The Celtic connections of the Tristan story (part one)

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Some readers may wonder whether this title heralds yet another tedious trek over well-trodden ground. The hope is that there is still something useful to be said on the topic; and that the debate is one in which both Romanists and Celticists can participate.

Most general discussions of Tristan topics include some routine reference to the 'Celtic origins' of the story or to a Celtic 'nucleus' as part of the critical consensus.[1]

It is not proposed to review in detail all the arguments advanced by previous scholars on both sides of the pro- and anti-Celtic sources debate. What can be shown, I hope, is that many of these claims and counterclaims may be assessed more accurately in the light of a better understanding of the nature of early Celtic languages, literature and tradition, now rendered more easily accessible to the non-specialist through the labours of appropriate experts. Time and effort are indispensible, none the less, and, ideally, those wishing to establish their research on a solid basis ought to try to acquire a reading knowledge of at least one medieval Celtic language, a surely not unreasonable demand.

It is also essential to state very briefly where one stands with regard to the genesis of the continental Tristan tradition and the relationship between the versions. There are two polarized views on the relationship between the extant so-called primary versions of the story - the French versions of Béroul[2] and Thomas,[3] the German version of Eilhart von Oberge[4] and one section of the French *Tristan en prose*.[5] The older Heinzel[6]-Paris[7] view - to some extent revived by the Loomisite school of the 50's and 60's - sees the Tristan texts as the end-product of a continuous evolution from some not very clearly specified starting point, while the Bédierist view, possibly still held by a slim majority of current scholars, traces all the medieval poems, *lais* and fragments back to a single lost source, an Old French poem created by an

* Part Two will appear in Volume XIII

individual,[8] which predated the appearance of the earliest of the extant versions by more than 50 or 60 years. Between these two extremes lie a number of more nuanced judgements.

The view of the present writer is, briefly, as follows. I do not find a stemmatic representation and the borrowed notion of an archetype helpful. The flaws in Bédier's attempts at the reconstruction of his single lost source have been sufficiently well demonstrated.[9] Instead, the poets' own testimony to the existence of a multiplicity of versions, oral and written, should be taken at face value.

As to what preceded these versions, it is impossible to be dogmatic. It is obvious that even within the diversity, some versions or narrative details were regarded as more authoritative than others (Béroul's *estoire* references, for instance) but in any study of a tradition which is represented orally as well as in writing, it is unikely that a single exclusive source can be pinpointed accurately. Although the Tristan story is more than just a *Märchen* variant, it does include *Märchen* type features (and not merely the so-called 'popular elements' cited by Schoepperle, Vàrvaro and others) and these belong to the international repertoire of the *Märchenwelt*. Even among the small minority of folklorists still interested in origins, the theory of polygenesis has as many supporters as that of monogenesis or diffusion.

It is possible, none the less, by looking closely at the composite Tristan story, to distinguish different strands of tradition, and perhaps even to suggest some order of priority among them. There is, for instance, a *Marchen* [10] type biographical outline which dominates the earlier parts of the story; and a cyclic, repetitive type of pattern[11] which fleshes it out in two principal areas: the peripeties and discoveries at Mark's court and the returns of the exiled Tristan to Cornwall. These two symmetrically-placed patterns have been woven together in an overall motivating design, where the philtre-elopement-love-death complex confers a thematic unity on an otherwise rather loosely coordinated narrative. It could perhaps be argued that a new creation came into being when this tragic motif-complex was grafted onto a pre-existing (perhaps non-tragic) Tristan tradition, though opinions may differ as to when and where (i.e. in what linguistic and cultural milieu) this happened. This last remark hints at a position not totally irreconcilable with a modified Bédierist view! The question of Celtic influence is quite crucial to this notion of a 'layered' Tristan tradition.

First, a brief sketch of the so-called 'Celtic theory'. Gaston Paris[12] was one of the earliest scholars to suggest that the Tristan story owed its inspiration to Celtic tradition, at that time imperfectly known and

subject to much misunderstanding. Paris's poetic language and great breadth of scholarly interest caught the imagination of many, but more soberly expressed and philologically-oriented studies appearing at roughly the same time pointed in the same direction. Careful perusal of Bédier's edition of Thomas reveals that Bédier himself was aware of the Welsh and other material cited by such scholars, but felt constrained to deny its importance.[13] Joseph Loth, in a series[14] sought to establish a clearer picture of the Brittonic material relating to Tristan, while in 1911 an important contribution to the debate appeared in the shape of Gertrude Schoepperle's *Tristan and Isolt* [15] which listed an impressive array of Irish parallels to the Tristan story and drew particular attention to the category of *aitheda* or elopement stories. Schoepperle's views passed quickly into the general consensus for a variety of reasons, including the justly praised combination of boldness and thoroughness with which her views were expressed and possibly also her subsequent marriage to R.S. Loomis, for several decades the doyen of Arthurian studies in America, who continued to expound and publish prolifically arguments based on the same approach. In France we must jump to the 50's and 60's writings of Jean Marx[16] and Jean Frappier[17] for the expression of a pro-Celtic view on Arthurian matters. In England, a Bédierist view continued to hold sway, encouraged perhaps by the influence of Vinaver,[18] whose position and prestige among British Arthurians rivalled that of Loomis in the U.S.A. It was not until the 1950's that a Celtic specialist, Rachel Bromwich, addressed herself to the question of the Celtic origins of the Tristan story.[19] Bromwich added to this some important notes on Drystan, March and Essyllt in *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*,[20] and finally (in *Studia Celtica* 79)[21] a further note on one of the more difficult of the Welsh passages previously attributed to a Tristan context. From the Irish side, only James Carney, in 1955,[22] devoted a substantial chapter to discussion of the Irish affinities of Tristan, advancing a radically different view from that of Schoepperle. Other Irish scholars have commented in passing on specific analogues, or on the general thematic connections between Tristan and early Irish tradition.

Critics have also not been lacking. They fall into two clearly identifiable groups. One group includes scholars whose orientation is strongly literary, whose interest is in the structural, thematic, stylistic qualities of the Arthurian Romances themselves and see over-enthusiastic pursuit of the Loomisite approach as a 'flight from the masterpiece' (or as Chrétien de Troyes himself said of the *conteurs*, an attempt to 'dépécier e corrompre'). The other group comprises those

who would substitute some other source - classical, contemporary, oriental,[23] for the Celtic material cited by Schoepperle, Bromwich etc. As Ian Lovecy points out,[24] this polarization seems to be most acute in the case of Chrétien de Troyes. On the one hand some would no doubt regard R.S. Loomis's *Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes* as his most significant contribution to Arthurian studies, while on the other, some of the anti-Loomisites have, in Lovecy's words 'seemed almost to deny the Celts a place in the tradition behind Chrétien'.

This polarization of opinion is not only unhelpful (to the student, the would-be specialist and to the teacher) but at times demeaning and negative.[25] This article seeks neither to prolong such differences nor to adjudicate between them. Chrétien de Troyes will not be discussed here, though he too has his place in Tristan tradition. What it does propose to do is to look at the Celtic material itself, review as carefully as possible what is known about it in its own context, and suggest several ways in which Tristan studies might then approach the tasks of comparison and analysis.

It is important to make a distinction between the relevant Irish material, and the Welsh Tristan fragments. While context is equally important in both cases, the fact that there is Welsh Tristan material, - setting aside for the moment the delicate questions of chronology and interpretation - places these fragments in a special category. At the very least, the 'anti-Celticists' must concede that some version of the story was current in Wales at the time the relevant versions were written down. Furthermore, a substantial body of support exists for the belief that these fragments represent an early, independent Tristan tradition in Wales and possibly Dumnonia. This support comes, not from Loomis, nor indeed from those who would describe themselves primarily as 'Arthurians', but from the work of specialists in Celtic languages and literature themselves. The Irish material must for the moment be considered as analogous only.

A very brief, inevitably sketchy outline is perhaps necessary, of the relationship between early Irish and Welsh literature. This task, I hasten to add, has been much better performed by a number of specialists, in articles and books, mainly in English, and of easy access to anyone interested.[26] It is all the more surprising - and a source of regret - that so many Arthurians, even some of considerable standing, do not appear to be familiar with such useful contextual information. This justifies my brief word on the subject here.

The constant coupling, in discussions such as this, of Irish and Welsh literature, and the references to a common cultural heritage derive

from the close cultural, historical and geographical ties between the various parts of the Celtic world from the emergence of the Celts in the written testimonies of Greek and Roman commentators right up to the eve of the Norman Conquest of England (and indeed, beyond). Common observances, deities, sacred sites and cultic practices are suggested by the evidence provided by the study of both Continental and Insular Celtic archaeology, topography, language, and confirmed to some extent in the testimony of some of the literary works of the medieval period. The Indo-European cultural heritage is still being explored by scholars ranging from crucially important historical linguists to those who defy categorisation such as Georges Dumézil and Celticists of the breadth and intellectual vigour of Proinsias Mac Cana and the Rees brothers. In the Europe of the Dark Ages, the physical links between the Celtic territories were an everyday reality. The Irish Sea Province, as Myles Dillon called it,[27] was an area of considerable mobility from the earliest recorded times. The researches of these and other scholars have transformed the picture of the Celtic world from that conceived by Gaston Paris - to whom the Celts were a picturesque, downgraded minority deserving of intellectual rehabilitation, or Bédier, who seems to see them as some sort of primitive tribal fringe element. (It is therefore as unscholarly for scholars today to rely upon such outdated perceptions as it would be to rely upon quill pens or the abacus.)

There are of course, differences and distinctions which have to be made between the development of language, culture, tradition, literature, etc., in different parts of the early Celtic world. Significantly, Ireland was never physically occupied or politically subjugated by the Romans, unlike her neighbours Britain and Gaul. When Latin learning did come to Ireland, it came in the relatively peaceful guise of Christian missionary activity; (and it was the Irish in their turn, who were to assist in the dissemination of Latin Christian culture on the Continent). And so a new, dynamic cultural graft fused with, rather than replaced, a vigorous and relatively homogeneous substrate to produce a complex cultural mosaic, characterized by a productive syncretism.

I shall return later to the question of the Irish analogues, described by Schoepperle and further discussed by a number of more recent writers. Some brief reference may first be provided in respect of their context. The great Irish manuscript collections of the 12th century[28] and later - themselves copies of earlier lost manuscripts, - contain a rich variety of material, some elements of which display linguistic and other characteristics which point to a much earlier origin. Furthermore, a majority of experts have suggested that even before some of these early

versions were written down in the 7th – 8th centuries, many of the narratives and other material included may have circulated orally for a considerable period of time. We are thus faced with a difficult and delicate problem when it comes to deciding which elements in a proposed analogue belong to an 'original' nucleus and which represent accretions contemporary with the date of the manuscript. A further caveat concerns the use of an atomistic, isolating approach to individual motifs or narratives and the failure to take account of the way such motifs, story patterns and narrative accessories mesh in together. This vital aspect of early Irish literature has been highlighted by Proinsias Mac Cana in a series of articles on *Immram Brain*.[29] In both Ireland and Wales storytelling and poetry, whether of the humbler kind (the *scél*, the *chwedl*) or of the loftier or more specialised variety (praise poems, elegies, heroic narrative etc.), were based on the shared repertoire of the hierarchy of poets and story tellers, whose activities were both valued and feared.[30] The Rees brothers have demonstrated how this aspect of early Irish and British society is paralleled in early Indian tradition and suggest that here too, 'These classes are survivals, in the East and in the West, from the social and religious hierarchy of the peoples who spoke the ancient Indo-European languages'.[31]

Be that as it may, we must leave aside the question of cultural milieu and look at the surviving Welsh Tristan material, which falls into two categories: isolated references to the principal characters in contexts unrelated to the love-story as we now know it, and fragments of narrative which fit into this latter framework.

Tristan in its Welsh form Drystan (occasionally Trystan) occurs ten or so times in the *Triads*,[32] the important corpus of story-material preserved, probably, for mnemonic reasons, representing material found in manuscripts ranging from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Most of these references are of the single-item variety, name plus epithet or attribute, and seem to belong to a conventional, heroic context. In distinguishing between 'historical' and 'legendary' traditions concerning Arthur, A.O.H. Jarman writes[33] 'References to persons in early Welsh heroic verse are invariably to historical and never to legendary or mythological characters'. He is speaking here, of course, of the celebrated Arthurian reference in *Canu Aneirin* and the less well-known one in the elegy for Cynddylan, but the remark applies equally well to the context to which much of the material in the Triads belongs. There is, as many scholars have pointed out, a Northern element in some of this heroic material and it is therefore possible that Tristan may have been a historical personage, with Northern associations. Two further

single references to Drystan occur in the context of the 'Native Tales', *Culhwch and Olwen* and *Rhonabwy's Dream*. In Culhwch a certain Drwst[34] 'Iron Fist' is listed as one of Arthur's companions, while in the latter tale, arguably later and more literary in tone - though still drawing on the same mixture of legendary, folkloric and semi-historical material - Drystan is again included as one of Arthur's followers. Jarman[35] couples Culhwch with certain of the 'Arthurian' poems in the *Black Book of Carmarthen* as representing the beginning of the development of the 'legendary' as opposed to the 'historical' Arthur. Drystan, like Cai and Bedwyr, would seem to be among his regular retinue in the former context, and the isolated references to Drystan of a conventionally heroic nature would link him, at least by association, to the latter.

Essyllt[36] references are less frequent, but she, too, appears briefly in the *Triads*, where her father is given as Kulvanawt Prydein - a character with North British associations and in *Culhwch and Olwen*, where she appears in a 'doubled' form, a stylistic feature found elsewhere in early Welsh literature, particularly in lists, or catalogues. Despite a *prima facie* Germanic look to the name Iseut, Isolt, it has been persuasively argued that earlier Brittonic forms of the name would anchor it to an indigenous, insular context.

March[37] is the most widely attested of the three principal *dramatis personae*. March ap Meirchawn belongs to a South-Western context, either South Welsh or Dumnonian, and is usually identified with a 6th century ruler who, by the 9th century, according to the testimony of the British monk Wrmonoc, was believed to have ruled jointly in S.W. Britain and Brittany. He is also identified in the latter context with the tyrant Cunomorus, and in the former with the famous inscription at Castle Dor 'Drustanus filius Cunomori hic jacet'. The tendency to locate early British heroes in different parts of the Brittonic world is most strikingly obvious in the case of Arthur, and may reflect the fragmentation of a common tradition due to the wedges driven between different parts of that area by the Germanic invaders.

The second category of Welsh references comprises three fragments of narrative linking Drystan, March and Essyllt (either overtly or by implication) in a situation reminiscent of the continental poems. All available evidence to date suggests that this represents a narrative context independent of, and much earlier than, the extant continental versions or the so-called 'archetype'.

The first of these is the so-called Swineherd Triad,[38] No. 26, which comes in two slightly different versions and represents the disguised

Trystan as one of three powerful Swineherds of the Island of Britain, standing in for the real swineherd who has gone with a message to Essyllt. Arthur and companions (March in the earlier version, Cai and Bedwyr added in the later) try to steal a piglet by ruse or by force, but do not succeed. Two comments can be made about this snippet of narrative. The first concerns the context. One of the other swineherds is Pryderi son of Pwyll (lord of Dyfed), hero of the first branch of the Mabinogi. The adventures of Pwyll and Pryderi are meshed in with motifs relating to the Otherworld, Annwfn, a connection which links Arthur's expedition to Annwfn in *Preiddau Annwfn* in the *Book of Taliesin* [39] and the hunt for the magic boars Twrch Trwyth and Henwen in *Culhwch*. The Rees brothers point out the parallels between these associations and the Swineherd-Otherworld-Southern-realm connotations of the Irish 'fifth', Munster.[40] More prosaically, the linking of Drystan and March with Arthur, Cai and Bedwyr, the latter context belonging as Bromwich has pointed out, to the oldest stratum of Arthurian tradition in Wales, reinforces the likelihood of this part of the Tristan story belonging to the same context as *Culhwch and Olwen*. The second comment concerns the structure of the narrative. Brief though it is, this narrative conforms to the same pattern which underlies the 'cyclic' returns of Tristan and the earlier 'Ruse and Counter-Ruse' sequences set at March's court.

Tristan, Mark and Isolt are linked in a clandestine triangle, but the simple movement from 'Lack to Lack Liquidated' (in Proppian terms[41]) affords the possibility of frequent repetition, either in *bout à bout* sequences, or by way of parallel variations. There is no hint of a tragic or even dramatic context.

The second piece of evidence is difficult to assess. It occurs (in the *Black Book of Carmarthen*) as two *englynion* which on linguistic grounds have been dated to c. 1100. Reference was made by Loth[42] to this poetry and Rachel Bromwich has discussed it twice, first in her 1955 article and more recently in *Studia Celtica* XIV 1979. This latter article includes a translation and commentary and the reader is advised to refer to it in detail. The verses in question are both dramatic and enigmatic, but suggest an association commonly found in Irish and Welsh literature of the period, whereby a prose 'frame' provides the context for highly dramatised or rhetorical verse inserts. Commenting on some of the Irish examples, Proinsias Mac Cana has suggested that the usually succinct and economical prose represents a 'pared-down' version of narratives at one time well known and frequently rendered - presumably orally as well as in writing. Even where such verses have

become displaced from their original context, or may not have been explicity linked to a particular prose 'frame', it may be justifiable to infer a narrative context, once well-known, now lost.

This would supply a frame of reference for the persons and incidents alluded to in the *englynion*. Rachel Bromwich singles out as most significant the fact that Drystan and March are included together in the second fragment, and that the otherwise unattested name Kyheic is found with Tristan and March among the lay witnesses to charters in the Book of Llan Dâv - the point here being, presumably, the association of the three names and the geographical (S.W. Wales) provenance of the material. Secondary features include the reference to the dwarf in the final line of the second *englyn*, the mention of the water which 'carries the leaves' and the thematic importance of the sea.

The final piece of evidence for Welsh literature is to be found in the prose tale *Ystorya Trystan*,[43] preserved in a number of MSS, none earlier than 1550. One version preserves 14 lines of prose, while in the other main version, the prose is garbled or missing. In a third version represented in the MSS, the verse inserts are also garbled. The tale recounts an episode in the flight of the lovers to the forest pursued by Arthur, Mark and followers. Arthur arbitrates between Tristan and Mark, but Isolt, by a clever verbal ruse, ensures that she will be always with Tristan. The structure of this tale conforms to the model represented in the Triad, which I have called the 'Trickster' pattern.

Despite the late date of the manuscript tradition, this story has been conclusively demonstrated to belong to a much earlier context. Sir Ifor Williams described this as 'saga' poetry and assigned it to a 9th century milieu.

Thematically and structurally, such compositions differed from those of the early heroic period, the panegyric and elegaic of the early bards.

Rachel Bromwich's conclusion concerning the Welsh Tristan material is as follows: ' . . . it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the central situation of the *Ystorya* . . . indicates that the story of an *aithed* or 'Escape to the Wilderness' formed part of an indigenous Welsh story about the lovers' and again 'What is certain is that episodes which are central to the story as told in the continental romances were already anticipated, as regards their general character, in essentially independent Welsh sources. The Black Book poem preserves the earliest literary allusion in any language to the story of Drystan/Tristan: it thus contributes substantially to the weight of evidence for the independent Welsh inspiration of the Tristan romances.'[44]

Reference was made previously to the distinction between the cyclic, repetitive narrative pattern found in all versions of the continental Tristan, and the overarching, 'biographical' theme which confers ultimate meaning on the story as a whole by weaving together disparate elements and threading the whole canvas through with the recurrent motifs of the philtre and the inevitable death of the lovers. It is not apparent to me that this tragic element is anywhere suggested by the extant Welsh Tristan material, except possibly by inference in two cases. The first is the generally dramatic and arguably even tragic atmosphere in the *BBC* fragments, which, as Bromwich points out, show affinities with the tragic parts of the *Llywarch Hen* cycle and other similar verses. The second is the fact that the *Ystorya* is set in a forest, to which the lovers have fled from Mark. Although the category of *aitheda* is nowhere near so well represented in early Welsh literature as in Irish, this does not necessarily mean that Welsh versions never existed. None the less, the *Ystorya* ends 'happily', with a resolution of the conflict in the lovers' favour, while still perhaps leaving the way open to a renewal of sparring between the protagonists.[45] In this respect it is identical in structure to the other variants cited. The Irish elopement stories invariably end in death and defeat of the lovers. At least one critic, Schoepperle, believed in an 'original' Tristan story which ended in a similar way. In all the extant continental versions, the 'cyclic' and the 'biographical' patterns have been harmonised or conflated, so that the flight to the forest is terminated by Iseut's return to Mark's court and a further separation, punctuated by the cyclic 'returns' concluding with the death of the lovers, which is represented as inevitable, if postponed. Though later references to the Tristan story in Welsh do mention the philtre, the love-death motif, which all subsequent interpretations of the continental Tristan tradition (including Wagner) have singled out as significant, seems at the very least under-represented in Welsh tradition.[46]

Mention has not been made of the minor characters or of place-names. Amongst the former, Brangien/Brangene clearly deserves pride of place. In the Welsh *Ystorya* Isolt's handmaid is given another name, while Branwen - the obvious ancestress of Brangien - is a heroine in her own right and has no connection with Essyllt. Rachel Bromwich believes aspects of Brangien in the continental poems reflect a 'remote offshoot' of the Mabinogi of *Branwen*,[47] which incorporates elements of the 'Calumniated Wife' (Griseldis) motif. It is certainly curious that in an isolated instance in Eilhart's version, Brangene is reported as having died and been replaced by Gymêle. Perhaps this reflects some

earlier (oral?) cluster of traditions associated with Brangien inherited from her Welsh prototype. It is possible that the Welsh Tristan story (or saga) was never completely committed to writing, and that diffusion in other parts of the Brittonic world would have been responsible for the localisation of versions or portions of the story in Cornwall and Brittany. Hence the importance of Brittonic place names, and the strong argument advanced - most recently by Padel[48] - for the importance of the Cornish associations of the story.

Notes

1. See, for instance, H. Newstead 'Origin and Growth of the Tristan Legend' in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. R.S. Loomis, Oxford 1959. Tristan studies are now further represented by a specialist bibliography: D.J. Shirt, *The Old French Tristan Poems* – (Research Bibliographies and Checklists) London 1980 and a periodical, *Tristania*.
2. Ed. A. Ewert, Oxford 1939, 1970; Muret-Defourques, Paris 1947.
3. Ed. J. Bédier, Paris SATF, 1902–5; Wind, 1950, 1960, Paris, TLF.
4. Ed. D. Buschinger, 1976.
5. See Bédier's *Thomas* Vol. 2, pp. 321–395. For the now numerous critical studies, linguistic, stylistic commentaries on these individual versions, see Shirt.
6. Heinzel, *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum* 14, 1869, 272–447.
7. Gaston Paris, *Revue de Paris*, 15 avril 1894, also in *Poèmes et Légendes du Moyen Age*, Paris 1900.
8. Bédier, *Thomas*; M. Delbouille, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médievale* 5, 1962, 273–286, 409–425.
9. A. Vàrvaro, 'La teoria dell'archetipo tristaniano', *Romania* 88, 1967, 13–58.
10. Probably the most comprehensive account of the Indo-European *Märchen* as a distinctive *genre* has been provided by Max Lüthi, in a large number of publications: *Das Europäische Volksmärchen*, Bern 1947; *Volksmärchen und Volkssage*, Bern 1961; *Märchen*, Stuttgart 1962, 1972, etc. Lüthi's approach strongly tinged with Jungian insights, is complemented by the formalist or structuralist

descriptions of Propp (see note 41); Greimas, *Sémantique Structurale*, Paris 1966, *Du Sens*, Paris 1970; Köngas-Maranda, *Structural Models in Folklore and Transformational Essays*, The Hague 1971, and others. Though differing in orientation and method, such studies confirm the picture of the *Märchen* as essentially biographical, even if stylised, abbreviated, etc., characterised by the dominance of a hero and defined by his ultimate success.

11. Alan Dundes has singled out this pattern as typical of 'primitive' or non-literate narration, and identified it with that sequence described by Propp (see below) as 'Lack' to 'Lack Liquidated'. On these sequences in *Tristan*, see A. Trindade 'The Enemies of Tristan', *Medium Aevum 43, 1974, 6–21.*
12. See note 7.
13. Bédier, *Thomas*, vol. II, pp. 106–130; and especially p. 167.
14. *Revue Celtique* 32, 1912, 403–13.
15. London, Frankfurt, 1913.
16. *La légende arthurienne et le Graal*, Paris 1952, *Nouvelles recherches sur la littérature arthurienne*, Paris 1965.
17. Jean Frappier, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 6, 1963, 255–280; 441–454. In numerous other publications, on the *roman courtois* in general, on Chrétien de Troyes, and particularly on the Grail theme, Frappier has made clear his belief in the Celtic origin of the main Arthurian motifs and characters.
18. *A la recherche d'une poétique médiévale*, Paris 1970, *The Rise of Romance*, Oxford 1971.
19. 'Some Remarks on the Celtic Sources of Tristan', *Transactions of the Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion*, 1955, 32–60.
20. Cardiff 1961.
21. 'The "Tristan" Poem in the Black Book of Carmarthen', pp. 54–65.
22. *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, Dublin 1955.
23. Notably, the Arabic story of Qays wa-Lubna and the Persian Wis u Ramin. For a review of the debate to date see A. Trindade, *Parergon* (NS) 4, 1986, 19–28.
24. *Reading Medieval Studies* 7, 1981, 3–18 'Exploding the myth of the Celtic myth: a new appraisal of the Celtic background of Arthurian Romance'.
25. Witness for instance the regrettable coda to the long drawn out debate between pro and anti in Sr. M. Amelia Klenke, *Chrétien de Troyes et le Conte del Graal*, Madrid 1981.

26. Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Conservation, Innovation in Early Celtic Literature', *Etudes Celtiques* 13, 1972, 61–119; *Celtic Mythology*, London 1971; A. &. B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales*, London 1961, generally speaking, authors sympathetic to this comparative approach include Mac Cana, Gerard Murphy, Myles Dillon. Rachel Bromwich, *Medieval Celtic Literature: A select Bibliography*, Toronto 1974 provides some useful information, (pp. 92 ff.) covering the period up to 1972.

27. Myles Dillon, 'The Irish Settlements in Wales', *Celtica* 12, 1977, 1–11.

28. See Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: An Introduction to Sources*, London 1972, or the old but still invaluable Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the MS Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Dublin 1861.
For descriptions of the literary 'cycles' represented in these early MSS, see Myles Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings*, London 1946, *Early Irish Literature*, Chicago 1948; (ed.) *Irish Sagas*, Cork 1968. Gerard Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*, Dublin 1955, 1971; *Ossianic Lore and Tales of Medieval Ireland*, Dublin 1955, 1971; Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland*, Dublin 1980.

29. 'Mongán mac Fiachna and *Immram Brain*' *Eriu*, 23, 1972, 102–42 (esp. 141); *ibid* 26, 1975, 33–53; 27, 1976, 95–118.

30. See, for instance, on the role of 'satirists' - F.N. Robinson 'Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature' in *Festschrift for Howel Toy*, New York 1911; on the *filidh* generally - E. Knott, *Irish Classical Poetry*, Dublin 1955; Gerard Murphy, 'Bards and Filidh', *Eigse* 2, 1940, 200–207; David Greene, 'The Professional Poets' in Brian O Cúiv, ed. *Seven Centuries of Irish Learning*, Dublin 1961; K. Nicholls *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*, (The Gill History of Ireland vol. IV) pp. 82–84; J. Caerwyn Williams, 'The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 56, 1971, 85–135; Proinsias Mac Cana 'The Rise of the Later School of Filideacht', *Eriu* 25, 1974, 126–146; Ceri W. Lewis, 'The Historical Background of Early Welsh Verse' in Jarman and Rees Hughes, (note 43) pp. 11–50, and pp. 14–19.
For the role of Welsh story tellers and poets, see R. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, Cardiff 1961, pp. LXX–XCVIII.

31. *Celtic Heritage*, p. 17.

32. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, pp. 329 ff.

33. A.O.H. Jarman, 'The Delineation of Arthur in Early Welsh Verse' in

An Arthurian Tapestry, essays in memory of Lewis Thorpe, Glasgow 1981, pp. 1–21.

34. One cannot, of course, be certain that this Drwst is to be identified with Drystan/Tristan. On *Culhwch*, generally, see I.L. Foster in Loomis, *Arthurian Literature*, pp. 31–39, and on Rhonabwy, *ibid*, pp. 39–43.
35. See note 33.
36. *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, pp. 349–350.
37. *ibid*, pp. 443–448. See also H. Newstead, 'King Mark of Cornwall', *Romance Philology* 21, 1958, 240–253.
38. No. 26 in *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, p. 45.
39. Jarman (note 33 *supra*).
40. *Celtic Heritage*, p. 178 ff. Further, on the swine-hunt in *Culhwch* see Gwyn Jones, *Kings, Beasts and Heroes*, Cardiff 1971, and Doris Edel, *Helden auf Freiersfüssen*, Amsterdam 1980, pp. 190 ff.
41. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* 2nd English edition Austin 1968 and Alan Dundes, *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales*, Helsinki, 1964.
42. 33, 1912, 403–413
    Text: *Black Book of Carmarthen*, ed. J.G. Evans, pp. 100–101 See also Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Edinburgh 1868, vol. I, 325–326.
    Skene's translation does not recognise the significance of March and D(i)ristan as proper names.
43. Ed. I. Williams, 'Trystan ac Essyllt', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 5, 1930, 115–129; T.P. Cross, 'A Welsh Trystan Episode', *Studies in Philology* 17, 1920, 93 ff; for full discussion of 'Saga poetry', see Sir Ifor Williams's *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry*, Dublin 1944; *id. The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry* (ed. R. Bromwich) Cardiff 1972; A.O.H. Jarman and G. Rees Hughes, *A Guide to Welsh Literature*, Vol, I, Swansea 1976, pp. 88 ff.
44. See note 43, pp. 63–64.
45. See A. and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage*, pp. 283–285.
46. As Rachel Bromwich points out (*Studia Celtica* 79, p. 64, n. 2), the later poetic tradition in Welsh represents Drystan as the lover of Essyllt (in *Rhonabwy's Dream* eg) perpetually seeking clandestine assignments, and some references allude to the philtre. However, what has come (via Wagner) to be known as the *Liebestood* theme is strongly represented in the continental tradition as in the

'couplet' cited by Gottfried: 'Isôt ma drûe, Isôt m'amie, en vus ma mort, en vûs ma vie'. There are two other literary contexts in which the notion of love-death is dominant, one is that of the Irish *aitheda*; the other the Arabic love-stories celebrated in early Islamic poetry and attributed to the poets of the *Jâhilîyah*. See H. Ringgren, *Studies in Arabian Fatalism*, Uppsala 1955.

47. See also Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen, daughter of Llyr*, Cardiff 1955.

48. *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 1, 1981, 53–82.