

ART. VI.—*The Commanders at Arthuret.* By M.
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Read at Seascale, July 4th, 1975.

THE earliest surviving record of the battle of Arthuret is in the tenth-century *Annales Cambriae*, where the laconic entry *bellum Armterid* is placed at the year equivalent to A.D. 573. This marks the beginning of Northern entries in the *Annales*, and is the historical horizon for Latin records in that region; its importance seems to be further emphasized by the sequence of Camlann in 537, Armterid in 573. That is to say, the battle not only marks the historical horizon for Northern records, but is for this compiler apparently the first noteworthy battle after the national disaster of Camlann.

Allusions in surviving Welsh poetry make Myrddin the most famous participant in the battle: he is represented as a man of the defeated Gwenddoleu and (at the dramatic date of fifty years later) living in the forest of Celyddon in fear of Rhydderch of Strathclyde.¹ The elements of his story — of a man maddened by slaughter and so given foresight of his own and others' deaths — have been discerned also in the Irish tale of *Suibhne geilt* and correlated with the surviving fragments of the story of Lailoken in Strathclyde.² There is also, however, the question why,

¹ TYP 469 f. The poems are the *Cyvoesi* and the *Ymddiddan*, both reportedly composed in the Old-Welsh period before 1150; and the *Avallenau* and *Hoianeu* which might be based on Old-Welsh originals; in Latin, the *Vita Merlini* is dated 1150/1 and ascribed to Geoffrey of Monmouth. English versions of the first four are in Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales* [1868], 462 ff., 368 ff., 370 ff., and 482 ff.; for the *Vita* see now the edition and translation by Basil Clarke (Cardiff, 1973). These poems are all derivatives of the story, which is pieced together from allusions in them.

² K. H. Jackson, "The motive of the Threefold Death in the story of *Suibhne geilt*", in J. Ryan (ed.), *Essays and Studies presented to Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin, 1940), 535 ff.

in the ninth to twelfth centuries, in societies where warfare was endemic and in which Suibhne and Myrddin are imagined as professional warriors, literature should create and concern itself with this psychological study. The new features of warfare — surprise, ferocity, and shock — introduced by the Vikings are no doubt explanation enough, but if accepted they at the same time limit the ancestry of the Myrddin story to that time: its only relevance to the battle of Arthuret is then that some poet used it to emphasize the importance and terror of that conflict, and at the same time to place the psychological fact in a bearably remote context.

If the main purpose of the story is psychological and literary, setting on record not so much the killings as the destruction of the living which was experienced in Viking times, for our purposes its importance lies in the choice of Arthuret as a comparable historical analogue for ferocity. This cannot be a wholly new development, but must in part derive from a reputation which that battle already possessed. So long, however, as the literary aspect was unassessed or unexplored, this *traditio* was merely elaborated from the twelfth to the present century: from these poems Geoffrey deduced the presence of Rhydderch of Strathclyde at Arthuret,³ ignoring or unaware of the dramatic date fifty years later in the *Avalleuau*; Evan Evans' copy of Vaughan's notes adds Aedan of Dalriada,⁴ apparently by some confusion with Degsastan thirty years later; Skene accepts both these and, through misunderstanding of the *Ymddiddan*,⁵ adds Maelgwn Gwynedd who died some twenty-five years before. In all these antiquarian speculations the great name of Urien did not appear until recently, but is now proposed

³ TYP 505.

⁴ TYP 209.

⁵ TYP 209. But an alliance between "Malgo" and Aedan is well known to Scottish pseudo-history from Fordun iii 28 to Bellenden ix 16.

as that of a *tertius gaudens* who profited from a Brittonic civil war.⁶ The whole of this *traditio* is neither literary nor historical and must be set aside: the only permissible inference from the Myrddin poems is that Arthuret, even in Viking times, had the reputation of being a ferocious and shocking conflict.

This entirely agrees with the appearance of the battle as marking the historical horizon of the North in the *Annales Cambriae*, which implies that after this awful event things were never the same again and a new period began.⁷ The ferocity of the battle is explicit in abstracts from poems and stories no longer extant, contained in Triads 29c, 31c, 44b, and 84b. Triad 29c asserts that Gwenddoleu's war-band continued the fight for six weeks after Gwenddoleu himself was killed, thus matching the unparalleled ferocity of the attackers with the unparalleled valour of the defenders. In Triad 31 the war-band of Dreon son of Nudd at Arthuret is compared to that of the exterminated war-band of the Gododdin at Catraeth: in the similarly twelfth-century pedigree tract, *Lineages of the North-countrymen*,⁸ a Nudd is brother of Gwenddoleu, so that we seem to have a belief that not only Gwenddoleu and his war-band, but some of his kindred also, were involved. Triads 29 and 31 show great partisan feeling for Gwenddoleu and Dreon.

⁶ J. Morris, *The Age of Arthur* (1973), 218 f.

⁷ Similarly, the Irish *Suibhne geilt* was attached to the Battle of Moira in 637, when the Dal n Araidi and Dal Riata were totally defeated by the Ui Neill, and never again could aspire to rule in Tara: F. J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High Kings* (1973), 112 ff. Again, the wild man of Black Morrow Wood at Kirkcudbright has been taken into the foundation-legend for another new period, that of the MacLellans of Bombie, by 1824 [D. Macritchie, *Scottish Gypsies under the Stewarts* (Edinburgh, 1894), p. 24, note 1], being identified with a personage previously called a Saracen from Ireland. The psychological force even in this late and partial form of the tale is admirably expressed by the Rev. C. H. Dick (who seemingly knew no other): "one would like to know what terror thrust this Saracen upon his hunted life on this northern coast, what he thought of its dank woods and heathy crags, how he prayed in his loneliness, and if a vision of burning sands came to him at the end" (*Highways and Byways in Galloway and Carrick* [1916], 101).

⁸ EWGT 72 ff.

Triad 44b places on one horse at Arthuret the sons of Eliffer, with Dunod the stout and Cynfelyn the rough: this riding of one horse by four heroes may be either mockery of the heroes or admiration of the horse. The first is suggested by the burlesque account of Elidir the pretender, contained in 44a, but an addition to the Arthuret entry in a later manuscript may suggest rather the second. This agrees with the older version that the four heroes were carried by the horse to look upon the battle-fog of Arthuret, and adds that "none overtook them but [the horse] ridden by Dingad son of Cynan *garwyn*, who is therefore . . . dishonoured to this day". Since the sons of Eliffer are riding their own horse, but Dingad a horse otherwise assigned to Gwenddoleu's father,⁹ it would appear that the situation envisaged is one in which the attacking commanders drew back to examine the state of the fighting at large, when Dingad seized his moment, and a horse, to escape. Whether the author of the story of Dingad was re-telling an old tale, or inventing a new one to be rude to someone in Powys, is uncertain: the epithet *carwyn* is distinctively that of Cynan of Powys, but otherwise the names of Dingad and Cynan are too common to have any significance.

We should add Triad 30b, which asserts that at Caer Greu the war-band of Eliffer's sons deserted, leaving their lords to be killed. This is the greatest possible contrast to the war-bands of Gwenddoleu and Dreon, and gains in effect from the standard epithet of Eliffer himself, "of the Great War-band". It is to be noted that Triads 29 and 30 use the term *teulu*, which is held certainly to mean the personal life-guards of the ruler; while Triad 31 (Dreon) and Eliffer's epithet use the term *gosgordd*, which is also the term used throughout the *Gododdin* for the force

⁹ TYP 115.

sent to, and killed at, Catraeth unaccompanied by their king Mynyddog.¹⁰ Since a *teulu* without its prince is not, apparently, imaginable, a *gosgordd* should presumably (at least in these instances) be understood as an equally élite task-force: Triad 30b therefore implies that Eliffer could organise such a body, while his sons could not even retain the loyalty of their *teulu*. Triads 29 and 31 thus seem to show strong feelings for Gwenddoleu's life-guards and Dreon's task-force, while Triad 30 shows no less a hostility to the life-guards who were all that was left of their inheritance to the sons of Eliffer.

This twelfth-century division of sympathies does not seem to be the oldest visible in Welsh records. The pedigree collection of the Harleian genealogies¹¹ places Dunod and Eliffer's sons among the Coeling, which should mean that they were regarded in the tenth century as desirable collaterals to the first dynasty of Gwynedd;¹² while *De Situ Brecheniauc*¹³ (which represents an Old-Welsh original earlier than 1150) makes Eliffer's sons the nephews of the great Urien Rheged, to whom no-one in Wales was hostile from at least the ninth century onwards. These pedigrees therefore show that in the ninth and tenth centuries it was Gwenddoleu's enemies who were in favour: their supersession by Gwenddoleu is evidenced for the twelfth century both by the Triads, and by Gwenddoleu's attachment to the Coeling pedigree in *Lineages of the Northcountrymen*. It is, of course, tempting to suggest that this overturn of sympathies was due to the Myrddin poetry, but it is not certain that a purely literary influence, however powerful, could produce these effects.¹⁴

¹⁰ TYP 65 f.

¹¹ EWGT 9 ff.

¹² HPN.

¹³ EWGT 14 ff.

¹⁴ It is possible that the older hostility to Gwenddoleu appears in Triad 32, where his man-eating birds are fortunately killed.

We may, however, take the judgement, in Triad 84, on Arthuret as a senseless battle, to be a result of these changes of sympathy. The Triad is extant first in Peniarth 50, a south-Welsh manuscript of 1425-1456,¹⁵ and ascribes the battle to a rustic squabble over a lark's nest: the implication is that, if the causes had ever been known in Wales, they had been denied by one ideology or the other, and forgotten. The modern continuation of this *tradio* is the view of Arthuret as a quarrel among the Coeling,¹⁶ a mere skirmish, which denies the evidence that it was an important event, even if little historical detail was known in Wales, and its importance there, from the ninth century onwards, was literary. In this, of course, it is hardly different from any other Northern material, which was exploited by the Welsh literary men precisely because it was enticingly remote.

The Welsh evidence, on the historical side, therefore presents us with a dated event, of acknowledged great importance, about which very little was known beyond the name of the place and the names of the participants. Modern study must begin from these, under the constant apprehension that one or more may have been inserted for ideological reasons.

Arthuret.

The identification of *Armterid* with Arthuret near Carlisle was first proposed by Skene, supported by the derivation of the name of nearby Carwinley from *Caer Gwenddoleu*. These derivations are generally accepted,¹⁷ even if with some hesitation by the linguists.¹⁸ The historians, however, show no agreement on the strategic or tactical situation envisaged: the sites have been connected with the Strength of

¹⁵ TYP xxxi.

¹⁶ TYP 209, Morris, *op. cit.*, 218.

¹⁷ TYP 379.

¹⁸ PNCu 51 f.

Liddel, and with Netherby.¹⁹ Liddel is Norman, and Roman Netherby had not been in military use for a considerable time by the late sixth century, so that archaeological evidence offers no support to either of these suggestions.

The Myrddin poetry is quite unhelpful, for Myrddin is represented as hiding in the forest of Celyddon. This should, of course, be within some probable distance both of other places sharing the Caledonian name (like Dunkeld or Schiehallion²⁰) and of Arthuret itself, and not beyond Rhydderch's reach. No locality can conform with all these requirements; it must be supposed that the Welsh poets used the term Celyddon, at least in this instance, quite arbitrarily.²¹

Gwenddoleu, Dreon, and ?Dingad.

Gwenddoleu's association with Arthuret and Carwinley in lower Eskdale cannot be said to tell us of his relations (if any) with Carlisle.²² His position at the time of the battle might have been a result of losing Carlisle to southern enemies, or might have been intended to screen the town from northern attack.

Dreon son of Nudd presents rather different problems. His own name is not illuminating; Nudd's is well-evidenced. The twelfth-century sources know of Nudd the Generous, son of Senyllt, who appears first in Triad 2; he seems at that time to have only recently

¹⁹ TYP 379.

²⁰ CPNS 21 f.

²¹ The "Wod of Calidone" in which the Clyde and Annan rise (Bellenden, i 7) is within reach of Arthuret, but the name is quite possibly derived from the Merlin poetry. Lailoken's Drummelzier would be in *Goddeu*, The Forest (of Etrick, Yarrow, and Tweed, CPNS 343).

²² I use the name of Carlisle as a convenient shorthand for "the chief centre of the military organisation protecting the food-growers on the eskers of the Carlisle plain". Since this agriculture had developed in Roman times, it must be supposed to have been, more or less, a constant throughout the Brittonic period, and therefore equally constantly requiring military protection. But that centre may not always have been Carlisle: a twelfth-century gloss to the *Historia Brittonum* seems to name *Guasmoric* (*Palmecastle*, Old Carlisle near Wigton) as a command post in the Pictish wars; and Urien's residence is named as Lyvennet. For the Heskets see below.

ousted his father Senyllt as proverbially generous and one of the three heroes so recognised in the bardic conventions, for it is Senyllt who is named in the *Gododdin*,²³ and in the Jesus College pedigree collection,²⁴ which is based on an Old-Welsh text.²⁵ Another ancestry for a Nudd is given in *Lineages of the Northcountrymen*, also of the twelfth century: he is the son of Ceidio and brother of Gwenddoleu. Probably he is the same Nudd for (it has been remarked with surprise) Nudd the Generous does not otherwise appear in this tract: his first appearance in pedigree material is as son of Senyllt in the *Lineages of the Saints*,²⁶ in entry 18, a highly systemising conflation derived in part from the *Northcountrymen*. There is, therefore, less reason to suppose that Nudd the Generous was omitted from the *Northcountrymen* than that he is there in a variant version, as brother of Gwenddoleu. By the seventeenth century he has become Nudd the generous-handed, king of The North,²⁷ and a figure of romance.

Nudd's name seems to be epigraphically evidenced in the Yarrowkirk stone of the first half of the sixth century:²⁸ "This is the everlasting memorial: in this place lie the most famous princes, Nudus and Dumno-genus: in this tomb lie the two sons of Liberalis." The simultaneous burial of two brother princes suggests either battle or plague, and the first half of the sixth century ended with the Yellow Plague: if this was the cause of Nudd's death, his son could well have been present at Arthuret some twenty-four years later.

To be buried at Yarrowkirk, Nudd was presumably prince of some area to the west of Gododdin; to take

²³ Stanza A47.

²⁴ Entry 19: EWGT 46.

²⁵ TYP 186; Triad 70 and notes.

²⁶ EWGT 51 ff.

²⁷ Triad 71 and notes.

²⁸ *Royal Commission for Ancient Monuments (Scotland) : Selkirkshire* (1957), 110 ff.

a task-force to Arthuret, Dreon would need (beside the political will) men, equipment, communication routes, and lack of danger to those he left unprotected. Thus if he could be supposed to come from anywhere as near the Gododdin border as Yarrowkirk, he would need to be assured of the unlikelihood of Gododdin attacking his rear; and he would make, presumably, for the Roman road which came down into Eskdale at Raeburnfoot, unless other routes through The Forest were already open. So far as Dreon son of Nudd is concerned therefore, there seems to be no immediate objection either from geography or epigraphy to his participation in Arthuret, but it leaves the question open of the activity of Gododdin at this time.

In the case of Dingad son of Cynan, the question arises whether the epithet assigned to his father, *carwyn*, is original or whether it replaces some such title as prince of Powys, for there was also a Powys in Liddesdale, near Newcastleton.²⁹ This is geographically much more probable in relation to Arthuret, but whether it is more probable for a late Welsh source is less certain.

The widest plausible area occupied by Gwenddoleu and his possible allies at the moment of Arthuret would thus seem to be Eskdale and beyond, and Liddesdale: that is to say, The Forest with some more southern territory. It may seem doubtful whether this could form a viable kingdom, but our information is limited to the moment of Arthuret, which was either the only, or perhaps more probably the last, battle in the war.

Cynfelyn the rough.

According to entry 3 of the *Lineages of the North-countrymen*, this Cynfelyn was one of the Cynwydyon war-band, a "brother" of Clydno of Edinburgh and Cadrod of Kelso. We must, however, suppose that

²⁹ CPNS 383.

if these brothers had been in their remembered seats at the time of Arthuret, Dreon could hardly have left a principedom on or near the Gododdin border open to their attack: a point which is emphasized by the statement in *De Situ Brecheniauc* (entry 12.16) that Cadrod married Gwrygon *goddeu*, of The Forest.

According to HG 5-7, Cynwyd the eponym of the Cynwydyon was ancestor also of the kings of Strathclyde; and correlation of these pedigrees³⁰ with those of the Coeling of Gododdin suggests that Clydno and Cadrod obtained Edinburgh and Kelso for a short period between the reigns of the Coeling brothers Bran and Cyngar. This context suggests that Cynfelyn may have moved southwards from Strathclyde against Gwenddoleu at about the same time as Clydno and Cadrod moved eastwards against Gododdin. Cynfelyn's most direct route would then be down Annandale and eastwards, driving Gwenddoleu towards Eskdale. This is quite consistent with the most plausible disposition of Gwenddoleu and his allies at the moment of the battle; and a Cynwydyon threat to Gododdin, present or anticipated, might account for Dreon's ability to bring a task-force to the aid of Gwenddoleu (if the Coeling of Gododdin were neutral or hostile to Gwenddoleu), or for the absence of Coeling help for Gwenddoleu, if the Coeling were his friends.

Dunod the stout.

The immediate family of Dunod appears in entries 11 and 19 of the Harleian Genealogies, and his obit is entered at the year corresponding to 595 in the *Annales Cambriae*. The prima facie inference is that Dunod's dynasty or area was particularly closely connected with the original source of this entry.

A similar inference may be made from the names

³⁰ HPN.

of Dunod and his father and brother, Pabo and Sawyl. These exceptionally Latinate and ecclesiastical names, Papa, Donatus, and Samuel, indicate proximity to or the influence of some important Christian centre; and it would seem that the family had this reputation still very strongly in the twelfth century, when it is credited with a remarkable saintly progeny.³¹

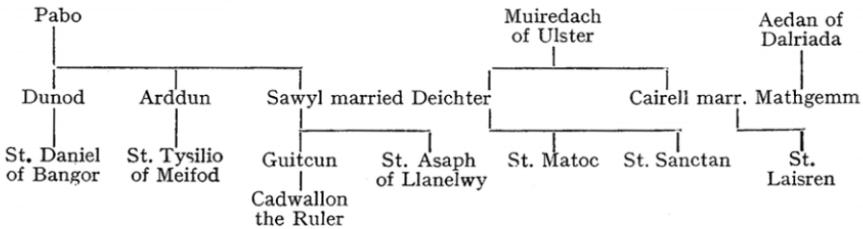
Sawyl's alleged Irish marriage implies that his family were supposed to be active in an area where communication with Ireland was possible, and this entirely agrees with Pabo's grave in Anglesey, Dunod's presence at Arthuret, and the cults at Bangor and Llanelwy, and the establishment of a cult of St Laisren at Lamlash in Arran by Ragnall of the Isles (1160-1207). The most informative of these affiliations however is that of St Sanctan, who was known to the Irish as a Briton, and who seems to be identifiable as the eponym of *Cill Espuig Sanctain* near Dublin, of the parish of Kirk Santan in the south-east of the Isle of Man, and of Kirksanton near Millom on the Cumberland coast, first recorded in 1086.³²

The pedigree of St Sanctan is undoubtedly a confection of the twelfth century or shortly before, and compiled by someone who wished to identify a

³¹ For the details of the sources see HPN, notes 45 to 50. The derivation of *Pabo* from *papa* depends on whether the standard Latin *pāpa* had become *pāpa* in British Latin (K. H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (1953), 287 ff.).

³² PNCu 415 f. The Cumberland site was taken over by Furness Abbey, which founded Rushen in Man in 1134, and later planted colonies in Ulster. It might be debated whether (1) the cult spread from Cumberland through the activities of Furness; (2) the cult spread from Ireland with the Norse-Irish: against this is the Irish belief that Sanctan was a Briton; (3) the cult was common to Cumberland and Man before the Vikings and spread to Dublin under their rule, perhaps in connection with the eleventh-century exile of the kings of Dublin in Man. The written record of the Manx cult begins in 1291 (J. J. Kneen, *The Place-names of the Isle of Man* [Douglas, 1925], 133); the parish was the only one in the southern half of the island over which the king had full jurisdiction; it is one of three in Middle Sheading in which the "toponymy belongs to the later Gaelic period" when Norse had ceased to be productive (p. 129). The sheading as a whole, therefore, was apparently not settled by the first generations of the Norse-Irish, and Kirksanton maintained a special position within it. The Irish statement is that Sanctan was bishop of *Cill da les*: this is not identified, but may not have been in Ireland.

Muiredach associated with the cult, ending somewhat desperately with the king of the Dal Fiatach of Ulster, whose son Cairrell was already associated with Man and Arran.³³ There was, however, at least one Norse-Irish settler in Cumberland named Muiredach, who left his name in Setmurthy near Cockermouth, and it seems likely that the pedigree-maker was refurbishing some information on an association between St Sanctan and a Muiredach of the Cumberland coast.³⁴ In that case, Sanctan's other grandfather, Pabo, is to be connected with the name of Papcastle on the other side of Cockermouth, which occupies the site of the Roman fort at Derventio, and of which the name is held to originate in the word *papi*,³⁵ the Old-Norse equivalent of Pabo.



The hypothesis, on the toponymic evidence, is therefore that the pedigree compiler (in the twelfth century or shortly before) was working on the basis of information which both connected St Sanctan with the Papcastle area, and added to his Brittonic grand-

³³ For the Dal Fiatach dynasty see F. J. Byrne in *Stud. Hib.* 4 (1964), 54 ff. It seems not improbable that the pedigree of Sanctan is due to Furness and its offshoots, very soon after their arrival in Ulster. There are extant variants which look like modifications and alternatives; and the fantasy of St Laisren's pedigree seems to be a further development.

³⁴ Setmurthy: PNCu 433 f. If the field-name *Karcmurdath* also includes the name (PNCu 91) it may indicate another settler, or the extent of one man's power.

³⁵ PNCu 308. Derventio is not entered in the *Notitia*: S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (London, 1967), 230 ff. The absence may mean that the fort was among the first to be handed over to local Brittonic forces, sometime after its repair in 369: the Roman element here seems to have been unusually well-integrated with the development of native agriculture: P. Salway, *Frontier People of Roman Britain* (Cambridge, 1965), 113 f., 120 f.

father Pabo an Irish-Norse grandfather Muiredach, the eponym of Setmurthy. Some other and independent considerations may be brought to bear on this suggestion.

The first is that Kirksanton was already the site of a cult of Sanctan in 1086, while the nearby settlement of Whicham carries one of the oldest Anglian names in Cumberland, no doubt pre-Viking.³⁶ It would seem to be probable therefore that Sanctan's cult was established not only before the Norse-Irish but also before the Angles arrived, though the name of Whicham does not give any very firm indication of date. Anglian sculpture at sites further north in the coastal strip (at Waberthwaite, Irton, and Workington) apparently show the Anglian church active in or before the ninth century.

Secondly, the pedigree of HG 19 brings the family or dynasty of Pabo down to Sawyl's grandson Cadwallon. With Dunod's obit in 595, this should mean that the dynasty was known, recorded, or believed, to continue until sometime in the first half, or about the middle of the seventh century, which brings us to the great periods of Northumbrian expansion under first Edwin, then Oswy, either of which would be a plausible time for the first Anglian settlements on the Cumberland coast.³⁷

Thirdly, the name of Dunod raises the question of the identification of the *regio Dunutinga*, part of which was given to St Wilfred together with other lands.³⁸ The linguistic implications of *Dunutinga* are not clear: on the one hand the regional name may be an Old English back-formation, meaning "the people of Dent" in western Yorkshire;³⁹ on the other hand the name

³⁶ PNCu xxi 443 f.

³⁷ In Man, the special position of Kirksanton parish [see note 30] may reflect a special status in pre-Viking times.

³⁸ B. Colgrave, *Eddius Stephanus, Life of St Wilfrid* (Cambridge, 1927), chapter 17.

³⁹ PNWe xxxvi note 4, xxxviii note 1: but surely only if Dent itself is not from the Old Irish [-Norse] *dind*. Cp. also PNCu 358, 132, 421; PNWe ii 76.

Dunod produces the regional name Dunoding in north Wales, so that the name could be purely Brittonic. There is an area where the toponymic evidence may provide an overlap of the names of Dunod and Wilfred, at the eastern end of the limestone crescent which stretches between the Cumbrian dome and Inglewood Forest from the neighbourhood of Papcastle to that of Penrith (and provides the only fairly easy cross-country communication route independent of the Roman roads).⁴⁰ St Wilfred's is a chapel in Brougham,⁴¹ and a lost *Saintwilfritholm*⁴² is reported in the parish of Dacre, while Powdonnet Well in Morland parish⁴³ (recorded only from 1637 onwards) might include Dunod's name. This evidence is fragile: it is mentioned in order to demonstrate a lack of conflict with the rest, due to the geology of the area.⁴⁴

The upshot of this collation of material is that while the positive evidence cannot be regarded as probative, there seems also to be an absence of negative evidence bearing on the hypothesis that Dunod's dynasty ruled the Cumberland coast in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, and may also have held the limestone crescent between the Carlisle plain and the Cumbrian dome. There has appeared, however, no evidence for the ecclesiastical centre which the names of the dynasty, and the Latin annal of Dunod's obit, so clamantly require.⁴⁵

So far as Arthuret is concerned, the location of any

⁴⁰ R. Hogg, "Early Settlement in the Lake Counties", in CW2 lxxii 1 ff., especially p. 26. If this is relevant, the territory of Dunod will have been determined rather by the natural divisions of the country than the imposed Roman economy.

⁴¹ PNWe ii 131, 133.

⁴² PNCu 190 note 2.

⁴³ PNWe ii 143.

⁴⁴ An equal fragility attaches to the Irish evidence that Sanctan was a bishop, and to the Norse-Irish name Postlethwaite (if this means "Apostle's clearing"), debatably a manor, or a vill, of Kirksanton: PNCu 416 f.

⁴⁵ Perhaps the name and site of Eaglesfield near Cockermouth should be reconsidered, by comparison with Eaglesfield in Dumfriesshire, Eaglesham in Renfrewshire, and other parallels: on *eglwys* names in general see now G. W. S. Barrow, *Kingdom of the Scots* (London, 1973), 60 ff.

of the allied commanders south of Carlisle would imply either that Carlisle (or its equivalent) was held by enemies of Gwenddoleu, or that they had captured it before the battle at Arthuret. If the war involved the possession of this centre, it would, of course, begin to assume an importance commensurate with its reputation.

Gwrgi and Peredur, sons of Eliffer.

The earliest mention of Gwrgi and Peredur is their obit in the *Annales Cambriae* at the date equivalent to 580, seven years after Arthuret. The story of their death is given in the twelfth-century Triad 30: deserted by their *teulu*, they were killed at Caer Greu by Eda big-knee. The place Caer Greu is unidentified; Eda is identified, erroneously, with an eighth-century Bernician prince in *Historia Brittonum*, chapter 61, and so was known before or by about 1100, the date of the manuscript. The English material for Deira and Bernicia, sparse for the sixth century, offers no identification.

The name of the father Eliffer is often confused with Elidir (from *De Situ Brecheniauc*, about 1200, onwards): the earliest source, entry 12 of the Harleian Genealogies, neatly avoids decision by using instead the pseudo-Latinism Eleuther. Geoffrey has Peredur map Eridur for one of Arthur's nobles, which looks like a further corruption from Elidir; and in another story Peredurus is one of the brothers of Elidurus. Eliffer has the standard epithet Great War-band, but no story survives of his purpose or success in organising it.

The names of the brothers taken separately have rather various associations. Gwrgi has a homonym with the epithet *garwelwyd*, "rough grey", which seems to designate a wolf, outlaw, or exile; he was a murderer, fortunately killed (like Gwenddoleu's birds and Aethel-

frith) according to Triad 32: apparently his story was located, if anywhere, in the North.

Peredur's is a much more famous name. The son of Eliffer has a son Gwgon the hero, and a grandson Cedwyn, the saint of Llangedwyn in Denbighshire. Gwgon, however, is the subject of contradictory statements: in a variant of Triad 19 he subdues his enemies, in Triad 8 he is broken-spirited (in spite of his epithet, "hero"); it seems likely that we have here another example of the change of ideology in the Welsh treatment of Gwenddoleu and his enemies. St Cedwyn first appears about 1510 in the surviving sources;⁴⁶ later, he is one of the few who escaped from Camlann.⁴⁷ But the name appears to have been known as that of a saint quite independently of this material,⁴⁸ which is clearly without authority, and of interest only as showing the survival of Peredur son of Eliffer, in spite of Geoffrey and other developments.

A Peredur "with steel weapons" is named in the *Gododdin* (A31) together with ten others (including a Gwgon) as having fallen at Catraeth. It is not clear whether this is, in part, a variant of the Caer Greu story, for both brothers could, of course, die in one year though in different battles; it is also not clear whether Peredur's name is an interpolation in the *Gododdin*, or precisely what such an interpolation would necessarily involve for that text.

Geoffrey's Elidurus Pius, brother of Peredurus, is active in Dumbarton, Callendar Forest, and York, but is reported by a glossator⁴⁹ to have been buried at *Kair Peredur quod nunc Ribbecastria dicitur*: this form of the name of Ribchester seems to be more Latin than the Ribbecestre of 1202.⁵⁰ At first sight,

⁴⁶ ByS 74 in Peniarth 127: EWGT 65.

⁴⁷ TYP 161.

⁴⁸ LBS ii 98.

⁴⁹ To the Ushaw College manuscript (possibly from Kirkstall) fo. 29r, twelfth century: W. Levison, EHR 58 (1943), 41 ff.

⁵⁰ PNL*a* 144, 233.

the restriction of the glossing information to the names of Elidir (Eliffer?) and Peredur suggests that it might be of independent descent, but since the famous Maponus inscription of Ribchester was read by Camden as ending with the line of letters ELITER, the possibility that someone has been jumping to conclusions cannot be quite excluded.⁵¹

The Peredur who was claimed as the founder of Pickering⁵² was Geoffrey's hero, perhaps transferred from Ribchester after the grant of Pickering to Edmund of Lancaster about 1213.⁵³

The most famous Peredur, however, was Perlesvaus, Perceval, of the Grail romances, son of Efrog Iarll. Geoffrey⁵⁴ uses the eponym of York, Ebraucus, as the father of numerous progeny but does not include a

⁵¹ Camden, *Britannia* (1586), 43r. Mr B. J. N. Edwards tells me that these letters were read as VELITEREIS by T. D. Whitaker's editors as late as 1872 (*History of Whalley*, 3rd ed., i 23). The most recent reading of the stone is Alföldy's, printed by Mr Edwards in *Ribchester* (National Trust, 1972), 26 f., no. 7. The inscription, self-dated to 31 August 241, was found (for the new learning) at Ribchester in 1578, but is very badly weathered in its lower part, and so was presumably exposed to the climate, and to observation, for centuries. There is thus no small possibility that ELITER was read long before Camden: the name MAPON[in line 2 might in any case have suggested that it was a Brittonic document, to be somehow related to the Solway area and the Clochmabanstane.

It should be added that the appearance of Ribchester as a very early Saxon site (J. N. L. Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery* . . . [Oxford, 1969], 46 facing and 143; John Morris, *Age of Arthur* [London, 1973], 107) rests, as Mr Edwards tells me, on a single very early sherd, now in Ribchester museum but of unknown provenance. Of the other fairly early Saxon material in the museum, two more sherds, a shield boss, and a small long brooch are also of unknown provenance; the seventh-century bracelet was found in Ribchester. Since Ribchester is at the western end of the Aire gap, and Saxons were numerous at and near York very early, the kind of contact evidenced by this material needs most cautious consideration.

⁵² TYP 492 mentions this attribution in John Stow's *Chronicle of England* (1615), 12. In the 1580 edition, p. 30, there is a margine to this passage: *Caxton, I Rouse*. John Rouse, *Historia Rerum Angliae*, ed. T. Hearne (Oxford, 1745), 44, says ". . . Peredurum. Qui secundo anno regni sui condidit villam de Pikryng boreali plaga Angliae, comitatu Eboracensi, et ibi idem rex, ut ipse iusserat, erat sepultus." This looks like a simple relocalisation of the twelfth-century Ribchester story of Elidir. Rouse's *Historia* (according to *Dict. Nat. Biog.*) was written in order to provide a gallery of founders, which suggests that he may have had a large part in this fabrication, but I have not been able to trace Stow's reference to Caxton and so determine the relative dates. Pickering is not mentioned by Higden (died 1363), *Polichronicon* [Rolls 41, vol. iv, p. 28], a major source for Caxton.

⁵³ VCH Yorks., NR ii 419.

⁵⁴ HRB ii 8.

Peredur amongst them; the Grail hero had, however, been created by 1160.⁵⁵

It seems clear that, whatever the sources for the alleged localisations of Peredur in and after the twelfth century, it was believed that he should be placed south of Carlisle and in either Lancashire or Yorkshire. It is extremely difficult to estimate the value of this belief, which presumably rests on popular lore already in existence when Geoffrey's book reached the North.⁵⁶ Such lore was no doubt of Brittonic origin, but need not have been Brittonic in transmission, as the popularity of Gawain and others in subsequent centuries proves. In the North, there would be a period in which bilingual Norse-Irish were in communication with monoglottal English, Danes, and Cumbrians, and it is to be remembered that, even if all other reasons for the movement of men and animals in this largely pastoral country ceased at any time, animals as well as men must have salt (especially salt-licks for sheep and cattle in limestone country), and this salt must be brought from the coast. The organisation of the salt trade thus provides even in the most insecure times an irreducible network of communications.⁵⁷ For the Norse-Irish period and later, some other centres of such communication can be located: the Heskets between Carlisle and Penrith are named from the Old Norse word for "racecourse", and the Court Thorn near Low Heskett was the meeting-place of the Ingle-

⁵⁵ TYP 490 note 1.

⁵⁶ Geoffrey's book was presumably to some extent known in the North before 1150, but perhaps the first sign of the acceptance of its authority is the use, in official documents, of his spelling *-mar-* in Westmariland (from the eponym Marius, HRB iv 17, himself derived from epigraphic evidence reported by William of Malmesbury, prologue to Book iii of *De Gestis Pontificum*). The first of these documents is a charter of 1150 x 1162, and the form continues in official use until 1179, then ceases: PNWe i 1. If Geoffrey's glossator in the Ushaw manuscript was relying on ELITER, he is perhaps most likely to have been of this generation and school of thought.

It is interesting that *Westmaria* is still the standard literary spelling in the sixteenth-century Scots historians.

⁵⁷ Salterwath Bridge across the Lune at Tebay has succeeded a "salt-merchants' ford" and carries the Roman road: PNWe i 20, cf. ii 47 f., 53.

wood Forest court, held yearly on 11 June, while Tarn Wadling nearby provided drinking water in plenty, and was named from an Irishman by Britons.⁵⁸ The knowledge of exactly this area (used as a meeting place from, apparently, the tenth to the eighteenth centuries) in the late fourteenth-century *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*,⁵⁹ suggests that other entertainments than racing and litigation were to be found at these meetings, and makes such nearby toponyms as Caraverick (Caer Efrog?) and Castle-Ewaine⁶⁰ less surprising. The tales, having been composed within the limits of credibility acceptable at such meetings, would not only enter the repertoires of winter lore over a wide area locally, but be repeated at other gatherings perhaps far away: for example, at the Hesketh on the Ribble estuary, accessible either down the Roman road to Ribchester, or by sea. Thus from the tenth century to and after our written sources, stories and localities of Peredur could have been known to travelling men, as part of the ordinary repertory of entertainment.⁶¹ From this repertory, it could have been "known" to the oral literature of several languages that Peredur belonged to the country south of Carlisle, though precise localisation would shift with time. While therefore neither Pickering, nor York, nor Ribchester can for general reasons — and special reservations in each case — be trusted, the "known" limits may be regarded with some respect, in so far as they are reflected in our written sources.

For Arthuret this means that for two very different

⁵⁸ PNCu 200, 202 f.

⁵⁹ PNCu xix. Obviously for this Norse-Irish toponym we should compare the Irish institution of the *oénach*. Hesketh as an *oénach*-centre might well be an alternative to Carlisle as an institutional location during the early Norse-Irish period. The *Awntyrs* is now edited by Robert J. Gates (Philadelphia, 1969).

⁶⁰ PNCu 202. "Sir Ewayne fitz Uryene" is in the *Awntyrs*.

⁶¹ It may be noted that the third Hesketh (in Felixkirk YNR) near Thirsk, is not far from Pickering. An entertainers' circuit is, of course, one of the modes of organisation to be looked for.

sets of reasons, the evidence (such as it is) about two of Gwenddoleu's enemies may plausibly be interpreted as bringing them from the south, Dunod from Cumberland and the sons of Eliffer from Lancashire or Yorkshire north of the Aire gap. It follows from the geography that Arthuret was almost certainly the last battle of the war, fought after the fall of Carlisle; and that Gwenddoleu fell to a remarkably wide alliance, stretching from the Clyde to the Aire. The event thus begins to display dimensions suitable to its fame, and to its position as the historical horizon of the Brittonic North.⁶²

* * *

This is not the place to discuss any but the most immediate implications. The first is that the sons of Eliffer seem to have been the chief or most powerful members of the attacking confederacy; presumably the chief prize, Carlisle or its equivalent, was in their possession in the years 573-580.⁶³ The second is that their allies, the Cynwydyon of Strathclyde, would now be able to establish Clydno in Edinburgh and Cadrod in Kelso (and the latter to deal with the Forest): the expulsion of Bran the Coeling from Gododdin⁶⁴ cannot have been much later than Arthuret. Third, and most

⁶² The extent of Gwenddoleu's kingdom is a much more difficult question, for some of his enemies may have been rebels, and in any case we may not have an exhaustive list. It may, however, be noted, as a curiosity, that in the *Thirteen Treasures of Britain* (TYP 240 ff.), Gwenddoleu is credited with possession of a chessboard, on which the gold and silver men moved themselves (this story appears about 1470 [TYP xxxiv], and the words for chess in Irish and Welsh are cognates). The Westmorland place-name Tailbert in Shap Rural (PNWe ii 171), first recorded about 1200, is probably from the Old Norse for "chessboard", and is otherwise unparalleled in English place-names (PNWe xlv: unless the field-name Tailber in Lupton, recorded in 1688, is to be added: PNWe i 48). Shap could, of course, provide a frontier; but the evidence on both sides is late for application to the sixth-century Gwenddoleu.

⁶³ This might suggest that Caer Greu is to be sought in one of the Pennine Gaps from Aire to Tyne, if Eda big-knee really was an Angle: Eata was a common Northumbrian name. The Brittonic word *creu* appears in English place-names as Crew, *vel sim*.

⁶⁴ HPN.

important, the campaign of Catraeth, with a task-force commanded by Cynon son of Clydno, would be most intelligible during the period when Eliffer's sons held Carlisle, if the force went west-about, through Carlisle and over Stainmore to Catterick.⁶⁵ Fourthly, the massacre of Catraeth would help to explain the assertion that the bodyguard of Eliffer's sons deserted at Caer Greu, if that was about the same time. Fifthly, the career of Urien belongs to the years 580-593 at most, and if he seized Carlisle on the death of Eliffer's sons, the stories of war with Dunod,⁶⁶ and Dunod's absence from Urien's confederacy at Lindisfarne, become explicable — as well as the total silence of the *Gododdin* on any of the famous heroes of Urien's family, for it would be composed in, or refer to, the time before Urien's fame.

A rather short interval of time between the Cynwydyon capture of Edinburgh and the campaign of Catterick is implied by several references in the *Gododdin* to previous fighting at or near *Eidyn*. In stanza B34, Edar is remembered as having put men to flight before *Eidyn*, the hill; in A13, Tudfwlch put the enemy to flight from the stronghold of *Eidyn*; in A15 the sons of Godebog (that is, the Coeling of *Gododdin*) are a wicked folk and old enemies of Tudfwlch and Cyfwlch; in A76 Cynon (apparently) did not retreat in front of *Eidyn*. The mention of Tudfwlch is of particular importance, for he was from Eifionydd in Dunoding of Gwynedd,⁶⁷ and he seems to have taken part both in the capture of Edinburgh and the Catterick campaign. This implies some permanence of the Cynwydyon task-force, as well as a relatively brief time between the capture of Edinburgh and the Catterick battle: the seven years, 573-580, do not seem at all too short.

⁶⁵ *Gododdin*, 13.

⁶⁶ TYP 334.

⁶⁷ Cf. Jackson's discussion, *Gododdin*, 27 f.

The character of our other early source, produced by a different branch of learning, seems also to be illuminated. The *Annales Cambriae* begin their history of the Brittonic North with the *bellum Armterid* of 573, and this particular cluster of entries ends with the obit of *Dunaut rex* in 595.⁶⁸ Dunod then survived Urien,⁶⁹ and these events of 573 and 595 span the whole period of these eventful years, the "heroic age of the North". The entries therefore assume the character of brief mnemonics, especially of the termini of the period. Consequently the omissions of such matters as Catraeth and Lindisfarne (or Urien's obit) from the *Annales* lose a good deal of their *prima facie* significance, both for the knowledge of the compiler, and the place of, and interest served by, the compilation; modern study, apparently, must begin with the assumption of much knowledge rather than much ignorance in the compiler of this part of the *Annales* and those for whom he wrote.

Abbreviations.

Annales Cambriae, edited by E. Phillimore in *Y Cymmrodor* ix (1888), pp. 152 ff.

Bellenden John Bellenden, *The History and Chronicles of Scotland written in Latin by Hector Boece, Canon of Aberdeen*, vols. I-II (reprinted Edinburgh, 1821).

CPNS W. J. Watson, *History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926).

EWGT P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (Cardiff, 1966).

This contains the following texts used here:

BGG *Bonedd Gwyr y Gogledd*, Lineages of the Northcountrymen.

ByS *Bonedd y Saint*, Lineages of the Saints.

DSB *De Situ Brecheniauc*.

⁶⁸ between the death of Columba and the mission of Augustine, both events of 597, so the date may be two years too early.

⁶⁹ whose death in the time of Husa of Bernicia is at latest in 593.

- HG Harleian Genealogies (from Harley, 3859).
 JC Jesus College MS. 20, genealogical collection.
- Fordun W. F. Skene, *Johannis de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, vols. I and II (vols. I and IV of *The Historians of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1871/2)).
- Gododdin K. H. Jackson, *The Gododdin : the oldest Scottish poem* (Edinburgh, 1969).
- HPN "Historicity and the Pedigrees of the Northcountrymen" in *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* xxvi (1975), 255-280.
- LBS S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, vols. I-IV (1907-1913).
- PNCu A. M. Armstrong, et al., *Place-names of Cumberland*, I-III (Cambridge, 1950-52).
- PNLa E. Ekwall, *Place-names of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1922).
- PNWe A. H. Smith, *Place-names of Westmorland*, I-II (Cambridge, 1967).
- TYP R. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein : The Welsh Triads* (Cardiff, 1961).
- VCH Victoria County History.