

Early Welsh Metrics and the Indo-European Poetic Tradition

Author(s): Eve E. Sweetser

*Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* (1985), pp. 505-518

Please see “How to cite” in the online sidebar for full citation information.

Please contact BLS regarding any further use of this work. BLS retains copyright for both print and screen forms of the publication. BLS may be contacted via <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/bls/>.

---

*The Annual Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* is published online via [eLanguage](#), the Linguistic Society of America's digital publishing platform.

Early Welsh Metrics and the Indo-European Poetic Tradition<sup>0</sup>

Eve E. Sweetser  
University of California at Berkeley

From the works of Lord (1960), Nagy (1974), Jakobson (1952), and others, it is clear that there existed a rich Indo-European oral poetic tradition, whose characteristics can in some measure be reconstructed from the cognate descendent traditions of Greek, Indic and Slavic poetics. Calvert Watkins (1963) has argued that Old Irish verse must also be seen as one of the legitimate heirs of Indo-European poetics.<sup>1</sup> An immediate question raised by Watkins' work is whether poetry in other Celtic languages also shows evidence of direct descent from this common Indo-European heritage. In particular, early Welsh verse has frequently been assumed to be a totally native development, or at least completely separate from its neighbors' poetic traditions.<sup>2</sup> This paper will argue that, in fact, one of the earliest extensive Welsh poetic sources shows every likelihood of being another daughter of Indo-European poetry.

My data come from a single 13th-century manuscript of 38 pages, usually referred to as Canu Aneirin ("the songs of Aneirin") or The Gododdin, and technically labelled Cardiff Central Library MS 2.81. This manuscript contains 88 poems in one hand (the "A" hand) and 42 poems in a second ("B") hand, plus four longer poems which the rubrics label as gorchanau.<sup>3</sup> The authorship of this body of verse has traditionally been attributed to the supposedly 6th-century poet Neirin or Aneirin.<sup>4</sup> Many of the poems concern British heroes who are praised for their heroic deaths at the late-fifth-century battle of Catraeth (probably fought at Catterick<sup>5</sup> in Yorkshire), when the Saxon kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira wiped out the neighboring British kingdom of Gododdin. However, there are poems in this corpus which must be dated later - in particular, one about the killing of the Irish king Domnal Breck (Dyfnwal Frych) by the Britons of Strathclyde in 642. Furthermore, scribal rubrics specifically assign one of the gorchanau to Taliesin (another early Welsh bard) rather than to Aneirin. So the corpus cannot be considered as monolithically 6th-century or necessarily all authored by the same poet.

### I. Dating the Text.

The greatest difficulty in dealing with the Gododdin manuscript has always been the unbridgeable gap between its supposedly early 6th-century origins (whether or not one believes the poetry was literally composed then) and the 13th-century manuscript which is the only text that has come down to us. The linguistic date, as opposed to the manuscript date, of the text, is of course essential for any assessment of the poems as evidence for the history of a linguistic or a poetic tradition. Luckily we

can narrow things down a good deal further: even Jackson (1969), who ranges himself on the side of 6th-century composition, does not claim that the extant corpus could possibly represent an unrevised early 6th-century text. Oral and/or literary transmission is assumed to have drastically modernized the linguistic forms.

First of all, the Gododdin corpus regularly reflects the effects of the radical syncope and apocope processes which are assumed to have been complete by the late 6th century, and which are a major part of the transformation of Brythonic to Welsh. For example, a Brythonic name such as Cuno-bélinos shows up in the Gododdin as Cynfélyn, with loss of the final unstressed syllable and the medial unstressed o. The Gododdin poems are not noticeably different from medieval Welsh with respect to these syllable-loss rules; and one must assume that they were written at least no earlier than the end of the 6th century, since there is no variation or other evidence that these changes were incomplete.

Secondly, the Gododdin poems regularly show various written manifestations of consonant-lenitions, some of which are not regularly present in the Juvenicus englynion: e.g., m → v in final position - where the Juvenicus writes m, we find f (for phonetic v) in the Gododdin. While this may be partly scribal conservatism on the Juvenicus marginalist's part, no one has argued that the language of the Juvenicus poems dates to a time prior to the 8th or 9th century. And the language of the Gododdin poems is manifestly less archaic than that of the Juvenicus englynion. If, therefore, the Gododdin poems reflect a (written or "memorized") 6th-century text, they reflect it only distantly, via modernization to a language which is probably post-9th-century.

Third, and perhaps most interesting, the poetic structure of certain poems in the corpus clearly shows that they post-date the Welsh shift of word-stress from the ultima to the penult, a process variously dated to somewhere between the 9th and the 13th centuries. (Common opinion now places it in the 10th or 11th century, at the boundary between Old Welsh and Middle Welsh <sup>6</sup>.) So far as I am aware, no previous examinations of the Gododdin poems have made mention of this fact. But examples such as

med evynt melyn / melys maglawr (C.A. XI, A.11)<sup>7</sup>

wherein the rhyme is not word-final, would logically force us to assume that the rhymed syllables had stress-prominence (or pitch-accentual prominence) at the time of composition. "Internal rhyme" is normally between stressed syllables, as is alliteration; it would be odd for a poet to rhyme syllables which were neither word-final nor stressed. And in the example above, stress would not have been placed on the relevant syllables until after the stress-shift had taken place.

The relevant linguistic evidence, then, forces us to view these poems as not only compiled/revised, but probably composed,

at a date no earlier than about the tenth century. Given in particular the evidence of the rhyme-schemes, the burden of proof must rest on those who suggest that some earlier, much-revised text existed. A tenth-century date would, incidentally, still be within the range of probability from the point of view of later data; there is no doubt that the Gododdin is archaic in language when compared to 12th- or 13th-century Welsh.

## II. Linking the Gododdin with a poetic tradition.

A. Line-length and metrics: earlier views. Welsh scholars have been divided between an emphasis on the unique native quality of Welsh verse, and a desire to connect their poetic tradition with evidently prestigious neighbors such as Latin verse. There is, however, a shared tacit assumption that the long poetic lines of classical epic carry the prestige of antiquity, and that shorter lines are correspondingly less ancient and less venerable. This attitude carries over from earlier work such as that of Davies (1927) who derives the short-lined Welsh englyn from one and a half long Latin lines (!), or Williams' (1938) edition of Canu Aneirin, which argues for native line-lengths of up to twenty syllables, to Jackson (1969). In view of more recent work such as that of Watkins and Nagy, which suggests that Indo-European poetics had shorter as well as longer lines at its disposal, there is every reason to discard this prejudice in favor of the antiquity of the long line. Williams in fact normally prints short lines, despite his stated belief that these are only sections of longer lines. (The Gododdin manuscript, in common with most early Welsh poetic sources, does not arrange the poems in neatly-divided poetic lines, but writes them out like prose.)

What I am about to argue is that in fact the nativists and the classicists are both right, and both wrong. Welsh poetry is not a complete isolate; but its relationship to Latin and Greek verse is not via borrowing. Rather the Welsh tradition is an independently-developed descendent of the Indo-European verse forms, as are the classical poetic traditions. And, as we shall see, the Gododdin poems are in fact best analyzed as composed of short lines (frequently, though not always, identical to Williams' printed lines). As will become clear, Williams' "archaic" long lines would be most implausible descendents of an Indo-European metrical tradition, while the short lines dictated by the basic rhyme-schemes of the poems are also more likely descendents of a common poetics.

A second dispute (though related to the classicism/nativism debate) has arisen over the nature of the Gododdin poems' metrical framework. The nativist viewpoint has always drawn credibility from the fact that syllabic metrics are not characteristic of most of the likely sources for medieval Celtic versifiers. Latin verse moved from a classical quantitative model (long vs. short syllables) to a stress-metrical medieval model; Old English poetry is stress-metrical, as is the Germanic tradition at large.<sup>8</sup>

Although early Irish syllabic poetry exists, mutual influence between Celtic neighbors still leaves the syllabic metrics as a Celtic innovation. Furthermore, early accentual verse also exists in Irish, and may reflect a more archaic tradition than the syllabic forms (cf. Carney (1971), and the appendix to Klar, O Hehir and Sweetser (in press, a)). But high medieval Welsh poetry is (like modern Welsh verse) regularly and indisputably syllable-counting. The englyn, for example, consists of three lines, each line containing a fixed number of syllables (rather than stresses) - a classic form is the englyn milwr or "soldier englyn," of three seven-syllable lines.

So what are the metrics of the Gododdin corpus? A single glance at poems like gredyf gwr oed gwas (whose first four lines appear below) assures us that the Gododdin poems do not conform to a regular syllabic verse canon. Lines varying from four to seven syllables, occurring irregularly mixed in the same poem, seem unlikely in any syllabic tradition. Scholars have been balked in their efforts to produce a non-syllabic analysis of this poetry, however, because the lines also do not contain any regular number of word-stresses - hence a stress-metrical analysis has seemed as messy as a syllabic analysis, and less in tune with later Welsh poetic developments.

CA. I (A.1)	syllables
Gredyf gwr oed gwas	4
gwrhyt am dias	5
meirch mwth myngvras	4
a dan vordwyt megyrwas	7
...	

B. A Reanalysis: Short Lines and Stress Metrics. My personal moment of revelation came when I began to think about the Gododdin in the context of general theories of metrical stress. First of all, poetry based on stressed/unstressed alternations is NOT typically based on lexical stress, but rather on something closer to phrasal stress. Halle and Keyser's (1971) analysis of "Ride a cock horse" shows the single poetic stress in a two-lexical-stress phrase such as fine lady or white horse:

See a fine lādý/ ón a white hórse.

Halle and Keyser see the two stresses of fine lady as merged into one; later metrical stress analyses (e.g., Liberman and Prince (1977), Thompson (1980)) would, in my opinion more correctly, treat fine as effectively destressed relative to the adjacent strongly-stressed noun lady:

See ǎ fine lādý/ ón ǎ white hórse.

My first crucial point, then, is that poetic stress is not lexical stress.

Secondly, poetic stress can vary greatly according to context. The same word may bear the metrical "beat" in one line but not in the next; the same phrase may constitute one foot (one "beat" plus adjacent unstressed syllables) in one line, and two feet in the next. In the following examples, look at the varying treatments of the preposition on and of the phrase into the tent, depending on the larger poetic context:

- (1a) Sée ă fine lădy/ 6n ă white h6rse  
 (b) Sée ă fine lădy/ r6d6ng 6n ă h6rse  
 (2a) Thē mēn wēnt/ 6nt6 thē tēnt  
 (b) Thēy wēnt 6nt6 thē tēnt

In example (1a) above, we see on take the poetic beat, while the same word is treated as unstressed in (1b). In example (2a), the phrase "into the tent" constitutes two feet - a full dimeter line - but in (2b) the same phrase constitutes a single foot (half a dimeter line).

Without going into further details of a theory of the interaction between stress and metrics, it is only too evident that isoaccentual lines do not necessarily have the same number of lexical stresses in each line. Early analysts like Joseph Loth (1902) may well have been on the right track in their attempts to understand archaic Welsh verse. Loth, while assuming syllable count to be basic, tried to develop a theory of which syllables didn't count, if a line apparently had too many syllables to be regular. He suggested that, in the older Welsh verse, stress as well as syllable-count was involved. He never followed this up by doing actual stress-metrical analyses of early poems, but he did propose some rules of "rhythmic unit" structure which amount to stress-subordination rules. For example, he suggested that an article, preposition, or adjective adjoining a noun might fail to enter into the syllable count because it formed a "rhythmic unit" with the noun. Or a pronoun or particle might enter into a similar "rhythmic unit" with the verb. Loth noticed that the metrics of much early Welsh verse seemed considerably regularized by assuming such "exceptions" to syllable-count.

My suggestion, then, is that if we assume this early poetry to be essentially stress-metrical, then stress-subordination rules will be a natural part of the metrical system. As we have said, all accentual verse involves poetic, rather than purely lexical, accent - so an irregular number of lexical stresses per line is no surprise in an isoaccentual poem. An irregular number of syllables per line in an isosyllabic poem would, however, constitute a real exception to the rules of syllabic metrics, and

such exceptions would be extremely unlikely to recur as pervasively as they seem to occur in the Gododdin corpus. Finally, isoaccentual verse is bound to have some limits to the variation in numbers of syllables per line. Given that a language has some average number of syllables per word, and that there is also (more crucially) some average number of syllables per poetic stress-unit (i.e., per foot), isoaccentual lines will naturally average out at some appropriate syllable-number. Indeed, they may frequently be isosyllabic; nothing in the rules of stress-metrics bars isosyllabism from occurring. So apparent stretches of isosyllabism in the Gododdin poems (and such do occur) may in fact be chance occurrences, or may show some development from chance isosyllabism towards a later syllabic versification pattern.

As observed above, such a stress-metrical analysis is more in tune with other western Indo-European developments than is a purely syllable-counting analysis. Accentual metrics have, then, the added charm of a plausible connection with Indo-European verse. In my opinion, development towards regular syllable-count in high medieval Welsh verse could well have been influenced by an essential misunderstanding of classical Latin verse forms. Welsh poetics being accentual rather than quantitative, and hence lacking a native long-short metrical contrast, Middle Welsh poets could easily have reinterpreted Latin poetics as purely syllabic<sup>9</sup>.

However, there is a yet more cogent linguistic argument for the historical plausibility of accentual metrics. Despite the evidence against 6th-century composition, the material in the Gododdin poems probably reflects an oral poetic tradition which goes back to the sixth century and beyond. We know that oral composition was usual throughout medieval Europe, and Melia (1981) has argued persuasively that the Gododdin poems in particular show evidence of the same kind of oral formulaic structure which characterizes other oral poetic traditions. An oral poetic tradition depends (cf. Lord (1960) and others) on preservation of formulae which can be relied on to give appropriate chunks of metrical structure without the poet's having to actually think up each word of each line anew. Recomposition and transmission of such a poetic corpus are not accomplished by word-for-word memorization, but by learning of a (frequently narrative) content, and retelling of this content with the help of a common basic repertory of formulae. Many whole lines may indeed be preserved intact through recomposition, especially in introductory sections, where poets are most likely to remember earlier performances verbatim. To my knowledge, no one has previously observed that this oral formulaic method of composition poses insuperable obstacles to the direct descent of a syllable-counting poetic tradition from Brythonic to Welsh. The formulae would simply not retain their metrical structure. Earlier lines, recomposed in later (syncopated/apocopated) language, would become ametrical as well. Welsh poetry would indeed have to have been recreated ex nihilo.

An accentual poetics, however, would be unaffected by the syncope and apocope of unstressed syllables which were incapable of bearing poetic beat. Each line or formula would retain the same number of accents, however many syllables were lost. Recombination and transmission could continue unaffected by the surrounding linguistic changes.

Jackson (1969) argues that only a syllabic metrics could have descended unchanged through the linguistic reorganization of early Welsh. His claim might make sense if early Welsh verse were exclusively literary; poets would simply count syllables as they composed new lines. Older poetry would be frozen in an earlier syllabic regularity, and would necessarily lose its poetic character if linguistically modernized, since lines would not lose identical numbers of syllables by syncope and apocope. Jackson indeed denies the likelihood of oral transmission of the Gododdin corpus. However, his understanding of "oral transmission" is just rote memory - he has no understanding of formulaic structure. By all the evidence, oral tradition remains the most reasonable explanation for the form and content of the Gododdin as we possess it. And such orality makes direct transmission of syllabic poetics unlikely for Welsh. If the poetics of the Gododdin are syllabic, as Jackson and others believe, then they cannot also be as archaic as the same scholars have claimed they are.

The above discussion brings us back to the question of line length. Williams' long lines of 20 syllables clearly cannot be direct descendents of any accentual Brythonic verse tradition. The equivalent accentual lines in Brythonic would have been between 30 and 40 syllables long - far too long to be credible within an Indo-European tradition with a 16-syllable "long line." Morris-Jones also proposes some fairly long lines in his (unfortunately too-little-known) accentual analyses of early Welsh verse (as does Loth): however, his Cerdd Dafod (1925) examples of long lines are uniformly divided into shorter 2-stress units, as in this example of an "8-beat" rhpunt hir line:

Eil Néddig-Nár, / neus dúg Drwy fár /  
 gwlédd i adár / o drydar drín.

It would be just as easy to see this as a quatrain of two-stress lines, linked to other quatrains by the final prifodl -in (which Morris-Jones sees as the line-final rhyme, the other rhymes being "internal"). Williams' long lines in Canu Aneirin are in fact equally reanalyzable into shorter subunits, to the significant improvement of their poetic regularity.

As a sample case, let us examine the apparently highly irregular C.A.45A (= A.42). Williams, who takes the prifodl or linking rhyme as the boundary-determinant of his long lines, would reach the following analysis if his method were applied to this



poem (slashes mark divisions into his "halflines" of 6-10 syllables):

Eur ar vur caer krysgwrwydyat aer/ cret ty na thaer aer vlodyat  
 Un axa ae leissyar ar gatwyt adar/brwydryar syll o virein  
 Neus adrawd a vo mwy o damweinyeit llwy/ od amluch lliuanat  
 Neus adrawd a uo mwy en awr blygeint/ na bei kynhawal  
kynheilweing

This quatrain is composed of lines varying from 15 to 18 syllables, with no obvious regular accentual pattern either. Williams does not in fact print the poem in this format (I have already mentioned that he never prints the long lines for which he argues), but in the following format of shorter lines:

Eur ar vur caer	rhyme a	4 syllables
krysgwrwydyat aer	a	4
cret ty na thaer aer vlodyat	b	7
un axa ae leissyar	c	6
ar gatwyt adar	c	5
brwydryar syll o virein	d	6
neus adrawd a vo mwy	e	6
o damweinyeit llwy	e	5
od amluch lliuanat.	b	6
neus adrawd a uo mwy en awr blygeint	d	10
na bei kynhawal kynheilweing.	d	8

As far as I can tell, this printed poetic structure is even less regular than the hypothetical long-line version, both in line-length and in rhyme structure.

My own analysis of this poem, below, divides it into regular two-stress lines. It is noticeable that such a division also brings out a fully regular rhyme scheme. The only "irregularity" is in the length of stanzas or rhannau<sup>10</sup>, which alternate between 3 and 4 lines - surely a more acceptable variation than irregularity in line-length.

Eúr ar vur cáer	___ a rhyme
krysgwrwydyat áer	___ a
cret tý na tháer	___ a
áer vlodyat	a_p
vn áxa ae léissyar	___ b
ar gátwyt ádar	___ b
brwydrýar syll o vírein	b_q
neus ádrawd a vo mwý	___ c
o damweinyeit llwý	___ c
od ámluch (lliuánat)	__c(?)_p

(neus adrawd a vo mwy) \_\_\_\_\_? (from above?)  
 en <sup>áwr</sup> bly<sup>geint</sup>  
 na bei kynháwal / kynheilweing \_\_\_\_\_q  
 \_\_\_\_\_d/d' \_\_\_\_\_q  
 (last line = 2 lines?)

It remains for further study to show whether all early Welsh verse is reanalyzable along these lines, like the Gododdin poems (cf. Klar, O Hehir and Sweetser (in press, a) and Sweetser (in press)). But in the final section of this paper, I will give a few more reanalyses of poems from the Gododdin corpus.

My claim, then, is that early Welsh verse (like early Irish verse) was based on a two-stress line, with a one-stress catalectic variant. Such a line would average four or five syllables: an approximately 5-syllable Welsh line could readily correspond to a Brythonic decasyllable, and hence to an Indo-European short line. If this is so, Welsh poetics fits neatly in next to its Irish cognate, as a branch of the Indo-European poetic tradition. Paradoxically, the long Welsh lines proposed as "archaic" could never have had such an Indo-European origin, as discussed above.

### III. Lines and rhannau: metrical structure in Canu Aneirin.

To put the above analysis in context, it is necessary to discuss the metrics of the other Gododdin poems, at least briefly. My colleagues and I have found that the basic two-stress lines (with one-stress catalectic variant) are arranged into rhannau or stanzas of variable length. The Irish rann or stanza is canonically of four lines, but Welsh verse seems to have tended towards couplets and triplets. Notice the contrast between the early (linguistically archaic) Gwarchan Tutvwlch, with its highly variable rhan-length, and the later C.A.XII (A.12), with regular 2-line rhannau and cymeriad ("linking" rhyme) between the end of the first line of each couplet and the beginning of the next line:

Gwarchan Tutvwlch: Áryf angkýnnull  
 angkýman dúll  
 twryf en ágwed  
 e rac meúwed  
 e rac mawrwed  
 e rac máryed  
 pan ýstern  
 gwern  
 e ám gamgyrn  
 e ám gámgled...

pétwar lliwet  
pétwar milet  
miledawr...

C.A.XII (A.12):

Gwyr a aéth  
gátraeth gan dyd

nes góreu  
o gádeu gewílid

wy gwnáethant  
en geugant gelorwyd

a llávnawr lláwn  
ánawd em bédyd...

A regular combination of full 2-stress lines with catalectics could naturally develop into a 3-stress line. Once again, compare the (perhaps more archaic) structure of C.A. LXXVI (A.85) with that of C.A. LVB (B.2). The cymeriad rhyme between lines is fully regular in A.85, and the rhannau vary between 2 and 3 lines - the line-length is 2 stresses, varying with catalectic 1-stress lines. B.2, on the other hand, shows irregular use of line-internal rhyme (as opposed to the regular, required, cymeriad rhyme in A.85) and 3-stress lines; the internal rhyme is probably a relic of the earlier cymeriad linking between two shorter lines.

A.85: Diánnot  
e glót e glútvan

diáchor  
ángor yg kyman

diéchyr  
éryr gwyr  
govaran

trinódef  
éid  
oed eiryan...

B.2: Godódin gomynnaf oth blégyt  
yg gwyd cánt en áryal en émwyt  
a guárchan mab dwywei da wrhyt  
poet gnóen vn tyno tréissyt...

Finally, the native Welsh englyn can easily be seen as a possible descendant of the Indo-European short-line verse form, via combination with a catalectic variant - rather than as (cf.

Davies) developing from one-and-a-half classical elegiac lines. The archaic Juvenicus englynion (see Williams' 1972 edition), when rearranged, yield neat early three-stress lines of the same kind seen in C.A. LVB (B.2):<sup>11</sup>

nicánāniguárđam nicúsam  
 henóid / cet íben með nóuel  
 mí am frānc dam an pátel  
 (slash = Williams' division between lines 1 and 2)

IV. Conclusions. I have used a combination of linguistic and poetic evidence to show that the metrical structure of the early Welsh Gododdin poems must be based on short accentual lines. Only such an analysis yields regular line-lengths and rhyme-schemes, so the internal data require it. Interestingly, such an analysis almost forces us to link early Welsh verse with an ancestral Indo-European short poetic line. Scholars like Williams and Jackson were probably wrong in positing a 6th-century text of the Gododdin poems, as they were misled in looking for "archaic" long lines. However, if the Gododdin's metrical forms do go back to the Indo-European short line, then a 6th-century bard or an earlier Brythonic bard could well have sung in exactly these poetic forms.

This does not mean that the Gododdin poems' accentual metrics are unconnected with later Welsh syllabic forms. As mentioned above, isoaccentuality does tend towards isosyllabism, and reanalysis could occur, turning (for example) a 3-stress line into a 7-syllable englyn-line.

In short, early Welsh verse provides the link between modern Welsh forms and the Indo-European metrical tradition. There was justification for the feeling of continuity expressed by the poet of these lines from C.A.V (A.5):

...gwerth méd  
 eg kynted gan lliwédawr  
 hýueid hír  
 etmýgir tra vo kérdawr.

("Value of mead/ in the hall among the hosts/  
 Hyfaidd the tall/ will be praised while there be bards")

#### Notes

<sup>0</sup> The work contained in this paper is part of a larger-scale collaborative research project; Kathryn Klar, Brendan O Hehir, and I are working on a full edition of the Gododdin poems. Kathryn and Brendan's input to my work has been crucial; indeed, it is not evident that this article is separable from our joint efforts. I would like to thank various other critics and colleagues, in

particular Dr. Geraint Gruffydd and Dr. Daniel Huws of the Welsh National Library at Aberystwyth, Dr. Marged Haycock, Professor Eric Hamp, Professor Daniel Melia, and all the participants in the June 1984 Colloquium ar y Hengerdd held at the Welsh National Library. Haycock (in press) presents another analysis of early Welsh verse which is accentual like this analysis, but in other ways quite different; I refrain from discussing it here because I have not yet seen it in final form.

1 For a fuller discussion and critique of Watkins' analysis, see the appendix to Klar, O Hehir, and Sweetser (in press, a). Carney (1971) is also of great interest.

2 See, for examples of two viewpoints on this subject, Davies (1927), Williams (1938), and Jackson (1969).

3 For a review of past work on the manuscript, and a full discussion of my own views, see Klar, O Hehir and Sweetser (in press, b). For the current discussion it is sufficient to say that although the two scribes probably had distinct sources, both sources clearly belonged to the same poetic tradition. So far as I have observed, there are no metrical distinctions between the two hands' contributions to the corpus, although such may yet emerge as my analysis progresses.

Two points which may be of interest to the reader are that the manuscript was originally catalogued as Cardiff Library MS Welsh 1, and that the relationship between the gorchanau and the other 130 Gododdin poems is usefully discussed in Klar (in press), where the meaning of the word gorchan or gwarchan (usually translated "lay") also receives some elucidation.

4 The attribution of the Gododdin poems to Aneirin is due originally to the thirteenth-century scribal rubricator of the manuscript. Patrick Ford, in a presentation at the 1981 University of California Celtic Conference (held at Berkeley), argued that the name Aneirin, like other names of early Welsh bards (e.g. Talhaearn or Gwenith Gwawd) is a mythical proto-bard name, symbolic of the essence of poetry. There has never been any good evidence for the historicity of Aneirin or Taliesin, and the poems attributed to them in fact appear to vary considerably in linguistic age - a good reason to suspect the medieval habit of attributing works to prestigious past "sages" of uncertain historicity.

5 See Jackson's (1969, pp. 83-84; 1953, pp. 409-10, 564) discussions of the name Catraeth.

6 T. Arwyn Watkins (1972) contains a reanalysis of data concerning the Welsh accent-shift, suggesting that (a) it took place earlier than usually supposed (perhaps in the 9th century)

and (b) that both pitch and stress accent may have been involved. So far as I can tell, the early poetry does not require separate consideration of two kinds of accents, and I have dealt solely with one, which I have called stress. This does not imply disagreement with Watkins, but simply lack of evidence for his theory in my data.

7 All references to the Gododdin poems in this paper have been given in double form: first the number of the poem in Williams' (1938) now standard edition (referred to as C.A., for Canu Aneirin), and secondly the number of the poem in the A or B hand's corpus as it appears in the manuscript (these are also the numbers used by Jackson (1969)).

8 It is noticeable that the Old French syllabic chansons de geste frequently also show accentual regularity, perhaps reflecting this general trend in northwestern Indo-European folk verse.

9 Brendan O Hehir (personal communication) has suggested that the early Irish syllabic verse form came into existence through just such a misinterpretation of Latin poetics.

10 Brendan O Hehir coined the term rhan by borrowing the cognate of the Irish word rann to use in the Irish sense of "stanza". Klar, O Hehir and myself have adopted this loan-translation as a technical term for the description of early Welsh verse, there being no extant Welsh term for the entity in question.

11 The manuscript form of the Juvencus englynion does not provide line-divisions - nor do most early Welsh verse manuscripts, including the Gododdin manuscript.

### Bibliography

- Carney, James (1971) "Three Old Irish Accentual Poems," Ériu XXII, 23-80.
- Davies, J. Glyn (1927-8) "The Englyn Trisectual Long Line in Early Welsh Metrics," ZCP 17, 113-128.
- Halle, Morris and Samuel Jay Keyser (1971) English Stress: Its Form, its Growth, and its Role in Verse, New York: Harper and Row.
- Haycock, Marged (in press) paper from the Colloquium ar y Hengerdd held at Aberystwyth in June 1984, to appear in the volume from the conference, ed. Geraint Gruffydd.
- Jackson, Kenneth H. (1953) Language and History in Early Britain, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1969) The Gododdin: The Oldest Scottish Poem, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Jakobson, Roman (1952:1956) "Studies in Comparative Slavic Metrics," reprinted in Jakobson's Selected Writings IV, The Hague: Mouton.
- Klar, Kathryn (in press) "What Are the Gorchanau?," to appear in the volume from the 1984 Colloquium ar y Hengerdd, ed. G. Gruffydd.
- Klar, Kathryn, Brendan O Hehir, and Eve E. Sweetser (in press, a) "Welsh Poetics in the Indo-European Tradition," to appear in Studia Celtica.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (in press, b) "The Components of Cardiff MS Welsh 1, Llyfr Aneirin," to appear in BBCS.
- Liberman, Mark and Alan Prince (1977) "On Stress and Linguistic Rhythm," Linguistic Inquiry 8:2, 249-336.
- Lord, Albert B. (1960) The Singer of Tales, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Loth, J. (1902) La métrique galloise depuis les plus anciens textes jusqu'à nos jours (vols. ix-xi of H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, Cours de littérature celtique, Paris, 1883-1902).
- Melia, Daniel (1981) "Tension in the Two Texts of Canu Aneirin," paper presented at the University of California Celtic Conference in 1981, in Berkeley.
- Morris-Jones, Sir John (1925) Cerdd Dafod: sef Celfyddyd Barddoniaeth Gymraeg, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nagy, Gregory (1974) Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- O Hehir, Brendan Patrick (in press) "What is the Gododdin?," to appear in the volume from the 1984 Colloquium ar y Hengerdd, ed. Geraint Gruffydd.
- Sweetser, Eve E. (in press) "Line Structure and Rhan Structure: The Metrical Units of the Gododdin corpus," to appear in the volume from the 1984 Colloquium ar y Hengerdd, ed. Geraint Gruffydd.
- Thompson, Henry S. (1980) Stress and Saliency in English: Theory and Practice, Palo Alto CA: XEROX Palo Alto Research Center.
- Watkins, Calvert (1963) "Indo-European Metrics and Archaic Irish Verse," Celtica IV, 194-219.
- Watkins, T. Arwyn (1972) "The Accent in Old Welsh - its Quality and Development," BBCS xxv:i, 1-11.
- Williams, Sir Ifor (1938: 1970) Canu Aneirin, Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (1972) The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry, ed. R. Bromwich, Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru.