidéas*, 16 (1946), 3–48.

has been judged a late example of its type on several counts: the occurrence of such 'typically seventeenth-century' names as Orlando, Melora, Gustavus, Levander, and Uranus; undoubted borrowing from the non-Arthurian *Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann*; linguistic peculiarities shared with *Tóraidheacht Gruaidhe Griansholuis*, another probably seventeenth-century creation found in the same manuscript as the oldest copy of *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*; and a suggested debt, direct or indirect, to Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.¹⁴

Whatever the merits of these last suggestions, one is tempted to see *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* as a 'pot-boiler' in the context of the Gaelic romantic tradition as a whole, though one should add that it is coherent and skilfully told. It may also be taken as a fair representative of the Arthurian type of tale in the relatively subordinate role it assigns to Arthur, the details of Arthurian background it assumes, and in the way its Arthurian matter is integrated into the wider world of the Gaelic romances.

Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil ('The Adventure of the Crop-eared Dog') and *Eachtra Mhacaoimh an Iolair* ('The Adventure of the Eagle-youth') may be mentioned next.¹⁵ The first tells how the 'Crop-eared Dog' saves Arthur and his household from the depredations of the malevolent Knight of the Lantern, and how he and Sir Gawain pursue the marauder through many lands. During the

¹⁴See Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 338-39; Williams and Ní Mhuiríosa, *Traidisiún Liteartha*, pp. 129-30; Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 28. *Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann* was in existence before 1600 (R. B. Breathnach, 'Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann: A Sixteenth Century Latin Fragment', *Éigse*, 1 (1939-40), 249-57), and perhaps considerably earlier (James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin, 1955), pp. 158-59; see, however, Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 42). For the connection with *Tóraidheacht Gruaidhe Griansholuis*, see T. F. O'Rahilly's opinion, printed in *Mhac an tSaoi*, *Dhá Sgéal*, p. 84. The connection with Ariosto depends upon similarities between the roles of Orlando and Melóra on the one hand; and of Ruggiero and Bradamante on the other. It has been doubted by Draak ('Orlando agus Melora', p. 10), who favoured a link with *The Seven Sages of Rome* (an Early Modern translation of which has been edited, from an Edinburgh manuscript, by David Greene, 'A Gaelic Version of the *Seven Wise Masters*', *Béaloides*, 14 (1944), 219-36). Certainly it would be pleasant if Ariosto could be confirmed as a source, in view of the evidence adduced by Flower (*Catalogue*, II, 339) for Sir John Harington's English translation of *Orlando* circulating in Irish aristocratic circles in 1599. But the name 'Orlando' could be a red herring rather than a real clue; nor should it be forgotten that Spenser had transposed the episode of Ruggiero and Bradamante into an Arthurian setting (in which, moreover, Merlin played a part): see *The Faerie Queene*, Book III (first published in 1590). For what it is worth, one may add that a cursory investigation of the language of *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* prompts the tentative suggestion that one element in its history may have been a text written in English. ¹⁵Edited by R. A. S. Macalister, *Two Irish Arthurian Romances*, Irish Texts Society, 10 (Dublin, 1909). Note the review by T. F. O'Rahilly in *Gaelic Journal*, 19 (1909), 355-64, where it is pointed out, inter alia plurima, that Sir Gawain, and not Sir Galahad (as Macalister supposed) is the hero.

course of their adventures the Dog explains to Gawain that he has been metamorphosed by his step-mother, that the Knight of the Lantern is his step-brother (in whose favour the mother had attempted to eliminate him), and that he is really the son and heir of the King of India. At last the Knight of the Lantern is captured by the Dog, and compelled to restore the latter to his true shape, after which he and Gawain return triumphantly to Arthur's court.

The Eagle-youth is the posthumous son of the King of Sorcha, whose brother has slain him by treachery and imprisoned his widow with a view to killing her child if it turns out to be a boy. The baby is carried off by an eagle before he can be put to death, however, and is deposited in Britain, where he is adopted by King Arthur. He grows up strong, handsome, and princely, and the romance is concerned mainly with his efforts to discover who he is, and with how he takes revenge on his uncle and wins back his rightful kingdom.

Both *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* and *Eachtra Mhacaoimh an Iolair* occur in a number of manuscript sources, which are mostly of the eighteenth century, but include a first appearance in 1517 for the former,¹⁶ and a mid-seventeenth-century witness to the latter.¹⁷ The 'Crop-eared Dog' belongs to the well-represented class of werewolf tales; and the in-tale in which the Dog explains to Gawain how his enchantment came about is closely related to the 'Werewolf's Tale' discussed in Part I of the present study, though the frames are different.¹⁸ *Eachtra Mhacaoimh an Iolair* has been characterized as a conflation of the theme of the abducted child seeking to avenge his wrongs and discover his identity (as found in *Alexaunder le Orphelyn*) and the motif of the child abducted by a bird or winged monster (as found in *Eglamour of Artois*).¹⁹ In both these texts the Arthurian element is relatively slight, little more than a frame, though it is extended in *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* by the fact that Gawain is made to accompany the 'Crop-eared Dog' on his mission.

Caithréim Chonghail Chláiringnigh ('The Martial Exploits of Conghal Flat-nail') is a rather different proposition. Composed, perhaps, in the sixteenth century, it is a pot-pourri of a text, based loosely on the Ulster Cycle, but permitting characters from different literary ages to gather round the character who is its hero.²⁰ The

¹⁶Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 259. ¹⁷*Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, edited by T. F. O'Rahilly, Kathleen Mulchrone, and others (Dublin, 1926-), xviii, 2241. ¹⁸See 'Part I', pp. 53-55. For werewolf tales in Gaelic tradition, see G. L. Kittredge, 'Arthur and Gorlagon', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 8 (1903), 257-60; Cecile O'Rahilly, *Eachtra Uilliam*, pp. viii-ix. On the relationship between 'The Werewolf's Tale' and *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* see Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 158-59. ¹⁹O'Rahilly, reviewing Macalister in *GJ*, 19 (1909), 357-58; cf. n. 58 below. ²⁰Edited and translated by P. M. Mac Sweeney (Dublin, 1904). For a vellum fragment (containing the 'Arthurian' section) in Edinburgh (National Library of Scotland, MS 72. 1. 31, Fragment C) see Donald Mack-

story tells how Conghal, disappointed in a dispute over the right to the kingship of Ulster, leaves Ireland with a band of followers and travels to foreign parts to win fame and fortune. In the course of his travels he arrives in the land of the Britons, which is ruled by Artúr Mór mac Iubhair, at a time when the Saxons are threatening to invade the land. This Arthurian section, which alone concerns us here, reveals how Conghal was instrumental in discovering Artúr's long-lost son, who had been taken away by the Saxons and brought up in ignorance of his identity, and how he was able to persuade Artúr, who had been soured by imposters claiming to be his missing son, that the lad was in fact his heir. The interesting thing about this episode is that it appears to have been culled from a text of an earlier vintage, the twelfth-century *Fled Dúin na nGéd* ('The Feast of the Fort of the Geese').²¹ Now the 'King of the Britons' in the earlier text is called not Artúr but Eochaid Aingces. One's immediate reaction would be to suppose that the identification of the King of the Britons as Artúr was the work of the composer of the later tale; yet it is not impossible that he had some earlier authority for it, and that Eochaid Aingces (an unknown but unexceptionable Gaelic name) is secondary.

Eachtra an Amadáin Mhóir ('The Adventure of the Great Fool'), the last text to be mentioned in this class, is of special interest, in that it offers the opportunity to compare a romance with a popular tale; for the Great Fool who is its hero is indubitably the character whom we encountered in the modern, orally preserved tales, and the ground covered by the latter has much in common with the subject matter of the *Eachtra*.²² The early sections of the *Eachtra* follow the same line as the Scottish Gaelic version summarized in Part I of this study,²³ save that in the romance the characters tend to be named rather than anonymous and, in particular, that the king's court is identified as Arthur's court. Thus we are told how King Arthur's brother, the Knight of the Fair Land, sends his pregnant wife into a 'wonderful forest' within his domains, where the child, if it be a son, may grow up ignorant of arms and chivalry. (This is necessary because the Knight's elder sons have met their death attempting to

innon, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 90; John MacKechnie, *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in Selected Libraries in Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 vols (Boston, 1973), 1, 172, col. 2. On the date of composition see Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 42, n. 16. ²¹*Fled Dúin na nGéd*, edited by Ruth Lehmann (Dublin, 1964), especially pp. 22–29. ²²The romance was edited from two eighteenth-century manuscripts by T. Ó Rábhartaigh and Douglas Hyde, *Lia Fáil*, 2 (1927), 191–228. See also Ludwig Mühlhausen, 'Neue Beiträge zum Perceval-Thema', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 17 (1928), 1–30; Sheila J. McHugh, *Sir Percyvelle: Its Irish Connections* (Ann Arbor, 1946); Gerard Murphy, reviewing McHugh, in *Studies*, 37 (1948), 368–71; Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 147–49. ²³See 'Part I', p. 52.

slay Arthur, and he fears that a younger brother would seek to avenge them and be similarly destroyed.) The boy is brought up in solitude by his mother and a nurse until the age of eight, when the nurse's son joins them in the forest. He becomes the Fool's companion, and is instrumental in the Fool's learning how to cast a spear and how to provide meat and clothing by hunting deer. He also explains what horses are for when they come upon the knight's stud in the forest, whereupon the Fool catches and mounts one of his father's chargers and rides it out of the forest, until he comes to Arthur's capital, Cathair an Chuill, in the 'Plain of the Britons'.

At this point, it will be recalled, the oral version begins to diverge from the Perceval texts with which it had borne comparison up to now. The *Eachtra*, by contrast, continues to parallel the Continental and English accounts of Perceval's appearance and adventures at Arthur's court. When the Great Fool first arrives on the scene he encounters Gawain, a daughter of Arthur, and Arthur's fool, who is dressed in a coat of skins. Introducing himself, he asks who Arthur's fool is. On being told, he naively asks whether the fool is the best man present, which elicits the sarcastic reply that he is, indeed. Would he (the Great Fool) be a better fool than the other if he had such a dress? he asks. Gawain replies that he would. At this point Arthur's daughter laughs, whereupon Gawain strikes her. (He is annoyed that she has laughed at the Fool, since she had vowed to laugh only at the best man, not the worst.) In the ensuing altercation the Great Fool realises that Gawain has been mocking him, and attacks him, injuring him severely. He then goes back to his mother, and has her make him a deerskin costume similar to that worn by Arthur's fool, before returning once more to court. This time he encounters a scene of carnage, and its perpetrator, the Purple Knight, who sends him on to Arthur as his messenger. Arthur and Gawain tell him that he could be a better fool if he had a costume like the Purple Knight's, hoping thereby to rid themselves of him; but he overpowers, kills, and despoils the Purple Knight, to the astonishment of all. At this point the *Eachtra* takes its leave of the Perceval texts, to send its hero on a series of romantic adventures and missions whose relationship to those undertaken by Perceval is limited to certain vague and general similarities of temperament.²⁴ As we saw previously, in connection with the ballad evidence, the last of these adventures is in effect a prose re-telling of *Laoidh an Amadain Mhóir*.

²⁴For these later sections see McHugh, *Sir Percyvella*, pp. 21–26. For echoes in Modern folktale sources see Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 148 ('Gleann-a-chait-chaothaich'), and possibly the latter part of a 'Dummling' cum 'Sorcerer's Apprentice' tale entitled 'An t-Amadan Mór mac Rìgh Eirinn' (cf. 'Part I', p. 51, n. 15).

The studies of Mühlhausen and McHugh have pointed up the complex background of the prose texts about the Amadán Mór, though it is clear that the last word has yet to be said on the subject. Some tokens of their existence within a Gaelic continuum will be specified shortly; from the Arthurian point of view three points are worth establishing at this stage. First, a consideration of the *Eachtra*'s affiliations within the Gaelic romantic tradition suggests the tentative conclusion that the text attained its present form in the later sixteenth or early seventeenth century.²⁵ Secondly, when one comes to scrutinize more closely the Great Fool's connection with the Perceval legend, there appear to be grounds for recognizing a special relationship with Chrétien de Troyes, as Mühlhausen in particular has stressed. His caveat that one should be thinking in terms of early printed editions, rather than of links with the Chrétien manuscript tradition, seems equally well founded, for reasons that will become clear hereafter.²⁶ At the same time, however, one should not assume that demonstrating a link between Chrétien's *Perceval* and *Eachtra an Amadáin Mhóir* would exhaust the question of the Great Fool's literary connections, since there are also suggestive correspondences with other texts—for example, with the *Bel Inconnu* tradition. Equally, certain correspondences linking Chrétien and Arthurian sources with the folktale about the Amadán Mór, but absent from extant versions of the *Eachtra*, should warn us that on the Gaelic side, too, the picture is complex. All in all, a fresh examination of the whole question of the Great Fool texts is a desideratum.

With the Early Modern material in general one is conscious of a fuller and more specific Arthurian background than was the case with the modern, vernacular tales. There is, it is true, some variation (mostly minor) and contradiction; but there is also a core of assumed facts about Arthur, sometimes mentioned explicitly and sometimes taken for granted. The picture which emerges has a curious quality of 'double vision' about it at times—the product, as we shall see, of a situation in which earlier and later 'concepts of Arthur' are resolving their differences.

Arthur himself is usually called *Cing Artú(i)r*, but is also regularly styled *Rí Breatan* ('King of the Britons') or *Rí an Domhain* ('King

²⁵Compare Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 128 (opening section shared with, and probably borrowed from our text by *Eachtra Éachtaigh*), 198 (supposed verbal borrowing by our text from *Eachtra Chonaill Ghulban*, whose composition Dr Bruford would tentatively assign (p. 88, n. 2) to the period 1529–1607), and 64 (romances which generate folk versions antedate the eighteenth century). Cf. also my 'Part I', p. 69, where a comparable date is assigned to the *Laoidh* for comparable reasons. ²⁶On the grounds for suspecting a special relationship with Chrétien see Mühlhausen, pp. 26–30; cf. R. S. Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes* (New York, 1949), p. 340.

of the World').²⁷ He has his seat at a place usually called *Dún(adh) an Halla D(h)eirg* ('The Fortress of the Red Hall'), though occasionally also *Cathair na Camlaoide* ('The Castle [or 'City'] of Camelot'). *Dúnadh Chathrach an Chuill* ('The Fortress of the Castle of the Hazel'), which occurs in *Eachtra an Amadáin Mhóir*, is exceptional.²⁸ The location of this seat is usually rather vague—'in Britain', or 'in the plain of the Britons (*machaire Breatan*)', for example.

Arthur's lineage is usually given at the beginning of a romance involving him, or at the point where he first figures in it, by a convention well-established in the purely native tales, and reflecting the perennial Gaelic preoccupation with birth and genealogy. Arthur's pedigree admits of minor variation, but standardly runs something like 'Artúr mac Iobhair (or *Iubhair* or *Úir*) mhic Ambróis mhic Constantín', to which may be superadded 'mhic Uter (or *Ughdair*) Pendragoin (or *Ceann Dragúin* or *Finn Dragúin*)'.²⁹

Where the story demands it, members of Arthur's family may come to the fore. Thus 'Gunevér' (who does not figure largely in the preserved texts) plays a part in *Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe*; and Arthur is credited with a daughter Melóra for the purposes of the romance bearing her name. 'Bhalbhuidh' or 'Sir Bhalbhuidh'³⁰ appears regularly at Arthur's side. In Macalister's printed version of *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* he is described—appropriately enough for one who is elsewhere the son of King Loth of Orkanie—as the young son of the King of Lochlann (that is, Scandinavia). The same version also makes him a *dalta* ('fosterling') of Arthur's, who is knighted in the emergency caused by the Knight of the Lantern's incursion.³¹ In the earliest manuscript of this text, however, he is Arthur's nephew, a relationship also attested in one passage in *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*, which mentions 'Sir Gabhín [*sic*], sister's son to the King of the World'.³²

²⁷The latter title was attached to Roman Emperors and others (e.g. to Alexander the Great) in medieval Irish literature: see the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. *domun*¹. In Arthur's case a reference may have been intended to the Galfridian conqueror of the Continent (cf. T. Gwynn Jones, 'Some Arthurian Material in Keltic', *Aberystwyth Studies*, 8 (1926), 39) on the analogous Welsh appellation 'Yr Amherawdur Arthur'. ²⁸For the Scottish identification of the 'Red Hall' with Dumbarton see below, p. 69. 'Camelot' occurs in *Two Romances*, edited by Macalister, for instance at p. 122 (note p. 176, where it is clearly the same place as the 'Red Hall': cf. Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', p. 12, n. 4); and passim (as 'Camalóit') in the Irish *Queste*. For a tentative equation of *Cathair an Chuill* with *Carduel* (Chrétien's *Cardoeil*) see Mühlhausen, p. 20. ²⁹cf. Jones, 'Some Arthurian Material', p. 48; Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', p. 12; and below, p. 71. ³⁰Forms in *Bhal-* and *Bhol-* (or *Ual-* and *Uol-*) are standard in the romances. See 'Part I', pp. 50 and 57, for oral developments, and below, n. 77, for origins and significance. ³¹*Two Romances*, edited by Macalister, for instance at pp. 10, 12, and 66. ³²cf. Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', p. 14; and the preamble to the Modern Scottish Gaelic *Sir Uallabh O' Còrn* ('Part I', p. 49).

Like King Conchobor in the Ulster Cycle, Arthur has his *draoi* (that is, 'druid', connoting 'sage-cum-prophet' in early texts, but later more or less equivalent to 'wizard'). In *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*, as we have noted, this functionary is Meirlín.

Arthur's court centres on the *Bord Cruinn* ('Round Table'). Kings' sons like Orlando gravitate towards it from all quarters on account of its 'reputation and pre-eminent custom',³³ and sally forth from it as Arthur's knights to seek adventures and to undertake missions and quests. Like the kings of Tara, Arthur's conduct is regulated by certain royal *geasa* ('tabus, prohibitions')—one of which prevents his dining at the Round Table until some new marvel has been related to the assembled company.³⁴ We also gather that, just as it was customary for the Ulster heroes to take turns at guarding the passes into the Plain of Emain, so Arthur's knights took it in turn to venture into the *Foraois Baoghalach* ('Perilous Forest') in *Magh na nLongnadh* ('The Plain of Strange Adventures' or similar) to seek adventures and marvels.³⁵ Some of the other names of places, however, have a more ad hoc ring to them, and may be compared with the 'quasi-aetiology' common in Early Irish texts, whereby relevant-sounding place-names may be invented and then cited as traditional, in order to lend an air of authenticity to fictional episodes.³⁶

Although there is a tendency for the roles of subordinate characters to be eliminated, or (as with Kei in *Eachtra an Amadáin Mhóir*) for their actions to be attributed to Gawain, additional knights from Arthur's following (or from elsewhere) are sometimes named. Their names may be expressed by the formula 'Sir X', for instance 'Sir Brandámor' in *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*, or built around the term *ridire* 'knight', for instance, 'Ridire an Lóchrainn' ('The Knight of the Lantern') and 'An Ridire Dubh' ('The Black Knight'), both in *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil*. The latter type may be expanded by adding 'son of the King of X' (for instance, 'An Ridire Dubh, Mac Ríogh na Frainge' in *Eachtra Mhacaoimh an Iolair*), which conforms to the commonest type of name for the hero of Early Modern Gaelic romances in general.³⁷

³³*Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, p. 2 (line 58); cf. pp. 4 (lines 105–15) and 46 (lines 1550–56). ³⁴See *Two Romances*, edited by Macalister, p. 118; *Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, p. 7 (lines 217–20). This particular prohibition is, of course, standard in non-Gaelic Arthurian literature. For other Gaelic prohibitions see Macalister, p. 4. ³⁵See *Two Romances*, edited by Macalister, pp. 14 and 118. The former is clearly a translation of *La Forest Perilleuse*: cf. *Lorgaireacht*, edited by Falconer, p. 165 (line 3962). Note also the (?) telescoped form *Foraois na nLongnadh* ('The Forest of Marvels') in *Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, for example, p. 7, line 221. ³⁶e.g. *Magh na gColl gCorcra* ('The Plain of the Red Hazel Trees'), *ibid.*, p. 63, line 2119; *Tiobraid na mBuadh* ('The Well of the [Magical] Powers'), *Two Romances*, edited by Macalister, p. 12. ³⁷See Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 23, for the principles of nomenclature observable in the Gaelic romances.

A couple of texts are even more informative. *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* assigns to Arthur a personal bodyguard of 'the twelve knights of hardihood', who are then named.³⁸ A context for this statement is provided by the opening of *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil*, according to which Arthur's retinue contained 'the twelve knights of hardihood, the twelve knights of liveliness, the twelve knights of the Round Table, the twelve knights of counsel, the two hundred and forty knights of the Great Table, and the seven thousand knights of the household'.³⁹ In both texts these details are non-essential, and are best explained as manifestations of a bias towards antiquarianism which is never far from the surface in the Gaelic manuscript tradition.⁴⁰ As to their provenance, it is tempting to connect them with a text mentioned by Douglas Hyde, which I have been unable to inspect, apparently entitled *Teglach an Buird Chruinn* ('The Household of the Round Table').⁴¹ That the Arthurian material should have been supplied with a learned infrastructure of this sort merely brings it into line with the better attested cycles.⁴²

The composite, 'traditional' factor in the make-up of the Gaelic romances raises difficult questions about the real extent of contact between the native tradition and Arthurian material, and about the extent of the Arthurian element in the 'Arthurian' romances themselves. This difficulty, which has already been voiced with regard to the vernacular tales, is posed by the occurrence, not only in Gaelic Arthurian romances, but also in romances lacking an explicit Arthurian setting, of a considerable amount of incidental motif which could be, and in some cases has been compared with non-Gaelic Arthurian sources. In certain cases this could represent a genuine 'Arthurian' correspondence—an indication, perhaps, of an Arthurian text known to the Gaelic romancers at one time, and then forgotten. This would be perfectly consistent with what we know about the low survival rate of medieval literature in general, and about the salvaging and recycling instincts of the Gaelic tradition. However, it is usually extremely difficult to establish an exclusive connection of this sort, because of the multiplicity of alternative channels of influence to be reckoned with, and the uncertainty, with some of them, as to which way the current may have flowed. Such alternative explanations

³⁸*Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, p. 40, line 1382. ³⁹*Two Romances*, edited by Macalister, p. 2. ⁴⁰cf. Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 53, n. 17. ⁴¹See n. 5 above. Possibly, the disposition of Arthur's court, as given in *Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe* (edited by Mhac an tSaoi, *Dhá Sgéal*, pp. 44–45, lines 1499–1523) and in the bardic poem 'Triath na nGaidheal Giolla-easbuig' (below, n. 99) may also draw on such a text. (For a different, and perhaps preferable, interpretation see Draak, 'Sgél Isgaide Léithe', pp. 238–40.) A Welsh parallel is discussed below, p. 62. ⁴²Compare, for example, *Airem Muintiri Finn* (edited and translated by Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, 2 vols (London, 1892), I, 92–93, and II, 99–101); *Fiannsruth* (edited and translated by L. Stern, *ZCP*, 1 (1897), 471–73).

might include: items from Celtic tradition passing into Continental Arthurian literature but also remaining current within the Gaelic tradition; parallel but independent use of material with an international currency—through the Church, for example, or at the popular level; the intrusion into Gaelic literature of European items which had at one stage been specifically associated with Arthurian literature, but had lost this special association before being taken over into Gaelic; and so forth. The following examples, drawn from the texts described above, illustrate some of these possibilities.

It has been pointed out that one of the magic objects required to free Orlando is none other than the spear of Longinus (manuscript 'Lagínus'), which, granted an Arthurian context, would at once suggest the Bleeding Lance of the Grail romances, and that the automated game of *fidchell* (commonly translated 'chess') which Orlando sees in the enchanted castle before he is made prisoner is reminiscent of similar episodes in *Peredur* and in Wauchier's continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval*.⁴³ Taking these similarities in conjunction with the Arthurian frame of *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* might lead one to believe that they too are to be deemed Arthurian in inspiration. But it must also be borne in mind that Longinus had been a person of considerable interest to Gaelic tradition since the Old Irish period, and that the wonderful 'chess' game could be the conceit of someone familiar with the numerous descriptions of wonderful *fidchell* sets, and with the wide range of magically animated objects and instruments occurring in early Irish and later Gaelic literature.⁴⁴ Moreover, any assessment of the provenance of the motifs in this text must give due weight to the preponderance of such *prima facie* native ones as the sleep-inducing harp music; the one-armed, one-legged, one-eyed figure (actually Merlin in disguise) who plays it; and the speech-restoring 'oil of the pig of Tús'.⁴⁵ One would be

⁴³See Mhac an tSaoi, *Dhá Sgéal*, p. ix; Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', p. 14; and, for the *fidchell* (:Welsh *gwyddbwyll*), Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, second edition (Cardiff, 1978), pp. 246-47. ⁴⁴For Longinus, see Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 439-40; Lambert McKenna, *Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn* (Dublin, 1931), p. xvii; Martin McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin, 1975), p. 81. For *fidchell* sets, see Wolfgang Meid, *Táin Bó Fraích* (Dublin, 1967), pp. 28-29, and *Die Romanze von Froech und Findabair* (Innsbruck, 1970), pp. 134-35. For automated objects in general, cf. Tom Peete Cross, *A Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature* (Bloomington, 1952), pp. 168-72 (D1600-49). ⁴⁵For references to sleep-inducing harps, see *Duanaire Finn*, edited and translated by Eoin MacNeill and Gerard Murphy, 3 vols, Irish Texts Society, 7, 28, and 43 (Dublin, 1908-53), III, 274, s.v. *gentarglés*; Cross, *Motif-Index*, D1275.1 and D1364.24 (Gaelic sub-types of international motifs). For 'one-armed' (etc.) betokening supernatural or Fomorian personages in Gaelic literature, see Cross, *Motif-Index*, F525.3.1 and cross-references, and G100.1. (One should also, however, bear in mind the similar passage in the prose *Merlin* (edited by H. Oskar Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, 8 vols (Washington, 1908-16), II, 408-14) in which Merlin disguises himself as a blind harper.) The 'pig of Tús' is a literary borrowing from the well-known romance *Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann*.

perfectly entitled to assign a basic role to the Arthurian indications in this tale, associate the first pair of motifs with it as part of an Arthurian nucleus in the tale, and call the rest secondary elaboration. But it would equally be possible to start with the proposition that *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* consists basically of a standard type of Gaelic romance—the ‘search for the means to release someone from enchantment’—with a heroine whose readiness to take the initiative relates her to prototypes in early Irish literature, and so on. According to this view, the Arthurian frame would be incidental and adventitious, and the grounds for associating other motifs in the tale with the exotic rather than the native contribution to it would be significantly diminished.⁴⁶

A similar ambiguity surrounds the ‘magic hunt’ in *Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe*; for although Arthurian parallels are not hard to find, it recurs in Gaelic romances lacking any explicit Arthurian reference.⁴⁷ The same applies to its theme of mortals being tested by a supernatural visitant, which recurs both in Arthurian and in early Irish literature.⁴⁸ Finally, whereas it has already been noted that the theme of the abducted child, as found in *Eachtra Mhacaoimh an Iolair*, finds close analogues in English and French romance, the occurrence of other Gaelic representatives of the same theme (for instance, the Gaelic version of *Florent and Octavian*) compels us to take account of the possibility that the immediate inspiration of our text may have been a Gaelic source, whatever the ultimate source of the theme.⁴⁹

In short, if a Gaelic romance offers a seemingly substantial point of contact with the Arthurian corpus, it may be worth considering Continental influence as a possible explanation, even if there are no other Arthurian indications in the text in question. But there will usually be no lack of alternative explanations.⁵⁰ As a rule, then, it

⁴⁶cf. Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 9 and 31, n. 23. ⁴⁷*Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, pp. 46–48, lines 1574–1640. Compare, for example, the ‘magic hunt’ episode in the non-Arthurian *Eachtra Ridire na Leomhan* (summarized and discussed by Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 151–52)—a tale which, it should perhaps be added, bears no obvious relation to the nearly synonymously entitled *Li Chevaliers au Lyon*. The situation is further complicated, of course, by the fact that ‘magic hunt’ episodes outside Gaelic literature, while they include Arthurian examples, are by no means confined to these. ⁴⁸See, for example, ‘Part I’, pp. 64–66 (on *Laoidh an Bhruit*); and *Fled Bricrenn*, edited and translated by George Henderson, Irish Texts Society, 2 (London, 1899). ⁴⁹See Carl Marstrander, ‘Sechrán na Banimpire 7 Oilemain a Deise Mac’, *Ériu*, 5 (1911), 161–99; Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 156, n. 19. As will appear in a moment, a French source is actually claimed for *Eachtra Mhacaoimh an Iolair*; but the principle is unaffected. ⁵⁰Thus, for example, the ‘very full and detailed parallel’ between *Tóraidheacht an Ghiolla Deacair* and the combat at the fountain in *Yvain* has prompted the suggestion of Arthurian influence on the Gaelic text; but other explanations, including influence in the other direction (by a more primitive version of the *Tóraidheacht*) have also been put forward: see Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, p. 290.

is hazardous to posit a direct influence where all one has to go on is a motival coincidence. (Combinations of motifs, or the conjunction of motival and other sorts of evidence may, of course, be more persuasive.)⁵¹ Nevertheless, we may be fairly confident that there has been contact and influence, beyond what is now demonstrable, between the main stream of Arthurian literature and the Gaelic romances.

In many obvious respects it is unnecessary to go beyond the native romantic literature to account for stylistic and structural features in the Gaelic Arthurian texts. They are typical enough in their choice of language register, in development of plot and character, and in such specific features as an occasional tendency to insert verses duplicating the sense of important speeches. The social conditions and conventions portrayed in them are those of the native literary tradition, as when they refer to the king's *geasa* ('tabus'), or make Gawain into Arthur's *dalta* ('fosterling'), or when their heroes swear by their 'tribal gods', or when they make shinty the sport of king's sons.⁵² Their composition was susceptible to the same antiquarian divagations and folktale influences as other Gaelic romances, and they make full use of the latter's narrative devices and stock formulae.⁵³ If they were once more distinctive in these ways, they have had their rough edges smoothed off—in transmission if not in composition. The general tendency would doubtless be, as we saw with the popular tales, to assimilate the exotic to the familiar and the well established.⁵⁴ Thus, most noticeably, the spiritual and idealistic side of chivalry is well-nigh absent, the translation *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha* standing in sharp contrast to the romances in this respect.⁵⁵

As regards the provenance of the Arthurian element in these texts,

⁵¹e.g. if R. A. S. Macalister were right in equating the name *Pisear* in *Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann* with (*Le Riche*) *Pechéoir*, there would be a definite presumption of borrowing, which might (though this is not a necessary consequence) tempt one also to derive the spear and cauldron associated with *Pisear* from the Lance and Grail of Arthurian romance: see 'Oidhe Chloinne Tuireann', *Béalóideas*, 1 (1928), 20; Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 379–81. (Loomis's objections to Macalister's identification of *Pisear* with *Pechéoir* rest on the erroneous assumption that acceptance of their identity would necessitate believing that *Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann* as a whole is derived from Arthurian romance.) ⁵²*Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*, which is late, and perhaps close to an English original (cf. n. 14 above) mentions jousting (*giústáil*, a loanword): see *Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, p. 5, line 136. (Note that the author feels the need to gloss *giústáil* with the term *iomruagadh* ('mutual vanquishing'), and to explain it as a sport of olden times.) But this is rare. ⁵³cf. Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 53, n. 17 (intrusions from learned and folk sources), and 143 (narrative devices). ⁵⁴This process was not entirely one-way: it seems likely, for example, that the literature of the Round Table was primarily responsible for introducing the knight (as opposed to kings' sons and indigenous champions and warriors) as an acceptable hero for Gaelic romance. ⁵⁵*Céilidhe Iosgaide Léithe* might count as a partial exception: see n. 12 above.

it must be admitted at the outset that what evidence we can muster is mostly indirect and fragmentary. It is appropriate to take as our starting point an exceptional case, in which we appear to be given a brief glimpse of the sort of circumstances in which foreign material may have made its way into the Gaelic repertoire. By what Flower has termed 'a rare fortune', the earliest extant version of *Eachtra Mhacoimh an Iolair* includes the author's comment on the source of the tale: 'You should know, reader of this tale, that I, Brian Ó Corcráin, received the bones of this tale from a gentleman who said that he had heard it told in French; and since I enjoyed it I have worked it up in this way, and add these little poems as my compliment to it; and the tale itself was never in Gaelic until now'.⁵⁶ This statement is important not only because Ó Corcráin can be identified with some probability as a professional poet and scribe of the early seventeenth century, but also because the result of his 'working up' is in many ways one of the most thoroughly 'Gaelic' of these romances.⁵⁷ If he and his reporter have told us the whole truth, this tale shows how rapidly exotic material of the right stamp could be reduced to a form in which only the Arthurian setting differentiates it from the most indubitably home-grown romances.⁵⁸

This account holds good for one text only, of course, though there is nothing inherently exceptional about the scenario it implies. Some more general inferences with regard to the provenance of these texts are suggested by close attention to Arthurian personal names as found in Gaelic. The 'Twelve Knights of Hardihood' mentioned above are instructive in this respect. Their names, as given in *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*, are as follows:⁵⁹

Sir Gabhín, mac deirbhshíaracha Rígh an Domhain, agus a dhias dear bhráthar, .i. Sir Garet agus Sir Gahéris; Sir Brandámor, mac Rígh na

⁵⁶See Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 353; Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 46; and, for the author, Osborn Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry* (Dublin, 1970), p. 63. ⁵⁷Certain unusual personal names, and what Dr Bruford has termed the 'Christian' tone of the romance (*Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 25) are, however, striking. ⁵⁸Should we doubt his statement? There is nothing implausible about a poet's being involved in the manufacture of a romance (cf. Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 46) and his use of the word 'bones' (*cnámha*) leaves room for manoeuvre. Yet we know that at least one Early Modern translator was drawn to make false claims about the language he had translated from (see Whitley Stokes, 'The Gaelic Maundeville', *ZCP*, 2 (1898), 1); and it has been pointed out that the main source languages in the period are English and Latin rather than French (Falconer, *Lorgaireacht*, p. xxxi, n. 1). Note that Flower (*Catalogue*, II, 354) has suggested that the Arthurian element (i.e. the frame) might have been what Ó Corcráin added; the 'bones' being 'the theme . . . the common one in mediaeval romance of a child saved by an animal (in this case an eagle) from death by treachery, who returns after many adventures to rescue his wronged mother'. But this is by no means a necessary conclusion. ⁵⁹*Dhá Sgéal*, edited by Mhac an tSaoi, p. 40, lines 1385-92; cf. Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', p. 13, for the list's occurrence in a version of *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil*.

hEadáille; Sir Marrábhús, mac Rígh Éireann; Sir Frol, Sir Tor agus Sir Ector, agus nífeas dúinn a n-aithre; Sir Lameric as críochaibh Dobhar, ridire rochródha; Sir Bébhús, Sir Bóbus agus Sir Lancelot, mac Rígh na Binne Brice.

At first sight the list appears a complete hotch-potch, a mixture of the illustrious and the obscure, containing not only such entirely appropriate 'bodyguards of the king' as Gawain and his brothers, but also, in 'Frol' (if he be Frolle of Almayne), one who was no friend of Arthur's; in 'Sir Bébhús' (if, as appears to be the case, the name intended is that of Bevis)⁶⁰ someone who was not an Arthurian character; and in 'Sir Brandámor' someone whom I cannot find in any source, Arthurian or otherwise.

A more positive approach to these names would, however, seem to be possible. It is to be noted that 'Gabhín' (a rare substitution for the firmly established *Bhalbhuaidh*), 'Lancelot' (already modified to *Lamsalóit* in the Gaelic *Queste*) and 'Ector' (Gaelicized as *Echtair* since the Middle Irish period) strongly suggest the proximity of a non-Gaelic written source.⁶¹ Further, the occurrence of 'Garet' and 'Lameric' would seem to suggest acquaintance with Malory's Gareth and Lamorak (variant *Lameryk*).⁶² If acquaintance with Malory be conceded a possibility, it becomes permissible to ask whether any of the other names can be explained on the same basis. 'Tor', for example, could be associated with Tor(re) le Fyze Aryes, who figures in several sections of the *Morte Darthur*. As for 'Frol', it is to be noted that whereas Frolle of Almayne does not appear in Malory, another Froll does—Froll of the Oute Iles, the brother of Bellyaunce. With these two additions, it is suggestive that, of the twelve, at least seven are named by Malory as accompanying Arthur on his journey to attend the tournament proclaimed by Dame Lyonesse in Book vii ('Sir Gareth of Orkney').⁶³ Gareth himself is, of course, absent from

⁶⁰For Bevis in Gaelic tradition, see F. N. Robinson, 'The Irish Lives of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton', *ZCP*, 6 (1908), 9–104 and 273–338; cf. the reference to a modern 'Sir Bevis mac Sir Guy' quoted by Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 169, n. 19. For an alternative explanation of the name, however, see below, n. 64. ⁶¹On the criteria to be adopted in cases like this, see especially Quin, *Stair Ercuil*, pp. xiv–xxiv; Falconer, *Lorgaireacht*, pp. xx–xxviii. I have used principally the indexes to Sommer's *Vulgate Version*, Robert W. Ackerman's *Index of the Arthurian Names in Middle English* (Stanford, 1952), and Eugène Vinaver's *The Works of Thomas Malory*, second edition, 3 vols (Oxford, 1967), as a means to establishing prima facie correspondences between Gaelic and non-Gaelic forms. ⁶²The -c of *Lameric* invites comparison with Malory, as against the -t of French sources. ⁶³See Vinaver, *Malory*, 1, 344. The seven are Gawayne, Gaherys, Tor, Lamerok, Launcelot, Ector, and Bors. (For the spelling *Bóbus*, cf. *Boos* in the Gaelic *Queste*. The -b(h)- here is presumably an attempt to cope with the uncontracted adjacent vowels presented by the latter form, which would not have been normal in Early Modern Irish: the nearest analogue to its /o-ə/ was the /ovə/ of words like *dobhar* 'water'. Cf. Scottish Gaelic *sobhadh* 'turning' < Old Irish *soüd*, beside Sc. G. *sobhal* 'shed' < Latin *stabulum*.)

Arthur's party in Malory, since he is with Dame Lyonesse (as Beaumains) at the time; but the similarity between 'Sir Gabhín . . . and his two brothers, namely Sir Gareth and Sir Gahéris' at the head of the Gaelic list, and Malory's similarly placed 'Sir Gawayne, Aggravayne, Gaherys his brethern. . . ' makes it likely enough that Gareth, who is psychologically to the fore in the episode as a whole, has displaced Aggravayne here. Again, the puzzling 'Sir Bébhús' and 'Sir Brandámor' in the Gaelic could well be eliminated if we assume them to be corruptions of two further members of Arthur's party in Malory, Sir Bleobrys and Sir Blamour. Finally, 'Marrabhus, son of the King of Ireland' (= Marhaus in Malory) and Frol could have been suggested by references to 'Irelande' and 'the Oute Iles' in the immediately preceding and succeeding paragraphs in Malory. (The 'Kynge of Irelande' is actually a member of Arthur's party.)⁶⁴

All in all, acquaintance with the *Morte Darthur* seems an irresistible conclusion.⁶⁵ It may even be possible to hazard a guess at the principle of selection employed on the Gaelic side (given that these names occur within a considerably longer list of knights in Malory). It seems to me not inconceivable that some Gaelic scholar has become aware of the *Morte Darthur* as a potential source for history (or pseudo-history); that that person hence took a special interest in characters hailing from the 'Celtic fringe'; and that their names have been drawn on by the compiler of our list to supplement the obvious names (such as Gawain, Lancelot, and Bors) whose inclusion in such a list would have been de rigueur. It is surely more than a coincidence that Malory's Froll is styled 'of the Oute Iles'; that his Lamorak is 'of Walis'; that both Lamorak and Tor are accounted sons of Pellinore, whom he sometimes calls 'King of the Iles'; and that his Marhaus is brother of the Queen of Ireland.⁶⁶ If these suggestions are well founded, it would appear that we have here additional evidence for a connection between the Gaelic literati and the pur-

⁶⁴The sight of the unfamiliar 'Bleobrys' (or a corruption thereof) may have been enough to make a copyist take refuge in 'Bébhús'; the prospect of pairing the similar sounding 'Bébhús' and 'Bóbhús' may have been an added inducement. 'Brandámor' may have evolved from 'Blamour' under the influence of *Brandiles*; *Gringamour* and *Sagramour* could also have mediated. (All these characters appear in the relevant episode in Malory.) On this interpretation of the Gaelic list, the epithets of the type 'son of the king of (Italy)' should be regarded as exemplifying the attraction of foreign material towards Gaelic norms (cf. above, p. 51). Lameric's epithet, 'from the bounds of Dobhair', is difficult to account for, though it presumably corresponds somehow to 'de Galys'. ⁶⁵Although it would be rash to lay undue weight on the evidence of a single name, we may note with regard to Lameric that in Malory the variant in -yk appears to be confined to the printed editions beginning with Caxton, -ak(e) and -ok(e) alone occurring in the Winchester manuscript. ⁶⁶We are not concerned, of course, with where Malory might have located these places, but only with how an Irish or Highland reader might have taken them. For the 'Oute Iles' cf. the realm comprising 'Irelande and Argayle and all the Oute Iles' (Vinaver, *Malory*, I, 189).

eying of romances, and further grounds for believing that their acceptance of the Arthurian matter as a fit and worthy subject for their attentions entailed certain scholarly activity, aimed at producing what we have termed a 'learned infrastructure' supporting the Arthurian cycle.⁶⁷

In a sense, it should be added, a list like the above is a rather special case, since most of the knights mentioned in it do not play any part in the romance as a whole, and since there is at least a suggestion that the list may have had a separate existence as part of a learned compilation, whose background may easily have been quite different from that of the stories themselves. It would therefore be dangerous to generalize too readily from it. In fact, probably the most striking feature about the Arthurian names in general is the way in which the ones most frequently met with may sport non-Gaelicized, semi-Gaelicized, and thoroughly Gaelicized variants in different sources. Thus, for example, Lancelot appears as *Lamsalóit* (in modernized spelling *Lamhsalóid*)—that is to say, already partially assimilated—in *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha*. This form recurs in the earliest text of *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil*; but in later texts a 'meaningful' form *Lámhsholas* ('Bright-hand') sometimes replaces it.⁶⁸ Then again, as we have just seen, it appears in the wholly unassimilated form *Lanselot* in the late *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*. Similar variation can be traced in the case of (H)ector (assimilated as *Eachtair* in the *Lorgaireacht*, but remaining *Ector* in *Eachtra Mhelóra*), and, most striking of all, in the case of Gawain (with *Bholbhuaidh*, *Bhalbhuaidh*, and other increasingly assimilated forms from the *Lorgaireacht* onwards, but then a reversion to non-assimilated *Gabhín* or similar in some late manuscripts and contexts).⁶⁹

Clearly we cannot assume a simple, one-way process to account for these variations in the data. It would be nearer the truth to think in terms of the fluctuation produced by a perennial tendency to assimilate foreign names to Gaelic phonological and semantic norms, countered by a periodic access of fresh material from outside the tradition. The body of evidence supplied by extant texts is not large enough for us to draw very precise conclusions from these name forms; but they leave one with the distinct impression that there must have been two main phases in the importation of Arthurian material from outside the Gaelic tradition: an early phase, already well under way (if not complete) by the time of the earliest surviving

⁶⁷It is suggested below (p. 60) that this took place at a comparatively late date—perhaps in the latter part of the fifteenth century. ⁶⁸See Falconer, *Lorgaireacht*, p. xxiii and n. 1; Macalister, *Two Romances*, p. 60. ⁶⁹cf. Draak, 'Orlando agus Melora', p. 14. Note that Gawain plays no material part in *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando*, appearing only in the structurally superfluous name-list.

text of an Arthurian romance in Gaelic (the British Library, Egerton MS 1782 version of *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil*, copied in 1517);⁷⁰ and a later phase, perhaps signifying an increase in the availability of, and in receptiveness to Arthurian and other non-native literature. One factor in this later development may (as suggested above) have been renewed interest in the Matter of Britain, following the publication of Malory's *Morte Darthur*.⁷¹

It is useful at this point to quote a parallel from a closely related area. Gerard Murphy, discussing the impact of the 'Franco-English culture' of the old Anglo-Norman families in Ireland on Irish literature and storytelling, contrasted the work of the two Ó hUiginn poets, Tadhg Óg (d. 1448) and Tadhg Dall (d. 1591), in respect of allusions to Continental literature and exempla. Pointing out that the former contains none, while the latter includes a not inconsiderable number, from a surprisingly diverse range of sources, Murphy concluded from this and other evidence that the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century saw a marked increase in interest in such exotic material on the part of the native literati.⁷² It may not be too much, then, to presume that interest in Arthur built up within the context of this wider movement during the latter part of the 'Gaelic revival', and that this interest became, as it were, 'official' towards the end of the Classical period. It seems likely, moreover, that this last development coincided with the availability of printed books. There are some indications (as well as a general probability) that these printed sources were, or at least included, English ones.

It is not so easy to pinpoint the dates or sources of the earlier stratum, because of the paucity of contemporary evidence, and, presumably, the degree to which any such early material in later sources will have been overlaid or transformed in subsequent transmission. Nevertheless, there are some slight indications that the main proximate source of knowledge about Arthur was English in the earlier phase as well as in the later. First, an English source has been established for *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha*.⁷³ Secondly, the origin of the terms *Cing* and *Sir*, which are constantly prefixed to the names of Arthur and his followers in the Gaelic romances, is patently English.⁷⁴ Thirdly, the Gaelic form of 'Gawain' (*Bhal-*

⁷⁰See n. 16 above. Note that evidence for the 'romantic' Arthur in Gaelic occurs already in the early-fifteenth-century Campbell genealogy contained in Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 50. 1.1., fol 1^r, col. 4, which, on reaching the Arthur at the head of its tree, carries the scribal comment, 'i.e. the King of the World, no doubt'. (For the reading and interpretation, see my 'Some Aspects of Campbell History', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 50 (1976-78), 282 and 294, n. 45). ⁷¹For knowledge of Malory's work in sixteenth-century Ireland, see Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, I (London, 1926), p. 154; Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 4. ⁷²Murphy, *Ossianic Lore*, pp. 33-35. ⁷³Above, p. 42. ⁷⁴So Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 23.

bhuaidh or similar) has been deemed instructive and important: if T. F. O'Rahilly was right, *Bhalbhuaidh* presupposes a Middle English form **Walway*—a form pretty near the beginning of the chain of developments linking *Gawain* with its presumed original, Middle Welsh *Gwalchmei*.⁷⁵ Now it must be said that, although the identity of *Gwalchmei* and *Gawain* is now accepted—rightly, it would appear—the mechanics of the transition from one form to the other remain obscure.⁷⁶ Moreover, one is conscious, as always, of the vulnerability of an argument based on the evidence of a single name-form, even where the name in question is a well-represented and strategic one. (Is it, after all, inconceivable that the Gaelic forms in *-uaidh* derive from an unnoticed or carelessly omitted *n*-suspension in a Middle English *Walwain* or a Latin *Walwainus* rather than from the postulated form in **-ay*?) Nevertheless, it seems safe enough, and will suffice for present purposes, to conclude negatively that the source of *Bhalbhuaidh* is unlikely to have been French, and that it is unlikely to have come into Gaelic from an oral English source later than the middle of the fifteenth century.⁷⁷ Finally, it is perhaps worth noting (though this is a mere impression) that the differences in spirit and temper which separate the Gaelic romances from the 'classical' French canon appear to be most closely paralleled in texts emanating from the Northern English cum Lowland Scottish area, and composed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Before proceeding to summarize our conclusions on the prose tale tradition as a whole, it is pertinent to comment on another conceivable source of Arthurian material in Ireland. For it might be expected a priori that Welsh tradition could have played a part in the formation of Gaelic Arthurian romance, when one considers the demonstrable

⁷⁵See his review of Macalister in *GJ*, 19 (1909), 357. ⁷⁶cf. Bromwich, *Trioedd*, pp. 369–75 and 552; Melville Richards, 'Arthurian Onomastics', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1969, p. 258. (The problem is compounded by a seeming oddness in the form of Welsh *Gwalchmei* itself: see Eurys Rowlands, reviewing Bromwich, *Trioedd*, in *Llên Cymru*, 6 (1960–61), 241–43. Conceivably, the early association of *Gawain* with Galloway—that is, Galweithia, Galwedra, etc.—may have helped the /lχm/ of *Gwalchmei* to give the /lw/ seen already in Geoffrey's *Gualgvanus* (or similar), a development which is not easily explicable in purely phonological terms.) ⁷⁷The following points should be borne in mind with regard to the Gaelic forms: (1) the initial *Bh-*, an approximation for /w/ in its source, probably precludes direct contact with Welsh, though the late Scottish Gaelic forms in *G-* ('Part I', pp. 57, n. 35, and 62, n. 50) should not be completely forgotten. (2) The internal *-lbh-*, an approximation for /lw/ in its source, probably precludes the influence of French, which had vocalized /l/ in this position. (3) More positively, the epithet 'de Cornubas (Cornabas, Cordibus)', which very often accompanies *Bhalbhuaidh*, strongly suggests an origin in Latin involving *Cornubia* 'Cornwall' or *Cornubii* 'Cornishmen'—though it must be said that the Cornish connection is not helpful: Galloway or Orkney would be much easier to account for! (O'Rahilly, in his review of Macalister in *GJ*, 19 (1909), 357, proposed a connection with 'some form of Orkney', but without explanation.)

contacts between Ireland and Wales through the centuries⁷⁸—not to mention the literary pedigrees and stemmata linking Ireland and Wales which are sometimes postulated by Arthurian scholars. In more concrete terms, it may be asked whether those families of Welsh origin which had established themselves in Ireland after the Anglo-Norman invasion, and whom the Irish genealogists term *Breathnaigh Éireann* ('The Welsh of Ireland'), might have mediated in this respect; for it could be argued that such recognition by the genealogists in itself indicates that the families concerned had evolved some aspirations within the Gaelic cultural framework, thereby providing conditions favourable to cross-pollination.⁷⁹ I have noted one reference in the Mac Firbis genealogical collections⁸⁰ which does reveal an awareness of the Arthurian legend, and an acceptance of its relevance to the *Breathnaigh*, on the part of one such family.⁸¹ Although the level of knowledge implied is pretty minimal, this reference may nevertheless serve to indicate the existence of the sort of conditions we are looking for.

When one turns to examine the Gaelic Arthurian texts, however, there is scant evidence for any special relationship between Gaelic traditions of Arthur and Welsh congeners. The *Amadán Mór*, for example, seems to be significantly nearer to Perceval than he is to the Welsh *Peredur*.⁸² The only hint of a direct Welsh contact I am aware of in the texts discussed above concerns the Gaelic references to the personnel and ordering of Arthur's court,⁸³ which bear comparison with the probably fifteenth-century Welsh compilation entitled *Pedwar Marchog ar Hugain Llys Arthur* ('The Twenty-Four Knights of Arthur's Court').⁸⁴ But even if such alternative explana-

⁷⁸See Cecile O'Rahilly, *Ireland and Wales* (London, 1924); Clark Harris Slover, 'Early Literary Channels between Britain and Ireland', [*University of Texas*] *Studies in English*, 6 (1926), 5–52, and 7 (1927), 5–111; Richards, 'Arthurian Onomastics', p. 251. ⁷⁹Compare the famous proverbial phrase (quoted, for example, by Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford, 1947), p. 114) to the effect that the Anglo-Norman families in general became 'Hibernis ipsis hiberniores'. ⁸⁰These are represented principally by the *Book of Genealogies* compiled by An Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh in 1650 and now in the Library of University College, Dublin; see *Royal Irish Academy Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts*, xv, 1811–12. ⁸¹See Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS C vi 2 (James Maguire's transcript of the *Book of Genealogies*), p. 477, col. 1, based on a family history written in English by one Labhras Wailis (i.e. Lawrence Walsh) in 1588. Its opening may be retranslated 'The genealogy of *Walynus*, brother of *Bairead* son of *Guindaly*, high steward of the House of *Camelot* . . .' Compare also the 'origin legend' of the *Breathnaigh* given at p. 473, col. 1. ⁸²See the analyses of Mühlhausen, 'Neue Beiträge', pp. 8–15, and McHugh, *Sir Percyvella*, pp. 27–28. 'The Werewolf's Tale' (see my 'Part I', pp. 53–55) might possibly be cited, if one could (a) assume a Welsh provenance for *Arthur and Gorlagon* (which seems not improbable), and (b) postulate an Early Modern Irish derivative of it—which is much less certain, though not impossible (as Loomis maintained in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, p. 477). ⁸³Above, p. 52. ⁸⁴Edited by Rachel Bromwich, *THSC*, 1956, pp. 116–32; cf. Bromwich, *Trioedd*, pp. cxxxv–cxxxix and 250–55.

tions as common inspiration in a non-Celtic source, or fortuitous resemblance, could be eliminated, and a direct relationship established, it must be said that the putative link is an extremely minor and peripheral one.⁸⁵ That this should be so may result from the vagaries of literary survival. If further explanation is required we may reflect that the Breathnaigh may not have occupied a social position enabling them to exert a formative influence on the Gaelic tradition during the first generations of their sojourn in Ireland—at least at the levels we are concerned with. Again, they may in subsequent years have lost touch with any Welsh cultural heritage they had brought with them—perhaps in proportion as they developed that very Irishness which brought them to our attention. And they may in any case have included many—a majority, perhaps—who were ‘Welshmen’ only in the sense that Wales was the point from which their ancestors had set off for Ireland, with the result that it would be unrealistic to expect them to have acted as apostles of Welsh literature in the first place.⁸⁶

All in all, then, it seems permissible to re-affirm the conclusion adumbrated earlier, that the mingling of Gaelic, French, and English language and culture in post-Norman Ireland provided the conditions most favourable to the injection of an Arthurian element into the native literature. What evidence we have suggests that this occurred at a time (or times) and social level in which Gaelic and English were the main linguistic and cultural forces.⁸⁷

It should be added that the Arthur we have been dealing with so far is the Arthur of literature. Although a Middle Irish version of the Cambro-Latin *Historia Brittonum* attained a certain currency in Ireland in the tenth century, our King Arthur is the King of the Round Table, and owes little to the ‘historical’ tradition. Apart from

⁸⁵There are differences as well as resemblances. The case for a relationship would rest on identity of basic concept, backed up by the shared categories of ‘counsellor knights’ (*comhairle/cynghoriad*) and ‘knights of battle’ (*cródhacht* ‘hardihood’/*cad*), and possibly the number ‘twenty-four’ (though this is partially obscured in the Gaelic version); one would then have to assume independent elaboration (for instance, assimilation to triad form on the Welsh side). ⁸⁶Thus the families listed as ‘Breathnaigh’ in Mac Firbis include English and Flemish names, as well as the Howels and Ithels who appear among their founding ancestors. See in general Edmund Curtis, *Mediaeval Ireland* (London, 1923), pp. 49–51. ⁸⁷Compare the parallel problem of the reflexes of *amour courtois* which surface in the *amhrán* and syllabic traditions of Gaelic poetry. See Seán Ó Tuama, *An Grá i nAmhráin na nDaoine* (Dublin, 1961), pp. 172–73; ‘Traidisiúin Iasachta sna Dánta Grá’, *Éigse*, 17 (1977–79), 301–18. Here, as there, one emphasizes Ireland rather than Scotland because, in general, Norman influences were more marked in Ireland than in the Highlands, and because Ireland was the innovative centre for the pan-Gaelic area at the time and level in question: cf. William Gillies, ‘Courtly and Satiric Poems in the Book of the Dean of Lismore’, *Scottish Studies*, 21 (1977), 38 and 49, n. 7. (For possible exceptions to this rule see below, nn. 105 and 112.)

the brief genealogical indications which tend to accompany Arthur's appearance in Gaelic romances,⁸⁸ the only possible exception would appear to be an echo of Arthur as defender of 'Britain' (against the Saxons) diagnosed in *Caithréim Chonghail Chláiringnigh* by its editor.⁸⁹ But the echo, if it is one, is faint, and causes no reverberations within the literary tradition. This text, as we have seen, displays an unusual familiarity with earlier Gaelic sources, including learned and pseudo-historical writings, of which the Irish version of the *Historia Brittonum* may have been one.⁹⁰

Before leaving the romances it is worth adding a couple of observations regarding their position in the history of Gaelic prose narrative in general. To be precise, comment is called for on the relationship between the Early Modern texts and, on the one hand, the popular tales discussed in Part I of this study, and, on the other hand, the earlier prose literature.

It is now accepted that the heroic-romantic oral tales are descended more or less directly from literary romances, which are the main source of their previously noted 'literary' quality. The history of individual tales provides clearer evidence in some cases than in others, but the cumulative picture is clearly one of gradual adaptation to humbler circumstances during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, once the aristocratic basis of patronage which had supported their composers and earlier exponents had withered away. An earlier view of this relationship, emphasizing the antiquity and integrity of the oral tradition, and tending to regard the literary romances as a sort of backwater peripheral to a main stream of oral tale-telling, still contains a modicum of truth, but is no longer tenable in a simple form.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it should not be thought that the romances are the sole literary source of the modern tales; for the latter show points of contact with pre-romantic Gaelic tales, with non-Gaelic romantic fiction, and with other categories of European literature besides—including cases where no literary stage has survived. It is true that in such cases there are sometimes grounds for suspecting a lost romantic intermediary, but this is by no means always the case.⁹²

⁸⁸For the form of these additions see above, p. 50; for their provenance cf. below, n. 105. ⁸⁹*Caithréim Chonghail Chláiringnigh*, edited by Mac Sweeney, pp. 152, n. 2, and 204. ⁹⁰As indeed Mac Sweeney its editor assumes, p. xxxiv. For the Irish version of the *Historia Brittonum* see D. N. Dumville, 'The Textual History of "Lebor Bretnach": A Preliminary Study', *Éigse*, 16 (1975-76), 255-73, and below, p. 72. ⁹¹See Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, pp. 69-164, and Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, pp. 2-7, where the complex pattern of continuity between the categories here contrasted is fully brought out. For the earlier view (itself a reaction against previous underestimation of the oral tradition) see Murphy's introduction to *Duanaire Finn*, III; and his *Ossianic Lore*, pp. 44-46, and *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*, second edition (Dublin, 1971), p. 16. ⁹²e.g. linguistic and stylistic features of the tale *Sir Uallabh O' Còrn* (see my 'Part I', pp. 49-50) may lead one to postulate a lost romance: cf. Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 164, n. 19, and Chapter 14 (pp. 157-64) in general.

Then again, the Gaelic romances include examples which are simply romanticized versions of tales from the earlier literature, and also contain many more echoes from the same source at the level of incident and motif. The Arthurian romances are no exception, as we have seen in the case of the Arthurian part of *Caithréim Chonghail Chláiringnigh* and elsewhere. A further area of overlap, the one existing between romances and ballads, is also of relevance to the present enquiry, but so far lacks the set of detailed case studies which would permit inferences more generalized than those essayed in Part I with regard to individual Arthurian ballads.

The Amadán Mór texts provide excellent examples of these points. If we first disregard their Arthurian dimension and consider them simply in Gaelic terms, we may infer that the modern tales about the Amadán Mór are indebted, in one way or another, to the romance *Eachtra an Amadáin Mhóir*, and also that the *Eachtra* in its turn is somehow indebted to the probably twelfth-century *Fotha Catha Cnucha*, to *Macgnímartha Finn*, and to other pre-romantic traditions about the birth and boyhood deeds of Finn.⁹³ That is not the whole story, however, for the modern version on which our earlier discussion centred⁹⁴ has its own specific points of contact with the Perceval texts and with the earlier Finn texts—points, that is, which are not to be found in the surviving version of the *Eachtra*. In the former case, the nature of the correspondence is such as to suggest the existence of another version or versions, now lost, at the romantic level;⁹⁵ in the latter case, by contrast, one should note how the *enfances* of Finn would seem to have survived from a relatively early period down into the oral tradition of Ireland and Scotland, without any clear evidence that they were ever worked up into a romantic tale.⁹⁶

There is thus an element of continuity to set beside the innovative, foreign-inspired aspects of the romantic literature. We shall shortly have to examine some faint but suggestive hints that Arthur himself may have had an existence in pre-romantic Gaelic literature, and hence have taken part in this continuity. Before tackling that question, however, it is necessary to round off our presentation of the Early Modern and Modern evidence by taking account of two further categories of Arthurian reference: in the learned tradition as represented in the strict verse of the professional poets and in the

⁹³See Mühlhausen, pp. 8–15; McHugh, *Sir Percyvelle*, pp. 36–38. ⁹⁴For 'The Story of the *Lay of the Great Fool*' see 'Part I', pp. 51–53. ⁹⁵I refer to the *credol/creud orm* correspondence, which seems to betoken a definite connection, with an appeal more 'literary' than 'folk'. ⁹⁶So Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 129. Note, for example, the nurse's name *Braomall*, which clearly derives from *Bodbmall* in *Macgnímartha Finn* (Mühlhausen, p. 10; McHugh, *Sir Percyvelle*, p. 38). On the relationship between the tales and the ballad about the Great Fool see 'Part I', pp. 69–70.

historical-genealogical sources they drew on; and in localized legends relating to Arthur.

Arthurian references in Classical bardic verse are rare and late. Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, whose readiness to admit foreign and naturalized romantic literature into his field of reference has been mentioned, has two references to Arthur. In both cases, however, one can point to what may count as special circumstances: in one case the poem is not a formal piece of eulogy or elegy, while the other is not a literary but a genealogical reference.⁹⁷ One strict eulogy known to me uses as its apologue the story of how Galahad acquired his sword; but even here it is possibly significant that the person lamented, one James Purcell, is of the *seanGhaill* rather than a member of the pure Gaelic aristocracy.⁹⁸

The exception to this rule is the official poetry addressed to the Campbells of Argyll, in which references to Arthur abound, along with the Round Table, the Fortress of the Red Hall, and other allusions to Arthurian literature of the sort discussed above.⁹⁹ However, these Campbell references to Arthur really take us into a new area, because of the special genealogical claims upon which they depend (of which more in a moment). The main conclusion regarding bardic verse seems to be that, whereas certain classical and medieval literary texts were known to the Gaels early enough to be included in the canon from which bardic verse drew its allusions and apologues, Arthurian romance must have become known too late to figure in the 'reading lists' of the Classical bardic schools—which, having been once determined, did not readily admit additions from other sources.

To explain the Arthurian references in Campbell bardic poetry and genealogical lore, one must bear in mind that certain southern Highland families, most notably the Earls of Argyll, claimed a British descent. At the ideological level this claim was pressed by the Campbells as a counter to the Gaelic (that is, ultimately Irish) basis of claims to hegemony made by the Clan Donald and their satellites. In the hands of the Campbell bards and shennachies, the ancestor assumed was none other than King Arthur.

⁹⁷*The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn*, edited and translated by Eleanor Knott, 2 vols, Irish Texts Society, 22–23 (Dublin, 1922–26), I, 56 and 269. The genealogical allusion relates to the Campbell claims discussed below; Toirdhealbhach Luineach Ó Domhnaill, the recipient of the poem, was married to Agnes, daughter of Archibald, fourth Earl of Argyll. ⁹⁸See Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 4, where it is stated that Purcell 'probably lived in the 16th century'. ⁹⁹Typical examples are 'Triath na nGaidheal Giolla-easbuig' and 'Rug eadrain ar iath nAlban', edited and translated by W. J. Watson, 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry—IV, V', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 3 (1931), 139–59. For further references and discussion see my 'Some Aspects of Campbell History', pp. 276–83.

In any literal sense, of course, this is nonsense, although recent research has rendered it less implausible than hitherto that there might be some substance in the underlying claim to British origins. (Such substance would presumably involve descent from less illustrious, more down to earth beings than King Arthur—in other words, from representatives of the old British families which melted into the Gaelic or Scottish sands after the demise of the British kingdom of Strathclyde in the eleventh century.)¹⁰⁰ Whatever the implications, it is noteworthy that the families making the 'British' claims sport the Christian name Arthur, almost as a badge, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on—before Arthurian romance could have become well enough established in the conservative Gaelic tradition to have any standing for name-giving purposes.¹⁰¹

At all events, once the descent from King Arthur became accepted doctrine, it was duly elaborated by the Campbell genealogists, and hence became part of the stock in trade of their poets. The result was a complex and fascinating web of lore and invention, whose intricacies cannot be unravelled here.¹⁰² We should note, however, that the fully developed version of this account (as found in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources), while it certainly drew fully on the background common to the Gaelic Arthurian romances, was by no means limited to this source for its information about Arthur and about British origins. It drew, for example, (as might be expected) on the Irish synthetic historians, and on the Scottish chronicle tradition. It also contained elements which are not found anywhere else, some of which may have been created on an ad hoc basis, but others of which may have resulted from access to older literary or historiographical sources not otherwise surviving.¹⁰³

These Arthurian references are productive mainly in the works of the Campbell shennachies themselves, though, as was noted in the case of Tadhg Dall's poem to Toirdhealbhadh Luineach, professional poets from elsewhere would have to study and know the Campbell claims if they were called upon to address poetry to a member of the

¹⁰⁰See especially W. D. H. Sellar, 'The Earliest Campbells—Norman, Briton or Gael?', *SS*, 17 (1973), 109–25. ¹⁰¹cf. Sellar, 'The Earliest Campbells', p. 120; and 'The Lairds of Ardincaple and Darleith: MacArthurs and MacAulays', *Scottish Genealogist*, 21 (1974), 46–54. Note, by contrast, the dearth of Welsh Arthurs (Richards, 'Arthurian Onomastics', p. 261). ¹⁰²The acme of this activity is represented by the 'Kilbride' version of the genealogy, contained in the now lost National Library of Scotland MS 72. 1. 32 (see Mackinnon, *Catalogue*, pp. 217–21), printed by W. F. Skene in *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Edinburgh, 1847), p. 360. ¹⁰³How, for instance, has the composer of 'Triath na nGaoidheal Giolla-easbuig' come by the phrase *an tOileán Breatnach* 'The Island of Britain' (edited by Watson, p. 144, stanza 10a), which must somehow reflect Welsh *Ynys Prydein*? Cf. also the traditions regarding Smeirbhe, son of Arthur, referred to below, n. 112.

Argyll family.¹⁰⁴ As the Campbells' involvement in, and influence on Gaelic politics expanded (during the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), so the need would have become more acute for their genealogy to be known in a wider context than before; and pressure would accumulate for a niche to be found for it within the framework of Gaelic genealogy in general. In fact, this rise to prominence did not take place early enough for such pressure to have much effect outside Scotland, and it is noteworthy that Duald Mac Firbis at least was apparently not disposed to accept the genealogical edifice concocted by the Campbells' own historians, but instead included in his *Book of Genealogies* a more obscure (though perhaps more authentic) pedigree, without any attempt to tie it onto any of the main lines of descent of the Gaels.¹⁰⁵

It remains to mention briefly one further category of Arthurian reference to be found in Gaelic tradition: the Arthur of local legend. Local traditions concerning Arthur were already in circulation by the time of the early-ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*, and have been current in more recent times in many parts of the British Isles.¹⁰⁶ Very often they are enshrined in and perpetuated by place-names. The two commonest elements identifiable in this category of material are probably (1) basically popular legends, especially legends of the Culture Hero type referring to the most famous 'once and future king'; and (2) traditions growing out of learned identifications based on acquaintance with the 'Legendary History of Britain'.¹⁰⁷ The first sort are mostly of uncertain age, but may be of considerable antiquity in some cases; the latter may have taken root at any time subsequent to the appearance of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, and are by no means exclusive to the antiquarianism of the last few centuries.

There is little trace of Arthurian lore in this sense in Ireland;¹⁰⁸ but a fuller representation may be found in Lowland Scotland, with extensions into at least the more southerly and easterly parts of the

¹⁰⁴This is clear in the poem 'Dual ollamh do thriall le toisg' (Nat. Lib. Scot., MS 72. 2. 2: see MacKechnie, *Catalogue*, I, 210, items 10 and 13), probably composed by O'Donnell's chief-poet on the occasion of an embassy to Argyll in the 1550s. ¹⁰⁵For Mac Firbis's version see Sellar, 'The Earliest Campbells', p. 123, n. 11; cf. my 'Some Aspects of Campbell History', pp. 282-83. An earlier, less elaborate form of the Arthurian pedigree may have been more widely recognized in bardic circles, and been the source of the rudimentary genealogical data attached to Arthur in the romances (above, p. 50); but this is very uncertain. ¹⁰⁶On local traditions concerning Arthur see, for example, E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, second edition (Cambridge, 1964), Chapters 4 and 7 (pp. 100-32 and 205-32). ¹⁰⁷For the Culture Hero in general see Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (Berkeley, 1946), pp. 263-65 and the references to his *Motif-Index* there cited. ¹⁰⁸See however Flower, *Catalogue*, II, 271, for localization of an Arthurian tale leading to a modern 'Arthur's Castle' in County Derry.

Highlands.¹⁰⁹ That it is virtually absent over the rest of the Gaelic-speaking area is doubtless to be ascribed in large measure to the prevalence of lore about Finn and the Fenian warriors, whose functional similarity to Arthur and his men has often been noted.¹¹⁰ By far the most widely based and persistent Arthurian associations to be found within (or, in this case, on) the Highland Line concern Dumbarton (Scottish Gaelic *Dùn Breatann*, 'The Fort of the Britons') and the neighbouring Dunbuck (*Dùn Buic*); though here Arthur had to compete not only with Finn, but also with another Culture Hero figure, Thomas the Rhymer.¹¹¹

Thus in Scottish Gaelic tradition the '(Fortress of the) Red Hall', which we have met already as the usual name for Arthur's court in the Romances, is located in Dumbarton. The identification was accepted by at least the later Campbell shennachies, and may be implicit in allusions from 1386 onwards to an 'Arthur's Castle' at Dumbarton. Again, there are tantalizing references to what appears to have been a romance entitled **Eachtra Smeirbhe Mhóir*, concerning a mysterious character Smeirbhe, who appeared as the son of Arthur in the Campbell genealogies and bardic verse, and who was also connected somehow with the 'Red Hall'. Thirdly, Dunbuck was known in popular Gaelic tradition as one of those sites under which the Culture Hero and his warriors slumbered, awaiting the summons to awake; in at least one version, the warriors were Arthur and his men.¹¹² These traditions raise a number of interesting points, which I hope to pursue elsewhere in the context of a fuller investigation of the Campbell genealogies.

By comparison with the evidence relating to Dumbarton, other local references involving the name 'Arthur' (Scottish Gaelic *Artar*) are vague and difficult to interpret, since they lack early attestation and corroborating tradition, and may hence commemorate some

¹⁰⁹See J. S. Stuart Glennie, *Arthurian Localities* (Edinburgh, 1869); W. J. Watson, *The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926), pp. 208–209; R. S. Loomis, 'Scotland and the Arthurian Legend', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 89 (1955–56), 1–21. ¹¹⁰e.g. by T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin, 1946), pp. 526–27; Proinsias Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology* (London, 1970), p. 115. ¹¹¹On the figure of Thomas see Emily B. Lyle, 'Thomas of Erceldoune: The Prophet and the Prophesied', *Folklore*, 79 (1968), 111–21. Cf. now John MacInnes, 'Gaelic Poetry and Historical Tradition', in *The Middle Ages in the Highlands*, edited by Loraine Maclean (Inverness, 1981), p. 152. ¹¹²See Sellar, 'The Earliest Campbells', p. 120; I. M. M. MacPhail, *Dumbarton Castle* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 3–4 and 170, n. 45; and, for Dunbuck, J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, second edition, 4 vols (Paisley, 1890–93), III, 97. It may be noted (1) that the Dumbarton tradition about the 'Red Hall' may have been the starting point for references to 'Dúnadh an Halla Dheirg' as Arthur's capital in the romances, though influence in the opposite direction cannot at present be ruled out; (2) Sellar has most interestingly related Smeirbhe to the Myrddin of Welsh tradition, though there are difficulties in this view, and it may turn out that he is rather to be associated with the Amadán Mór texts—that is as a Perceval figure.

much more recent individual bearing the name Arthur, or result from comparatively modern antiquarian guesswork, of the sort that spawned Ossianic place-names in the wake of MacPherson's 'translations'. Nevertheless, a few of the Lowland Arthurian sites seem to have quite a long history, and it remains possible that some of the Highland ones do too, though proof is unattainable.¹¹³

In the various categories of evidence examined so far we have been concerned with material which has branched off from the main stream of Arthurian tradition at a stage or stages subsequent to its transformation at the hands of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Continental creators of Arthurian romance. (Certain elements in the traditions bearing on the Campbells and on Dumbarton may, as I say, count as exceptions to this generalization, but that question must remain open for the present.) As a conclusion to our survey it is appropriate to mention a group of literary references to Arthur (or to *an* Arthur) which seem to antedate the possibility, or at least the likelihood, of acquaintance with these developments.

The compilers and composers of Fenian literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries thought of Britain as supporting warrior bands on a par with the Fians which roamed their heroic Ireland and Scotland. They also imagined individual warriors travelling from other lands, including 'Britain', to join Finn's men—in much the same way that the Arthurian sources picture kings' sons journeying to Arthur's court to win renown.¹¹⁴ In these 'pre-Arthurian' texts¹¹⁵ the names *Artúr*, *Ibar* (later spelt *Iobhar*), and *Béinne* demand particular attention amongst those with 'British' associations.

Thus in *Acallam na Senórach* we find an Artú(i)r, son of Béinne, King of the Britons, serving as an *óclách* under Finn. (He makes off with some marvellous hounds belonging to the Fenians and transports them to the territory of the Britons, but is later brought to book by Finn's men, and returns to Finn's service.)¹¹⁶ Later on in the *Acallam* another Artúr is mentioned as a member of Finn's 'first battalion' (*den chétFéinn*) who drowns in Loch Lurgan along with

¹¹³One cannot forbear to cite, as a possible example of the survival of local legend from very early times, the apparent persistence of traditions about the sixth-century Battle of Arfderydd: see W. F. Skene, 'Notice of the Site of the Battle of Ardderyd or Arderyth', *PSAS*, 6 (1864–66), 91–98. ¹¹⁴e.g. *The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn*, edited and translated by Kuno Meyer, *Fianaigecht* (Dublin, 1910), pp. 70 and 84. See below for similar references in the main prose text of the period, *Acallam na Senórach* (edited and translated by O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I, 94–233 and II, 101–265, and by Whitley Stokes in *Irische Texte*, edited by Ernst Windisch and W. Stokes, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1880–1909), IV, Part 1. ¹¹⁵By 'pre-Arthurian' I mean simply 'antedating the Gaelic Arthurian romances as defined above', without prejudice to such questions as the 'Arthurian flavour' which Myles Dillon (*Early Irish Literature* (Chicago, 1948), p. 39) felt to be present in the *Acallam* itself. ¹¹⁶O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I, 98–100 and II, 105–107; cf. Jones, 'Some Arthurian Material' (n. 27 above), p. 46.

his brothers Samaisc and Inber.¹¹⁷ They are described by the Irish redactor as 'the three sons of the King of the Gallgaeidil from the other side'. 'Artúr amra' ('wondrous Arthur') also occurs in the oldest version of the twelfth-century poem 'Lige Guill i mMaig Raig-ni', in the enumeration of warriors slain by the rival warrior band of Goll mac Morna.¹¹⁸ Béinne, Artúr's father in the *Acallam*, crops up in several other contexts in early Irish literature, most notably as the leader of the army of Britons who attended the Battle of Mag Mucrama in *Cath Maige Mucrama*.¹¹⁹ He also figures, it should be added, in the Campbell genealogies. As for Ibar, he is called 'the high king' and the father of the 'three kings of the Fian of the Britons' in another early ballad, dated to around A.D. 1200 by Gerard Murphy;¹²⁰ while the 'red onslaught of Clann Morna' (in the poem already mentioned) also accounted for 'Ibar, Ercail, and Ircal'.¹²¹ Note also Eobrán, a 'son of the King of the Britons' in the Loch Lurgan episode in the *Acallam*, whose name could be a derivative of Ibar's and suggested by it.¹²² Although the sources just quoted do not link Ibar specifically with Artúr, later sources, whether literary or genealogical, are unanimous in talking of 'Artúr mac Iobhair'—even the translated *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha* conforms¹²³—and the two groups of reference can hardly be dissociated. It has, indeed, been suggested that *Iobhar* is a rendering of *Uther*.¹²⁴ But it is impossible to see *Iobhar* as corresponding to *Uther* in the way that *Bhalbhuidh* represents **Walway*. The most that can be said is that the name may have borne enough of a general resemblance to *Uther* for it to escape replacement by the latter. As a matter of fact, we know what at least the late Gaelic treatment of *Uther* (or *Uter*) was, from some romance texts of the late sort, whose authors, being strongly aware of foreign sources, felt uneasy about *Iobhar* as Arthur's father, and tacked a form of *Ut(h)er* onto the pedigree (in addition to *Iobhar*!) for good measure.¹²⁵ These *Ut(h)er*

¹¹⁷O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I, 187 and II, 212. In view of the other evidence (to be cited) for a connection between Artúr and Ibar one is tempted to read *Iubar* for *Inber* here. ¹¹⁸See *The Book of Leinster*, edited by R. I. Best and others (Dublin, 1954–), IV, 986, line 28906. On the date of the poem see Murphy, *Duanaire Finn*, III, 109 (cf. my 'Part I', p. 59, n. 41). ¹¹⁹Edited and translated by Máirín O Daly, Irish Texts Society, 50 (Dublin, 1975); see pp. 52 and 56, and (for the ninth-century date of the text) p. 18. Cf. also Watson, *Celtic Place-Names*, pp. 191 and 216. ¹²⁰*Duanaire Finn*, III, 36. ¹²¹*Book of Leinster*, IV, 981, line 28717; cf. 'naoi mic Iobhair is Ichtair' in the corresponding passage in *Duanaire Finn*, edited by MacNeill and Murphy, II, 146, stanza 18. ¹²²I take *Ibar* to contain the Celtic stem **eburo-* 'yew', which yielded personal and place-names in *Ebur-* and *Ebor-* in Britain and on the Continent (cf. Hiberno-Latin *Iborius* in the Book of Armagh); for the phonetics, compare the various spellings instanced in the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary*, s.vv. *lebor* 'book' (< Latin *liber*) and its diminutive, *lebrán*. ¹²³Falconer, *Lorgaireacht*, p. 164, line 3926. ¹²⁴Jones, 'Some Arthurian Material', p. 48. ¹²⁵See above, p. 50.

forms do not resemble *Iobhar*; and the original independence of the latter name is as clear as the 'British' aura it suggested to the minds of those who employed it in a Fenian context in the twelfth century.

The several occurrences of these names do not form a consistent pattern; indeed, they involve contradictions if placed side by side. Most probably, the redactors of the Fenian material were merely concerned at a given moment to provide names with the right 'British' ring to them. Yet one would very much like to know whence those 'British' associations had arisen—whether, for example, a twelfth-century Irish audience was aware, even in a vague, generalized way, of Arthur as a hero of British tradition, or whether the Arthur referred to was one who had already become a figure within the Gaelic tradition, like Béinne. The first alternative seems perfectly plausible, whether one thinks first of cultural connections across the Irish Sea, or of tradition emanating from Strathclyde, and entering Gaelic literature through Scottish Gaeldom and Ulster.¹²⁶ The latter alternative (which is not, of course, incompatible with the first) is perhaps the more problematic, though it is by no means inconceivable. One obvious source for such knowledge would be the Irish version of the *Historia Brittonum*; but it must be admitted that there are no shared peculiarities to confirm the suggestion. (Possibly the *Lebor Bretnach* did not attain a currency beyond the historical-genealogical sphere at this period, any more than it did later on.)¹²⁷ Another possible hint that Arthur had secured a niche in the early Gaelic literary tradition is contained in the title of a lost tale, *Aíge-decht Artúir* ('The Guesting of Arthur'), which appears in one of the medieval tale-lists. Unfortunately, however, doubts have been cast on the validity of this reference as proof of a pre-Galfridian Arthur, and even on the genuineness of the name *Artúr* in the title.¹²⁸ Although these objections are not insurmountable, they are

¹²⁶For communications across the Irish Sea see the works cited above, n. 78; for the 'North Channel' route see (à propos of the Strathclyde and Irish traditions of the 'Wild Man of the Woods') Kenneth Jackson, 'The Motive of the Threefold Death in the Story of Suibhne Geilt', in *Féilscríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, edited by J. Ryan (Dublin, 1940), pp. 535–50; 'A Further Note on Suibhne Geilt and Merlin', *Éigse*, 7 (1954–55), 112–16; 'The Sources for the Life of St Kentigern', in *Studies in the Early British Church*, edited by N. K. Chadwick (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 273–357; James Carney, 'Suibhne Geilt and the Children of Lir', *Éigse*, 6 (1949–52), 83–110, and *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin, 1955), pp. 129–64 and 385–93. ¹²⁷See above, n. 90. ¹²⁸See Kuno Meyer, 'Eine verschollene Artursage', in *Festschrift Ernst Windisch zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1914) pp. 63–67; Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 47. For doubts and alternative suggestions see Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage* (Halle, 1921), p. 515; Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales*, p. 163, n. 7; Mac Cana, pp. 107–108. (Bruford and Mac Cana accept *Artúr* as Arthur, but regard his appearance in the twelfth-century tale-list as evidence for awareness of Geoffrey's work.)

enough to deter one from using *Aígidecht Artúir* as proof that Arthur was the hero of an early Irish tale.

An early manifestation of Arthur in Middle Irish literature must therefore remain an unverified hypothesis. One should add here, in deference to the fact that several historical bearers of the name Artúr are attested in the early Irish record, that our problematic references might conceivably hark back to a namesake rather than to Arthur of Britain himself. It might be asked, for instance, whether there could have been a narrative involving the Artúr who was a son of the Dalriadic king Aedán mac Gabráin, bearing in mind the keen interest which the latter and his family generated both in Gaelic and in Welsh tradition.¹²⁹ Or again, could we be dealing with faint echoes of an Arthur of Strathclyde (or of Strathclyde tradition)? Postulating such a character would certainly help to explain the incidence of the name among the early Campbells and other potentially ex-British families in the Southern Highlands, and would provide the germ of truth which could have led the Campbell genealogists to found their pedigrees on King Arthur. Moreover, if we were to take seriously their unanimity in calling Arthur 'son of Iobhar', there might just be a hint of corroboration in Geoffrey of Monmouth's so far unexplained association of his Ebraucus with the founding of Alclut: could Geoffrey have been drawing on a Northern tradition to the effect that someone with a name in *Ebor-* was the founder of Alclut?¹³⁰ But this is the merest guesswork. In the present state of knowledge it will not be out of keeping to take our tune from the Scottish Gaelic rhyme

Uirc is tuirc is Ailpinich—
ach cuin a thàinig Artaraich?
Na cnuic a' freagairt, 'Cuin?'

Pig(-folk) and boar(-folk) and descendants of Alpin—but when did the descendants of Arthur come? The hills reply, 'When?'¹³¹

The main object of the present study has been to show when and how the tide of Arthurian literature percolated through to the Gaelic tradition, and to outline the developments it underwent once there. In attempting this one has at times been conscious of trying to

¹²⁹M. E. Dobbs, 'Aedán mac Gabráin', *SGS*, 7 (1953), 89–93; Bromwich, *Trioedd*, pp. 264–66. ¹³⁰See the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, edited by Acton Griscom (London and New York, 1929), p. 259; cf. possibly the opening of *Historia Peredur vab Efwrawc*, edited by Glenys Witchard Goetinck (Cardiff, 1976): 'Efwrawc iarll bioed iarllaeth yn y Gogled' (p. 7). ¹³¹Quoted from Skye oral tradition by John MacInnes, 'Eachdraidh agus Fàisneachd', *The Scotsman*, 29 September 1979; cf. the Tiree version quoted by J. Gregorson Campbell, 'Sgeulachd air Sir Uallabh O' Corn', *TGSI*, 13 (1886–87), 82–83.

reconstruct a pot (as it were) from too few sherds, with the consequent danger that some pieces of evidence have been misplaced; while some others (to continue the metaphor) may only too easily belong to a different pot altogether. It is worth emphasizing three particular problems posed by the Gaelic evidence in this connection.

In the first place, the tradition itself has a notorious tendency to impart its own flavour to exotic material of whatever class, thus impeding the establishment of detailed correspondences and affiliations. Its consistency, moreover, is such that the ever suspect distinction between 'literary' and 'popular' is unusually inadequate; with the result that one is the less able to confine oneself to the relatively manageable problems pertaining to straightforward manuscript traditions. Secondly, the question of the 'Celtic origins' of Arthurian romance imposes a special burden of vigilance when one tries to use the terms 'native' and 'Arthurian' in a Gaelic context. Absolute criteria are all too rare, and what validity our picture possesses must depend, to a significant degree, on its cumulative impression rather than on the certainty of individual deductions. Thirdly, so much work requires to be done in the Early Modern period of Gaelic literature that provisional judgements have unavoidably been ventured above where books and theses should first be written. As a consequence of these difficulties the volume of explanation needed at certain points has put pressure on the space available to do justice to discussions by Arthurian scholars which have centred on some of the Gaelic texts and themes mentioned. Although there are practical reasons for rigidly excluding questions concerning Celtic sources of Arthurian literature, the limitation is, in the last resort, an artificial one.

Despite these embarrassments, it has seemed feasible and useful to unite, under Arthur's aegis, some categories of material which tend to be treated in isolation by Celtic scholars. Moreover, without in the least wishing to open a Pandora's box of unbridled speculation, or pretending that the Gaelic evidence contains earth-shattering solutions to Arthurian problems, one would hope that a more detailed knowledge of what could happen and what did happen within the Gaelic tradition might help to take us beyond what one Gaelic scholar has plaintively called 'the occasional fumble by an Arthurian scholar looking for "Celtic" motifs'.¹³²

Our main conclusions—provisional as they must be in many respects—are that the literature of the Round Table reached Gaelic parts fairly late in European terms, but gradually established itself as a minor but significant element in the prose and verse traditions

¹³²Alan Bruford, 'Legends Long Since Localised or Tales Still Travelling?', *SS*, 24 (1980), 55.

of the Early Modern period. It would have commended itself to the Gaelic literati by the glamour and prestige it enjoyed in the eyes of their patrons, and by a quality about some of its themes and details which cannot have been other than *déjà vu*. Once established in Gaelic literature, it partook fully of the fortunes of the genres it had penetrated, and became increasingly Gaelicized. It never ousted its native equivalents (though it tintured their flavour) or attained a pre-eminent position in the literature; and so, in time, it became subject to the processes of assimilation and recycling, more especially at the oral level in the Modern period. There was also intermittent antiquarian interest in Arthur, with characteristic repercussions in literature. Finally, there are hints of Gaelic acquaintance with a pre-romantic Arthur, and, in Scotland at least, with the Arthur of popular tradition.¹³³

¹³³I wish to thank Dr P. Sims-Williams for encouragement and advice in preparing this material for the press.

Cistercians and Schools in Late Medieval Wales

David Thomson

Maltby, South Yorkshire

IN 1920 L. S. Knight, writing on 'The Welsh Monasteries and their Claims for doing the Education of Later Medieval Wales', concluded that, 'Since then no evidence can be found to prove that the monasteries kept schools and taught the youth of the country round, we may with justice discard the theory altogether'.¹ For Knight this was a general thesis applicable throughout England and Wales in the late medieval period. This wider claim has received an implicit rebuttal in the chapter of Nicholas Orme's recent *English Schools in the Middle Ages* which treats of the religious orders and education.² My purpose in this brief article is to present circumstantial evidence that two Cistercian monasteries in north Wales, in particular, had some concern for the elementary education of the youth of the country round.

This evidence consists of two manuscript schoolbooks, both now preserved in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth: MS Peniarth 356 and MS NLW 423. I have published elsewhere a detailed description of both these manuscripts,³ but briefly MS Peniarth 356 is a mainly paper volume of 168 leaves, measuring 215 × 145 mm., compiled and largely written by one Thomas Pennant who was probably the man of that name who became abbot of Basingwerk in 1481, although on palaeographical grounds his first entries in the manuscript are to be dated some twenty years earlier. Pennant may also be the 'T.P.' who wrote St John's College, Cambridge, MS 72—a copy of the *Medulla Grammaticae* dated in a colophon to 16 December 1468—as well as the writer of a few marginal notes to the text of *Brenhinedd y Saeson* in the Black Book of Basingwerk, MS NLW 7006 (for example, pp. 260–1 and 272).⁴ MS NLW 423 is a paper

¹*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, sixth series, 20 (1920), 257–75 (p. 272). ²Nicholas Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973), Chapter 8, especially pp. 243–51. ³David Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Middle English Grammatical Texts* (New York and London, 1979), pp. 105–31. ⁴This information was kindly supplied by Mr Daniel Huws of the National Library of Wales, who has been of great help to me in working on these manuscripts, and in all things Welsh.

volume of 94 leaves, measuring 310×225 mm., written in the 1480s by John Edwards the younger of Chirk, probably the son of John ap Edward, receiver and chief forester of Chirkland, who died in 1498. A Calendar in the manuscript (fols 83^r-88^v) departs from the Sarum use in including the feast of St 'Colgeni abbatis' (that is, St Collen) on 21 May. Taken together with the considerable overlap in contents between the two manuscripts we are considering, this reference suggests the Cistercian Abbey of Valle Crucis, near Llangollen, as the place where MS NLW 423 was first put together. It should be further noted that both manuscripts are larded through with sufficient local place-names, Welsh personal names and scraps of Welsh, English of distinctly northern Welsh dialect,⁵ and liturgical items of Welsh provenance that there can be no reasonable doubt that they were used in north Wales. There is equally, however, no doubt that the predominant vernacular of education represented in the manuscripts is English and that it draws its inspiration from Oxford, since texts by John Leylond and John Anwykyll and references to William Kyngesmill—all Oxford teachers—are found in them. The Anwykyll text, the *Compendium Totius Grammaticae*,⁶ was only published in 1483 so the inspiration was clearly still fresh.

The evidence so far indicates a close connection between the two monasteries and elementary education after the Oxford model, but the nature of that connection is not clear, although we may feel that the most likely hypothesis is that one of the brothers became familiar with the Oxford style of grammar teaching while studying there and subsequently saw to its introduction in his home area, by the setting up of a monastically sponsored school. On fol. 95 of MS Peniarth 356 it is likely, however, that we have direct if circumstantial evidence for such a school. The verso is headed 'Post festum Sancti Thome' and has a list of names against which is entered—in columns marked 'prima septimana', 'secunda' and so on—the sum of one penny per week. The verso covers four weeks, the recto continuing with weeks five to twelve. At the foot of the verso is a note of debts owed by various of the individuals named in the lists above. The lists of names and weekly entries are as follows:

fol. 95^v

Dauid ap Tudur	jd.	jd.	jd.
Gruffudd ap Reis	jd.	jd.	jd.
Iohne ap Ithel	jd.	jd.	jd.
Dauid Smyth	jd.	jd.	jd.

⁵In a personal communication, Professor Angus McIntosh describes the Middle English grammatical text in MS NLW 423 as 'a valuable Denbighshire text'. ⁶MS NLW 423, fols 21^v-31^r.

Iohne ap Re(i)s	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Thomas ap Gruffudd ⁷	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Iohne Daid	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Ieuan ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Thomas Pennant	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Iohne ap Ynys	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Kenrig ap Gruffudd	jd.		jd.	
Ednyfed ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Gronwy ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Dauid ap Dycus	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Ieuan ap Reis	jd.		jd.	
Iohne Kenrig	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Iankyn' ap Sir Benet	jd.		jd.	
Reis ap Henri	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Ricard ap Day			jd.	
Iohne Wyrhall'				
Reis ap Ieuan ⁸	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.
Gruffudd ap Hoell'		jd.	jd.	jd.
Iohne ap Ednyfed	jd.			
Dauid ap Blethin				
Ithel ap Iorwerth				
Ithel ap Sir Ricard				
Meredudd ap Dycus	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Dauid ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Llywelyn ap Reis	jd.	jd.	jd.	
Dauid ap Sir Geffray ⁹			jd.	jd.
Gronwy ap Llywelyn			jd.	jd.
Llywelyn ap Meredudd ⁹			jd.	jd.
Eduard' ap Tudur ¹⁰		jd.		
William Owe(n)		jd.		
Gronwy ap Reis		jd.		
Robert Hiltyn			jd.	

fol. 95^r

Iohn' ap Ednyfed	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.				
Thomas ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.				
Gronwy ap Llywelyn	jd.		jd.	jd.	jd.			
Dauid Smyth'	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.			
Ieuan ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.
Thomas Penant	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.
Iohn' ap Reis	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.			jd.
Meredudd ap Dycus	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.		jd.	
Iohn' Dauid	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.

⁷This name is very faint. ⁸An erasure follows this name. ⁹All the names on the verso are preceded by 'D', presumably for 'Debita'. These two names are followed by 'S', presumably for 'Soluta'. ¹⁰This and the next three names are in a second column, and some notes of fees may be lost in the binding. They are followed by scribbled fragments of names.

Iohn' ap Ynys	jd.							
Kenrig ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.					
William Owe(n)	jd.	jd.						
Iohn' ap Ithel	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.			
Dauid ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.			jd.	jd.	jd.
Llywelyn ap Meredudd	jd.	jd.		jd.				
Dauid ap Sir Geffrey	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.				
Gronwy ap Reis	jd.			jd.				
Robertus Hilton'	jd.		jd.	jd.				
Gronwy ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.				
Edward' ap Tudur	jd.							
Dauid ap Dicus	jd.							
Iankyn' ap Sir B.	jd.							
Llywelyn ap Reis	jd.		jd.	jd.	jd.		jd.	jd.
Ednyfed ap Gruffudd	jd.	jd.	jd.				jd.	jd.
Wurhall'								
Gruffudd ap Hoell'								
Robertus ap Reis		jd.		jd.				
Ithel ap Sir R.								
Iohn ap Kenrig	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.				
Reis ap Ieuan	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.
Recard' ap Day	jd.							
Reis ap Henri'		jd.	jd.	jd.	jd.		jd.	jd.
Dauid ap Tudur		jd.						
Dauid ap Ithel					jd.			

This is almost certainly the record of weekly attendance and fees paid at an elementary school over the twelve-week term following the feast of St Thomas, by which—given the part of the country—we are probably to understand St Thomas Cantilupe of Hereford whose feast day was 2 October. The period covered is thus the final quarter of the year. Weekly fees of 1*d.*, or a shilling a term, are quite plausible for the late fifteenth century.¹¹ The number of pupils shows that the school was flourishing, and this was evidently not its first term, since the notes at the foot of the verso record what was owing from previous terms. John Wyrhall, for instance, is not surprisingly absent all this term since he is recorded as owing the full shilling from the previous term ('de ultimo termino'). The fact that the pupils are paying shows that they are not monastic novices, and it may also suggest, although not conclusively, that the master was employed by the monastery and paid out of the fees, rather than being a monk himself. That the record should have been made in Thomas Pennant's book, and that Pennant is clearly interested in grammar, make it very likely that for a time at least Pennant was the master, perhaps before he was professed as a monk, although

¹¹On school fees see Orme, p. 118.

this must remain conjecture. It is intriguing to find a Thomas Pennant in the list of pupils, especially since he is never absent. Could this be the second son of the future abbot, also called Thomas (he became vicar of Holywell), being kept up to the mark by his father? Or, as Mr Daniel Huws suggests to me, could it be Thomas Pennant, the future abbot of Basingwerk, as a child—the good boy of the class, keeping the record on behalf of the master? Among the other pupils, John Wyrhall may be related to the Henry Wyrehall who was abbot of Basingwerk in the mid-fifteenth century (although his indebtedness would not reflect honourably on the abbot's memory), and Robert Hilton may be the chaplain of that name who is recorded as giving land in Prestatyn before 1487.¹² A careful search through the Welsh pedigree books and what local records survive could well identify other pupils and help to prove or disprove the hypothesis I have put forward, that the two manuscripts discussed above are the remains of an attempt by the Cistercian abbeys of Basingwerk and Valle Crucis to provide elementary education for the boys of the country around.

¹²For Wyrehall see the entry under his name in D. H. Williams, 'Fasti Cisterciensis Cambrensis', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 24 (1970–72), 181–229. For Hilton see *The 37th Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* (London, 1876), p. 164. Again, I am indebted to Mr Huws for these references. Mr P. C. Bartrum suggests, via the Editor, that John Wyrhall perhaps belonged to a family with that surname in Rhuddlan (see Lewis Dwnn, *Heraldic Visitations of Wales*, edited by Samuel R. Meyrick, 2 vols (Llandover, 1846), II, 296; London, British Library, MS Harley 1969, p. 372); but he adds that the names in the lists are too common to be identified definitely.

Notes on the Later History of the Oldest Manuscript of Welsh Poetry: The Cambridge Juvencus

J. C. T. Oates

University Library, Cambridge

MANUSCRIPT Ff. 4. 42 in Cambridge University Library is a copy of Juvencus' fourth-century Latin epic on the Gospel story, made in the ninth century by Núadu, an Irish scribe working in Wales, and subsequently glossed in Latin, Irish, and Welsh by several other scribes in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹ The manuscript is best

¹[See T. Hersart de la Villemarqué, *Notices des principaux manuscrits des anciens Bretons* (Paris, 1865), pp. 8–10 (with hand-drawn facsimile of three englynion); Whitley Stokes, 'Cambrica', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1860–61, pp. 204–32 and 288 (also in German, 'Die Glossen und Verse in dem Codex des Juvencus zu Cambridge', *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sprachforschung*, 4 (1863–65), 385–423), and *The Old-Welsh Glosses on Martianus Capella, with some Notes on the Juvencus-Glosses* (Simla, 1872; corrected reprint in *BVS*, 7 (1871–73), 385–416); W. F. Skene, letter in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, third series, 10 (1864), 152–56 (the same material revised in his *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1868), II, 1–2 and 311–14); Henry Bradshaw, 'On the Oldest Written Remains of the Welsh Language', *Cambridge Antiquarian Communications*, 3 (1864–76), 263–67 (reprinted in his *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, 1889), pp. 281–85; with an Appendix, pp. 453–88); *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, edited by A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, 3 vols (Oxford, 1869–71), I, 622–23; F. C. Meyer, 'The Welsh Poems in the "Codex Juvencus"', *Arch. Camb.*, fourth series, 3 (1872), 212–22; R. Thurneysen, 'Gloses bretonnes', *Revue celtique*, 11 (1890), 91–93; *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, edited by Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3), II, 44; John Rhys, 'The Origin of the Welsh Englyn and Kindred Metres', *Y Cymmrodor*, 18 (1905), 103–106; W. M. Lindsay, *Early Welsh Script* (Oxford, 1912), pp. 16–18; T. H. Parry-Williams, 'The Juvencus Glosses', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 1 (1921–23), 120–23; Ifor Williams, 'Glosau Rhydychen a Chaergrawnt', *BBCS*, 6 (1931–33), 115–18, and *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin, 1944), pp. 28–32; Kenneth Jackson, 'Brittonica', *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 1 (1949–50), 71, and *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), pp. 49–53; T. A. M. Bishop, 'The Corpus Martianus Capella', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 4 (1964–68), 258; Ifor Williams, *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, edited by Rachel Bromwich, second edition (Cardiff, 1980), pp. 89–121; T. Arwyn Watkins, 'Englynion y Juvencus', in *Bardos: Penodau ar y Traddodiad Barddol Cymreig a Cheltaidd cyflwynedig i J. E. Caerwyn Williams*, edited by R. Geraint Gruffydd (Cardiff, 1982), pp. 29–43; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Evidence for Vernacular Irish Literary Influence on Early Mediaeval Welsh Literature', in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, edited by Dorothy Whitelock and others (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 240–43. In the article cited above Bishop says the

known for the Welsh poems which were added in its margins in the first half of the tenth century: nine religious *englynion* and three *englynion* from a secular saga.² While much Welsh poetry composed in the tenth century and earlier survives in later Welsh manuscripts, none is preserved in manuscripts as old as the Juvencus manuscript, whose provenance and history are therefore of particular interest.

The manuscript is in an unremarkable calf binding of c. 1700, of a type common in the University Library, with leaves from an early printed book used as paste-downs within each cover; leaves from the same book perform the same office in many other similar bindings in the Library. The volume was rebacked in 1958, and the remains of a previous rebacking, perhaps of c. 1800, were then laid down inside the box in which it is kept. Also in the box, but lying loose, is a double sheet of black-edged nineteenth-century writing-paper of octavo dimensions; it has been twice folded—in half and then in half again—parallel to its longer side. The manuscript itself has been profusely annotated—quite apart from the glosses and added verses in Welsh which give it its primary importance—by a very individual hand to which a date of c. 1600 may for the time being be assigned. According to Henry Bradshaw's pencilled collation it originally comprised fifty-five leaves, of which fols 30 and 39 are missing. The lower margins of fols 24, 26, 47, and 51 have been cut away; elsewhere the corners of the leaves have been curiously and individually rounded with scissors or shears. It is evident that the portions of the upper margins of fols 25 and 26 on which the famous Welsh *englynion* are written have also at some time been cut away, though now skilfully reunited to the leaves to which they belong. On a piece of paper tipped-in inside the front cover is a note by Bradshaw's successor as University Librarian, William Robertson Smith; it reads

On May 11th, 1889 I examined the Juvencus Manuscript Ff. 4. 42, with Professor Cowell & found that the precious slips with Cymric vss. which according to Mr. Bradshaw's note on the cover ought to have been in their places were no longer there. Were they removed when he began to prepare the volume for the binder? If so they will probably be found between the leaves of some MS.

manuscript 'was acquired by an English centre, but perhaps one located in Wales' by c. 1000, when glosses were added in English Caroline minuscule. See further his *English Caroline Minuscule* (Oxford, 1971), p. 19, where he compares the hand of glosses in a possible Worcester manuscript—*Editor*.]

²A dating to the first half of the tenth century (rather than to the ninth century) is now generally accepted. The *englynion* are edited and translated by Ifor Williams, *Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, pp. 89–121; this is an English version of his articles 'Tri Englyn y Juvencus' and 'Naw Englyn y Juvencus', *BBCS*, 6 (1931–33), 101–10 and 205–24. Cf. the review by J. Vendryes in *RC*, 51 (1934), 164–67.

This unlikely speculation need not detain us; the words 'were no longer there' have been struck through in pencil and the word 'found' written in above them by Robertson Smith's own successor (and Bradshaw's own pupil) Francis Jenkinson. 'Mr. Bradshaw's note', in pencil and now almost illegible, will be found in the top margin of the printed leaf which is the end paste-down; it refers to the mutilation, already mentioned, of the lower margins of fols 24, 26, 47, and 51, and adds that the two slips containing the *englynion* have been 'cut from the upper margin of ff. 25, 26 but are still preserved in their places'.³ It is evident therefore that in Bradshaw's time the *englynion* were separate from the manuscript, and we may hazard that they were 'preserved in their places' folded inside the double-sheet of writing-paper, now lying inside the box but then lying in the manuscript between fols 25 and 26. It is curious therefore that in his description and discussion of the manuscript Bradshaw gives no hint that the *englynion* had been cut away from it, nor, so far as I am aware, do any of those who preceded him in their study and publication.⁴ The explanation adopted by three scholars in the present century—John Rhys ('long since severed . . . by a reckless book-binder'), W. M. Lindsay ('cut off by a ruthless binder'), and Ifor Williams ('cut away by some vandal of a binder')⁵—will not find acceptance with anyone who has watched a binder, however reckless and ruthless, at work, since a binder's plough or guillotine cannot cut in a curve or angle.

Some other explanation of so curious a circumstance must be sought, and if we seek it first in Edward Lhuyd's discovery and publication of the *englynion*, we quickly encounter another just as curious, for though Lhuyd reported his discovery of the Cambridge Juvencus to Henry Rowlands and others in letters written at the end of 1702, enclosing in particular transcripts of 'the three following Englyns, which I found at the top-margin of three successive pages in the midst of the book', he made no mention of Cambridge or of the Juvencus manuscript when he published those same stanzas in his *Archaeologia Britannica* of 1707 (p. 221), observing merely (and in Welsh) that he had found them in an old Latin book written on vellum about a thousand years before. Why, we may ask, did Lhuyd conceal a source which Rowlands did not hesitate to reveal when he published Lhuyd's letters after his death in his own *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* of 1723?⁶ Hersart de la Villemarqué alone has attempted

³In the photograph facing page 102 of Williams, 'Tri Englyn y Juvencus', the strips bearing the *englynion* are still separate. They are shown in their present position in the plate facing page 89 of *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*. ⁴See references in n. 1 above. ⁵Rhys, 'Origin of the Welsh Englyn and Kindred Metres', p. 103; Lindsay, *Early Welsh Script*, p. 16, n. 1; Williams, *Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, p. 89. ⁶(Dublin, 1723), pp. 333–34; reprinted by R. T. Gunther, *Early Science in*

an answer, suggesting that Lhuyd behaved thus 'comme s'il avoit voulu garder sa découverte pour ses compatriotes'.⁷ The truth, however, is less creditable and may be read in Thomas Hearne's Journal for 7 June 1730, where he sets down the gist of a letter from Thomas Baker, antiquarian and *socius ejectus* of St John's College, Cambridge:

M^r. Baker knows nothing . . . of any antient Orders concerning their Cambridge Library, but he observes that B^p Cobham's at Oxford (what I had told him) *neque cum cultello* was a provident & wise order, for a reason he will venture to tell me, though it concerns a Friend. M^r. Baker had the same opinion of M^r. Edward Lluŷd that I have (as a plain, open, hearty man, *sine fuco*) till he came to Cambridge, where, being trusted in the public Library, he met with a Juvencus MS. of the age of 1,000 years in his opinion, & there being some antient British Notes (Cumbrian, M^r. Baker thinks) in the Margin, he cut 'em out with a Penknife, w^{ch} after his death being found among his Papers, were returned (thro' M^r. Baker) by M^r. Wanley . . .⁸

'Honest Lhuyd', as his contemporaries called him, succumbed in the excitement of his discovery to a temptation which has afflicted others after—and doubtless before—him; and though Hearne goes on to record Baker's suspicion that he may also have removed from the library of St John's 'a little portable MS. in one of the Northern Languages', he was certainly not guilty, as one might at this point infer, of removing as well the lower margins of fols 24, 26, 47, and 51 of the Juvencus. These had been cut away before the manuscript entered the University Library with the rest of Richard Holdsworth's library in 1664, the annotator of c. 1600 having written in the gutter of fol. 47^r the last line of text on that page, since part of it had been inadvertently cut away along with the margin below.

This annotator wrote, both marginally and between the lines, in a very legible squarish script in which each letter tends to be detached from its neighbours. He often used a bright red ink, to good decorative effect, and he wrote the letter v very large, both medially and initially (so that his notes often look like chronograms), and he was fond of marking off clauses in the text by putting brackets round them (in red) and of writing in the bottom margin of a page some

Oxford, xiv: *Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 472–73 (and see also letter to Humphrey Foulkes, p. 476). The text in *Archaeologia Britannica* is corrected from Lhuyd's manuscript by Stokes, 'Cambrica', p. 228. ⁷*Notices des principaux manuscrits des anciens Bretons*, p. 8. ⁸*Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, x, edited by H. E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, 67 (Oxford, 1915), p. 288. On the disposal of Lhuyd's collections after his death in 1710 and on Wanley's attempt to secure them for Lord Harley see *The Diary of Humfrey Wanley 1715–1726*, edited by C. E. and Ruth C. Wright, 2 vols (London, 1966), I, xxvi and 2–10.

key-word of its contents: 'CentVrio'; 'Vulpes et AVes'; 'AqVa in VinVm'. On the first verso of the manuscript he wrote 'Mr. Price', neatly framing it in red, and below it in red and black he wrote, among other references, 'Vide Bishop of Meaths booke. Iames Vsher. fol. 349'. The latter inscription refers to Ussher's *Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuite* and must have been written during the short interval between that book's publication in 1624 and Ussher's elevation to the archbishopric of Armagh in March 1624/5.

There are other books, both manuscript and printed, in the University Library which bear the unmistakable characteristics of the same ownership as the Juvenius: MS Kk. 6. 14 (a thirteenth-century Psalter; Holdsworth's), MS Ff. 5. 46 (Petrus Blesensis, c. 1300; from the library of John Moore, Bishop of Ely, d. 1714), Syn. 8. 55. 32 (STC 361: Humphrey Dyson's; probably Holdsworth's), D*. 16. 14 (*Turchicae Spurcitiae et Perfidiae Suggillatio*, Paris, 1511; possibly Holdsworth's), T*. 4. 52 (Savonarola, *Prediche per quaresima*, Venice, 1528; Henry Lucas's, bequeathed in 1663), MS Add. 43 (*The Three Kings of Cologne*, fifteenth-century; acquired in 1859–61), and Bensly 4. e. 114 (*Machumetis eiusque Successorum Vitae, Doctrina, ac ipse Alcoran*, etc., edited by T. Bibliander, 1550; acquired in 1894). Of these the first five and the last have the signature *richarde amadas*, found also in Syn. 8. 55. 156 (STC 15066, 17822, 17821, 18310; Holdsworth's), Syn. 8. 55. 122 (STC 15064; Holdsworth's), and F152.c.2.6 (a Greek Psalter printed at Venice, 1521; John Moore's). This signature is written in a hand which rarely leaves the paper and produces an almost illegible tangle of narrow sloping loops. Its characteristics are in complete contrast to those of the annotator, whose careful hand could hardly have produced such a signature, however assiduously practised. It is a great satisfaction therefore to find the Will of 'Richard Amadas parson', written at Hallingbury Magna in Essex on 18 December 1626 and proved on 26 June 1629, signed in our annotator's hand. In it he leaves to his wife Mary his furniture, his pieces of brass and pewter, and 'all my bookes that I have' together with all his other possessions; there is unfortunately no inventory.⁹

That we now have one Richard Amadas more than we need, of unknown relationship the one to the other, is for our purpose unimportant. They came of a distinguished West Country family (Richard the annotator wrote 'Exon 1607' in MS Ff. 5. 46) which had connections by marriage with the families of Hawkins, Gorges, and Carew. Several of the name were goldsmiths, and one of them was Master of the Mint to Henry VIII. Another was Henry's Sergeant-

⁹The Will is in the Greater London Record Office, ref. DL/C420/ – . I am grateful to Mr I. Darlington, Head Archivist, who sent me a copy of it many years ago.

at-Arms, and yet another captained a ship in the first two voyages of discovery to Virginia in 1584–85 and passed the first year's settlement there as 'Admiral of the Country'. Two members of the family entered Exeter College, Oxford.¹⁰

Who, however, was the 'Mr. Price' whose unhelpful name Richard the annotator wrote in the manuscript? La Villemarqué suggested that he was of the family of Sir John Prise, and that the latter had acquired the manuscript in the course of his activities as Visitor to the monasteries in 1535 and 1539.¹¹ Bradshaw, who knew that Amadas had owned the manuscript and passed that information on to W. F. Skene,¹² believed on the other hand that it had passed from Amadas to Price and 'with other books' from Price to Holdsworth, identifying Price as 'the learned Pricæus' who corresponded with Ussher.¹³ The fact that Holdsworth acquired other books which had belonged to Amadas but not, so far as we can tell, to Price suggests, however, that Price's ownership (if indeed he ever owned the volume, for we do not know for certain why Amadas wrote his name in it) preceded rather than followed Amadas's. If that is so, then it may be that the West Country origin of the Amadas family points to Thomas Price of Plas Iolyn, privateer in the company, it is said, of Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake, son of Ellis Price, whom Cromwell appointed Visitor to the Welsh monasteries in 1535, and himself a poet.¹⁴

There are, inevitably, other loose ends as well. Bradshaw's knowledge of the University Library's early collections was profound, but he too often refrained from setting down on paper what he knew with the result that others after him have had to traverse the ground again in order to reach the same destination. I presume that he realised Amadas's ownership of the Juvencus when he found (in these matters serendipity is as important as search) that manuscripts Kk. 6. 14 and Ff. 5. 46, both annotated in the hand that annotated the Juvencus, had the *richarde amadas* signature as well, and I must

¹⁰See *Hasted's History of Kent*, edited by Henry H. Drake, Part 1 (all published) (London, 1886), pp. vii, x, xxii–xxiii, and 251n., and for brief details of Richard the annotator see Richard Newcourt, *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense*, 2 vols (London, 1708–10), II, 296, and J. C. Challenor Smith, 'Some Additions to Newcourt's *Repertorium*', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, new series, 6 (1898), 305. ¹¹On Sir John Prise, 1502/3–1555, see N. R. Ker, 'Sir John Prise', *The Library*, fifth series, 10 (1955), 1–24. ¹²Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, II, 311–12. ¹³See Ussher's *Whole Works*, edited by C. R. Elrington, 17 vols (Dublin, 1847–64), xvi, 63, 253, 261, and 531. This John Price (on whom see the *Dictionary of National Biography*) was born in 1600 and died in 1676. Arevalus, in the Prolegomena of his edition of Juvencus (Rome, 1792), p. 40, says that Magnus Daniel Omeis found Price's *Commentarii in varios Novi Testamenti Libros* (London, 1660) outstandingly useful in interpreting Juvencus. ¹⁴See G. J. Williams, 'Wiliam Midleton a Thomas Prys', *BBCS*, 11 (1941–44), 113–14, and William Rowland, *Thomas Prys o Blas Iolyn (1564?–1634)* (Cardiff 1964).

suppose that he traced Amadas to Hallingbury Magna through Newcourt's *Repertorium*. I do not know how many books of Amadas provenance in the University Library were known to him;¹⁵ and I suspect that he knew about Lhuyd's misdemeanour but chose to keep silent. I have not thought it necessary more than a century later to follow his example.

¹⁵Most of them were, however, known to Charles Sayle, under-librarian in the University Library, d. 1924, to whose notes I am gratefully indebted.

Recent Books

The Middle Ages in the Highlands. Edited by LORAINÉ MACLEAN OF DOCHGARROCH. Inverness: The Inverness Field Club, 1981. 180 pp., 12 figs, 5 tables. £5. (£5.50 including U.K. postage from Hazelbrae House, Glen Urquhart, Inverness, Scotland.)

IN SPITE of their extent and cultural importance, the Highlands of Scotland have attracted much less historical enquiry in recent years than the Lowlands. Indeed, one sometimes senses that certain Scottish historians regard the former as no more than an extension of the latter, when sound evidence could be produced to demonstrate that most of present-day Scotland was once a *Gaidhealtachd*. This volume contains some of that evidence, and it was doubtless to counterbalance the common neglect of the Highland area among historians that the Inverness Field Club organised a conference in July 1980 on the theme 'The Middle Ages in the Highlands'. The success of the venture can be gauged from the generally excellent quality of the material found in the present work, which assembles the papers given at that conference. Together with the major contributions of Kenneth Steer and John Bannerman in *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (1977), and David Stevenson in *Alasdair MacColla and the Highland Problem in the Seventeenth Century* (1980), this book may mark the beginning of a new era of Highland historical research. That it should be produced within the geographical Highland area is itself significant.

While the analysis of historical source material relating to the Highlands may not have been pursued avidly or consistently over the years, the collection of such material began as early as 1749 with the completion of Walter MacFarlane of MacFarlane's *Geographical Collections*. This point is made by Professor G. W. S. Barrow in his opening paper on 'The Sources for the History of the Highlands in the Middle Ages'. This is primarily a review of the direction of scholarly interest in the medieval Highlands, but it also offers a valuable guide to key sources for the benefit of students and teachers.

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Professor Barrow, who passes over his own major contribution to the field, notes a continuity of purpose between the most significant early scholars and their present-day successors. This is apparent in the case of genealogical material, which engaged the mind of W. F. Skene in his *Celtic Scotland* of 1876, and which is the subject of David Sellar's article in the present volume, 'Highland Family Origins—Pedigree Making and Pedigree Faking'. The 'notable advances' in this area, attributed by Professor Barrow to Mr Sellar, are equally evident here. Combining a healthy scepticism with a rigorous examination of the external evidence, the author examines the motives for the creation—and manipulation—of pedigrees.

In addition to genealogies, the source material examined in this volume embraces charters relating to the Lordship of the Isles, utilised by J. W. Munro in her largely biographical account of this province and its leaders; evidence from the Vatican Archives included by I. B. Cowan in 'The Medieval Church in the Highlands'; clues to educational patterns in the Highlands, assembled by D. E. R. Watt, who, like Dr Cowan, keeps well clear of native Gaelic material, but gives a valuable picture of contacts between the Highlands and the wider European world; and references to Highlanders participating in the Crusades, analysed by Alan MacQuarrie. Mr MacQuarrie's article, which makes good use of traditional Gaelic lore as well as bardic verse, sheds much light on an area which could be of some significance to literary studies. Besides souvenirs such as camels, one imagines that Gaelic-speaking crusaders could have brought back a wealth of stories gathered during their adventures.

If this book has a weakness, it must surely be that Gaelic language and literature are not given as much space as the other types of material already mentioned. The vast field of 'Gaelic Poetry and Historical Tradition' is surveyed in a single article by John MacInnes, with characteristic detail and stimulating insight. Dr MacInnes looks at the implications of bardic verse for the MacDonald-Campbell 'feud', for example, but such is the importance of the genre that it could have merited an article itself. Equally, Gaelic ballads and prose tales have much to tell the historian about the relationship of the Scottish *Gaidhealtachd* to its Irish counterpart, and to European tradition in general.

In terms of maximum information pressed into a single paper, Dr MacInnes's work is rivalled, if not surpassed, by John Dunbar's contribution on 'The Medieval Architecture of the Scottish Highlands'—a veritable colossus of research complete with ground plans of the most significant buildings. This supplies an important general perspective for Kenneth Steer and John Bannerman's *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, and it is likely to remain the principal reference work for those who find the regional

volumes of the Historical Monuments Commission either beyond their convenience or their resources. In contrast to the scope of Mr Dunbar's article, Jonathan Wordsworth focuses attention on an 'Archaeological Investigation of Medieval Inverness'.

The Inverness Field Club deserves our congratulations not only for the high academic standard of this volume, but also for its attractive, inexpensive, and convenient format. Fully indexed, it is illustrated with pen sketches of Highland landmarks.

University of Edinburgh

DONALD E. MEEK

The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History. The Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 1977. By G. W. S. BARROW. Oxford: University Press, 1980. xxiv + 232 pp., 10 maps. £17.50.

IN THIS distinguished book Professor Geoffrey Barrow distils his exceptional knowledge of the feudal history, and the documentary record, of Scotland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The reader is naturally reminded of Sir Frank Stenton's Ford Lectures on *The First Century of English Feudalism*, and we see here a like deep scholarship and mastery of difficult material. In a way Professor Barrow does less than Stenton did, for the evidence is more elusive; in a way he does more, for the whole picture of Scottish feudalism (anyway to non-specialists) was much less clear before he wrote. It is a study of feudal history in the Scottish setting and thus of interest to a wide audience of medievalists. But it has its message for readers of this journal too, as the following passages clearly show. He cites a number of instances in which 'we see . . . the heads of native comital dynasties attracting to themselves small retinues of trained cavalry soldiers who in districts still markedly Celtic in character were obviously a comparative rarity as late as the thirteenth century' (pp. 125-26). But, having established that 'early Scottish feudalism, far from appearing undeveloped or only half formed, seems remarkably cut and dried, almost a copybook version of the feudalism of north-western Europe' (p. 132) the author goes on to insist on the effectiveness of feudal lordship. 'The sentimental belief that Highland society was so pure that feudalism could only pollute it disregards the extent to which in the thirteenth century the whole of Scotland north of Forth and Clyde was still Celtic in low country and highlands alike. The companion belief in a conspiracy between monarchy and foreign feudalizing lords seriously underestimates both the strength of royal authority and the readiness of the native Highland nobility to adopt feudalism and adapt it to their needs' (p. 137). This

important statement indicates the rewards to be had from reading this closely-knit, sometimes difficult, sometimes witty, always masterly, addition to the great series of Ford Lectures.

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge

C. N. L. BROOKE

Retrospect: Journal of the Irish History Students' Association, new series, nos 1 (1981) and 2 (1982). Available from Circulations Manager, *Retrospect*, History Society, University College, Dublin 4, Irish Republic. 64 pp. each number. IR £1.50 per no. ISSN 0332-3366.

EACH ISSUE of *Retrospect* contains several short articles, covering a wide range of topics, a Research Review of an aspect of Irish history, and critical reviews of recent publications. In *Retrospect* 1 Vincent Hurley examines the current state of research in early Irish history. His paper surveys the sources available, warns of the difficulties they present, gives a résumé of recent achievements in this field, and suggests possible directions for new research. Mary C. Lyons publishes a thirteenth-century manorial account from Ballysax, County Carlow, one of a series containing exceptionally valuable evidence concerning agricultural experiment and crop-yields in medieval Ireland. In *Retrospect* 2 Peter McQuillan assesses the place of the Irish in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and Edel Bhreathnach reviews *CMCS* 1. These volumes assure us of the vitality of student interest in medieval Irish history.

Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

AOIFE NIC GHIOLLAMHAITH

Celtic Ireland. By EOIN MAC NEILL [Dublin, 1921]. Reprinted, with introduction and new notes by DONNCHADH Ó CORRÁIN. Dublin: Academy Press, in association with the Medieval Academy of Ireland. 1981. xv + 197 pp., 3 maps. £7.95, IR £9.

EVERYONE WHO cares for Irish history will welcome this handsome and relatively inexpensive augmented reprint of Eoin Mac Neill's *Celtic Ireland*, one of the rocks on which the modern study of early medieval Irish history is founded. It is a photographic reproduction of the original edition, with a new four-page introduction, a select bibliography of Mac Neill's historical works, and fifteen pages of annotation (pp. 183-97). By promoting this republication and supplying the new material Professor Ó Corráin has performed a signal service; the annotation, drawing attention to current scholarly thinking and supplying references to the primary sources on which Mac

Neill drew, allows one to recommend this work to undergraduates with much less fear that they will be misled by some of the now universally discarded theories which a sixty-year-old book must inevitably contain.

Mac Neill was an infuriating writer: steeped in the primary sources, he nonetheless was sparing to the point of abstention in documenting his discussions. In this he set an evil precedent for Irish historians. A major task for the reader of Mac Neill has always been to identify his sources and in this Ó Corráin has provided much help. But Mac Neill's research and writing were inspired and his publications remain classics. He has rightly been enjoying a revival over the last two decades: the process began in 1964 with the reissue of his studies on St Patrick and the Patrician legend (now, alas, out of print following the demise of Clonmore & Reynolds), continued in 1968 with the paperback reprint of *Phases of Irish History*, in 1973 with the inclusion of 'Ireland and Wales in the History of Jurisprudence' in *Celtic Law Papers*, edited by Dafydd Jenkins, and in 1980 with the separate reprints by the Royal Irish Academy of three papers from their *Proceedings*; one hopes that the reappearance this year of *Celtic Ireland* is not the culmination of the trend, but that Professor Ó Corráin, the Medieval Academy of Ireland, and the Academy Press will now move speedily to republish *Early Irish Laws and Institutions*, Mac Neill's last major work. The process could conclude splendidly with a reprint of the very valuable Mac Neill Festschrift of 1940!

Everyone will have his favourite part of *Celtic Ireland*, and will scrutinise the more closely Ó Corráin's annotation of that section. My preference is for Chapter III (pp. 25–42), 'The Irish Synthetic Historians', where Mac Neill's work maps out clearly the materials for study, the paths for future research, and the essential characteristics of the subject. Of the pseudo-historians, he noted (p. 41), 'the synchronizing and harmonizing of undated and unconnected traditions appealed to the . . . spirit of the time; just as even a weak and specious philosophy appeals to vacuous minds, gratifying them with a sense of some form of unity and order to take the place of chaos. The synthetic historians attained a fame excelled by none in the records of Irish learning'. In 1918, just before Mac Neill wrote, Rudolf Thurneysen had lamented the lack of work on these authors ('Zur keltischen Literatur und Grammatik', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 12 (1918), 271–89, especially p. 279). Yet in spite of the immense importance of such a large body of dated or datable poetry (which constitutes a substantial proportion of the relevant texts) to students both of the history of the language in the Middle Irish period and of Irish historiography, this literature has not found favour with subsequent generations of Celtic scholars. Ó Corráin's pertinent annotation (pp. 186–87) allows the lack of work to be seen,

while pointing students to some of the important texts. One misses, however, in the notice of Flann Mainistrech, reference to Seán Mac Airt's edition and translation of 'Réidig dam, a Dé do nim' and associated poems, in *Études celtiques*, 6 (1952–54), 255–80, 7 (1955–56), 18–45, 8 (1958–59), 98–119 and 284–97. In short, Mac Neill's work, on this subject most noticeably (but on many others too), still awaits amplification. With the benefit of hindsight we may certainly say that in Irish historical scholarship he worked before his time; the revival of historians' interest in the published work of this remarkable man has been too long coming and we must ensure that this time the promise is fulfilled.

All concerned with the republication of this book deserve our thanks. But they will not, I hope, expect its readers to remain uncurious about the fact that the title-page, pp. [v]/[vi], and pp. 189/190 are evidently replacements for cancelled leaves.

Girton College, Cambridge

DAVID N. DUMVILLE

Articles for future issues, books for review, short communications, and replies to work published in *CMCS* or elsewhere, should be sent to the Editor, Dr Patrick Sims-Williams, St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP, England. Typescripts should follow the journal's conventions, which are those of the Modern Humanities Research Association's *Style Book*, and should preferably be submitted in duplicate. Preference is given to original research written in a form that is interesting and accessible to a wide range of readers.

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