

The morphological structure of the supposed British preterite **wūke* coincided with that of **dūke* (MIW. *duc* 'he brought', Co. *duk*, cf. OBr. *dodocetic* gl. *inlatam*) < **dōke* representing IE. **douke*, a perfect of the root **deuk-* of OLat. *douco*, Goth. *tiuhan*, etc. (cf. Morris Jones, *Welsh Grammar*, 338).¹ According to K. Jackson (*Language and History in Early Britain*, 314) **ō* (< **au*, **ou*, **eu*) fell together with **ū* (< **oi*) 'by the end of the third century'. The structural syncretism of the preterites **dūke* and **wūke* subsequently caused the present **wiketi*, **wiket* 'fights' to be analogically remodelled on the present **duketi*, **duket* (MIW. *dwc*, Co. *dog*, *dek*, MIBr. *douc*) in accordance with the following proportion: (pret.) **dūke* : (pres.) **duketi*, **duket* = (pret.) **wūke* : (pres.) *x*. This remodelling of British **wiketi*, **wiket* into **wuketi*, **wuket* is hardly surprising in view of the fact that **wi-* in certain cases² seems to have yielded phonetically **wu-* in British, cf., e.g., W. *gŵr*, *ŵr*, OCo. *gur*, MCo. *gour*, lenited *wour*, OBr. *-gur* (: OIr. *fer*).

A British present 3 sg. **ambi-wuket*, after lenition and the loss of final syllables, gave Late British **am(m)-wug*, whence regularly MIW. *am-wc* in the same way as (lenited) British **wur* 'man' yields MIW. *ŵr* : such forms involve an assimilation of **wu-* to **u-*.³ The same assimilation is occasionally met with in Breton, cf., e.g., MIBr. *ouz*, *oz*, MBr. *ouzh* = MIW. *wrth*, cf. also OBr. *dūrth*, MIBr. *diouz*, etc. (cf. K. Jackson, *A Historical Phonology of Breton*, § 644). MIBr. *am-ouc* 'delay' may probably be explained in this way. The stem **am(m)-wug-* > **am-ug-* (seen in MIW. *am-wc*, etc.) has furnished the basis of the present ind. paradigm in Welsh (cf. 1 sg. *am-ygaf*, etc., with the regular reduction of *w* to *y*).

A British preterite stem **ambi-wūk-* should correspondingly give a Late British **am(m)-wūg-*, which seems to be directly continued in the OW. 3 pl. pret. *amgucant* (The Surexit Memorandum).⁴ The latter form should probably be analysed as **am-guc-ant*, *-gu-* being an OW. spelling of lenited **wū-* in the same way as OW. *gu-* in *gurth*, cf. *guurth*, is a spelling of lenited **wu-* (cf. MIW. *wrth*).⁵ If this is correct, MIW. *(am)-uc* would seem to testify to an early assimilation of (lenited) **wū-* to **ū-* similar in kind to the one seen in **wur* > **ur* (MIW. *ŵr*, etc.).⁶

¹ The analysis (Lewis-Pedersen, *ibid.* § 464) of MIW. *duc* as *d-uc*, i.e. as representing an old compound, the second element of which is supposed to contain the perfect **ouke* of the root **euk-* 'accustom (to)', is not convincing.

² Before a sonant?, cf. Morris Jones, *ibid.* 89.

³ Pedersen's hypothesis (*Vergleichende keltische Grammatik*, i, 42) of a British reduction of **wu* to **u* seems to be contradicted by OW. *gurth* = phonetically *wurth*, cf. below.

⁴ Otherwise Morris Jones, *Y Cymmrodor*, 28, 270.

⁵ For OW. *gurth*, *guurth*, etc. cf. K. Jackson, *A Historical Phonology of Breton*, 450, Note 5. Professor D. Ellis Evans, in a letter of 1 May 1979, expresses some doubt as to whether the *gu* of OW. *amgucant* and *gurth* spells lenited **wū-* and **wu-* respectively, and whether one can assume the same orthographic

patterning in both cases. Admittedly, the orthography of *amgucant* is peculiar. If, however, *gu-* in the OW. preposition *gurth* (cf., e.g., Ifor Williams, *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, p. 185), *gurd* (Juv., cf. Ifor Williams, *ibid.*, pp. 102, 115) spells lenited **wu-*, as I think it does (cf. the fixed initial lenition in our preposition: MIW. *wrth*, MIBr. *ouz*, *oz*, Co. *worth*, and see Jackson, *HPB*, §§ 427, 644), then *-gu-* in *amgucant* might spell lenited **wū-* as the letter *u* in the OW. orthography spells both *w* (e.g. *crunn-*, M. Cap.) and *u* (e.g. *tutri*, Surex. Memor.).

⁶ Pokorny (*ZCP* 15, 377) explains W. *ucher* as going back to British **wūksero-* < **woiksero-* (cf. Old Armenian *gišer* 'night', the *-i-* of which supposes an old diphthong **ei* or **oi*). If this is right, the initial **ū-* of *ucher* might be due to the same assimilation of **wū-* to **ū-*.

MIW. *gorchyfygaf*, MW. *gorchfygaf* may belong here.¹ A Primitive Celtic present 3 sg. **wor-kom-wiket* 'he conquers', after the (early) reduction of intervocalic **-mz-* to **-w-* and the analogical reshaping of **wiket* into **wuket* discussed above, should yield phonetically an Early MIW. form **gorchywug*. An existing alternation between *f* and *w* (as in MIW. *cyfoeth* 'wealth' (= OIr. *cumachte*) ~ *cywoeth*; *cafod* 'shower' ~ *carwod*, cf. Morris Jones, *ibid.* § 26.V) permitted the verb **gorchywug* to be transformed into **gorchyfwg* where the element *cyf-* appears in its normal shape.

If MIW. *goruc* 'he made, did' contains the same preterite **wūke* (as *am-uc*),² the meaning 'made, did' might possibly be the result of a semantic development 'overcame' (British **wor-wūke*) > 'succeeded' > 'accomplished' > 'did, made' parallel to the development suggested by Simon Evans (*A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, 147) for *goryw*, *goreu* (< **wor-* + *yw|ew*, 3 sg. pres.). For Co. *gruk* (1, 3 sg.), lenited *wruk*, *wreg*, which corresponds to MIW. *goruc*, one has to assume the same assimilation of **wū-* to **ū-*.

Oslo

FREDRIK OTTO LINDEMAN

Beech and the Lawbooks

Comparison of the area of natural distribution of beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) in medieval Wales with the values of beech given in the various versions of the Laws may offer a clue as to the approximate areas of application of the lawbooks themselves.

At the time of the Norman Conquest and during the Middle Ages, beech occurred naturally only along the English border and in south-east Wales, viz. the old county of Monmouth, adjacent parts of east Glamorgan and south-east Brecon, and in parts of Radnorshire. This is proved by pollen analysis and charcoal finds,³ and also by place-name evidence.⁴ Beech was still unknown in north Wales even as late as the time of Edward Lhuyd:

in noe part of Northwales is found any flint or chalk, nor beech trees [1 July 1690],

and:

In South Wales I found several plants common, which I had never seen in North Wales, such as . . . *Fagus* [24 Nov. 1696].⁵

The introduction of beech into north and west Wales by planting did not take place on any large scale until the middle and end of the eighteenth century.

The lists of values of trees given in the various versions of the Welsh Laws apparently reflect their relative usefulness to man, as in the old Irish tree-list,⁶ and moreover the lists

¹ Otherwise *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, 1465.

⁴ W. Linnard. *BBCS* xxviii/1 (1978), 83-6.

² Morris Jones, *Welsh Grammar*, 367, derives *goruc*, etc. from a root **peik-* (cf. OCS. *pisati* 'to write', (1945), 106, 315.

⁶ F. Kelly, *Celtica* xi (1976), 107-24.

³ H. A. Hyde, *Welsh Timber Trees* (1977), 129-31.

themselves are remarkably consistent. The common native trees, viz. oak, crab-apple, yew, alder, ash, willow, and hazel, which all occurred naturally throughout Wales, were given identical or very similar values in the 'Venedotian', 'Dimetian', and 'Gwentian' classes of lawbooks. The one great exception to this consistent pattern is beech.

Beech does not occur in any of Aneurin Owen's eight 'Venedotian' versions A-H. In the twelve 'Dimetian' versions I-T, beech is absent from three (I, J, S) but is consistently valued at 60 pence in the others. In the 'Gwentian' versions U-Z, beech is valued at 60 pence in U, but in W and also in the Bodorgan manuscript it is valued at 120 pence. Beech is not mentioned in the Latin redactions A, B, and E, but it does appear in redactions C and D where it is valued at 60 pence; D is a redaction with a Deheubarth bias and closely related to Blegywryd.¹

The presence or absence of beech and the differences in its value form a significant and fairly consistent pattern. Owen's 'Venedotian' versions make no mention of beech whatsoever, presumably for the very practical reason that it was thought pointless or unnecessary to include a tree species which did not occur in north Wales. Most of the 'Dimetian' versions, one of the 'Gwentian', and Latin redactions C and D value beech at 60 pence, i.e. only half the value of an oak tree but still substantially more valuable than any other woodland tree species. This would tend to suggest areas of south, mid, and east Wales where beech occurred naturally, or more westerly areas close enough for beech to be familiar and worth entering in the tree-lists in the lawbooks.

Only two versions of the Welsh Laws value beech at 120 pence, i.e. equal to oak which throughout Wales was the most important forest tree, producing valuable mast and tan-bark as well as excellent timber. These two versions are W (the 'Liber Cardiff de consuetudinibus Walliae', B.M. Cotton Cleopatra A xiv) and the Bodorgan manuscript. The readings are: *eithyr fawyden. Honno weugeint* in W, and *ffawyden - wheugeint* in Bodorgan.² These uniquely high valuations, presumably neither scribal errors nor arbitrary alterations, would accord well with a location in the heart of the natural area of distribution of beech in south-east Wales, i.e. where beech was a common tree, comparable in frequency and quality to oak. Only here would it make legal and practical sense to equate beech and oak in value. This can be illustrated by the actual use of wood in the building of castles. Throughout Wales, oak was the species exclusively used for castle-building, but in south-east Wales, and only here, beech too was used for this special purpose, e.g. at Llanybi in 1286/7.³

K and the Latin redaction C are apparent inconsistencies. K is a manuscript which Owen erroneously classed as 'Dimetian' instead of 'Venedotian',⁴ and which does include beech, but although the text is 'Venedotian', it is a late fifteenth-century copy made by Lewis Glyn Cothi, perhaps for the lord of Cefnlllys (Radnorshire) and therefore within or very close to the area of natural beech. The defective Latin redaction C includes beech

¹ H. D. Emanuel, *Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws* (1967), 68-70.

² W (85 vv. 16-18) [= *Welsh Medieval Law*, 104. 16-18]; Bodorgan (88. 13-14).

³ *Arch. Camb.* (1956), 104.

⁴ G. Edwards, *Welsh Hist. Rev.* (1963), Spec. No., p. 4.

(*faweden*) but otherwise appears to have been written from a Gwynedd standpoint; the values of the trees may, however, be in a different hand from the rest of C.¹

Although the evidence of beech should not be taken in isolation, in general the occurrence and relative values of beech in the Laws appear quite accurately to reflect both the natural distribution and importance of the species in medieval Wales, and therefore may contribute towards indicating, even if only approximately, the areas of application of the various law books.

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Welsh Folk Museum

WILLIAM LINNARD

Sylwadau ar y 'Surexit'

Yn ei gyfraniad i Gyfrol Deyrnged Syr Thomas Parry,² a thrachefn yn ei lyfr yn y gyfres Saesneg *Writers of Wales*,³ bu'r Athro Proinsias Mac Cana'n bur feirniadol o'r pwysigrwydd a roddodd yr Athro Idris Foster a Miss Morfydd Owen i gofnod *Surexit* fel tystiolaeth i ddatblygiad rhyddiaith Gymraeg.⁴ Nid yw rhesymeg Mac Cana'n fy argyhoeddi, a dichon hefyd mai ei gasgliadau ef ei hun y mae'n eu collfarnu yn hytrach na dim sydd yn yr ysgrifau Cymraeg eu hunain; ond nid wyf am fanylu ar y wedd honno ar ei ymdriniaeth. Eisiau edrych ar ei gasgliad terfynol sydd arnaf, yn gyntaf, ac yna wneud awgrym am ystyr rhan o'r cofnod *Surexit*.

Cymerer yn fan cychwyn ddwy frawddeg olaf ymdriniaeth Mac Cana â'r testun arbennig hwn:

Gwyddys mai traddodiad y gyfraith a sgrifennwyd gyntaf mewn llawer o'r cymdeithasau cynnar: yn Iwerddon dechreuwyd ei recordio rywbryd yn y chweched ganrif. Felly, o gofio pa mor gyfyng yw amgyffred y cofnod a pha mor elfennol ei arddull, hwyrach na fyddai yn annheg casglu nad oedd ffurf sgrifenedig ar ryddiaith wedi ei datblygu a'i harfer eto fel cyfrwng i adrodd hanes a chwedl.⁵

Gwir mai traddodiad y gyfraith a sgrifennwyd gyntaf mewn llawer gwlad; ond nid 'traddodiad y gyfraith' sydd yn *Surexit* — nid datganiad o reolau cyfraith, ond cofnod am drafodaeth gyfreithiol, peth sy'n bur wahanol, fel y caf bwysleisio'n fuan.

Gwir hefyd fod traethodau cyfreithiol syml wedi'u sgrifennu yn yr Wyddeleg rywbryd yn y chweched ganrif. Fe wyddom hynny, nid am fod gennym lawysgrifau cyfraith Gwyddeleg o'r chweched ganrif, ond am i wŷr cyfraith ceidwadol Iwerddon ddal i gopïo'r testunau cysegredig (gan ychwanegu atynt losau ac esboniadaeth sy'n chwyddo'r testunau'n ddirfawr) drwy'r canrifoedd. Ond (chwedl Binchy) 'the Welsh mediaeval jurists were far

¹ H. D. Emanuel, op. cit., pp. 48, 275.

² 'Rhyddiaith Gymraeg', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*, x, 80-2.

³ *The Mabinogi* (Caerdydd, 1977), 12.

⁴ Idris Foster, *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith* (gol.

Geraint Bowen; Llandysul, 1970), 15; Morfydd E. Owen, *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol* (gol. Geraint Bowen; Llandysul, 1974), 196-7.

⁵ *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*, x. 82.