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Charlemagne in Wales and Ireland: Some Preliminaries on Transfer and Transmission

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1.

Narratives about Charlemagne and his peers enjoyed a wide popularity in medieval Europe, as is evidenced in the recent collection of essays *Karl der Große in den europäischen Literaturen des Mittelalters.*[1] This collection, however, has one conspicuous gap – the medieval Celtic literatures of Wales and Ireland. Although situated at the western fringe of Europe, these literatures were not marginal or insular (in the pejorative sense of the word), but participated in many pan-European trends and fashions through the adaptation of foreign subject matter. A preliminary survey of the corpus of narratives about Charlemagne translated into Welsh and Irish may therefore not be out of place in the context of a volume on the *riddarasögur*, a literary genre treating of foreign subject-matters, including the *matière de France*, from medieval Scandinavia, another Insular culture (in the geographical sense, as propagated by the Chadwicks) of the (north-)western fringe of Europe. Even this preliminary survey, however, is beset with difficulties: many of the relevant Welsh and Irish texts have not been properly edited, and none are critically assessed.

2.

Medieval Welsh literature spans a period from perhaps the sixth century, the period of the so-called *cynfeirdd* 'early poets' who are mentioned in the *Historia Brittonum*, up to the Act of Union in 1536, which changed the administrative system in Wales to be almost identical to that of England. The earliest extant vernacular Welsh manuscripts date to the mid-thirteenth century and contain poetry, historiographical and legal prose. As Daniel Huws has stressed:

> The century from about 1250 onwards is outstandingly the most important in the conservation of Welsh literature. It generated not only the most important lawbooks, the best texts of [the historiographical works] *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brut y Tywysogyon*, the Welsh version of the Roland cycle and the best of the religious prose, but also the White Book of Rhydderch, which more or less established the canon of

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[1] Bastert, Bernd (ed.). 2004. *Karl der Große in den europäischen Literaturen des Mittelalters. Produktion eines Mythos.* Tübingen; and compare Poppe, Erich. 2005a. "[rev. of Bastert, Karl der Große]." *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur* 134.3, 380–383.

> what came to be known as the 'Mabinogion' [i.e., the native narrative prose], and four of the five great collections of pre-1300 Welsh poetry [...]. In all, over fifty books in Welsh survive from this period.[2]

The 'Roland cycle' mentioned here, otherwise also called *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* 'Stories about Charlemagne' in the absence of an authoritative medieval title, consists in its fullest form in the Welsh adaptation of four foreign sources, namely the Latin *Turpini Historia* and the Old French *Chanson de Roland*, *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, and *Otinel*. Somewhat simplified, and ignoring minor additional matter such as colophons, three cyclic arrangements of these texts are transmitted in eight medieval manuscripts. All of these now contain Welsh versions of the *Historia*, the *Chanson*, and the *Pèlerinage*; the Welsh *Otinel* is found in only three manuscripts:[3]

(1) Pèlerinage – Historia (a) – Chanson – Historia (b)
Peniarth 8a, saec. xiii/xiv, Peniarth 7, saec. xiii/xiv; Peniarth 10, saec. xiv med.; Peniarth 8b, saec. xiii/xiv; Cwrtmawr 2, 1543

(2) Historia (a) – Otinel – Pèlerinage – Chanson – Historia (b)
Peniarth 9, saec. xiv[1], Peniarth 4 & 5 (= White Book of Rhydderch), saec. xiv med.

(3) Historia (a) – Otinel – Chanson – Historia (b) – [other texts] – Pèlerinage
Jesus 111 (= Red Book of Hergest), saec. xiv/xv

Peniarth 8a, 8b, and 9 now only contain *Chwedlau Siarlymaen*, and Peniarth 10 contains *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* as well as some poetry; in Peniarth 7 are found, besides *Chwedlau Siarlymaen*, a text of *Peredur*, the Welsh analogue of Chrétien's *Perceval*, as well as a cycle of apocryphal tales about the history of Christ's cross and his passion.[4] The White Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest contain substantial collections of medieval Welsh literature.

In what would appear to be a standard sequence of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* the Welsh *Pèlerinage* precedes the first part of the *Historia*, then a truncated version of a probably originally complete translation of the *Chanson* is inserted in place of the *Historia*'s chapter 22, which covers the events up to the beginning of the Battle of Roncevaux, and then the *Historia*'s narrative is resumed (Peniarth 8b is incomplete and has a lacuna after the *Chanson*). In Peniarth 9 and the White Book both the Welsh *Otinel* and the *Pèlerinage* follow the first part of the *Historia* and precede the *Chanson* and the second part of the *Historia*; whereas in the Red Book the *Pèlerinage*

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2 Huws, Daniel. 2000. *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*. [Cardiff & Aberystwyth:], 13.

3 My summary is based on Rejhon, Annalee C. 1984. *Cân Rolant: The Medieval Welsh Version of the Song of Roland*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London (University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 113), 1–25, especially Table 1, 22–23; for the dating of the manuscripts see Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, 58–64.

4 Compare Evans, J. Gwenogvryn. 1899. *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language*. Vol I, Part II. London, 317–321; for detailed descriptions of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* in the manuscripts see Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 2–20.

(in hand A) is separated from the other *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* (also in hand A) by miscellaneous texts in a different hand.[5]

Brynley Roberts has drawn attention to the existence of links between the texts: "all the translators provided linking passages or edited the closing or opening sentences of existing texts so that the joins might be as unobtrusive as possible",[6] and these indicate a cyclic concept for *Chwedlau Siarlymaen*. The attested permutations of their sequence and of minor additional components within the actual manuscript transmission are evidence for a limited fluidity of the cycle's make-up.

According to Annalee Rejhon the translation of the *Chanson* into Welsh predates the translation of the *Historia* into which it was afterwards inserted in a truncated version; in a third step the Welsh *Pèlerinage* was added as the first text of the sequence, and the Welsh *Otinel* is a final insertion, originally between the first part of the *Historia* and the Welsh *Chanson*.[7]

Rejhon dates the original complete Welsh translation of the *Chanson* to the first half of the thirteenth century, perhaps originating in the monastery of Llanbadarn Fawr. She tentatively associates an initial interest in the French *Chanson* as well as in the *Pèlerinage* with Reginald, king of Man and the Western Isles from 1188 to 1226, whose daughter was married to a Welsh ruler, Rhodri ap Owain Gwynedd (d. 1195), and whose interest in these *sujets* may have been roused in, or via, Norway.[8] This interpretation derives from her acceptance of the veracity of a colophon which follows all texts of the Welsh *Pèlerinage* and which credits "Reinallt Vrenhin yr Ynyssoed" 'Reginald King of the Isles' with the commission of a translation of this text "o Rwmawns yn Lladin" 'from Romance into Latin'.[9] The *Chanson* was adapted into Welsh directly from an Old French source; it is less clear whether the Welsh *Pèlerinage* had a Latin intermediary, but Rejhon has also mooted the possibility that this reference to a translation from Romance into Latin may be "a variation on the traditional appeal to Latin as a 'guarantee' of authority".[10] Ronald Walpole believes that Reginald, who was also the brother-in-law of John de Courcy, earl of Ulster (d. *c.* 1219), had a decisive role in the dissemination of "the parent manuscript of the

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5 Compare Huws, Daniel. 2003. "Llyfr Coch Hergest." *Cyfoeth y Testun. Ysgrifau ar Lenyddiaeth Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol.* Ed. by Iestyn Daniel et al. Caerdydd, 1–30, 5.

6 Roberts, Brynley F. 1992. "Tales and Romances." *A Guide to Welsh Literature.* Vol. 1. Ed. by A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes. Cardiff, 203–243, 237. For a detailed discussion of the beginning sections of the Welsh *Chanson* see Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 49–58.

7 See Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 24–25; for her summary of Stephen Williams's views on the genesis of the cycle see Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 1.

8 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 71–75.

9 Parts of the colophon are quoted from Peniarth 10 by Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 29, for the text from the Red Book see Williams, Stephen J. (ed.). 1968. *Ystorya de Carolo Magno o Lyfr Coch Hergest.* Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 204.4–27, and for the text from Peniarth 8a see Williams, *Ystorya*, xxxv–xxxvi. For Rejhon's summary of Williams's theory about the Reinallt colophon see Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 29–30.

10 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 74.

Insular tradition of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*" in Wales and in Ireland.[11] On the basis of a colophon at the end of the first part of the Welsh *Historia* in three manuscripts, it is now thought that this text was most likely translated for Gruffudd ap Maredudd during his reign 1265 to 1282, perhaps in the monastery of Llanbadarn Fawr by Madog ap Selyf, who was probably also responsible for a Welsh version of *Transitus Marie* – furthermore, the Athanasian Creed was translated for Gruffudd's sister by Gruffudd Bola and is additional evidence for this family's interests in vernacular versions of foreign religious texts.[12] The Welsh versions of the *Chanson*, the *Pèlerinage*, and of the *Historia* may thus be roughly contemporary with the α-version of the Old Norse *Karlamagnús saga* which is dated to about 1250.[13] The Welsh *Otinel* is a later addition to the cycle; nothing more can be said at the moment about its date than that it necessarily predates its oldest, early-fourteenth century manuscript attestation.

Within the extant scribal transmission of medieval Welsh narrative prose, native and foreign subjects existed side by side. From the middle of the thirteenth century the small body of secular native tales was no longer significantly extended, although it continued to be transmitted in manuscripts, the rather small body of new prose texts consisting of adaptations of foreign narratives.[14] According to Daniel Huws, the Welsh Charlemagne cycle "circulated widely in manuscript in the early fourteenth century; there are four manuscripts, Peniarth 7, 8, 9 and 10, which are probably earlier than the White Book".[15] He has also suggested that the compilation around 1350 of the White Book of Rhydderch as a carefully planned anthology of "secular prose, of Welsh *belles-lettres*" – in contrast to collections of poetry and religious prose – represents a new development which may have been influenced by "manuscript collections of French romances of the sort then fashionable at court".[16] Here the Charlemagne cycle is followed by the Welsh version of the Anglo-Norman *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone* and the native tales. Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd ab Ieuan, for whom the White Book was produced, was "the most renowned patron of the bards

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[11] Walpole, Ronald N. 1947. "Note on the Meredith-Jones edition of the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi ou Chronique du Pseudo-Turpin.*" *Speculum* 22.2, 260–262, 262.

[12] For Gruffudd ap Maredudd and his sister see Williams, J.E. Caerwyn. 1966. "Medieval Welsh Religious Prose." *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Celtic Studies*. Cardiff, 65–97, 66–68.

[13] Compare Kramarz-Bein, Susanne. 2004. "Die altnordische Karlsdichtung." *Karl der Große*. Ed. by B. Bastert. Tübingen, 149–161, 150.

[14] Compare Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen. 1986. "Perceval in Wales: Late Medieval Welsh Grail Traditions." *The Changing Face of Arthurian Romance. Essays on Arthurian Prose Romance in Memory of Cedric E. Pickford*. Ed. by Alison Adams. Cambridge, 78–91, 80–81. For informative surveys of French/ Anglo-Norman influence on medieval Welsh literature see Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen. 1991. "French Texts, Welsh Translators." *The Medieval Translator II*. Ed. by R. Ellis. London, 45–63, and Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen. 2003. "L'évolution du conte gallois au Moyen Âge: tradition celtique et tradition française." *Regards étonnés. De l'expression à l'altérite ... à la construction de l'identité. Mélanges offerts au Professeur Gaël Milin*. Brest, 213–225.

[15] Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, 246.

[16] Compare Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, 246–247, the quotation 247.

in fourteenth-century Cardiganshire" and "must have known French and no doubt knew English".[17] The Red Book was produced after *c.* 1382 and before *c.* 1404 by Hywel Fychan and two other scribes for Hopcyn ap Tomas ab Einion, a leading Welsh patron, and their brief appears to have been to "gather into one book the classics of Welsh literature"[18] – and this would indicate the continuing status of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen*. Hopcyn ap Tomas would also appear to have commissioned a new translation of French Arthurian material, namely of *La Queste del Saint Graal* and of *Perlesvaus*, which were combined as *Ystoryau Seint Graal* 'The Stories of the Holy Grail'.[19]

It is probably no surprise that the sources for *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* have clear Insular affiliations. Ronald Walpole has shown that the Welsh, Irish, and English versions of Turpin's *Historia* follow the so-called C group of manuscripts of the Latin tradition, a distinctive Insular family of texts, almost all of which are found in Britain and Ireland, and whose textual tradition is also reflected in the *Karlamagnús saga*.[20] The Welsh *Chanson de Roland* is based on a lost Anglo-Norman assonanced version which was close to the text of the *Chanson* transmitted in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 23, the so-called Oxford version, and to the Franco-Italian text in Venice, Biblioteca de S. Marco, membr. Gall. IV, the so-called Venice 4 version. According to Rejhon, the source of the Welsh version may have preserved an earlier feature in the presentation of the relationship between Roland and Olivier and in the absence of any mention of Roland's boldness and Olivier's wisdom in the horn scene.[21] The source of the Old Norse version of the *Chanson* was similarly an early and close variant of the Oxford version.[22] The Welsh and the Old Norse *Pèlerinage* both appear to be quite close to the only known and now lost Anglo-Norman text in London, British Library, MS 15.E.VIII. The Welsh and the Old Norse *Otinel* both follow the text of the short Anglo-Norman Mende fragment, now Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouv. acq. franç. 5094, and also share some deviations from

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17 Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, 250, 246.

18 Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, 82.

19 See Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen. 1994. "Lancelot in Wales." *Shifts and Transpositions in Medieval Narrative*. Ed. by Karen Pratt. Cambridge, 169–181, 171.

20 For the evidence see Walpole, "Note", Foote, Peter G. 1959. "Note on the Source of the Icelandic Translation of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*." *Neophilologicus* 43, 137–142, and Shepherd, Stephen H.A. 1996. "The Middle English *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*." *Medium Ævum* 65.1, 19–34. I wish to thank Regine Reck for bringing these articles to my attention.

21 Compare Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 67–68, and Rejhon, Annalee C. 1981. "The Roland-Olivier Relationship in the Welsh Version of the *Chanson de Roland*." *Romance Philology* 35.1, 234–242.

22 Compare Kramarz-Bein, "Die altnordische Karlsdichtung", 153. The Old Norse version of the *Chanson*, *Af Rúnzívals bardaga* within *Karlamagnús saga*, preserves the comment "Rollant er hraustr, en Oliver er vitr" 'Rollant is bold, and Oliver is wise', see Unger, C.R. (ed). 1860. *Karlamagnus saga og kappa hans*. Christiania, 507. The question of whether the Welsh version here reflects a different and earlier source or the redactor's specific intention requires further discussion.

the other Anglo-Norman text, now Cologny, Bibliothek Martin Bodmer 168,[23] to which they are otherwise reasonably close.

The only reliable edition of a full cycle of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* is Stephen J. Williams's edition of the texts in the Red Book of Hergest (= Oxford, Jesus College 111).[24] The text published and translated by Robert Williams under the title *Campeu Charlymaen* 'The Gests of Charlemagne' in 1892[25] is generally considered to be unreliable for scholarly purposes because it is not clear which manuscript from the Peniarth collection he used at any particular point.[26] The Welsh *Chanson* was edited separately by Annalee Rejhon on the basis of Peniarth 10,[27] which in her view represents, "with the exception of an occasional error, as faithful and consistent a rendering of the archetypal Welsh translation of the *Chanson de Roland* as is available to us". Peniarth 9 and Peniarth 4 & 5 (= White Book of Rhydderch) are its closest rivals,[28] whereas the text in the Red Book of Hergest is "the most abridged version of the archetype".[29]

In the absence of critical editions and of comparative and literary studies of the Welsh texts, valid generalisation about the intended message(s) and specific concern(s) of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* are difficult. They clearly highlight martial Christian values – as does the roughly contemporary Welsh version of the Anglo-Norman *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone*. Justifications for the eventual inclusion into *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* of the slightly burlesque and "ribald"[30] story of the *Pèlerinage* could be the narrative's Christian image of Charlemagne, its considerable entertainment value with its "comic yet, in its way, heroic zest",[31] and its moral

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23 See Aebischer, Paul. 1960. *Études sur Otinel. De la chanson de geste à la saga norroise et aux origines de la légende*. Berne: Franke; I wish to thank Regine Reck for information on the affiliations of the Welsh version.

24 See above, footnote 9. For a translation of this text without the Welsh *Pèlerinage* see Williams, Robert. 1907. *The History of Charlemagne. A Translation of "Ystorya de Carolo Magno", with a Historical and Critical Introduction*. London. John Rhŷs published and translated the text of the Welsh *Pèlerinage* from the Red Book in Koschwitz, Eduard (ed.). 1879. *Sechs Bearbeitungen des altfranzösischen Gedichts von Karls des Grossen Reise nach Jerusalem und Constantinopel*. Heilbronn, 1–39.

25 Williams, Robert (ed. and transl.). 1892. *Selections from the Hengwrt MSS. Preserved in the Peniarth Library*. Vol. II. Translation continued by Hartwell Jones. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1–118, 437–517.

26 Evans, *Report*, Vol. I, Part II, 315, remarks: "Canon Williams's text is a composite one, and the following analysis may prove not useless to specialists. Sections I–XX. = MS.5; § XXI.–XXVIII. = a hopeless mixture of MSS. 8 & 5; § XXIX.–XLI. = MS. 8; § XLII.–LXXIX. = MS. 5; § LXXX.–LXXXIV. = MS. 10, fols. 36–38a; § LXXXV.–CXXI. = MS. 5. The references are all to Peniarth MSS. The printed text is not reliable."

27 See above, footnote 3.

28 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 63, and compare 58–63.

29 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 94.

30 This is the descriptive adjective used by Roberts, "Tales and Romances", 237.

31 This is one of the reasons for its appeal for a Scandinavian audience suggested by Hieatt, Constance B. (transl.). 1980. *Karlamagnús saga. The Saga of Charlemagne and his Heroes*. Vol. III. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 180; she also believes that the Scandinavian audience "probably did not appreciate some of the finer points of the original poem",

potential – trust in God's power to help and a warning against empty and playful boasts. Brynley Roberts said about the performance of the Welsh redactor of the *Historia* that it "follows the Latin closely with a few minor alterations and is a fluent rendering";[32] more detailed analyses of this text and its manuscript versions, as well as of the other texts of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen*, are needed. An interesting feature of the Welsh *Historia* in the Red Book is the fairly faithful retention of some of the narrator's rhetorical asides,[33] since they are not part of the native Welsh narrative tradition and are therefore quite regularly, albeit not always, suppressed in the Welsh adaptations of the *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone* and of the *Chanson de Roland*. They are frequent in the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, the Welsh biography of Gruffudd ap Cynan (c. 1055 to 1137) which is an adaptation of a Latin original.[34] It is tempting to relate these differences to the languages of the respective sources and the intellectual background of their redactors. One of the most remarkable traits of the Welsh *Otinel* is its retention of the narrator's prologue, which closely follows its French model.[35] The narrator's prologue of the Anglo-Norman *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone* was suppressed by its Welsh redactor, probably because such prologues had no analogue in the native narrative tradition. Similarly, the Old Norse *Otinel* and *Bevers saga* both leave out the prologue. The only addition in the Welsh *Otinel*'s prologue, compared to the extant French version, is Charlemagne's characterisation with a string of synonyms, "yr amherawdyr bonhedickaf a chyuoethockaf, ac arderchoccaf goresgynnwr gwladoed anfydlonyon a gelynyon Crist"[36] 'the noblest and most powerful emperor, and the most outstanding conqueror of the countries of the infidels and of the enemies of Christ', which follows native rhetorical usage. The Welsh *Chanson* reflects a typical approach of early- to mid-thirteenth century Welsh redactors of Anglo-Norman narrative sources with regard to the freedom with which they treated them. Their strategies include the faithful preservation of the foreign

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namely its comic play on the question of Charlemagne's status. See also Kramarz-Bein, Die altnordische Karlsdichtung, 160: "Karls religiöse Vormachtstellung [wird] nicht ernsthaft in Frage gestellt", and compare Ott-Meimberg, Marianne. 1984. "Karl, Roland, Guillaume." *Epische Stoffe des Mittelalters*. Ed. by Volker Mertens and Ulrich Müller. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 81–110, 94–95: The French *Pèlerinage* "verkehrt die Heilsmuster der *Chanson* in ihr Gegenteil, wenn an die Stelle des missionarischen Heidenkampfes die Pilgerfahrt Karls aus Eitelkeit tritt, und gibt die Helden der *Chanson*, die nur noch durch Prahlerei glänzen, der Lächerlichkeit preis."

32 Roberts, "Tales and Romances", 236.

33 Compare for example Williams, *Ystorya*, 7.7–9, 10.5–7, 24.7–25.2, 25.6–7 = Meredith-Jones, C. (ed.). 1936. *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi ou Chronique du Pseudo-Turpin*. Paris, 104/105, 110/111, 146/147.

34 Paul Russell's study *Vita Griffini filii Conani. The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*. Cardiff 2005, supplies important insights into the translation strategies employed in this text and, more generally, into Welsh redactors' approaches to Latin sources.

35 Compare Guessard, F. and Michelant, H. (ed.). 1859. *Otinel*. Paris, 1–2.

36 Williams, *Ystorya*, 43.5–8; the text of the Red Book here agrees with the text of the White Book, compare Williams, *Selections*, 49.

plot, the addition of at best marginal nuances on the level of content,[37] but major adaptations of narrative presentation, form, and style, in order to accommodate the literary expectations of the new audience.[38] As Brynley Roberts insisted – with reference to the extant truncated version of the Welsh *Chanson* inserted into the Welsh *Historia*:

> The translator has, perhaps, missed the full force of the [French] poem, for though he has conveyed the dramatic clash of characters in the opening scenes, and does not conceal either Oliver's view of Roland as impulsive and proud, or Ganelon's passionate criticism of his zest for war, the omission of the later stages of the battle in its irony and tragedy, its contrast between the sage Oliver and the heroically vain Roland, deletes the large question mark which hangs over the hero's conduct. The translator is more concerned with providing for his readers a pulsating account of a famous battle than with revealing the theme of the poem, and given this aim, we may feel that he has been successful.[39]

It is possible, and perhaps even likely, that the intentions and interests of the redactor of the Welsh *Chanson* are reflected in chapter LXX[40] which is probably his

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[37] Morgan Watkin's contention (Watkin, Morgan. 1921. "The French Literary Influence in Mediaeval Wales." *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* Session 1919-1920, 1–81, 14–15) that "[n]o one who will take the trouble to collate the Welsh versions of the *Chanson de Roland* and of the *Amis et Amiles* with their French counterparts can fail to note that the Welsh texts are very much more clerical in character than the others", may require some qualification: He quotes (16–17) chapter VIII (in Rejhon's edition) of the Welsh *Chanson* as one example in which "crusading enthusiasm has been added to a good deal of Christian theology", mainly an exposition of the Creed, but it should be noted that shorter versions also occur in the Norse *Karlamagnús saga* (compare Hieatt, *Karlamagnús saga*, 226) and the Middle High German *Rolandslied* (compare Kartschoke, Dieter (ed. and transl.). 1996. *Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad*. Stuttgart, 54.711–721). Balacawnt's greeting with its references to basics of the Christian faith is therefore most likely not an addition of the Welsh redactor but was probably already contained in its source. In the Oxford version of the *Chanson* the rationale for this specific form of the greeting appears to be indicated, namely that the pagan Spanish king Marsli had explored essentials of the Christian faith before sending his messengers to Charlemagne (compare Klein, H.W. (ed. and transl.). 1963. *La Chanson de Roland*. München, 16.123–126). The passage describing Rolant's death quoted by Watkin (19–21) from Peniarth 10, is derived from the *Historia* (compare Meredith-Jones, *Historia Karoli*, 194–203) and follows it very closely, and therefore tells us nothing about the interests of the redactor of the Welsh *Chanson*. The version of Rolant's death in the Red Book (compare Williams, *Ystorya*, 158.18–162.16) has left out two references to Rolant as "verthyr (crist)" 'martyr (of Christ)', a reference to Christ forgiving Mary Magdalene and the Apostle Peter, and two authorial intrusions.

[38] Compare Poppe, Erich. 2004. "*Owein, Ystorya Bown*, and the Problem of 'Relative Distance'. Some Methodological Considerations and Speculations." *Arthurian Literature* XXI. *Celtic Arthurian Material*. Ed. by Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan. Woodbridge, 73–94, 79–84.

[39] Roberts, "Tales and Romances", 237. For an introduction to the Welsh texts about Charlemagne see Reck, Regine. 2012. "Zwischen *lles y eneideu* 'Erbauung der Seelen' und *peth gorwac* 'eitler Sache': Die Matière de France in Wales." Forthcoming in *Die Chansons de geste im europäischen Kontext*. Ed. by Susanne Friede and Dorothea Kullmann. Heidelberg, 327–348.

[40] Chapter LXX in Rejhon's edition, but LXIX in Rejhon, "The Roland-Olivier Relationship", 237. The first half of this passage is quoted and translated below.

addition, since it has no parallels in the Oxford and Venice 4 versions, nor in the Old Norse *Af Rúnzívals bardaga*. In this extra passage, Oliuer is presented as inciting the French knights to battle, and he emphasises the eternal rewards of adhering to Christian martial values, of "fighting for the kingdom of heaven, for it is by abandoning transitory life that eternal life is attained". The narrator stresses the existing strength of the social ties of loyalty between the knights, "the compassion and love and good will of every one of them for the other", and Oliuer similarly urges the knights to "forgive each other and be reconciled as common friends and common foes".[41] Later in the text in a similar scene, archbishop Turpin explains the Christian knights' obligation to compensate Christ for his death for them on the cross, and his insistence on the social concept of gift and counter-gift, resulting in *kedymdeithas* 'companionship' with its duties and obligations, is absent from the parallel passages in the Oxford, Venice 4, and Old Norse versions.[42] The importance of companionship and solidarity between the warriors is again highlighted in a situation when Rolant feels that *kymydeithas* 'companionship' and *vnolder* 'unity' between himself and Oliuer are threatened,[43] and such a discussion of their relationship is absent from the relevant passages in the Oxford, Venice 4, and Old Norse versions.[44] The most striking innovation in this respect occurs in the scenes depicting the forging of the alliance between the Spanish pagans and Gwenlwyd with the aim to destroy Rolant. References to gifts and the obligations arising from their acceptance abound and make explicit the socially binding powers of such arrangements.[45] It is interesting to note in this context that Helen Fulton has suggested that the three Middle Welsh tales *Owein*, *Gereint*, and *Peredur*, which are in complex ways derived from Chretièn's *Yvain*, *Erec*, and *Perceval* and probably to be dated to the early or mid-thirteenth century, "privilege collectivism and the strength of the group above the behaviours or desires of its individual members" and a "model of lordship in which tribal loyalties outweigh individual ambition".[46]

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41 Rejhon, "The Roland-Olivier Relationship", 238, highlights as this chapter's thematic focus "the fully developed theme of the Frankish knights' sorrow, which leads into a related subject – reconciliation". For a discussion of the Christian motivation and vindication of violence in the Welsh *Chanson* see now Reck, Regine. 2007. "*Dielwi o lyuyr y vuched* ('aus dem Buch des Lebens löschen'). Die religiöse Inszenierung von Gewalt in mittelalterlicher walisischer Prosaliteratur." *Emotion, Gewalt und Widerstand. Spannungsfelder zwischen Geistlichem und Weltlichem Leben im Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Ed. by Ansgar Köb and Peter Riedel. München, 17–31.

42 Compare Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 206.LXXIV.3–6, and contrast Klein, *La Chanson de Roland*, 89.1128–1129, Mortier, Raoul (ed.). 1941. *Les Textes de la Chanson de Roland. La Version de Venise IV*. Paris, 87.1060–1, and Unger, *Karlamagnus saga*, 507–508, chap. 22.

43 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 198.LXVIII.15–16.

44 Compare Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 198.LXVIII.15–16 versus Klein, *La Chanson de Roland*, 85, Mortier, *Les Textes de la Chanson de Roland*, 83, and Unger, *Karlamagnus saga*, chap. 21.

45 Compare Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 162.XLI.3–6, 162.XLII.2,7–8, 164.XLIII.12–4, and 166.XLV.1–2.

46 Fulton, Helen. 2001. "Individual and Society in *Owein/Yvain* and *Gereint/Erec*." *CSANA Yearbook* 1. *The Individual in Celtic Literatures*. Ed. by Joseph Falaky Nagy, Dublin, 15–50, 24,

Little attention has been paid so far to the question of the manuscript transmission of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen*, with the important exception of Rejhon's detailed study of selected manuscript variants of the Welsh *Chanson*, which she conducted in order to arrive at stemmas of manuscript filiations and to select a base manuscript for her edition.[47] From her discussion one derives the clear impression that the texts vary considerably, and in the next section I want to focus on some aspects of the transmission of the Welsh *Chanson*. I will take the available texts of Peniarth 10 and the Red Book as my basis, which run parallel from chapter XII of Rejhon's edition. With regard to the position of these texts in the transmission, Rejhon has argued that Peniarth 10 is closest to the original translation, in that "only one [postulated] text separates D [= Peniarth 10] from the archetype",[48] and that "the R[ed Book] text is one of the least desirable for use as a base primarily because it has the most abridged version of the archetype [...] and contains a beginning section (I-XI) derived from a different French source from that of its main text".[49] The typology of fluidity and stability in the manuscript transmission of medieval Welsh prose texts argued for by Thomas Charles-Edwards may be relevant in this context. He suggests that there are at least three types: either "the original composition instantly acquired a canonical status and was thus never subject to major revisions", or "a period of fluidity eventually produces a canonical text, after which there is markedly less variation", or "a text remains fluid throughout the period illuminated by the surviving manuscripts".[50] Other useful parameters could refer to the status of a manuscript and to more individual scribal attitudes. Peter Wynn Thomas has described scribes as typically either 'form-orientated', faithfully reproducing the text of their exemplar, or 'content-orientated', deliberately altering the text to make it more accessible to their audience.[51] Pending further detailed research taking full cognizance of these factors, the Welsh *Chanson* would appear to belong to Charles-Edwards's third category, on the basis of the variation between the manuscripts noted by Rejhon, and to have

28. Her proposal, attractive as it is, requires further critical scrutiny, for example in the light of the considerable importance in *Owein* of individual action, motivation, and development.

47 Compare Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 32–58, with many instructive examples.

48 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 58. She also notes, 58, that "*B* [Peniarth 9] and *W* [the White Book, Peniarth 4 & 5] are *D*'s closest rivals: in many variants, by a turn of phrase or the content of whole lines [...], *BW* prove to be closer to the non-Welsh manuscripts." For an instructive example of the degrees of difference and similarities between the three manuscripts compare Rejhon's example 36–37.

49 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 94. The source for the different beginning in the Red Book appears to be as yet unidentified.

50 Charles-Edwards, T. M. 2001. "The Textual Tradition of Medieval Welsh Prose Tales and the Problem of Dating." *150 Jahre "Mabinogion" – Deutsch-Walisische Kulturbeziehungen*. Ed. by Bernhard Maier and Stefan Zimmer. Tübingen, 23–39, 38, 39.

51 Thomas, Peter Wynn. 1993. "Middle Welsh Dialects: Problems and Perspectives." *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 40, 17–50, esp. 20–21, 42–44. The classification of individual Welsh scribes as either form-orientated or content-orientated has not progressed far and is beset by methodological problems, compare the remarks about Hywel Fychan, hand B of the Red Book, by Thomas, Middle Welsh Dialects, 42–43, and Rodway, Simon. 2005. "The Date and Authorship of *Culhwch ac Olwen*." *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 49, 21–44, 24.

remained fairly fluid throughout its history of transmission. However, such a degree of fluidity is not necessarily typical of Welsh translations of foreign narratives: The text of another thirteenth-century adaptation from Anglo-Norman, the Welsh *Ystorya Bown o Hamtwn*, based on the *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone*, displays little significant difference between its two medieval manuscript witnesses, the White Book and the Red Book. A comparison between the texts of *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* in these two manuscripts would therefore be instructive, but in the light of the remarks above about scribes' individual attitudes it should be noted that different scribes were responsible for *Ystorya Bown* and *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* in the two manuscripts, in the White Book for the former its hand C and for the latter its hand B, in the Red Book for the former its hand B, i.e., Hywel Fychan, and for the latter its hand A.

With these considerations in mind I will now look at two passages from (Rejhon's edited text of) Peniarth 10 and from the Red Book.[52] I will begin with the first half of chapter LXX, and for comparative purposes I also reproduce the same passage as printed by Robert Williams from the White Book, according to Rejhon one of the rivals of Peniarth 10 with regard to closeness to the archetype:

Peniarth 10

Ac ar hynny yd oed y Freinc yn nessau ar eu gelyneon, a darogan eu merthyroleaeth yn eu kyfroi ar dagreuoed, nyt yr kymraw ev hageu nac yr metheant, namyn o warder a chareat a rybuchet pawb onadunt y'w gilyd. Ac eu hagreifftiaw a oruc Oliuer vdunt val hynn am hynny, gan eu hannoc ac eu kyfroi ar damunet brwydyr: "A wyrda etholedic," eb ef, "pei na ry brouwnn i awch grym chwi ac awch fynneant kyn no hynn lawer o weithieu, mi a'wch gogawn am awch dagreuoed, ac ny chredwn eu bot yn dagreuoed ediuarwch, namyn o lyuyrder ac ouyn. A pheidiwch bellach ac awch wylaw! Pa beth bynnac a wnel pawp ohonoch a'e gilyd, ymvadeuwch, a chymodwch yn vn gar vn esgar. Ac na vit neb ohonoch o hynn allan a [o]vynno[53] y agheu yn emlad dros wlat nef, canys gan ymadaw a buched amharaus y kefir buched dragywyd."[54]

[And at that point the Franks were drawing near their enemies, and the prophecy of their martyrdom moving them to tears, not because they feared their death or because of weakness, but because of the compassion and love and good will of every one of them for each other. And Oliuer chided them thus about that, urging them and stirring them to wish pitched battle: "O chosen barons," he said, "if I had not proved your strength and your courage many times before this, I would mock you because of your tears and I would not believe they were tears of repentence but of cowardice and fear. And stop your weeping now! Whatever every one may have done to the other, forgive each other, and be reconciled as common friends and common foes. And let there not be any one of you from now on who

[52] Compare also Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 35–37, for some further examples.

[53] The reading *vynno* 'wishes' of Peniarth 10 is emended by Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 201, on the basis of references to 'fear' in all other manuscripts.

[54] Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 200.

fears his death, fighting for the kingdom of heaven, for it is by abandoning transitory life, that eternal life is attained."[55]]

Red Book

Ac yna y nessaassant ar eu gelynyon, a darogan eu merthyrolyaeth a'e kyffroes ar dagreuoed, nyt yr kymraw eu hageu nac yr methyant, namyn gwarder a charyat a rybuchet pawb onadunt o'e gilyd. Ac Oliuer a dywawt wrthunt, gan eu hannoc ac eu kyffroi y vrwytraw, "A wyrda etholedic", heb ef, "pei na phrovwn i gynt awch ffydlonder chwi, ac awch dewred chwi yn vynych ym brwytreu, mi a'ch goganwn am awch dagreuoed, ac a dywedwn y mae o lyuyrder. A pheidywch bellach a hynny. Amadawet bawb ohonawch a'e gilyd, o gwnaethawch o gam, a bydwch ungar vnesgar. Ac nac ofynhaet neb ohonawch y agheu yn ymlad dros wlat nef. Kanys ymadaw a buched amharhaus a wnewch y geissaw buched dragywyd."[56]

[And then they drew near their enemies, and the prophecy of their martyrdom moved them to tears, not because they feared their death or because of weakness, but because of the compassion and love and good will of every one of them for each other. And Oliuer said to them, urging them and stirring them to pitched battle: "O chosen barons," he said, "if I had not proved your loyalty earlier and your bravery frequently in battles, I would mock you because of your tears and I would say it is from cowardice. And stop this now! Each of you should forgive the other, if you have done wrong, and be common friends and common foes. And none of you may fear his death, fighting for the kingdom of heaven, for you are abandoning transitory life in order to seek eternal life."]

White Book

Ac ar hynny yd oed gwyrda ffreinc nesnes y eu gelynnyon. ac eu merthyrolyaeth rac llaw yny kyffroi ar dagreuoed. nyt yr ofyn eu hageu. namyn o hiraeth pawb onadunt am y gilyd. Sef a oruc oliuer herwyd y syberwyt eissoes eu hangreifftyaw gan eu hannoc ar damunet brwydyr val hyn. Ha wyrda. heb ef. pei na bei brouedic gennyfi lawer gweith ych gwrhydri chwi. mi a gablwn ych methyant. ac ych dagreuoed. ac ny chredwn eu bot o gygweinyeint. ac ediuarwch. namyn o lyuyrder ac ofyn. Peidwch weithon ac ych methyant. pa gamwed bynnac ry wnel pawb o honawch yw gilyd medeuwch. a chymodwch yn gyfun dagnouedus. ac na vit ohonam o hyn allan a vo ouyn arnaw y lad. yn ymlad tros wlat nef. canys gan golli buched amserawl y kerdir ar uuched tragywydawl.[57]

[And then the nobles of France drew near their enemies, and their future martyrdom moved them to tears, not because of fear of their death, but because of grief of each of them for the other. Thus, however, Oliuer in accordance with his pride chided them, urging them to wish pitched battle like this: "O nobles," he said, "if I had not tried your valour many times, I would revile your lack of mettle and your tears, and I would not believe that they come from remorse and penitence, but from cowardice and fear. And stop your lack of mettle now. Whatever wrong one of you have commited to the other, forgive it and be rec-

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55 Translation from Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 201, with a slight modification for the sake of greater literalness.

56 Williams, *Ystorya*, 142.24–143.9.

57 Williams, *Selections*, 97.

onciled in unanimous peace. And let there be none of us from now on who would fear his death fighting for the kingdom of heaven, because by loosing transitory life eternal life is reached."]

The development of the story, the line of argument, and the content are the same in these three passages, but there are many syntactic, lexical, and idiomatic differences, particularly between Peniarth 10 and the Red Book on the one side and the White Book on the other. The larger question of their status, as successive stages of rewriting, polishing, or condensation, as variant versions or recensions, could, however, only be tackled on the basis of a comprehensive comparison of the texts in their entirety.

One of the more striking and unusual passages in the Welsh *Chanson* is the narrator's emotional and highly rhetorical outburst in chapter XCI, and a comparison between the texts in Peniarth 10 and the Red Book shows that in the latter it is considerably shortened, and its subjectivity toned down:

D

Och a Duw! mawr a gollet anescor a doeth y'r Freinc yn y lle hwnnw o golli y gniuer canorthwywr a golles y Brenin Chiarlymaen yn y lle hwnnw. Y mae oleu y colledeu a doethant o anffydlonder Gwenlwyd yn emdangos ettwan. Och a Duw! mor da y talut idaw ynteu yn y diwed pwyth y vratwreaeth. Yn y diwed yn y wlat a'e vedeant ehun y barnwyt y groc ar y decuet ar rugeint o'e oreugwyr. A'r brenin, kyt bai trist ganthaw a gwrthwynep, a gwplaawd y vrawt honno. Ac uelly y digolledut o gollet arall y gollet, ac y didanut o dolur arall y dolur ynteu.[58]

['O God! great the irremediable loss that came to the Franks in that place on account of losing so many helpers, that Chiarlymaen lost in that place! The consequences of the losses which came from the faithlessness of Gwenlwyd still manifest themselves. O God! how well would You pay him back, in the end, for his treachery. In the end, in his country and his own fief, he was judged to be hanged with thirty of his best men. And the king although it was sad and odious to him, carried out that judgement. And thus would You compensate his loss by another loss, and console his grief by another grief.'[59]]

R

Och a Duw! mawr a gollet anesgor a deuth y Ffreinc yn y lle hwnnw o golli y geniuer gwrda o wyr Chyarlys a gollet yno. Yma y mae goleu y colledeu a deuthant o anfydlonder Gwennwlyd yn ymdangos etwa. Ac ys da y talwyt idaw ynteu y uradwryaeth.[60]

['O God! great the irremediable loss that came to the Franks in that place on account of losing so many nobles of Chyarlys's men as were lost there. The consequences of the losses which came from the faithlessness of Gwenlwyd still manifest themselves here. And it was well how his treachery was paid back to him.']

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58 Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 228–230.
59 Translation from Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 229–231.
60 Williams, *Ystorya*, 150.22–28.

3.

Medieval Irish literature consists of a vast corpus of texts, both prose and poetry, whose extant manuscript attestation begins around 1100. Foreign narratives were received into the Irish textual culture in two stages, with different cultural affiliations and concerns. From (roughly) the tenth to the twelfth century the focus was on adaptations of classical material in a historiographical perspective, such as Dares Phrygius, Vergil, Lucan, and Statius. From the fourteenth century onwards the attention turned to English sources and resulted, for example, in Irish versions of the romances of William of Palerne (*Eachtra Uilliam*, fourteenth century), of the quest for the Grail (*Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha*, mid-fifteenth century), of Guy of Warwick, of Beues of Hamtoun, and of William Caxton's story about Hercules (the last three attributed to Uilliam Mac an Leagha, fl. 1470).[61] The two extant Irish narratives about Charlemagne – the Irish versions of Turpin's *Historia*[62] and the *chanson de geste* about Fierabras or Fortibras[63] – chronologically belong to this second phase, but have Latin sources. It is furthermore significant that the Irish *Fierabras*, whenever its beginning and preceding texts are preserved in medieval manuscripts, is always preceded by an Irish version of the *Inventio Sanctae Crucis*, the story of the Finding of the Holy Cross,[64] and the two narratives are explicitly and immediately linked in the Irish (and the Latin) *Fierabras* with a reference to the mother of the emperor Constantine, Helen, who was believed to have been instrumental in the finding of Christ's cross and its establishment as a relic. Copies of the Latin *Fierabras* and *Inventio*, as well as of Turpin's *Historia*, are transmitted as individual items, i.e., not in a sequence, in a manuscript from the second half of the fifteenth century written in a Franciscan monastery in Ireland, now Dublin, Trinity College 667 (formerly

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61 For useful surveys compare Ní Shéaghdha, Nessa. 1984. "Translations and Adaptations into Irish." *Celtica* 16, 107–124, and Williams, J.E. Caerwyn and Ford, Patrick K. 1992. *The Irish Literary Tradition*. Cardiff, Belmont, 134–145.

62 Hyde, Douglas (ed.). 1917. *Gabhaltais Shearluis Mhóir. The Conquest of Charlemagne*. London.

63 Stokes, Whitley. 1898. "The Irish Version of *Fierabras*." *Revue Celtique* 19, 14–57, 118–167, 252–291, 364–393. Stokes based his edition on the text in London, British Library Egerton 1781.

64 To the best of my knowledge this particular version remains unpublished; according to Flower, Robin. 1992. *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Library [formerly British Museum]*. Vol. II. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 527) the "translation here is much closer to the original than the form found in *L[eabhar] B[reac]*", a manuscript written in the early years of the fifteenth century before 1411, and is an "independent rendering much later in language." For a conspectus of the manuscript attestation of the different versions of the Irish *Inventio* see McNamara, Martin. 1975. *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 78–79. In this context it is interesting to note that Cowen, Janet M. 2004. "Die mittelenglischen Romane um Karl den Großen." *Karl der Große*. Ed. by B. Bastert, 163–182, 164, has suggested "den Karl-Stoff im Mittelenglischen nicht als eigenes Corpus zu betrachten, sondern als Teil eines größeren mittelenglischen Textverbandes, dessen Hauptinteresse dem Kreuzzug und der Verehrung der Passionsreliquien gilt."

F.5.3).[65] In the majority of fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts in which the Irish *Fierabras* is contained, religious texts make up its immediate context.[66] Its Christian focus is nicely encapsulated in its final sentence which characterises the contents of the narrative as 'the story of Charlemagne pursuing Christ's crown and the saints's relics', "sdair Serluis moir ag lenmainn coroine Crist 7 taissi na naemh"[67]. The Irish *Fierabras* and the Irish *Historia* are transmitted in sequence in three fifteenth century manuscripts.[68] When not combined with the Irish *Fierabras* the transmission of the Irish *Historia* in fifteenth century manuscripts also takes place within a predominantly religious context.[69] According to T.F. O'Rahilly, the texts of the Irish *Historia* can be assigned to two recensions.[70] The second recension not only features the prefatory epistle to Leoprandus, but is also characterised by many further differences which are, in O'Rahilly's view, "sufficient to show that we have here a completely new recension of the Irish text, if not indeed, as seems probable, a

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65 See Colker, Marvin L. 1991. *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*. Vol. II. Dublin, 1123–1164, for a description of the manuscript, and 1134, 1139, and 1141 for details about the three texts. The *Inventio* is found on pp. 68–71 of the manuscript, the Latin *Fierabras* on pp. 85–100, and the *Historia* on pp. 107–130. See also O'Rahilly, Thomas F. 1919. "[Review of *The Conquests of Charlemagne*]." *Studies* 8, 668–670, 670; Esposito, Mario. 1936. "Une version latine du roman de *Fierabras*. Notice du ms. F.5.3 de Trinity College a Dublin." *Romania* 62, 534–541, and Esposito, Mario. 1920. "Classical Manuscripts in Irish Libraries. Part I." *Hermathena* 42, 123–140, 133.

66 These are London, British Library Egerton 1781, Dublin, King's Inns 10, Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Misc. 610, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 23 O 48 (the Liber Flavius Fergusiorum), and Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 24 P 25 (the Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne). The exceptions are Dublin, Trinity College 1289, formerly H.2.7, in which the Irish *Inventio* and *Fierabras* are preceded by the Irish version of Lucan's *Pharsalia* and an Irish wisdom treatise, as well as a seventeenth century manuscript, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 24 P 12, in which an incomplete Irish *Fierabras* and an Irish *Historia* are followed by bardic poetry.

67 Stokes, "Irish Version", 380.

68 These are London, British Library Egerton 1781 and Dublin, King's Inns 10, and Dublin, Trinity College 1304, formerly H.2.12.

69 The relevant manuscripts are the Book of Lismore, Dublin, University College (formerly Franciscan Library Killiney) A 9, and London, British Library Egerton 92.

70 Represented by the texts in the Book of Lismore (on which the only available edition by Douglas Hyde is based), London, British Library Egerton 1781, Dublin, Trinity College 1304 (formerly H.2.12), and Dublin, University College (formerly Franciscan Library) A 9 on the one side, and Dublin, King's Inns 10, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 24 P 12, and London British, Library Egerton 92 (incomplete) on the other. The only text of the second recension Hyde was aware of at the time of the preparation of his edition, is Dublin, King's Inns 10, which he discovered too late for a detailed textual comparison; he only notes (Hyde, *Gabhaltais*, 122) that it "differs not only in the matter of possessing this letter [to Leoprandus] but in so many other points from all the others that I give here the first folio so far as it is legible." Hyde, *Gabhaltais*, xi, remarks on the relation between these texts of the first recension that the "Trinity College MS. [1304/H.2.12] differs far more from the Book of Lismore than either the Franciscan MS. [A 9] or Egerton, 1781", and he dates the original translation to about 1400, xiii.

second and independent translation".[71] The Latin *Historia* in Dublin, Trinity College 667 (formerly F.5.3) was, according to O'Rahilly, not "the *precise* original which the Irish translator had before him", since, for example, the letter to Leoprandus found here is not included in the first Irish recension.[72]

Douglas Hyde suggested that the (first recension of the) Irish *Historia* "resembles very much in style and vocabulary the translation of the French story Fierebras [*sic* ...], and also the Early-English story of Bevis of Hampton, the fragmentary Queste del Saint Graal, the History of the Lombards and Maundeville's Travels",[73] but both the Irish *Historia* and the Irish *Fierabras* would appear to be significantly more restrained in their employment of rhetorical ornamention, specifically strings of alliterating and/ or synonymous phrases, than the Irish *Beves* and the other adaptations attributed to Uilliam Mac an Leagha.[74] Sheila Falconer stressed that the Irish *Queste del Saint Graal, Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha*, followed its source "with a degree of closeness incompatible with the ornate literary style much in vogue with prose writers from the 12th to the 17th century" and concluded: "Whatever the reason, it is particularly fortunate that the Quest, a work designed to attract in order to edify, should not have been burdened with the verbal extravagences of this style."[75] Edification as a motivation for stylistic simplicity is an attractive suggestion, but the saints' lives attributed to Uilliam Mac an Leagha also exhibit a rather ornate and florid style.[76] Contrary to Hyde's contention, Irish redactors of foreign material in the fifteenth century had a variety of stylistic strategies at their disposal, and the aesthetic results differ significantly; the rationale behind their employment, or non-employment, of specific rhetoric and stylistic devices is as yet far from clear.

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[71] O'Rahilly, "[Review]", 669. For different assessments of the relation between the Irish text in the Book of Lismore and the Latin text in Dublin Trinity College 667 see O'Rahilly, "[Review]" and Esposito, "Une version latine."

[72] O'Rahilly, "[Review]", 669, and compare 669–670. Esposito, "Une version latine", 538, suggests that the first recension of the Irish *Historia* "n'est pas traduite du latin du ms. F.5.3", but the whole question would appear to need further scrutiny in the light of the second recension, which contains, for example, the letter to Leoprandus.

[73] Hyde, *Gabhaltais*, v.

[74] For Mac an Leagha's version of *Beves* and of *Guy* compare Poppe, Erich. 1992. "The Early Modern Irish Version of Beves of Hamtoun." *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 23, 77–98, and Poppe, Erich. 2005. "Narrative Structure of Medieval Irish Adaptations: The Case of Guy and Beues." *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society*. Ed. by Helen Fulton. Dublin, 205–229.

[75] Falconer, Sheila (ed.). 1953. *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha. An Early Modern Irish Translation of the Quest of the Holy Grail*. Dublin, xl.

[76] Compare Poppe, Erich. 1996. "Favourite Expressions, Repetition, and Variation: Observations on *Beatha Mhuire Eigiptacdha* in Add. 30512." *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*. Ed. by Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross. Blackrock, 279–299. Many of the statements about the stylistic characteristics and qualities of late-medieval Irish translations are biased, and a new balanced analysis across genres is required.

4.

My preliminary survey of the availability in medieval Wales and Ireland of texts about Charlemagne shows that both literatures shared a contemporary pan-European fascination with his person and with the narratives about him. Four texts are known from Wales, Welsh versions of Turpin's *Historia*, of the *Chanson de Roland*, of the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, and of *Otinel*, and they are combined in all the extant manuscripts into a cycle which, however, need not contain all four of them, but at least three: the Welsh *Historia*, into which a truncated Welsh *Chanson* was integrated, and the Welsh *Pèlerinage*. Two texts are known from Ireland, Irish versions of the *Historia* and of *Fierabras*, the latter always preceded by an introductory foretale[77] about the Finding of the Holy Cross, and the two texts about Charlemagne are themselves combined in a small number of manuscripts. The interest in this material seems to have started quite early in Wales, probably in the first half of the thirteenth century. The earliest Welsh manuscripts to contain texts about Charlemagne date to around the turn of the fourteenth century. The extant manuscript transmission of the Irish texts sets in and clusters in the fifteenth century; the original translation of the Irish *Historia* has been very tentatively dated to around 1400. The number of manuscripts which contain the Welsh and Irish texts about Charlemagne, and in Wales particularly their inclusion in the large collections, the White Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest, attest to their popularity and appeal. This appeal was probably the narratives' successful combination of Christian and martial values as well as the status they derived from their foreign origin and wider popularity.[78] In Ireland the main line of transmission was in combination with religious and devotional texts, and the existence there of a Latin translation of the originally French *Fierabras*, which served as the source for the Irish translation, also points to a monastic or clerical learned background.

One aspect which would certainly repay further discussion in a wider comparative perspective is the cyclisation of texts as it is realized in the extant Welsh *Chwedlau Siarlymaen* and in the combination of the Irish *Inventio* with the *Fierabras*. The Old Norse *Karlamagnús saga* is another relevant example; and an English model has been suggested for the integration of the Welsh *Otinel* into the Welsh cycle.[79]

It is finally tempting to suggest that the minds of medieval Welsh and Irish redactors of foreign literary sources and scribes respectively worked very much along par-

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[77] Medieval Irish *litterati* had a concept of "remscél" 'foretale, introductory tale' to describe a tale which contributes to the explanation of later events narrated in another tale, and in this sense the Irish *Inventio* is a "remscél" to the Irish *Fierabras*.

[78] In these respects the narratives about Charlemagne should be compared to the *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone* which was similarly successful in the Insular cultures. See now Poppe, Erich and Reck, Regine. 2008. "Rewriting Bevis in Wales and Ireland." *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*. Ed. by Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjevic. Cambridge, 37-51.

[79] Compare Rejhon, *Cân Rolant*, 24–25, footnote 88; and see Kramarz-Bein, "Die altnordische Karlsdichtung", 153–156, for a helpful survey of the *Karlamagnús saga* as "Groß-Kompilation".

allel lines, as they did in other medieval literary cultures:[80] Both redactors and scribes were prepared to adapt their exemplars to their, and their audiences', literary needs and expectations, even if this resulted at times in a far-reaching and dramatic interference with their exemplars' form and meaning, and this approach would appear to be intimately linked to their attitudes to the 'text'. Furthermore, the conceptually similar approach to the adaptation of foreign sources in medieval Scandinavia, combined with shared preferences for specific narrative techniques, for example the virtual absence of the narrator's voice, resulted in significant typological similarities between Welsh, Irish, and Old Norse translations, and these too would repay comparative analysis.

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[80] Compare, for example, the juxtaposition of translation and transmission noted by Douglas Kelly ("*Translatio Studii*: Translation, Adaptation, and Allegory in Medieval French Literature." *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978), 287–310, 291) for medieval France, "There are three prominent modes of *translatio* in medieval French: translation as such, including scribal transmission; adaptation; and allegorical or extended metaphorical discourse", and the discussions of the fluidity of Old Norse *riddarasögur* and of a typology of scribal interference by Glauser, Jürg. 1998. "Textüberlieferung und Textbegriff im spätmittelalterlichen Norden: Das Beispiel der *Riddarasögur*." *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* 113, 7–27, and Schubert, Martin J. 2002. "Versuch einer Typologie von Schreibereingriffen." *Das Mittelalter* 7, 125–144. I wish to thank Stefanie Gropper for bringing the work of Douglas Kelly to my attention.

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