Wales and Romania are geographically - and culturally in many respects - at opposite ends of the continent of Europe.[1] Yet it is perhaps worth noting at the outset one feature that both have in common: the names of both countries emphasise their Roman heritage. The 'Roman' connection is obvious in the case of the words 'Romania' and 'Romanian'; but what is not so often realised is that the words 'Wales' and 'Welsh' derive from the name given by Germanic speakers to 'Romanised foreigners', in this case the 'Romano-British' (or 'Celtic') enclave that gradually emerged as a distinct and conscious entity on the western peninsular of Britain, as the relentless westward advance of Anglo-Saxon conquerors eventually isolated the Welsh territorially from their compatriots - or *'Cymry'* - in the north and south-west of the island by about the sixth century ad. The name 'Walloon' for the inhabitants of south-east Belgium derives from that same Germanic word, *walh*, as does the name 'Wallachia' for southern Romania — and the word 'walnut' for that matter. The 'walnut' is the 'welsh nut', or 'foreign nut', the nut of the Celtic and Roman lands of Gaul and Italy, as opposed to the native hazel-nut of the Germanic lands. Little wonder, then, that I was sorely tempted to entitle this paper 'Walnuts and Old Chestnuts'![2]

The Romanian and Walloon languages both belong to the Romance family; Welsh, on the other hand, is a Celtic language. In the case of Wales, therefore, the attribution 'Welsh' does not mean that the language derives from Latin, but rather that Wales (to quote Ceri Davies in his important volume, *Welsh Literature and the Classical Tradition*) formed 'something of a sub-Roman outpost' following the demise of Roman rule in the British Isles, and that the Welsh were 'in some way the last representatives of *Romanitas* in Britain'.[3]It is worth remembering, then, as we turn to aspects of 'the Welsh bardic tradition', that we are discussing an old and tenacious cultural and linguistic entity born in the twilight years of the Roman Empire. To quote Tony Conran: 'Though it has never been spoken by more than a million at any one time, and is now spoken by about half that number, Welsh is one of the great carriers of Western civilization. Only Greek and possibly Irish, out of all the languages of Europe, have a longer continuous tradition.'[4]

On the continuum from the lyric through the narrative ballad to the epic, the Welsh bardic tradition has always veered strongly towards the lyric. One of the major Welsh poets of the twentieth century, Robert Williams Parry, was of the opinion that the Welsh muse is short-winded,[5] and it is difficult to dispute such a view. Ironically, during the nineteenth century, epics were produced in Welsh in diarrhoeal proportions. They represent one of the 'last-fruits' of the Renaissance ideal of producing an epic in the vernacular, part of a general desire in Europe to raise the status of indigenous languages and their literatures to the level of those of Classical antiquity. A relic of this is still to be found in the main annual cultural event of present-day Wales, the National Eisteddfod, where the chief poetry prizes — a crown and a chair — are normally awarded for lengthy odes. Yet the amount of worthwhile material produced by this obsession to write a Welsh epic only emphasises R. Williams Parry's truism that the Welsh muse is by nature short-winded![6]

If epics of any literary worth are in short supply in Welsh, the same is true of popular ballads of any length, such as are to be found in both the Scottish and English traditions. As Mary-Ann Constantine noted in her introduction to *Ballads in Wales* (1999): 'Since only the ubiquitous "Lord Randal" (Child 12) and "Our Goodman" (Child 274) are recorded as songs in Welsh, Wales has — in Child terms — only the slenderest of ballad traditions.' Some other Child material is to be found in Welsh. 'Young Beichan' (Child 53) occurs on eighteenth-century Welsh broadsides, for example, and evidence suggests that the riddling sequence from 'Captain Wedderburn's Courtship' (Child 46) and a version of 'Brown Robyn's Confession' (Child 57) were both being sung in Welsh in Anglesey in the early eighteenth century; but it would seem that 'Lord Randal' and 'Our Goodman' are (to quote D. Roy Saer) the only Child ballads 'of which sung examples in Welsh have been noted down from oral tradition'. It is also worth emphasising Phyllis Kinney and Meredydd Evans's point that 'in Wales the only Child ballads recovered from sung oral tradition belong to the class of international folk tale and are not specifically British'. One should also add that the versions of these ballads that have been recovered tend toward the folk-song rather than the narrative end of the spectrum. All in all, then, Child ballads are at rather a premium in Wales.[7]

One reason for the comparative paucity of narrative poetry in Welsh is the nature of the Welsh bardic tradition, which places great emphasis on praise poetry. Praise of God, of a prince, of one's country, of a fair lady, of a community leader — whatever the specific subject of praise (or its concomitant, satire), eulogies and elegies are the mainstream of Welsh poetry, and reflect the traditional role of the Welsh poet not so much as a romantic recluse at odds with the world, but rather as a craftsman well-rooted in the community, indeed as the spin doctor of that community.[8]

A key element in the Welsh bardic tradition is its traditional strict metres, written in cynghanedd (lit. 'harmony'), a complex system of structured assonance and alliteration within each line of poetry. Although it is difficult, some would say impossible, to recreate the effect of *cynghanedd* in English,[9] *cynghanedd* has influenced the work of a number of English poets, such as Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89) and the Dorset poet, William Barnes (1801-86), who made use of *cynghanedd*, for example, in his well-known couplet: 'An' there for me the apple tree/Do lean down low in Linden Lea.'[10] One can also find examples of Welsh-language poets experimenting, often playfully, in writing English poems using Welsh strict-metres and *cynghanedd*. Here is how one of the great virtuosos of contemporary Welsh strict-metre poetry, Dic Jones (b.1934), describes 'The Night' using an English couplet in the traditional Welsh *cywydd* metre: 'The stars ascend in splendour/And the dark creeps round the door.'[11] After much *angst*, the influential eighteenth-century poet, Goronwy Owen — instigator, in part, of the obsession with the epic in nineteenth-century Wales — concluded, that the traditional Welsh bardic metres were in very essence lyrical, and therefore unsuitable for epic poetry;[12] and the grip of those metres on Welsh poetry over the centuries is another factor which accounts for the comparative paucity of narrative poetry in Welsh.

A further contributory factor is the traditional role in Wales of the *cyfarwydd*, or storyteller, rather than the poet, as the performer of narrative.[13] Primary among Welsh narrative tales are the eleven medieval stories now known as the Mabinogion, perhaps the greatest Welsh contribution to European literature, and which include the earliest Arthurian tale in any language — the historical Arthur was most probably a sub-Roman military leader, engaged in stemming the advance of Anglo-Saxon invaders in southern Britain in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. And it is surely significant that whereas Welsh medieval bards are very conscious of authorship, Welsh medieval narrative, like so much ballad material, has on the whole no author attribution.

One must not overstate the case and give the impression that there is no narrative poetry in Welsh. The earliest extant Welsh poetry, that of the sixth-century poet, Taliesin, composed mainly in what is now southern Scotland and northern England, contains short but vivid descriptions of battles, including dialogue between the adversaries. Indeed, Tony Conran opens an article entitled 'The Ballad and Taliesin' — an article which looks at the poetry of Taliesin in the light of David Buchan's work on structural patternings in the ballads of Mrs Brown of Falkland — with these words: 'It is surprising how closely some of the poems attributed to the sixth-century Taliesin remind one of the traditional English and Scottish ballads. I am tempted, in fact, to call the battle-pieces about Urien of Rheged the first "border ballads". '[14]

Important cycles of saga poetry survive in Welsh from the ninth century;[15] and the work of perhaps the greatest of all Welsh poets — the fourteenth-century love poet,

Dafydd ap Gwilym — includes some of the most memorable and entertaining narrative poetry in the Welsh language. Take, for example, his celebrated poem, 'Trafferth mewn Tafarn' ('Trouble at a Tavern'). In it Dafydd on his travels comes to a town, which in post-Norman-Conquest Wales would have been a mainly Anglo-Norman settlement. He spends the night at an inn there, engages in conversation with a beautiful girl, wines and dines her, and arranges to go to her once everyone has gone to sleep. Unfortunately for Dafydd, as he tries to reach her bed in the dark, he bumps against the furniture. The racket awakens everyone, including three Englishmen, who are gripped with fear that a Welshman is abroad trying to rob them:

In a foul bed, at the wall,
Bothered for their packs, and fearful,
Three English lay in panic —
Hickin and Jenkin and Jack.[16]

Fortunately for Dafydd, in the commotion that follows, he succeeds under cover of darkness in reaching the safety of his own bed; and the poem ends with an expression of his relief and repentance.

A Welsh cousin of the *fabliaux* (the comic and satirical tales in verse which flourished in France in the twelfth and thirteenth century), and a fairly close relation of Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, this poem — would one be amiss in calling it a ballad? — with others in similar vein by the same author, form a high point in Welsh narrative poetry. Dafydd ap Gwilym, however, although not alone in this type of verse, is the exception rather than the rule. Most Welsh poetry surviving from the late medieval period is the work of professional poets of the Welsh bardic order; it emanates from the courts of the Welsh nobility, written (as already noted) in traditional Welsh metres, with eulogy and elegy as its main themes. However, with the gradual demise of the bardic order and the growth of English influences (especially following the Tudor Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543, which legally and politically annexed Wales to England), with increased availability of more affordable writing materials and increased literacy, not to mention the development of the printing press, a much wider range of poetry, wider both in subject matter and metre, begins to appear both in manuscript and print from about 1550 onward, side by side with more traditional material.

It is generally accepted that what is termed in Welsh 'free-metre poetry' — not *vers libre*, but rather poetry in any metres apart from the traditional strict (*cynghanedd*) metres — was being composed in Welsh prior to the mid-sixteenth century, but was in the main the work of lower orders of bards, intended for more popular consumption and not considered of sufficient worth to preserve on expensive vellum. (Such free-metre poetry, orally transmitted, also seems to have been the normal medium for female poets, since the Welsh bardic tradition and its metres have been until very recently almost exclusively male domains.) However, it is not until the second half of the

sixteenth century that this free-metre poetry attained sufficient esteem among educated people to be committed to writing in any quantity.[17]

Not surprisingly, given the increasing cultural interfacing with England during the sixteenth century, much of this early free-metre poetry in Welsh shows English influences both in content and metre. Indeed, much of the impetus behind the development of Welsh free-metre poetry in Tudor times was the growing popularity among the Welsh of fashionable English and Continental tunes.[18] And in that body of poetry we find ballads — on the Spanish Armada of 1588, for example, and on the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, not to mention love poetry and much devotional and moralistic verse. In his work on English influences on the early free-metre poetry, Brinley Rees has shown that there are comparatively few points of comparison between the Child corpus of ballads and the Welsh free-metre verse of the period; however, when one turns to the contemporary English broadside ballads, as represented by collections such as the Roxburghe Ballads, the situation is markedly different,[19] for while there seem to be very few direct translations from English into Welsh, the English broadsides and the Welsh free-metre poetry show significant similarities in terms of style and subject matter.[20]

This emergence of the Welsh ballad in the sixteenth century is a very important development, but one must remember that we are dealing with a fairly small number of extant ballads, preserved mainly in manuscript.[21] There is no substantial corpus of ballad material in Welsh, certainly in printed form, until the eighteenth century. However, one category of Welsh free-metre poetry which begins to emerge from the sixteenth century onward may well be worth examining in greater detail as a source of possible lost ballad literature in Welsh. I refer to the traditional folk stanzas known as *hen benillion* (lit. 'old stanzas', with 'old' here being as much a term of endearment as of antiquity).

The prominent poet and short-story writer, the late Glyn Jones (1905-95), chose *A People's Poetry* as the title for the volume of his English translations of a selection of these stanzas, published in 1997, a title which accurately reflects their popular nature.[22] The subject matter is varied, but rooted in the everyday life and experiences, not to mention the distilled wisdom, of the common people of rural, pre-industrial Wales. In style they are lyrical, economic and epigrammatic, and possess an 'unassuming craftsmanship' and a 'direct simplicity' which contrast starkly with the intricate style of traditional strict-metre poetry.[23] Most take the form of individual four-line verses, or occasionally a chain of two or three stanzas. However, while much shorter in length than the ballad, there are a number of useful comparisons which may be made between these 'old stanzas' and the traditional ballad material we associate with the Child corpus.

Interestingly both were 'discovered' by literary critics during an important bridging period between neo-classicism and romanticism in eighteenth-century England and Wales.[24] Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) was an important turning point, not only in the kindling of critical interest in the ballad as a genre, but also in the development of the Romantic movement both in Britain and continental Europe. Its publication, says Alan Bold, 'gave popular ballads literary respectability'.[25] Thomas Percy belonged to a group of English scholars and men of letters who had a keen interest in matters Celtic and had links with an influential literary and antiquarian circle of Welsh poets and scholars, usually referred to as the 'Morris Circle', and labelled by Saunders Lewis 'A School of Welsh Augustans'.[26] One of their number was Evan Evans ('Ieuan Fardd'; 1731-88), who may be described both as a drunken curate and as the greatest Welsh scholar of his age. Percy corresponded fairly regularly with Evan Evans on the subject of Welsh poetry during the 1760s, a correspondence which sheds light on the preparation and publication of Percy's *Reliques* and of Evan's pioneer anthology of early Welsh poetry with English translations, *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards*, which appeared in 1764 and became a 'fount of "Celtic" inspiration' for a host of English poets.[27]

The dominant figure in the Welsh literary circle to which Evan Evans belonged was Lewis Morris (1701-65). If Percy gave ballads literary respectability, Lewis Morris did likewise for the *hen benillion*. He seems to have been the first to recognise their literary worth and extol their virtues; and exactly as Percy saw traditional ballads as 'reliques of antiquity' with 'a pleasing simplicity, and many artless graces',[28] so Lewis Morris believed the *hen benillion* to be the 'remains of druidical Learning...transmitted to us by oral Tradition being sung to the harp from age to age'. Furthermore, he continues,

whoever considers ye natural simplicity of these expressions and the sound unaffected sense they contain...will not wonder that the multitude should be enamoured with these little *penills* [= verses] as to be constantly chaunting them whereever they meet with a Harp...The passions are not adulterated in these antient things. The phrase is so natural...and this perfect copying of nature it is which makes mankind so in love with the antient Poets.[29]

One obvious point of comparison between the *hen benillion* and traditional ballads is that the normal stanza structure in both cases is simple quatrains, although the *hen benillion* are usually in rhyming couplets as opposed to the 'abcb' rhyming pattern of most Child ballads.[30] Both are the 'poetry of the folk', the poetry of social function and of oral tradition, with the expected stock phrases and epithets, formulae and commonplaces. Anonymity of authorship is the norm in both cases, despite there being much more use of the first person singular in the *hen benillion* than in the more impersonal narrative of the ballad makers.

'Of the primary ingredients of a tale — action, character, description — it is noteworthy that folk ballads have relatively little concern for description, limiting it mainly to adjective and epithet — often cliché', says B. H. Bronson in *The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads* (1976), and this is also true of the *hen benillion*. Bronson continues: '...because ballads are more often than not concerned with some aspect of heterosexual love, a love-relation is likely to be the focus of the episode'.[31] And again, despite the wide variety of subject matter found in the *hen benillion*, the vast majority of them centre on a love-relationship of some kind.

At first sight, another point made by Bronson, namely his emphasis on the importance of the tune rather than the narrative for the survival of a ballad, would seem relevant in the present context, especially when one remembers that another name for the *hen benillion* is *penillion telyn* (lit. 'harp stanzas'). 'There are', says Bronson, 'numberless instances of ballads in fragmentary state, where the narrative is so confused, disordered even in its central incidents, or all but forgotten, that everything would have been lost, were it not for the tune.'[32] However, this emphasis on tune must be qualified in the case of the *hen benillion* to the extent that they seem not to have been closely wedded with one particular tune.[33] The harpist, Edward Jones (1752-1824), for example, states categorically: 'One set of words [of the *hen benillion*] is not, like an English song, confined to one air, but commonly adapted and sung to several.'[34] It is also worth noting Glyn Jones's comment regarding the *hen benillion*: 'Some no doubt survived, not because they were associated with a tune and with being sung to harp music, but because they embodied some piece of wisdom, or expressed neatly a widely-held belief or the fruit of experience.'[35]

Both Mary-Ann Constantine and Gerald Porter have at recent International Ballad Conferences and elsewhere, elaborated on various aspects of ballad fragmentation. At the 27th International Ballad Conference in Slovenia, for example, Mary-Ann Constantine discussed what she described as 'the really interesting cases' of ballad fragmentation, namely 'those extraordinarily condensed versions of ballads where the narrative line has collapsed — texts almost invariably classed as "fragments" by editors, but still perceived as "whole" songs by their singers. These', she says, 'are ballads which have imploded.'[36] And the question I would like to consider here is, to what extent may we regard the *hen benillion* as ballad implosions.

Reciting *hen benillion* to the harp was a common form of entertainment at social gatherings in pre-industrial Wales. It is worth quoting at some length from Edward Jones's *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*:

Numbers of persons of both sexes assemble and sit around the Harp, singing alternately Pennillion, or stanzas, of ancient or modern composition...The young people usually begin the night with dancing; and, when they are tired, assume this species of relaxation. They alternately sing, dance, and drink...Often, like the modern Improvisatori

of Italy, they sing extempore verses...Many have their memories stored with several hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Pennillion, some of which they have always ready for answers to every subject that can be proposed; or, if their recollection should ever fail them, they have invention to compose something pertinent and proper for the occasion. The subjects afford a great deal of mirth: some of these are jocular, others satirical, but most of them amorous...They continue singing without intermission, never repeating the same stanza, (for, that would forfeit the honour of being held first of the song,) and, like nightingales, support the contest through the night.[37]

The above is not far removed from Kittredge's description of the primitive 'folk' as

a singing, dancing throng subjected as a unit to a mental and emotional stimulus which is not only favorable to the production of poetry, but is almost certain to result in such production...Different members of the throng, one after another, may chant each his verse, composed on the spur of the moment, and the sum of these various contributions makes a song. This is communal composition, though each verse, taken by itself, is the work of an individual. A song made in this way is no man's property and has no individual author. *The folk is its author*.[38]

While the theory of 'communal composition' may not be tenable in the case of ballads, the situation is rather more complex with regard to the *hen benillion*, for as the quotation from Edward Jones's *Relicks* demonstrates, many were 'composed on the spur of the moment' in a communal context, although whether it would be right to describe the 'sum of these various contributions' as comprising a unified song, rather than a chain of stanzas on a similar theme or formulaic pattern, is another matter. But whether or not the folk is author in the case of the *hen benillion*, the folk is certainly editor when it comes to sifting and sieving these stanzas, and deciding which should be preserved in oral tradition. Such is the case with those stanzas composed as independent verses, both extempore or otherwise; but it is also clear that amidst the corpus of *hen benillion* passed down through oral tradition, there are verses which, although now extant as single stanzas (or perhaps short chains), were nevertheless once part of longer compositions — many of them insignificant poems by minor poets — which have gone through the sieve of the 'folk'. Indeed, R. Geraint Gruffydd has gone as far as to describe the *hen benillion* (non-pejoratively, one must hasten to add) as probably the *débris* of early Welsh free-metre poems.[39] In other words, there are to be found among the *hen benillion* examples of poems (including ballads) that have 'imploded'.

A most interesting example of such an 'implosion' is a stanza which, on the surface, emphasises the role of the storyteller in popular Welsh culture. It goes thus:

Dwedai hen ŵr llwyd o'r gornel,
'Gan fy nhad mi glywais chwedel,

A chan ei daid y clywsai yntau,
Ac ar ei ôl mi gofiais innau.'

Which may be literally translated:

An old grey man said from the corner,
'I heard a tale from my father,
And he had heard it from his grandfather,
And after him I remembered.'

The stanza, although well-known in oral tradition as a single verse, is actually part of a longer poem entitled 'Hanes yr Hen Ŵr o'r Coed' ('The Story of the Old Man from the Wood'). The poem tells of a man who prayed that he might experience a small miracle in order to serve God better. One fine morning while out walking in a nearby wood he heard a bird singing most beautifully. He listened to it for what seemed two or three hours, but when he returned home after the bird stopped singing, everything and everyone had changed and nobody knew him. After searching through some books, they found that he had gone from the house 350 years previously, and the man realised that he had been listening to an angel singing and had experienced a foretaste of the joy of heaven.

There is nothing uniquely Welsh about the story, of course. Both enchanting music and the supernatural passage of time are common international motifs. The first extant copy of the poem is to be found in a manuscript dated 1711. A revised version was included in a volume published in 1750, and subsequently published as a broadside. Indeed, there are around fifteen extant broadsides from the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century which include the poem. Most of these were printed in the Vale of Conwy in north Wales, although some were published in three other major centres of broadside production, namely Carmarthen, Aberystwyth and Caernarfon, indicating a fairly wide geographical distribution. Interestingly, the printed versions of the poem include a final stanza to the effect that the poet had read the story in a Welsh book and had versified it so that everyone could learn it. A number of the printed versions identify the book as being the first part of *Y Drych Cristianogawl* ('The Christian Looking-Glass'), a devotional treatise on the Four Last Things (Death, Day of Judgement, Hell and Heaven) printed secretly in 1586 and 1587 by Catholic recusants in a cave near Llandudno on the north-Wales coast,[40] and not very far from the places in the Vale of Conwy where most of the broadside copies of the poem were printed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the story as told by the eighteenth-century poet, there are two significant additions to the story found in the sixteenth-century volume, both of which suggest that the poet was drawing on oral tradition as well as on the printed version. One of these additions is that the man, after telling his story, lies down and turns into a pile of dust. The other is the introduction of the character of the old grey man in the corner who remembered his

father's tale; and as can be seen from this English translation of the stanza quoted above together with the following four lines, the tale he remembers is that of a man going out in olden times and never returning:

An old grey man said from the corner,
'I heard a tale from my father,
And he had heard it from his grandfather,
And after him I remembered,
That a man had gone out of this house,
Of the same name and the same age,
And he was never seen again
Nor was anything heard of him.

In the poem, 'The Story of the Old Man of the Wood', then, we have a most interesting example of interplay between oral tradition and manuscript and printed versions, both Catholic and Protestant, and between prose and poetry, over at least three centuries, leading eventually to a single stanza entering popular oral tradition not only totally removed from its original meaning and context, but actually 'imploded' mid-sentence.[41]

Another of the *hen benillion* which has been in oral circulation as a single stanza since at least the end of the eighteenth century, but which can be shown to be part of a longer poem, is the following description of the onset of summer:

Mae'r coedydd yn glasu, mae'r meillion o'u deutu,
Mae dail y briallu yn tyfu 'mhob twyn,
A'r adar diniwed yn lleisio cyn fwyned,
I'w clywed a'u gweled mewn gwiwlwyn.

Literally translated:

The trees grow verdant, clover surrounds them,
Primrose leaves grow on every knoll,
And the guileless birds giving such sweet song,
Are to be heard and seen in splendid arbours.

The stanza comes from a poem by one of the most skilful Welsh poets of the seventeenth century, a drover from north-east Wales called Edward Morris (1607-89).[42] Entitled 'Carol yn Gyrru'r Haf at Ei Gariad' ('A Carol Sending Summer to His Sweetheart'), it follows a popular convention in Welsh love poetry, where the poet sends a bird or an animal, or some natural phenomenon such as the wind, as a *llatai* or love-messenger.[43] The poem takes the form of a conversation between the poet and summer, and the present stanza occurs in the opening section of the poem, where the poet tells summer how much it is welcomed by the countryside. Interestingly in the

present context, part of the message which the poet sends to his beloved is that he is willing to venture all for her, specifically mentioning fighting in Asia, severing the head of Hydra, searching Europia for treasure from India, obtaining pearls from Tartaria, and travelling to America and Romania.[44]

The stanzas from 'The Story of the Old Man from the Wood' and 'A Carol Sending Summer to His Sweetheart' are concrete examples of longer narrative poems imploding into *hen benillion*; but among the *hen benillion* there are many more which one might reasonably surmise to be implosions, although the fuller versions are no longer extant (if indeed they ever existed!). For example, it would not be difficult to envisage the following as being opening stanzas of longer narrative poems:

Hen wraig fach ar fin y mynydd
A chanddi eneth laweth lonydd.
Pwy, debygech, ddaeth i'w charu?
Clochydd Llangwm wedi meddwi.

(A little old lady lived by the mountain
With her tame and quiet daughter.
Who do you think came to court her?
Llangwm's sexton, the worse for drink.)

Or again:

Dacw lwyn o fedw gleision,
Dacw'r llwyn sy'n torri 'nghalon;
Nid am y llwyn yr wy' 'n ochneidio,
Ond am y ferch a welais ynddo.

(Yonder is a grove of verdant birch,
That is the grove which breaks my heart;
It is not for the grove that I am sighing,
But for the girl I saw there.)

Nor would it be difficult to envisage a didactic stanza such as the following being at one time the closing verse of a longer narrative poem:

Pan fo seren yn rhagori,
Fe fydd pawb â'i olwg arni;
Pan ddêl unwaith gwmwl drosti,
Ni fydd mwy o sôn amdani.

(When a star shines brightly,
Everyone looks at it;
But once it clouds over,
There is no more mention of it.)

The following stanza could well be the closing verse of a humorous narrative poem:

Pe bai taranau'n rhuo a hefyd cloch y llan,
A rhod y felin bapur a gyrdd y felin ban,
A'r badell bres a'r crochan yn tymblo draws y tŷ,
A phawb yn gweiddi yma, cysgu a wnâi hi.

(If peals of thunder were to bellow, and also the church bell,
And the paper-mill's wheel and the fulling-mill's wooden mallets,
And if the brass pan and the cauldron tumbled around the house,
And everyone here shouted, she would still sleep.)

Indeed variants of this verse actually do occur as closing stanzas to prose anecdotes. One such anecdote attributes a variant of the verse to the doyen of Welsh hymn-writers, William Williams (1717-91) of Pantycelyn, who is said to have composed it after his cries had failed to wake a maid-servant; while yet another variant is attributed to Edward Thomas, a nineteenth-century rhymester from south-east Wales, whose nephew had trouble waking despite having surrounded his alarm clock with tin trays.[45]

Names of people and places feature prominently in the *hen benillion*, and it is reasonable to surmise that specific stories lie behind many such folk stanzas. Take the case of Margaret Evans (1695-1801?), better known as 'Marged ach Ifan' ('Margaret daughter of Evan'), an Amazonian lady from the Snowdonia area of north Wales.[46] In addition to her talents as a hunter, fisher, shooter, wrestler, blacksmith, shoemaker and boat builder, she was well-versed in traditional Welsh music, had an excellent singing voice, composed popular airs, and was able not only to play the harp and the fiddle, but to make those instruments as well. Several *hen benillion* about her are extant. Most open with the same formulaic couplet: 'Mae gan Marged fwyn ach Ifan…' ('Fair Margaret daughter of Evan has…'), followed by the naming of an object — harp, clog, bowl, horse, bellows — of which she has both a large and a small version. Here is one such stanza:

Mae gan Marged fwyn ach Ifan
Grafanc fawr a chrafanc fechan,
Un i dynnu'r cŵn o'r gongol,
A'r llall i dorri esgyrn pobol.

(Fair Margaret daughter of Evan has
A large claw and a small claw,
One to drag the dogs from the corner,
And the other to break people's bones.)

A number of folk tales about this extraordinary person have survived, and it is difficult to believe that ballads about such a colourful character did not exist in oral tradition at one time. The same may be said of 'Twm Siôn Cati' (Thomas Jones, c. 1530-1609), the 'Welsh Robin Hood', who is also the subject of *hen benillion*:

Mae llefain mawr a gweiddi
Yn Ystrad-ffin eleni,
A'r cerrig nadd yn toddi'n blwm
Gan ofon Twm Siôn Cati.

(There is a great crying and shouting
In Ystrad-ffin this year,
And the hewn stones are melting into lead
For fear of Twm Siôn Cati.)

We turn next to a folk stanza which may not only be an implosion, but also an example of the converse process:

Myfi sydd fachgen ifanc ffôl
Yn byw yn ôl fy ffansi,
Myfi'n bugeilio'r gwenith gwyn
Ac arall yn ei fedi.

(I am a young foolish lad
Living according to my fancy,
I watch the ripening wheat
And another reaps it.)

The stanza occurs in oral tradition as a four-line verse, and is included in T. H. Parry-Williams's standard collection of *hen benillion*. However it also occurs as the opening quatrain of the eight-line first verse of a well-known Welsh folk-song, 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn' ('Watching the White Wheat'), and it may well be correct to regard the folk stanza as an implosion of the first verse of that song into *hen benillion* mode. 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn' has a complex textual history. In its present form, the song, collected in Glamorgan in the 1830s, is probably a nineteenth-century creation based on a medley of *hen benillion*, drawn together from oral tradition and appropriately 'improved'.[47] In that expanded form, the song has been linked to the popular, but rather dubious,

tradition of a rich Glamorgan heiress of the eighteenth century, who was forced to marry against her will and who died of heartbreak for her true love, namely the poet to whom the song is attributed. Whether or not there is any truth in the tale or the attribution, the above stanza serves as a good example of the complexities which can arise when discussing implosions, for one possible scenario is that a version of the stanza began life as part of a longer narrative poem which then imploded into a folk stanza, which then joined with other folk stanzas to form the folk-song, 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn', before re-imploding into a folk stanza![48]

Finally we turn to an example of a folk stanza which was clearly felt in the twentieth century to be 'a song that tells a story',[49] an 'imploded' form waiting to be 'exploded' into a fuller version. Entitled 'Marwnad yr Ehedydd' ('The Lark's Elegy'), its single stanza and music were published in the *Journal of the Welsh Folk-Song Society* in 1914:

Mi a glywais fod yr hedydd
Wedi marw ar y mynydd;
Pe gwyddwn i mai gwir y geirie,
Awn â gyr o wŷr ac arfe
I gyrchu corff yr hedydd adre.

(I have heard that the lark
Has died on the mountain;
If I knew the words to be true,
I would take a band of armed men
To bring the lark's body home.)

Since its publication in 1914, there have been at least four attempts to write additional verses. One of these was by Albert Evans-Jones (1895-1970), better known by his bardic name, 'Cynan', one of the chief exponents of the Welsh literary ballad, which develops in earnest for the first time in the twentieth century. Another was by Enid Parry (1911-98), a gifted composer and prominent member of the Welsh Folk-Song Society, whose husband, Thomas Parry, wrote the classic study of eighteenth-century Welsh ballads, *Baledi'r Ddeunawfed Ganrif* (1935). The 'Lark's Elegy' has been interpreted as a nonsense rhyme, and it is in that spirit that it was 'exploded' by both Cynan and Enid Parry. Enid Parry added three unrelated verses focusing on other birds and animals — a seagull, a marten and a pheasant — with the additional verses all following the same formula as the original one: 'I have heard that…If I knew the words to be true, I would…' Cynan added four verses, all but the last opening with the phrase 'I have heard…' However, in contrast with Enid Parry, Cynan's verses form a unified whole in which the lark's murderer is revealed to be the hawk.[50]

However there is another possible interpretation of the 'Lark's Elegy'. On 16 September 1400, a war of liberation against the English broke out in Wales led by Owain Glyndŵr, the 'Owen Glendower' of William Shakespeare's play, *Henry IV (Part 1)*. Although that uprising was unsuccessful, it has left an indelible mark on Welsh national consciousness. Owain was not killed in battle, but rather went into hiding as the fortunes of war turned against him. Mystery surrounded the time and place of his death, and led to his becoming a messianic figure who would one day return.[51] After the failure of the uprising, many of his former soldiers remained outlaws in the mountains and forests; and while the 'Lark's Elegy' has been interpreted by some as a nonsense rhyme, there is a tradition — admittedly difficult to trace with any certainty — which equates the 'Lark' with Owain Glyndŵr and attributes the words of the song to one of his outlawed soldiers. And it is this tradition which lies behind the additional verses written by the poet and publisher from the Vale of Conwy, Myrddin ap Dafydd (b. 1956), for the folk group, 'Plethyn', in the late 1970s,[52] not to mention a new version he wrote in 2000 to mark the 600th anniversary of the beginning of the uprising.[53] The tradition may be suspect, but the 'explosive' treatment this folk stanza has received clearly demonstrates the ballad possibilities which are latent in such stanzas.

It is not difficult, then, to envisage a number of the *hen benilli*on as being ballad implosions, as lyric pieces fashioned out of longer narrative poems in the process of oral transmission. Indeed, I hope I have said enough to show that there is a wealth of material in Welsh free verse, and among the *hen benillion* in particular, which warrants further examination for examples of both 'implosions' and 'explosions', and that as a result of such detailed exploration we may perhaps find that ballad material in Welsh is somewhat richer than had been previously supposed.

Notes

[1]With regard to recent cultural links between Wales and Romania, special mention should perhaps be made of Geraint Dyfnallt Owen (1908-93), a specialist on Romanian cultural history, who published in 1951 a short history of Romania in Welsh, concentrating especially on the mid-twentieth century, *Rwmania: Pennod mewn Gwleidyddiaeth Grym* [= 'Romania: A Chapter in Power Politics'], together with a volume of translations of Romanian folk-tales, entitled *Y Blaidd Hud, a Chwedlau Eraill* [= 'The Magic Wolf, and Other Tales'], in 1949.

[2] See the Oxford English Dictionary under 'Vlach', 'Walloon', 'Walnut' and 'Welsh', and Meic Stephens (ed.), T*he New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales press, 1998), under 'Britain', 'Cymru' and 'Wales'. Interestingly, in Romania, walnut leaves play a part in church rituals linked with the Ascension and Pentecost. It is worth noting that Roman roots and an early Christianisation have been key elements in both Welsh and Romanian national identity over the centuries. On Welsh aspects of this, see my ' "The New Birth of a People": Welsh Language and Identity and the Welsh Methodists, c. 1740-1820', in *Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland, c. 1700-2000*, ed. Robert Pope (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 14-42.

[3] Ceri Davies, *Welsh Literature and the Classical Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p. 3. It is difficult to accept without substantial modification Ioan-Aurel Pop's statement in his *Romanians and Hungarians from the 9th to the 14th Century* (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundatia Culturală Română, 1996), p. 15, that the population of Wales 'remained, linguistically and spiritually, outside the Roman and Romanized world, developing its own forms of civilization'.

[4] Tony Conran, *Welsh Verse*, third edition (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1992), p. 102.

[5] cf. *Rhyddiaith R. Williams Parry*, ed. Bedwyr Lewis Jones (Denbigh: Gwasg Gee, 1974), p. 101.

[6] Dafydd Johnston, *A Pocket Guide: The Literature of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), pp. 70-1; Saunders Lewis, 'A Tipsy Anglesey Curate Started It', *Western Mail*, 3 August 1964, p. 7; Branwen Jarvis, *Goronwy Owen*, 'Writers of Wales' Series (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986); E. G. Millward, *Yr Arwrgerdd Gymraeg: Ei Thwf a'i Thranc* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998).

[7] Mary-Ann Constantine (ed.), *Ballads in Wales* (London: FLS Books, 1999), pp. 1, 6; D. Roy Saer (ed.), *Caneuon Llafar Gwlad (Songs from Oral Tradition)*, vol. 1 (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1974), pp. 65-6; Phyllis Kinney & Meredydd Evans (eds), *Canu'r Cymry*, vol. 1 (Welsh Folk-Song Society, 1984), pp. 64-5; vol. 2 (Welsh Folk-Song Society, 1987), p. 72; J. H. Davies, *A Bibliography of Welsh Ballads Printed in the 18th Century* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1911), p. ix. In an article entitled '…ac ar ei ôl mi gofiais inne', in the volume *Essays and Poems Presented to Daniel Huws*, eds Tegwyn Jones & E. B. Fryde (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1994), Meredydd Evans and Phyllis Kinney discuss the various versions of five Welsh folk-songs based on international popular tales, including 'Lord Randal' and 'Our Goodman'. Phyllis Kinney, in a note in *Canu Gwerin*, 15 (1992), pp. 64-5, has suggested a possible relationship between the Welsh folk-song, 'Migildi, Magildi', and the refrain in

'The Wee Cooper o' Fife', a variant of 'The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin' (Child 277).

[8] See A. M. Allchin, *Praise Above All: Discovering the Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991); W. Rhys Nicholas, *The Folk Poets*, 'Writers of Wales' Series (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978).

[9] Eurys Rowlands, '*Cynghanedd*, Metre, Prosody', in *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282-c. 1550*, second edition, eds A. O. H. Jarman, Gwilym Rees Hughes, Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 183.

[10] See Alan Llwyd, '*Cynghanedd* and English Poetry', in *Poetry Wales*, 14:1 (Summer 1978), a special issue on Welsh traditional strict poetic forms and metres.

[11] Quoted in W. Rhys Nicholas, *The Folk Poets* (1978), p. 66.

[12] See Branwen Jarvis, *Goronwy Owen* (1986), p. 79.

[13] Although the actual relationship between storyteller and poet in medieval Wales is not clear, medieval Welsh narrative literature differs from most other Indo-European traditions by using prose as the medium of narrative. Sioned Davies, for example, can state quite categorically that there are no metrical narratives in Middle Welsh — Sioned Davies, *Crefft y Cyfarwydd* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p. 3.

[14] Tony Conran, 'The Ballad and Taliesin', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 28 (Winter 1994), p. 1. English translations of a number of Taliesin's poems are to be found in Tony Conran's *Welsh Verse* (1992).

[15] Dafydd Johnston, *A Pocket Guide: The Literature of Wales* (1994), pp. 10-16; Jenny Rowland, Early Welsh Saga Poetry (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990). However, it should be emphasized that these saga poems are lyric, dramatic monologues and dialogues by the characters rather than a narration of events.

[16] From Tony Conran's translation of the poem in his *Welsh Verse* (1992), p. 175; see also his comments on the poem, pp. 57-9.

[17] On metrical developments in Wales in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see R. Geraint Gruffydd (ed.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature c. 1530-1700* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997); Thomas Parry (tr. H. Idris Bell), *A History of Welsh Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955); Gwyn Williams, *An Introduction to Welsh Poetry* (London: Faber & Faber, 1953).

[18] See Phyllis Kinney, 'Welsh Ballad Tunes', in Mary-Ann Constantine (ed.), *Ballads in Wales* (1999), p. 19; Gwyn Williams, *An Introduction to Welsh Poetry* (1953), pp. 209-10.

[19] Brinley Rees, *Dulliau'r Canu Rhydd 1500-1650* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952), pp. 150-1.

[20] Cf. the ballads in English and Welsh produced by both Puritans and Royalists during revolutionary times in the mid-seventeenth century — see W. T. Pennar Davies, 'Baledi Gwleidyddol yng Nghyfnod y Chwyldro Piwritanaidd', *Y Cofiadur*, 25 (March 1955), pp. 3-22; M. Wynn Thomas, *Morgan Llwyd*, 'Writers of Wales' Series (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984), pp. 19-22. The same may be said of the first flowering of Welsh broadside printing in the eighteenth century. While close similarities can be found between Welsh and English broadsides of the period (and with collections of tales such as the *Gesta Romanorum* for that matter), there are very few direct translations from English into Welsh — see J. H. Davies, *A Bibliography of Welsh Ballads Printed in the 18th Century* (1911), p. viii; [J. H. Davies (ed.)], *Casgliad o Hanes-Gerddi Cymraeg* (Cardiff: Cymdeithas Llên Cymru, 1903). A Welsh translation of the *Gesta Romanorum* has been preserved in a manuscript copied c. 1600 — see Patricia Williams (ed.), *Gesta Romanorum* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

[21] There would seem to be virtually no Welsh broadsides printed, or any market for them in Wales, until the eighteenth century. An exception is *Byd y Bugail* (= 'The Shepherd's World') by Richard Hughes, a footman of Queen Elizabeth I, published c. 1620 — see Tegwyn Jones, 'Welsh Ballads', in Philip Henry Jones & Eiluned Rees, *A Nation and Its Books* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1998), p. 245; Nesta Lloyd (ed.), *Ffwtman Hoff: Cerddi Richard Hughes, Cefnllanfair* (Cyhoeddiadau Barddas, 1998), pp. 84-6; Meredydd Evans, 'Canu Cymru yn yr Unfed Ganrif ar Bymtheg', in Geraint H. Jenkins (ed.), *Cof Cenedl XIII* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1998), p. 60. However, it is worth noting that the author of the Welsh ballad on the Gunpowder Plot (1605) talks of singing his ballad from mansion to village to gathered crowd — see Brinley Rees, *Dulliau'r Canu Rhydd* (1952), p. 27.

[22] The standard modern anthology of hen benillion is the collection of over 700 items compiled and edited by T. H. Parry-Williams and first published in 1940 under the title *Hen Benillion*. T. H. Parry-Williams (1887-1975) was Professor of Welsh at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth from 1920 until his retirement in 1952. One of his main contributions to Welsh scholarship is his work on popular free-metre verse in the early modern period. He published three volumes of such material in 1931-32, followed by the collection of *hen benillion* in 1940. From September 1911 until April 1913, Parry-Williams studied at Freiburg under Rudolf Thurneysen, who like a number of other German academics had stayed at Parry-Williams's family home in Snowdonia in order

to learn Welsh — see R. Gerallt Jones, *Dawn Dweud: T. H. Parry-Williams* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1999), pp. 15-17, 47, 55-6, 59-60. Although his PhD thesis at Freiburg was on Welsh and Breton phonology, one wonders whether that period, together with his family's wider contact with German academics, did not kindle his special interest in folk poetry. It is worth remembering, as Sigrid Rieuwerts informed us at the Bucharest International Ballad Conference, that Fred Norris Robinson, who pioneered Celtic studies at Harvard from 1896 until his retirement in 1939, was sent by Child and Kittredge to study Celtic philology at Freiburg between 1894 and 1896 in order to add a Celtic component to their comparative work on oral literature. But whatever the direct influences on Parry-Williams, he was certainly familiar with the work of Child, Kittredge and Gummere on ballads — see T. H. Parry-Williams (ed.), *Llawysgrif Richard Morris o Gerddi* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1931), p. xcviii.

[23] W. Rhys Nicholas, *The Folk Poets* (1978), p. 14.

[24] James Moreira, 'Genre and Balladry', in Tom Cheesman & Sigrid Rieuwerts (eds), *Ballads into Books*, second revised edition (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 95-6; Ffion Llywelyn Jenkins, 'Celticism and Pre-Romanticism: Evan Evans', in Branwen Jarvis (ed.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature c. 1700-1800* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), p. 104.

[25] Alan Bold, The Ballad, 'The Critical Idiom' Series (London: Methuen & Co, 1979), pp. 99, 8-9; Sigrid Rieuwerts, 'From Percy to Child', in James Porter (ed.), *Ballads and Boundaries* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 1995), pp. 13-15.

[26] *A School of Welsh Augustans* was the title of a volume he wrote on that group of scholars and poets, first published in 1924 with a second edition in 1969.

[27] R. T. Jenkins & Helen M. Ramage, *A History of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1951), pp. 69-70. The correspondence of Thomas Percy and Evan Evans, edited by Aneirin Lewis, was published as volume 5 of 'The Percy Letters' series by Louisiana State University Press, USA, in 1957. Saunders Lewis suggested that 'some evidence of Percy's influence on Welsh may be see perhaps in Lewis Hopkin's translation of the ballad of Chevy Chase' (Child 162B), published in the short-lived periodical, *Trysorfa Gwybodaeth*, in 1770 — see *A School of Welsh Augustans*, second edition (Portway, Bath: Firecrest Publishing, 1969), p. 139. Evan Evans in a letter to Percy in July 1767 mentions specifically having been very much pleased by 'Chevy Chase' when he saw it in the *Annual Register* in 1765. However, it is worth remembering that Joseph Addison had singled out 'Chevy Chase' for attention in his pioneer essays in *The Spectator* in 1711 — see Alan Bold, *The Ballad* (1979), pp. 6-7, 9.

[28] Quoted in Sigrid Rieuwerts, 'From Percy to Child', in James Porter (ed.), *Ballads and Boundaries* (1995), p. 14.

[29] In a draft letter to Owen Meyrick dated 30 December 1738 and published in Hugh Owen (ed.), *Additional Letters of the Morrises of Anglesey* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1947), pp. 74, 79-80; cf. his unsigned introductory essay (in English) in *Diddanwch Teuluaidd* (London, 1763), a collection of Welsh poetry edited by Huw Jones, Llangwm.

[30] Glyn Jones, *A People's Poetry* (Bridgend: Seren, 1997), p. 12; Alan Bold, *The Ballad* (1979), p. 21.

[31] B. H. Bronson (ed.), *The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. xxvi.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

[33] It must be remembered of course that even in the more closely wedded situation of the ballad, tunes 'refuse to be limited by their textual mates: they have an independent existence, and not infrequently take up with other companions' (B. H. Bronson, *The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads*, 1976, p. xliii); cf. the comments on folk singers using tunes as aids to recalling words, singing more than one tune to a single song, and being mentally able to separate tune from text, in MacEdward Leach & Tristram P. Coffin (eds), *The Critics and the Ballad* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), p. 267, n.17. See also Phyllis Kinney, 'The Tunes of "Yr Hen Benillion" ', *Canu Gwerin*, 2 (1979), p. 30.

[34] Edward Jones, *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, fourth edition (London 1825), p. 61; the first edition appeared in 1784. This comment refers in part, but not exclusively, to the mainly north-Walian practice known as *canu penillion* (lit. 'stanza singing'), *canu gyda'r tannau* (lit. 'singing with the [harp] strings') or *cerdd dant* (lit. 'string craft'), where the singer joins in after the harp has started playing a tune, singing a counter-melody to the tune and ending at the same point as the harp.

[35] *A People's Poetry* (1997), p. 16.

[36] Mary-Ann Constantine, 'Broken Ballads: The Art of Fragmentation', in Marjetka Golež (ed.), *Ballads Between Tradition and Modern Times* (Ljubljana: Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences & Arts, 1998), p. 235. [See also Mary-Ann Constantine & Gerald Porter, *Fragments and Meaning in Traditional*

Song (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).]

[37] Edward Jones, *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, fourth edition (1825), p. 61, based on a description in Thomas Pennant's *Journey to Snowdon* (1781).

[38] 'Introduction', in H. C. Sargent & G. L. Kittredge (eds), *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (London: David Nutt, 1905), p. xix. In contrast with Kittredge's far from complimentary comments about extempore verses created in such communal settings — 'crude', 'trivial', 'ephemeral' are among the adjectives he uses (pp. xix-xx) — it must be said that extempore verse composed in contemporary Welsh bardic contests can reach very high standards.

[39] *Llenyddiaeth y Cymry: Cyflwyniad Darluniadol*, vol. 2 (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1989), p. 64; see also T. H. Parry-Williams (ed.), *Hen Benillion*, third edition (Llandysul: Gwasg Aberystwyth, 1965), pp. 9-10.

[40] All three parts of the work have been preserved in a manuscript copied in 1600 by the recusant Llywelyn Siôn of Llangewydd in Glamorgan (who in the same period made the only extant copy of the *Gesta Romanorum* in Welsh). The manuscript has been edited by Geraint Bowen, *Y Drych Kristnogawl* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996); the passage on which the poem is based is to be found on pp. 73-4 of that edition.

[41] Detailed discussions on the poem and its sources, together with references to other versions of the story extant in Welsh, may be found in [J. H. Davies (ed.)], *Casgliad o Hanes-Gerddi Cymraeg* (1903), pp. 37-44; Meredydd Evans & Phyllis Kinney, '...ac ar ei ôl mi gofiais inne', in *Essays and Poems Presented to Daniel Huws*, eds Tegwyn Jones & E. B. Fryde (1994), pp. 148-55.

[42] Robin Gwyndaf, 'Traddodiad yr Hen Bennill a'r Rhigwm yn Uwchaled', *Allwedd y Tannau*, 36 (1977), p. 25.

[43] See Meic Stephens (ed.), *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (1998), under 'Llatai'.

[44] Hugh Hughes, *Barddoniaeth Edward Morris* (Liverpool: Isaac Foulkes, 1902), pp. 57-60, which follows the text in Dafydd Jones's anthology, *Blodeu-gerdd Cymry* (1759). A variant manuscript version of the poem, published by O. M. Edwards in *Gwaith Edward Morus* (Llanuwchllyn: Ab Owen, [1904]), pp. 9-12, places the stanza in question in the middle section of the poem, where summer encourages the poet to prepare a bower in which to meet his beloved. This might suggest that the stanza is actually a floating one borrowed from oral tradition, although a number of other stanzas occur in different

positions in this version. In this version also, Europia has become Ethiopia and Armenia has supplanted Romania.

[45] E. Wyn James, 'Hwbwb yng Nghymoedd Taf a Rhondda', *Canu Gwerin*, 17 (1994), pp. 35-6.

[46] See Meic Stephens (ed.), *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (1998), under 'Evans, Margaret'; J. E. Lloyd & R. T. Jenkins (eds), *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1959), under 'Marged vch Ifan'; T. H. Parry-Williams (ed.), *Hen Benillion*, third edition (1965), pp. 152, 181-2.

[47] For examples of poems on eighteenth-century broadsides based on medleys of *hen benillion*, see T. H. Parry-Williams (ed.), *Hen Benillion*, third edition (1965), p. 192.

[48] On the complex textual history of the folk-song, together with a discussion of the likelihood of the first four lines having had a previous life as a folk stanza, see Maria Jane Williams, *Ancient National Airs of Gwent and Morganwg*, ed. Daniel Huws (Welsh Folk-Song Society, 1988), pp. [22]-[25]; Meredydd Evans & Phyllis Kinney, 'Nodiadau', *Canu Gwerin*, 15 (1992), pp. 62-4. I discussed 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn', a song which was very popular on Welsh broadsides of the nineteenth century, in my paper to the 28th International Ballad Conference at Hildesheim in 1998, 'Watching the White Wheat and That Hole Below the Nose: The English Ballads of a Late-Nineteenth-Century Welsh Jobbing-Printer', published in Sigrid Rieuwerts & Helga Stein (eds), *Bridging the Cultural Divide: Our Common Ballad Heritage* (Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), pp. 185-7.

[49] G. L. Kitteredge, 'Introduction', in H. C. Sargent & G. L. Kittredge (eds), *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1905), p. xi.

[50] Cynan's version is to be found in the collected volume of his poetry, *Cerddi Cynan*, third edition (Liverpool: Gwasg y Brython, 1967), p. 53. Enid Parry's version, with an English translation by David Bell, was published in her collection of eight folk-songs, *Wyth Gân Werin* (Cardiff: Hughes and Son, 1949). On Cynan and his ballads, see Dafydd Owen, *Cynan*, 'Writers of Wales' Series (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979).

[51] The standard work on Owain Glyndŵr and his war of liberation is R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). His place in Welsh folklore down to the present-day is discussed in Elissa R. Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndŵr in Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), while I

outline his portrayal in Welsh literature in a series of articles in the Welsh-language periodical, *Taliesin*, commencing in vol. 110 (Winter 2000).

[52] The song was released by the recording company 'Sain' on a cassette by the group 'Plethyn' entitled *Blas y Pridd* (1979), and subsequently on a CD entitled *Blas y Pridd/Golau Tan Gwmwl* (1990).

[53] [Myrddin ap Dafydd published the new version he wrote in 2000, and discusses the background to the composition of his two versions, together with the tradition which associates the original stanza with Glyndŵr, in his article 'Geiriau Newydd, Hen Fesurau', *Canu Gwerin*, 27 (2004), pp.22-5.]