

THE THEME OF HUNTING IN THE MABINOGION

Thesis presented in candidature for the degree of Master of  
Arts, University of Wales, by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis which I now submit has not been accepted before, in any of its parts, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

I also declare that it is the result of my own independent investigation, and wherever I am indebted to anyone such persons are referred to in the references and bibliography.

Signed: ANNA GONZÁLEZ

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1989

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Nesta Lloyd for her suggestions and help. Also to Dr R.O.Jones and Mrs Gaynor Miles from the Department of Welsh, Mr T.H. Lloyd from the History Department and Mrs Victoria Cirlot from the University of Barcelona. I am indebted to the Fundació Jaume Bofill of Barcelona for the grant which allowed me to do this course.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.B.C.S.: Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies.

B.B.I.A.S.: Bibliographical Bulletin of the International  
Arthurian Society.

C.M.C.S.: Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies.

R.M.S.: Reading Medieval Studies.

T.H.S.C.: Transactions of the Honourable Society of  
Cymmrodorion.

Z.C.P.: Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie.

## S U M M A R Y

Through the tales of the Mabinogion in which hunting scenes occur, it is possible to follow the evolution of hunting practice and, above all, the changing meaning of the hunt rituals.

Three stages can be distinguished: The first, reflecting the oldest pagan beliefs about hunting -which may go as far back as the cave age- is well represented in "Culhwch and Olwen". This tale is thought to be the oldest one of the collection, and it definitely portrays a native pagan world with deep-rooted values and customs which are slightly different from those found in the Four Branches in general and in considerable contrast to those reflected in the Romances.

The tales of "Pwyll Prince of Dyfed", "Branwen Daughter of Llyr", "Manawydan Son of Llyr" and the "Dream of Maccen Wledig" belong to the second stage. They reflect a still pagan society and its ancient beliefs, where hunting was a means of contacting the omnipresent otherworld which had the power to influence dramatically the lives of mortal men.

The romances of "Peredur Son of Efwrc" and "Gereint Son of Erbin" together with the fourth branch "Math Son of Mathonwy" are the exponents of a radical change in the concept of hunting. Albeit retaining stereotyped formulae

and stock features handed down from the previous tales, the romances belong to a new era in which hunting has become a courtly entertainment or the means through which a hero follows an adventure or a quest. The Christian -and Norman-influenced- society which saw the redaction of the Romances converted the highly religious and transcendent matter of the hunt into a non-sacred and courtly feat. "Math Son of Mathonwy" reflects the extreme case of the hunt used only as a plot device for literary purposes.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

The dawning of myth and religious cult goes back to a very early period of man's evolution. Early man made his home in caves as the only available places of shelter. It has been shown (1) that myth and religion have their roots in the caves where paleolithic man began to discover his own identity, his relation to other men, to the animals and to the unseen powers he believed to be much greater than himself.

In the past, man defined his relation to animals mainly through myths. Animals became archetypes, that is, "patterns of awareness that primitive man used as tools of communication to come to terms with his environment as well as his inner world of feelings and instincts" (2). Man, then, projected on to animals many of his feelings which the behaviour of the animal may symbolize and represent. As parts of a larger whole, animals have a little of man's essence and vice versa, and this fact was realised by man in the time when he depended so much on them.

From the paintings made by Stone Age hunters on the cave walls it can be deduced that man was at first almost entirely dependent upon animals. He hunted them for food and skins. But the paintings on the walls seem to have a specific meaning, perhaps magic and religious purposes, to help the hunters to succeed in their hunt. The ceremonies



performed in the cave are considered to be the beginnings of religion.

We can see man bound up with animals in the very first steps of religious belief. He needed them, depended on them, worshipped them, admired them. Because man depended on animals and had to kill them in order to survive, he worshipped them as saviours of his ancestors of himself and of his descendants. A group or a tribe ensured its continuity through the animals, which had the force to keep life going. Later on, some groups identified themselves with a single animal which constituted the tribe's totem. It was thought to be the embodiment of Earth Mother as well as of the spirit of the past ancestors and, at the same time it ensured the fertility of the group and that of the animal group to which the totem belonged. The animal would have to be killed to ensure the tribe's survival, but before that certain rituals and sacrifices had to be performed in order to seek forgiveness from the totem. In a later form of totemism still alive in our day, the group abstains from killing the totem animal altogether, except on very solemn and sacred occasions.

If the roots of religions are to be found in the prehistoric caves it is only logical that animals still have a strong symbolism in more recent religions. And it is there that the meaning of the myths which have animals as their central figures has to be sought.

According to Jung, the myths, expressions of the collective experience at that time, not only remain deep within the racial memory but they also remain in the unconscious of the individual. At the beginnings of the race, animals figure as archetypes because of their close relationship with man. Man projected all his own qualities on to the animals and other objects outside himself, and this tendency was so strongly marked in man that it outlived the period of the caves and carried on into historical times.

Primitive religion, therefore, shows the strong influence of animals in man's beliefs. The religion and mythology of the Celts are no exception though they may have some characteristic of their own (3). There is little written evidence of the cults and beliefs that the Celts held for so many centuries, and to a large extent scholars have depended upon Latin sources to explain a considerably different culture, despite the obvious risks of this method. More reliable than this is the evidence given by all the archaeological remains, which can help to draw a picture -though inevitably a bit blurred- of what Celtic beliefs were.

Celtic religion and mythology are full of gods with animal parts, or deities constantly related to a certain animal, and, at the same time, divine beings turned into animals but that nevertheless retain human characteristics and understanding. It used to be thought that these

different ways of representing deities were the expression of various stages in the evolution of religion. That is, a deity having a zoomorphic image slowly developed into a god with animal parts and, finally, it became fully anthropomorphic albeit retaining its connection with the animal. Anne Ross has pointed out that rather than a logical evolution what we have are different forms coexisting at the same time

" it is more realistic to see in these divine animals and gods having zoomorphic parts and attributes, a manifestation of the whole complexity of Celtic mythology. Here human and superhuman, animal and anthropomorphic elements cannot be separated and fitted into a rigid schema of evolution but rather occur as varying elements appearing at different times and in different ways in an attempt on the part of the Celtic peoples to express the constantly fluctuating colourful and persistent concepts of their densely peopled otherworld and its relationship to mankind" (4).

It seems, therefore, that the different qualities of the various animals have been attributed to the deities to whom they were connected, due to certain animals being symbolic of certain qualities and powers.

In literature it is clear how a mythological character relates to an animal, usually being turned into, or turning himself into an animal, as well as adopting several animal forms during a period of time. On the other hand, the gods having animal parts seem to have an essentially fundamental association between god and beast,

and there is a deep link which remains constant through time.

Some animals are specially significant to Celtic culture and early literature. These are probably the most relevant ones:

#### THE STAG

The religious associations of the stag are of great significance and have been fully attested in all Celtic areas (5). The stag is mainly depicted as the attribute of the antlered god, known as Cernunnos. Its cult is so constant and widespread that it has been suggested that it could stand for a 'national' deity. The stag may be found on its own in the iconography, but usually appears with the stag-god. Cernunnos has been considered the Lord of the Beasts due to iconographic evidence, and, when compared to Latin sources, it has been associated with the god Cocidius in his role as hunter-deity.

The figure of the stag appears widely in literature, where legends can be found about the hunting of magical or supernatural stags which more often than not lead the hunters to some kind of otherworld experience. Another part played by stags in literature is that of the oldest animal, and sometimes characters in the tales may be transformed into stags.

It can be concluded that the stag was one of the most

important cult animals, strongly related to the otherworld, and as such has come down in literature, where he retains the aura of divinity.

#### THE BOAR

The boar seems to be the most typical Celtic animal, symbolic of war and of the sacred ritual of hospitality, a frequent form for metamorphosis as well as the hunt animal par excellence of the Celtic world (6). There was a native deity concerned with pigs, either as hunter or as divine swineherd, which has been related to the Roman Mercury after appearing with the epithet Moccus -Welsh moch, 'pigs'. It is seen to be the animal which has the greatest representational popularity, symbolically placed as a crest in Celtic helmets and associated with grave goods and with the Celtic ritual of the feast. Its occurrence on Celtic coins testifies to the widespread cult of the boar and its importance as a universal Celtic symbol.

The role of the boar in literature is varied. It may be the important culinary element in the sacred ritual of the otherworld feast and the food served in the ritual of hospitality in the courts of the kings and the dwellings of the gods; it may be the form into which any being has been metamorphosed; it may be the great otherworld beast which brings chaos and destruction with him. The hunting of magic or divine boars is an important theme in the early tales and this hunting of the otherworld boar must have constituted

one of the most fundamental cult legends. These supernatural beasts have an invincible nature and they can never be taken, despite all the skills of the heroic, kingly or divine hunters. Such is the case, for example, of Twrch Trwyth.

Anne Ross suggests (7) that the great frequency of occurrence of the boar hunt in tradition and legend shows that

"...the sacred Celtic animal which was ritually hunted and slain was the boar. The animal seems then to have been symbolic of fertility -agricultural and sexual- and of war. In it were contained all the passions of the Celtic peoples -hunting, feasting, fighting and procreation. it was an animal form appropriate to the gods, a food fitting for the otherworld feasts of the Celtic heroic world."

#### THE HORSE

The importance of the horse as a cult animal is widely attested throughout the Celtic world (8). A horse goddess called Epona in Gaul, Rhiannon in Wales and Macha in Ireland enjoyed widespread popularity which secured her a place in early literature. The relevance of this animal in early Celtic society is backed up by the tradition of the congenital birth of hero and horse in tales, legends and folklore (9). Supernatural horses of fantastic colours and magical qualities are frequent, and horse-racing was especially associated with the otherworld. The horse goddess and deities with hippomorphic characteristics are often

connected with birds, an example of that being the birds of Rhiannon, which "wake the dead and lull the living to sleep". The horse was a symbol of fertility and, above all, of kingship (10). The myths constantly reaffirm the female and equine nature of sovereignty (11). The horse is then, together with the stag and the boar, one of the most important cult animals in Celtic myth and religion which carry on having a significant role in early literature.

#### THE HOUND

The dog appears less frequently in the iconography than the animals mentioned above. Nevertheless it seems that there is a strong connection between dogs and gods. The fact that dog names abound in several traditions (e.g., CuChulainn, Cynon) indicate that the dog had an important place in early mythology (14).

Other significant animals in Celtic mythology which cannot be dealt with extensively here are the bull, the serpent (especially the ram-headed serpent), some fish such as the salmon and the trout -which symbolise wisdom and knowledge- and some birds as well.

To conclude with Anne Ross's words, "animals constitute an essential element in the vivid, ever-moving, frequently sinister otherworld of the pagan Celts" (13).

A certain animal can be a deity, or an envoy of this

deity; it can be the form into which a human being has been transformed, or has magically transformed himself; it can be a supernatural animal with special qualities and attributes like the ability to speak and understand or it can possess physical peculiarities of shape and/or colour. An animal is frequently the bridge between this world and the otherworld, i.e. a psychopomp, who guides mortals into the realms of the unknown or who leads human beings to some kind of supernatural experience.

All this relationship between animals and what is generally called the otherworld is very evident in the early literature of the Celts, and particularly in medieval Welsh prose. Of course, literature is not straightforward myth or a code of religious beliefs, but these do form an important part of what is expressed. Unfortunately, reading from the distance of this century it is possible to miss some of the meaning attached to the stories, and the extent to which the persons who copied the early manuscripts, or literally put pen to parchment to write down an orally-based story for the first time, were even then, missing part of the deepest meaning of the tales. Centuries elapsed between the formulation of these oral stories in a pre-Christian background and the occasional writing down of them in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, once this fact has been acknowledged it is still possible to make an attempt to study the patterns and the examples, and to try to reach some better understanding of some of the threads interwoven in this early literature (14).



## OTHERWORLD COLOURS

Some of the animals encountered in the tales of the Mabinogion are easily recognized as otherworld beings because of a few characteristic traits in their description, and the same applies to some otherworldly 'human' figures.

In "Pwyll", Pwyll was pursuing a stag when a pack of hounds other than his own appeared; he did not realise that it was an otherworld pack. Nevertheless, the hounds have unmistakable characteristics;

"Ac yna edrych ohonaw ef ar liw yr erchwys, heb hanbwyllaw edrych ar y carw. Ac o'r a welsei ef o helgwn y byt, ny welsei cwn un lliw ac wynt. Sef lliw oed arnunt, claerwyn llathreit, ac eu clusteu yn gochyon. Ac ual y llathrei wynnet y cwn, y llathrei cochet y clusteu (15)".

Soon afterwards Pwyll learns that these are the hounds of Arawn king of Annwn. The colours here are all important because they are associated with the otherworld and supernatural beings. The hounds that Pwyll encounters are shining white with equally shining red ears; Rhiannon's horse is pale-white and cannot be overtaken despite the fact that it appears to be moving at an amble; in "Branwen" the big man coming out of the Lake of the Cauldron has yellow-red hair and is carrying a cauldron on his back and at the same time his even bigger woman is going to give birth to a full-armed son. These traits are easily

recognisable otherworld marks, the colours above all, for red and white are the colours traditionally connected with the land of the dead and the otherworld.

The implicit meaning and symbolism of colours were basic in early literature. The underlying significance of a colour varies according to the cultural background but nevertheless there are some constants in a particular literature that persist. White and red are usually the colours of the otherworld in Celtic literature. White seems to be related also to some sacredness of one kind or another. Red on the other hand, seems to have some longstanding relationship with evil. Yellow-red hair has always been linked with evil, but in the Middle Ages it meant the merging of two 'bad' colours, yellow and red.

"Judas est également toujours représenté avec une chevelure rousse, couleur qui symbolise en quelque sorte l'association du mauvais rouge et du mauvais jaune. Ce caractère pejoratif des cheveux roux remonte très haut..., innombrables sont les documents littéraires ou iconographiques qui font des personnages roux des personnages mauvais. La littérature arthurienne, par exemple, réserve toujours la chevelure rousse aux chevaliers félons, aux traîtres, aux gens mal nés ou cruels.(...)Un chevalier rouge est ainsi un personnage aimé de mauvaises intentions (c'est en outre un personnage qui vient souvent de l'autre monde)(...) un chevalier blanc est un ami du héros... (16)".

Horses, like red colour, have otherworldly connotations and were a recurrent feature in tradition, especially red horses, as has been pointed out by both Anne

Ross and M.L. Sjoestedt:

"Fantastically coloured horses are a regular feature of the happy Celtic Otherworld, and one of the great pleasures to be anticipated were the horse-races to which the Celts were so attached. Red is the colour usually associated with death in the Celtic world, and as a result red horsemen are sometimes represented as constituting an omen of disaster (17)".

"Mars Rudianos (the Red) recalls the name of the horse god Rudiobos for the horse and the colour red are associated with the land of the dead and with gods of war throughout the Celtic territory (18)".

The appearance of Rhiannon on a horse is a good example of the supernatural,

"Ac wal y bydynt yn eisted, wynt a welynt gwreic ar uarch canwelw mawr aruchel, a gwisc eureit, llathreit, o bali amdanei, yn dyuot ar hyt y prifford a gerdei heb law yr orssed. Kerdet araf, guastat oed gan y march ar uryt y neb a'y guelei, ac yn dyuot y ogyuuch a'r orssed.".. "Y march a gymerth, ac racdaw yd aeth; y maestir guastat a gauas, ac ef a dangosses yr ysparduneu y r march. A ffei uwyaf y lladei ef y march, pellaf uydei hitheu e wrthaw ef. Yr vn gerdet a dechreuyssei hitheu yd oed arnaw. Y uarch ef a ballwys; a phan wybu ef ar y uarch pallu y bedestric, ymchwelut yn yd oed Pwyll a wnaeth. "Arglwyd" heb ef, "ny thykya y neb ymlit yr unbennes racco. Ny wydwn i varch gynt yn y kyuoyth no hwnnw, ac ni thygyei ymi y hmylit hi." "Ie" heb ynteu Pwyll, "y mae yno ryw ystyr hut. Awn parth a'r llys (19)".

Generally, in literature, meeting with an animal heralds some kind of adventure, but the hunting or the vision of a white animal -horse, stag, boar, hound- is

almost always the precursor of a supernatural adventure (20). According to P.K.Ford, "the supernatural horse is liath (grey) like the canwelu (pale-white, whitish) horse upon which Rhiannon rides (21)". Elsewhere Ford states that some Arthurian names in Welsh are in fact explanations of otherworldly items, most of which contain the adjective gwyn/gwen (white) in them. The names he refers to are Carnwenann, 'white hilt' (Arthur's knife); Prydwen, 'face of the evening star', (his ship); Gwenhwyfar, 'white spirit' (his wife); Gwenn, 'white' (his mantle); and Ehangwen. 'broad-white' (his hall).

"The striking thing about the list of Arthur's possessions... is that many of them are compounded with the adjective gwynn, fem. gwen, 'white' or, in a more specialized sense, 'pure', 'sacred', 'holy'. It is well known that white and red are the two special colours of the Otherworld in Celtic tradition, and in my view it is quite appropriate that Arthur's possessions, most of which are magical or possess magical powers, should be particularized as gwyn/gwen, emanating as they no doubt did, from the Otherworld (22)".

Rhiannon's horse is pale-white, and it is soon realised that it is an otherworld rider on an otherworld horse. Pwyll himself states that "there is some magic meaning there" But there is also some sacredness in it. Not only is she a horse-goddess, but an embodiment of sovereignty and fertility. Kingship was attained by the sacred union of the rightful king with a representation of sovereignty, in this case the horse-goddess. Pwyll then is

being ritually offered this sacred sovereignty by Rhiannon. The myths underlying the medieval Welsh and Irish tales state constantly the female and equine nature of sovereignty :

"Sovereignty, female, was elusive. There was competition for the kingship, several suitors trying to espouse the kingdom, of which only one could be successful. To put it another way, there was one on whom the lady Sovereignty bestowed her favours or was forced to do so. The king mated with her, and the result was prosperity in the land. In myth, the mating has two reflexes, human and equine, depending on whether it functions on the anthropomorphic -king and queen- or zoomorphic -mare and stallion- level (23)".

Whiteness, as it was understood in Celtic tradition, was quickly absorbed by Christianity in its typical way of making the most of pre-existent pagan beliefs for its own purposes. Thus, there are episodes which frequently recur in Celtic saint s lives in which the saint is directed to follow a white animal who will lead him to a suitable building site for his church (24).

In this thesis the hunting scenes which occur in the Mabinogion will be discussed. All of them play an important role in the tales, and they have a relevant place in their structure and plot. This fact only reflects the importance of hunting itself in everyday life all through the evolution of Celtic society -not only in the old pagan Celtic

societies but also right up to the end of the Middle Ages. Hunting practice changes, it develops in form and meaning through the different historical periods.

In the following examples there are a few questions that should be highlighted so that they may be compared with all the other hunting scenes in the tales. The first is the outcome of the hunt or the kind of situation it leads to, for example, in "Culhwch", to an otherworld experience. Another fact to be taken into account is the status of the huntsmen, to enable a discussion of the recurring appearance of noble men. In "Culhwch", for example, the importance of the enterprise required not only Arthur but the best warriors in the world. The geography of the tale is also relevant, whether it is made explicit or not. The animal or animals involved in the scene, if specified, may stress the otherworldly connotations of the scene. Some of the scenes can be viewed in the light of the contemporary laws which give more insight into them. These are the main questions that should be borne in mind when examining the following texts, in order to be aware of the similarities and differences of the texts, and, moreover, of the evolution of the hunting theme. For this purpose the tales have been arranged in the following order: "Culhwch", "Pwyll", "Branwen", "Manawydan", "Macsen", "Peredur", "Gereint" and "Math", ranging from the ones showing the oldest beliefs to the ones in the most advanced stage of evolution. "Lludd and Llefelys", "The Dream of Rhonabwy" and "The Lady of the

Fountain" have not been considered here since no relevant hunting scene occurs in these tales.

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## C H A P T E R I

### C U L H W C H A N D O L W E N

Undoubtedly, the supernatural boar 'par excellence' is Twrch Trwyth in "Culhwch and Olwen". The boar has in its possession some of the items that Ysbaddaden requires to groom himself for Olwen's wedding to Culhwch. It is clear though that this is just a feature of the tale, (1) and that both the animal and its hunting were sacred matters in their origins. The terrifying animal is not any boar but 'The Boar'. In the "Culhwch and Olwen" description of Twrch Trwyth we have the archetypal boar-god, and so we have in Culhwch himself. The underlying presence of the cult of a swine deity plays an important part in the tale. On the one hand we have the official protagonist being born in a pig run and thus named Culhwch. E.P.Hamp states that "Culhwch literally was a pig", and "originally a highly important pig, since he is stated to be noble. He was a cousin to Arthur (2)". Here we have then the anthropomorphic expression of the deity. On the other hand there is Twrch Trwyth, the otherworld boar, who used to be a prince and for his sins was turned into a swine. This would be the zoomorphic level of the same deity. This deity, on the continent was associated with the Roman Mercury, giving him the epithet 'moccus', pig. But, if there is only one deity, why can so many boars be found in the tale? First we have

Ysgithrwyn Penn Baidd; Ysgithrwyn has been translated as 'white tusks', and Pen Baidd means 'chief of boars'. Secondly, there is Grugyn Gwrych Ereint, which is 'silver bristles', and several other named piglets as well. P.K.Ford suggests that all these names were originally nicknames for Twrch Trwyth himself and that they later developed into different boars. "Thus it would seem that white tusks and silver bristles were the distinguishing features of the Otherworld boar, who was otherwise known simply as the 'Ancient White One'(3)". We find Porcum Troit in the Mirabilia in the Historia Brittonum as the first recording of the Hunting of the Boar, and after that as Henwen, the 'Ancient White One', in Triad 26 (4,5). But why should Twrch Trwyth be related to a prince? According to P.K.Ford (6), the corresponding words for Twrch Trwyth in Irish are Torc and Triath (meaning 'boar' and 'chieftain,hero'), and there are two definitions for 'orc' in Cormac's glossary: it may mean 'a young pig' or 'the name for the son of a king'. With this the association seems evident. And Twrch Trwyth, with all his connotations, is a sacred being, and as such it has to be ritually hunted.

The best examples of the religious rituals of hunting and its otherworld connotations are found in the oldest tales of the Mabinogion, undoubtedly because they are closer to very old beliefs and reflect a much more primitive state of affairs on the whole than, say, the romances.

"Culhwch and Olwen" is considered the oldest tale in

the collection. The hunting of Twrch Trwyth illuminates the idea of the hunt as a sacred ritual. Twrch Trwyth was known to Welsh bards long before the extant text of the tale. He first appears in a seventh century poem included in the Book of Aneirin (7). The first literary evidence of Arthur hunting Twrch Trwyth comes from the aforementioned Mirabilia of Britain, where it is said that there is a place called Carn Cabal where Arthur's dog, Cabal, left his footprint during the hunt of the Porcus Troit

"Est aliud mirabile in regione quae dicitur Buelto. Est ibi cumulus lapidum et unus lapis superpositus super congestum cum vestigio canis in eo. Quando venatus est porcum Troynt, impressit Cabal, qui erat canis Arthuri militis, vestigium in lapide, et Arthur postea congregavit congestum lapidum sub lapide, in quo erat vestigium canis sui, et vocatur Carn Cabal. Et veniunt homines, et tollunt lapidem in manibus suis per spatium diei et noctis, et in crastino die invenitur super congestum suum".

There is good reason to believe, then, that by the ninth century there was a detailed account of Arthur's hunting of the boar.

The whole tale of "Culhwch and Olwen" is in fact full of ritual scenes, like the one where Culhwch has his hair trimmed by Arthur, which altogether lead to the fulfilment of the main ritual of winning Olwen after the ritualistic death of her father. The long lists of tasks which Ysbaddaden sets upon Culhwch in order to obtain his daughter can be viewed as an initiation process. Not only

an individual one, i.e. Culhwch's, but a collective one, involving Arthur and all the retinue gathered for the occasion.

There are some seventeen tasks which lead up to the main task which is the hunt for the comb and shears from between the two ears of Twrch Trwyth(8). These tasks involve several objects and persons said to be indispensable for the big hunt of the big boar: Drudwyn, the whelp of Greid son of Eri, the leash of Cors Hundred-claws, the collar of Canhastyr Hundred-hands, the chain of Cilydd Hundred-holds, Mabon son of Modron, Gwyn Dun-mane the steed of Gweddw, Eidoel son of Aer, Garselit the Irishman, a leash from the beard of Dillus the Bearded Cynedyr the wild son of Hetwn the leper, Gwyn son of Nudd, Du the horse of Moro Oerfeddawg, Gwilenhim king of France, the son of Alun Dyfed, Aned and Aethlem, Arthur and his huntsmen, Bwlch, Cyfwlch, Syfwlch and all their retinue. Whatever this last trio and all their funny household may mean, the hunting of Twrch Trwyth is no joke. The performance of all these tasks implies a sacred ritual, and to perform it, as the collective enterprise that it is, every outstanding character is needed whether out of mythology, folklore, legend or history. The particular names are not as relevant as the fact that they imply the idea of collectivity, at some point described as 'Arthur and the hosts of the world'. Arthur may be the leader, but he needs the world -presumably the Celtic world- to follow him. Some of the huntsmen have to be

individualised for the sake of the narrative and then it is clear that it is 'la crème de la crème' of the warrior caste who is there. So royalty and people of high rank are found at the heart of the hunting.

Twrch Trwyth is the supernatural boar 'par excellence', a transformed king, the destructive maddened otherworld animal causing an almost pan-Celtic crisis. For it is a pan-Celtic tour they embark on in pursuit of Twrch Trwyth : Esgeir Oerfel, the farthest place in Ireland, is the starting point, and the Irish fight the first battle followed by Arthur's warband and then Arthur himself for nine days and nine nights, showing that it is useless to try to make him come to reason. The boar moves on to Arthur's country, and they cross to Wales. Porth Cleis in Dyfed, Mynyw, Cynwas Cwryfagyl's house, Deu Gleddyf, Preseleu, Glyn Nyfer, Cwm Cerwyn, Peluniawg, Glyn Ystun, Dyffryn Lluchwr, Mynydd Amanw, Lluch Ewin, Lluch Tawy, Din Tywi, Ceredigiawn, Garth Grugyn, Ystrad Yw, Tawy and Ewyas are the many places given in the account of the mischiefs of Twrch Trwyth and his piglets in Wales. Most of these places can still be identified in Wales's modern geography (9). The hosts of Cornwall and Devon are summoned to join Arthur at the mouth of the Severn to prevent the boar getting into Cornwall. Arthur swears that Twrch Trwyth will not get to Cornwall, but he does. He is driven into the Severn but he nevertheless succeeds in reaching Cornwall where finally he is caught, the 'treasures' obtained, and he himself driven

into the sea off Cornwall, and he is never taken or killed. The geography then is an important feature of the account, probably trying to convey the idea of the 'whole world'. The hunting of Twrch Trwyth then is some mighty matter, no adventure-seeking, no hunting for sport or pleasure but a necessity, a religious performance followed ritualistically after a sacred being.

This unacknowledgeable old purpose and meaning of hunting has found its way into the earliest literature, that which shows the importance of the otherworld as a kind of fourth dimension always present to mortal men and which can be contacted or entered into by the observance of certain rituals.

The conclusion is that the hunting of Twrch Trwyth, the supernatural boar, leads Arthur and the best warriors in the world to a mighty otherworld experience through the very specific geography of the Celtic world. It is the performance of a sacred ritual which gives meaning to the hunt and to the whole tale.

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## C H A P T E R   T W O

P W Y L L .   B R A N W E N ,   M A N A W Y D A N ,   M A C S E N

Though "Culhwch and Olwen" probably reflects the oldest beliefs in the Mabinogion, the Four Branches, on the whole, are the bearers of this ancient tradition as well. Though perhaps not in such heroic manner as in "Culhwch", hunting still retains its aura of sacredness and its relationship to the otherworld. This fact affects the everyday life of mortals, specially, as will be seen, that of people of high rank (Pwyll prince of Dyfed, Matholwch king of Ireland, Manawydan lord of Dyfed, or the emperor Maccsen) who venture out hunting or who sit down on a mound (Pwyll and his retinue, Matholwch, or Manawydan and Pryderi). The geography of the tales is, as in "Culhwch", well defined and mainly set in Wales or Ireland. The animals involved in the hunting scenes (stag, boar) are otherworld-related when specified though the fact that an animal is not described is no obstacle for the hunt to lead to a supernatural experience (a pact with the king of Annwn, the meeting of a supernatural race, the discovery of a magical caer, or the dream which leads the dreamer to his beloved).

The tales dealt with in this chapter are "Pwyll", "Branwen", "Manawydan" and, though not belonging to the Four Branches, "Maccsen". This last tale shares many characteristics with older tales, but at the same time

heralds a change in the treatment of hunting in the Mabinogion. On the other hand, "Math" has been omitted here to be discussed later on together with the Romances.

The opening of "Pwyll" is a good example of the relationship of hunting and the otherworld, and there are a few points to be discussed in that scene.

"Pwyll, Pendeuc Dyuet, a oed yn arglwyd ar seith cantref Dyuet. A threigylgweith yd oed yn Arberth, prif lys idaw, a dyuot yn y uryt ac yn y uedwl uynet y hela. Sef kyueir o y gyuoeth a uynnei y hela, Glynn Cuch. Ac ef a gychwynnwys y nos honno o Arberth, ac a doeth hyt ym Penn Llwyn Diarwya, ac yno y bu y nos honno. A thrannoeth yn ieuengtut y dyd kyuodi a oruc, a dyuot y Lynn Cuch i ellwng e gwn dan y coet. A chanu y gorn a dechreu dygyuor yr hela, a cherdet yn ol y cwn, ac ymgolli a'y gydymdeithon. Ac ual y byd yn ymwarandaw a llef yr erchwys, ef a glywei llef erchwys arall, ac nit oedynt unlllef, a hynny yn dyuot yn erbyn y erchwys ef... (1)".

Once lost, Pwyll hears a pack of hounds other than his own; he sees a clearing in the wood and there a stag in front of that other pack. Then he becomes aware of the strange nature of the colours of those hounds. He drives them away and sets his own hounds upon the stag already felled. Then he notices a rider near him:

"Ac ual y byd yn llithiau y cwn, ef a welei uarchauc yn dyuot yn ol yr erchwys y ar uarch erchlas mawr; a chorn canu am y uynwgyl, a gwisc o urethyn llwyd tei amdanaw yn wisc hela. Ac ar hynny y marchawc a doeth attaw ef, a dywedut ual hynn wrthaw. 'A unben' heb ef, 'mi a wnn pwy wytti, ac ny chyuarachaf i well it'.

'Ie heb ef, 'ac atuyd y mae arnat o anryded ual nas dyllyei'. 'Dioer' heb ef, 'nyt teilygdawt uy anryded a'm etteil am hynny'. 'A unben' heb ynteu, 'beth amgen?' 'Y rof i a Duw', hep ynteu, 'dy anwybot dy hun a'th ansyberwyt'. 'Pa ansyberwyt, unben, a weleist ti arnaf i?' 'Ny weleis ansyberwyt uwy ar wr' hep ef, 'no gyrru yr erchwys a ladyssei y carw e ymdeith, a llithiau dy erchwys dy hun arnaf; hynny', hep ef, 'ansyberwyt oed; a chyn nyt ymdialwyf a thi, y rof i a Duw', hep ef, 'mi a wnaaf o anglot itt guerth can carw'. 'A unbenn', hep ef, 'o gwneuthum gam, mi a brynaf dy gerennyd.' 'Pa delw', hep ynteu, 'y pryny di? 'Vrth ual y bo dy anryded, ac ny wnn i pwy wytti . Brenhin corunawc wyf i yn y wlat yd hanwyf oheni'. 'Arglwyd', heb ynteu, 'dyd da itt; a pha wlat yd hanwyt titheu oheni?' 'O Annwuy'n', heb ynteu. 'Arawn urenhin Annwuy'n wyf i'. 'Arglwyd' heb ynteu, 'pa furyf y caf i dy gerennyd di?' 'Llyma wyd y kyffy', heb ynteu"(2).

And then they make a pact which entails changing places in their realms for a year.

There are a number of points worth highlighting in these paragraphs. First of all, the role played by hunting. It is in the 'sacred' and ritualistic atmosphere of the hunt that the communication with the otherworld can take place. Secondly, the hunt leads Pwyll away from his companions. The paragraph states the names of well-known places identifiable even today, but as soon as the hunt starts he is in the 'woods' by himself. Now he is ready for the otherworld encounter. The animal involved is in this case a stag; Pwyll though, sees it for the first time when the otherworld pack is already upon it. Here, then, the stag instead of being an otherworld being 'per se' is more an

element in the setting of the hunt, the hunt being the right atmosphere for things to happen. The people involved in these hunting scenes are another feature to bear in mind. The tale gives a clear account of the royal status of the two huntsmen, it even stresses it. Both human and supernatural huntsmen are prince and crowned king in their own lands, and as such they are going to change places. It is a remarkable fact that Pwyll finds the otherworld court the same day of the hunt. Annwn, then, seems to be in or near Dyfed, the realm of Pwyll, though he was so far unaware of this fact. Magical places, then, are to be found in well-stated geographical surroundings.

This scene can also be discussed in the light of the ancient Welsh laws (3). In the Law of Hywel Dda the following statements can be found:

"The king is free to hunt in every place in his country".

"If a free man has a staghound hunt, let him wait in the morning until the king's huntsmen have loosed their hounds three times, and then let him loose his."

"If it happens that a person goes hunting and looses his hounds on an animal, then if idle hounds meet it and kill it, the animal will belong to the first hounds, which started it, unless the idle hounds belong to the king".

Given these three points, Pwyll is exercising his

lawful rights when he drives away the other pack of hounds and sets his own upon the stag. He is hunting in his dominion -as far as he knows- and he is its prince; he should not be very happy meeting unknown hounds interfering with his hunting. Nevertheless, he is civil to the other hunter, whom he calls 'chieftain', and by whom he is called chieftain too. This fact would have seemed to Pwyll quite impolite, since the rider boasts that he knows who he is, and therefore should have called him 'lord'. Pwyll, though, allows for the possibility that the dignity of the stranger is greater than his own, as it turns out to be: "A crowned king I am in the land whence I come" From now on Pwyll calls him lord(4). One cannot help wondering, though, where is it that they really are. Are they in Pwyll's domains, i.e. Dyfed, or in Arawn's, i.e. Annwn, or in both? Since Arawn is the one getting away with the compensation either they are in Annwn or Annwn is part of Dyfed.

This overlapping of world and otherworld occurs in "Branwen", too. Matholwch, king of Ireland, asked Bendigeidfran king of the Island of the Mighty, whence the cauldron he had just given him had come from. Bendigeidfran tells the story and marvels that Matholwch had not heard of it before. Matholwch had actually known of it, and so he told Bendigeidfran.

'A'r eil nos, eisted y gyt a wnaethant.  
 Arglwyd', heb y Matholwch, 'pan doeth  
 yti y peir a rodeist y mi?' 'E doeth im',  
 heb ef, 'y gan wr a uu y th wlat ti. Ac  
 ni wn na bo yno y caffo.' 'Pwy oed

hwnnw?' heb ef. 'Llassar Llaes Gyfnewit', heb ef. 'A hwnnw a doeth yma o Iwerdon, a Chymidei Kymeinuoll, y wreic, y gyt ac ef, ac a dianghyssant o'r ty hayarn yn Iwerdon, pan wnaethpwyt yn wenn yn eu kylch, ac y dianghyssant odynd. Ac eres gynhyf i, ony wdosti dim y wrth hynny. 'Gwn, Arglwyd', heb ef, 'a chymeint ac a wnn, mi a'e managaf y ti. Yn hela yd oedwn yn Iwerdon, dydgueith, ar benn gorsedd uch penn llyn oed yn Iwerdon, a Llyn y Peir y gelwit. A mi a welwn gwr melyngoch, mawr, yn dyuot o'r llyn, a pheir ar y geuyn. A gwr heuyt athrugar, mawr, a drygweith anorles arnaw oed; a gwreic yn y ol; ac ot oed uawr ef, mwy dwyweith oed y wreic noc ef. A chyrchu ataf a wnaethant, a chyuarch uell im! 'Ie', heb y mi, 'pa gerdet yssyd arnawch chwi?'. 'Llyna gerdet yssyd arnam ni'. 'Arglwyd', heb ef, 'y wreic honn' heb ef, 'ym penn pethewnos a mis, y byd beichogi idi, a'r mab a aner yna o'r torllwyth hwnnw, ar benn y pethewnos a'r mis, y byd gwr ymlad llawn aruawc. Y kymereis inheu wyntwy arnaf, yu gossymdeithaw. y buant ulwydyn gyt a mi. Yn y ulwydyn y keueis yn diwarauun wynt; o hynny allann y guarauunwyt im. A chyn penn y pedwryd mis wynt eu hun yn peri eu hatcassu, ac anghynwys yn y wlat, yn gwneuthur sarahedeu, ac yn eighaw, ac yn gouudyaw guyrda a gwragedda. O hynny allan y dygyuores uyg kyuoeth am ym pen, y erchi im ymuadeu ac wynt, a rodi dewis im, ae uyg kyuoeth, ae wynt. E dodeis inheu ar gynghor uy gwlat beth a wneit amdanunt. Nyd eynt wy o'y bod; nit oed reit udunt wynteu oc eu hanuod, herwyd ymlad, uynet'. (...)'Ac yna o'm tebygu i, Arglwyd' heb y Matholwch wrth Uendigeiduran, 'y doeth ef drwod attat ti. 'Yna dicoer', heb ynteu, 'y doeth yma, ac y roes y peir y minheu'. 'Pa delw, Arglwyd, yd erbynneisti wynteu?' 'Eu rannu ym pob lle yn y kyuoeth, ac y maent yn lluosau, ac yn dyrchauael ym pob lle, ac yn cadarnhau y uann y bythont, o wyr ac arueu goreu a welas neb (5)'.

Here again it is the fact that Matholwch was hunting that makes him ready for an otherworld experience. There is

here, moreover, another fact that almost guarantees an otherworld vision: Matholwch was on top of a mound. Mounds are places where encounters with the otherworld occur in Celtic tradition. For example, Pwyll first sees Rhiannon when he is sitting on a mound and Manawydan overlooks an otherworld caer from the top of a mound. The Lake of the Cauldron itself sounds like a magical place in Ireland. Given all these requisites, it is no surprise to see the diabolical couple coming out of the lake and talking to Matholwch. Apart from the easily recognisable feature of yellow-red hair as a sign of evil, M.L. Sjoestedt considers that there is more in this diabolical pair coming out of the lake:

"This couple, consisting of a mother-goddess, who combines warlike and sexual qualities, and a companion bearing in one instance a fork, in the other a cauldron . . . presents an even earlier state of tradition, as is shown by the predominance of the goddess over her male companion, which reflects a matriarchal notion in conflict with the social order of Celtic communities in historic times (6)".

In this example of the hunt no animal is specified. Once again it is not the prey itself but the whole atmosphere of the hunt that is important.

This scene can be commented on too in relation to the Law of Hywel Dda (7). The following statements are found under the heading "Aliens"

"The law says that uchelwyr are entitled to maintain lordship over their aliens as the king is entitled to maintain lordship over his aliens. And just as aliens become proprietors as fourth man after being put on king's waste, so uchelwyr's aliens become proprietors as fourth man if they occupy land under them as long as that. And from then on they are not entitled to depart from the uchelwyr, for they are proprietors under them, and they are not entitled to two proprietorships, one in the country from which they come and one here. (...) If it happens that an alien comes and does homage to the king and the king gives him land, and that he occupies the land for his lifetime, and his son after him, and his grandson and his great-grandson and his fourth-man, the latter will be a proprietor, and it is right that he should from then on have not the status of an alien, but the status of the land which he occupies and the status of a Welshman".

When the otherworld couple came out of the lake, Matholwch took them to him to maintain them. Matholwch tried to do his duty towards them but their behaviour and the people's dislike of them made it necessary to get rid of them by any means. Despite the fast reproductive habits of the couple, they are still aliens legally. When they manage to escape from Ireland they seek refuge in Wales. Bendigeidfran gave them quarters and it is implied in the text that having reached such a great number they are probably in their fourth generation, and therefore entitled



to their lands and to the status of Welshmen. This peculiar rate of procreation is another otherworldly characteristic of the couple and their race.

Sometimes, the animal that appears in the scene is a real messenger of the otherworld, as Manawydan discovers when his going out hunting conjures up the otherworld.

'A boregueith, kyuodi Pryderi a Manawydan y hela; a chyweiraw eu cwn, a mynet odieithyr y llys. Sef a wnaeth rei o'e cwn, kerdet o'e blaen, a mynet y berth uechan oed gyr eu llaw. Ac y gyt ac yd aant y'r berth, kilyaw y gyflym, a cheginwrych mawr aruthyr ganthunt, ac ymchwelut at y guyr. 'Nessawn', heb y Pryderi, 'parth a'r berth, y edrych beth yssyd yndi'. Nessau parth a'r berth. Pan nessaant, llyma uaed coed claerwynn yn kyuodi o'r berth; sef a oruc y cwn, o hyder y guyr, ruthraw idaw. Sef a wnaeth ynteu, adaw y berth, a chilyaw dalym y wrth y guyr. Ac yny uei agos y guyr idaw, kyuarth a rodei y'r cwn, heb gilyaw yrdhant a phan ynghei y guyr, y kilyei eilweith, ac y torrei gyuarth. Ac yn ol y baed y kerdassant, yny welynt gaer uawr aruchel, a gueith newyd arnei, yn lle ny welsynt na maen, na gueith eiryoet; a'r baed yn kyrchu yr gaer yn uuan, a'r cwn yn y ol. A guedy mynet y baed a'r cwn y'r gaer, ryuedu a wnaethant welet y gaer yn y lle ny welsynt eiryoet weith kyn no hynny, ac o ben yr orsedd edrych a wnaethant, ac ymwarandaw a'r cwn (8)".

Here the animal plays the role of a psychopomp, and appropriately it is a 'white' boar. As soon as Pryderi and Manawydan set out to hunt, unusual things start to happen. The white boar clearly anticipates some supernatural adventure, but in case this were not enough, it is from the top of a mound that the huntsmen see the 'suspicious' caer

and both hounds and boar disappearing into it. The two huntsmen are royal people, Pryderi having delegated his powers to Manawydan (rightly so from a mythological point of view since it is Manawydan who is now spoused to Rhiannon, i.e. Sovereignty). Apparently some features seem to repeat themselves frequently, all of them the consequence of or connected to the hunting, and all of them creating the 'sacred' atmosphere which inevitably conjures up the otherworld.

The hunting scene in "Macsen" is different from the examples found in the previous three tales, but it nevertheless shares with them their awareness of the otherworld and its importance in the life of human beings.

'Maxen Wledic oed amherawdyr yn Ruuein a theccaf gwr oed, a doethaf, a goreu a wedei yn amherawdyr or a vu kyn noc ef. A dadleu brenhined a oed arnaw diwarnawt ac ef a dywawt y annwyleit, 'Miui', heb ef, 'a vynnaf avory vynet y hela'. Trannoeth y bore ef a gychwynnawd a'e nifer, ac a doeth y dyffrynn auon a dygwyd y Ruuein. Hela y dyffrynn a wnaeth hyt pan vu hanner dyd. Yd oed gyt ac ef hagen deudec brenhin ar hugeint o vrenhined coronawc yna yn wyr idaw. Nyt yr digrifwch hela yd helei yr amherawdyr yn gyhyt a hynny, na myn am y wneuthur yn gyuurd gwr ac y bei arglwyd ar y sawl vrenhined hynny. A'r heul a oed yn vchel ar yr awyr uch eu penn, a'r gwres yn vawr, a chyscu a doeth arnaw. Sef a wnaeth y weisson, steuyll, kastellu eu taryaneu yn y gylch ar peleidyr gwaewar rac yr heul; taryan eur grwydyr a dodaffant dan y penn, ac uelly y kyscwys Maxen. Ac yna y gwelei vreidwyt(9)'.  
(9)'

In this case the hunt, however courtly it may look, still retains a certain otherworldly atmosphere since it

leads Macsen to his dream. And dreams are gates to the otherworld as well.

It is the hunt, again, that brings Macsen back from his dream, and what he has seen has changed his life.

'A phan yttoed ef a'e dwylaw am uynwgyl y vorwyn, ac a'e rud wrth y grud hitheu, rac angerd y kwn wrth eu kynllauann, ac yscwydeu y taryaneu yn ymgyhwrdd y gyt, a pheleidyrr y gwaewar yn kyflad, a gweryrat y meirch ac eu pystylat, deffroi a wnaeth yr amherawdyr (10)".

The fact that it has been the hunting that has brought Macsen his dream is made clear when, in order to find his maiden he is recommended to go hunting again so as to have the same dream.

'Ac yna y dywawt brenhin Romani wrth yr amherawdyr. 'Arglwyd' heb ef, 'kychwyn y hela y fford y gwelut dy uot yn mynet ae parth a'r dwyrein, ae parth a'r gorllewin'. Ac yna y kychwynnwys yr amherawdyr y hela, ac y doeth hyt yg glann yr auon. 'Llyma', heb ef, 'yd oedwn i pann weleis y vreudwyt. Ac yghyueir blaen yr auon y tu a r gorllewin y kerdwn (11)'.  
(11)'

The geography of the tale is relevant since the whole argument depends on the geographical descriptions. Both Macsen's country and his maiden's are real; nevertheless, Macsen's dreamt voyage is a connection with the otherworld.

"Macsen" is closer to the older tales, but also somehow one step forward towards the different world of the romances.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### PEREDUR, GEREINT AND MATH

It has become evident so far that the previous hunting scenes have marked characteristics in common. The most important one is the constant and clear relationship with the otherworld. Secondly there is the social importance of the hunters and the well-known geography of the scenes in contrast with the unexpected presence of the otherworldly or magic setting.

When analysing the hunting scenes which appear in the Romances it is easy to realize that the values, the habits and the literature of the society that produced them has changed.

Like the battle of Gwyn and Gwythyr for Creiddylad, the debate about the dating and origins of the Romances will go on until Doomsday. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the world of the Romances is a different one from that found in the rest of the tales.

Studying the importance of hunting in the Romances is one way of becoming aware of these dramatic changes. First of all, the religious, ritualistic and sacred background clearly diminishes. The otherworld is still present, but the characters fail to communicate with it

since they are not aware of the 'rules' any more. Hunting is now above all a courtly entertainment and the geography is different. There are no longer detailed accounts of places and settings but the vague errands of the characters among stock landscape features; "and he came to a river valley...", "and on the mountain ahead of him he could see a castle...", "he came to a great desolate forest...". There is one thing, though, that remains unchanged: the characters who engage in hunting are always aristocratic people of one sort or another.

This clear evolution of the treatment of hunting in literature is well exemplified in "Peredur", where the relationship to the otherworld is still present, but the supernatural atmosphere has to a certain extent lost its meaning and therefore its power.

"Ac o'r neill parth y'r afon y gwelei kadw o defeit gwynnyon, ac o'r parth arall y gwelei kadw o defeit duon. Ac val y brefei vn o'r defeit gwynnyon, y deuei vn o'r defeit duon drwod ac y bydei yn wen, ac val y brefei un o'r defeit duon y deuei vn o'r defeit gwynnyon drwod, ac y bydei du. A phren hir a welei ar lan yr afon, ar neill hanher oed idaw yn llosgi o'r gwreid hyt y vlaen, a'r hanher arall a deil ir arnaw. Ac uch llaw hynny, y gwelei mackwy yn eisted ar pen cruc, a deu vilgi vronwynyon vrychyon, mywn kynllyfan, yn gorwed ger y law. A diheu oed ganthaw na welsei eiroet maccwy kyteyrneidet ac ef. Ac yn y coet gyfarwyneb ac ef y clywei ellgwn yn kyfodi hydgant. A chyfarch gwell a wnaeth y r maccwy, a'r maccwy a gyfarchawd well y Peredur. A their fford a welei Peredur yn mynet y wrth y cruc, y dwy fford yn vawr a'r tryded yn llei. A gofyn a oruc Peredur py le yd aei y teir fford. 'Vn

o'r ffyrdd hyn a a y m llys i, ac vn o'r deu a gyghoraf i itti, ae mynet y r llys o'r blaen at vgg gwreic i yssyd yno, ae titheu a arhoych yma. A thi a wely y gellgwn yn kymell yr hydodt blin o'r coet y r maes, a thi a wely y milgwn goreu a weleist eiroet, a glewhaf ar hydodt, yn y llad ar y dwfyr ger an llaw. A phan vo amser in mynet y'n bwyd, ef a daw vggwas a'm march y'm herbyn a thi a geffy lewenyd yno heno. 'Duw a talho it; ny thrigya i, namyn ragof yd af. 'Yr eil fford a a y r dinas yssyd yna yn agos, ac yn hwnnw y keffir bwyd a llyn ar werth. A'r fford yssyd lei no'r rei ereill a a parth a gogof yr adanc' 'Gan dy ganhat, vaccwy, parth ac yno yd af i (1)".

This long quotation needs some comment. Peredur is obviously surrounded by an otherworld atmosphere while he observes such supernatural scenes as the changing colour of the sheep and the burning of only half of a tree. Moreover he sees the squire of princely mien sitting on top of a mound engaged in an important stag-hunt. The possibility of an otherworld experience is there, but Peredur is either not aware of it or chooses to ignore it and to take the path of adventure. Peredur observes these supernatural happenings but takes no action, he does not ask -a habit of his- , he does not understand and therefore nothing happens to him. He refuses the invitation to join the hunting and insists on following the path which he knows will lead him to his next adventure. There is a fundamental change here if this scene is compared with the previous ones. Undoubtedly the otherworld atmosphere is present, as well as the hunting, but then the hero passes it by towards something else more relevant to him, i.e. adventure. This is a new concept. The

characters up till now were led, one way or another, to a supernatural situation which was always a consequence of the otherworld background and therefore somehow predestined. On the other hand, here in "Peredur" it is he who chooses the path and to a certain extent he knows what is going to happen. He will not let himself be led, he is looking for an adventure in the new sense of the word and whether it is supernatural or not would not change the outcome much. This new concept of adventure is going to be central to medieval literature.

Many examples of this can be found in Peredur

"Ac yna y kerdawd racdaw, ac y deuth y dyffryn yr afon. Ac y kyfaru ac ef nifer o wyr yn mynet y hela, ac ef a welei ymplith y nifer gwr urdedic. A chyfarch gwell idaw a oruc Peredur. 'Dewis ti, vnben, ae ti a elych y'r llys, ae titheu dyuot gyt a mi y hela. A minheu a yrraf vn o'r teulu y'th orchymyn y verch yssyd im yno, y gymryt bwyt a llyn hyny delwyf o hela. Ac or byd dy negesseu hyt y gallwyf i eu kaffel, ti a'e keffy yn llawen' A gyrru a wnaeth y brenhin gwas byrrvelyn gyt ac ef (2)".

This scene closely resembles the previous one. Peredur is not heard answering the king's choice, but apparently he does not want to join in the hunt. The 'gwr urdedic' and the 'mackwy' of the previous quotation and the present yellow-haired boy could still be seen as otherworld guides and the hunt as a threshold to some otherworld experience, but these features do not play the role that they would have played in the Four Branches for



instance. In fact, they look as if they had already become stock features to herald not an imminent otherworld experience but the starting of any sort of adventure. It is in "Peredur" where this is most evident. In fact it seems as if the character finds himself in a background he cannot comprehend.

"Arthur a oed yg Kaer Llion ar Wysc a mynet a wnaeth y hela a Peredur gyt ac ef. A Pheredur a ellygawd y gi ar hyd, a'r ki a ladawd yr hyd mywn diffeithwch. Ac ym pen ruthur y wrthaw ef a welei arwyd kyfanhed a thu a'r kyfanhed y deuth. Ac ef a welei neuad, ac ar y drws y neuad ef a welei tri gweis moelgethinyon yn gware gwyddbwyll. A phan deuth y mywn ef a welei teir morwyn yn eisted ar leithic, ac eurwiscoed ymdanunt mal y dyliei am dylyedogyon (3)'.

In this scene there are some of the features characteristic of these situations; a person of high rank is hunting and wanders away thus entering an unknown domain where otherworld features are seen such as the youths playing gwyddbwyll and finely clad ladies. Nevertheless, Peredur does not respond to the otherworld atmosphere which surrounds him; he is just too happy to be involved in another adventure, which is his 'raison d'être' and that of so many heroes at this point of time in literature. The otherworld accoutrements are now a stage set, the trappings of the background, and have consequently, lost their own 'raison d'être'.

Both literature and the attitudes of the age are changing as is clearly portrayed in "Peredur". The fact of

the otherworld being present in everyday life and places as a sort of fourth dimension is no longer a deep-rooted concept but a stock literary device, and the hero can just walk through into it without even noticing it. The geography is vague compared with the accurate descriptions found in "Culhwch", the "Four Branches" or "Macsen". The ever-important theme of the difficult relationship between mortals and the otherworld progressively loses its grip and its power and even its meaning for the sake of the individualized hero whose main aim in life is the seeking -the questing- of adventures. This is going to be a prototype in literature from the twelfth century onwards, and is exemplified in this quotation:

" Ha vorwyn , heb y Peredur , 'mae yr amherodres?' 'Y rof i a Duw, nys gwely ti hi yn awr ony bei lad gormes yssyd yn y fforest racco ohonot'. 'Py ryw ormes yw?' 'Karw yssyd yno a chyebrydet yw a'r edeinyawc kyntaf, ac vn corn yssyd yn y tal, kyhyt a phaladyr gwayw, a chyn vlaenllymet yw a'r dim blaenllymaf. A phori a wna bric y coet ac a uo o wellt yn y fforest. A llad pob aneueil a wna o'r a gaffo yndi, ac ar nys llado marw vydant o newyn. Ac ys gwaeth no hynny, dyuot a wna beunoeth ac yfet y byscotlyn yn y diawt, a gadu y pycawt yn noeth, a meirw vydant eu can mwyhaf kyn dyfot dwfyr idi trachefyn'. 'A, vorwyn', heb y Peredur, 'a doy ti y dangos imi yr aneueil hwnnw?' 'Nac af. Ny lafasswys dyn vynet y r forest ys blwydyn. Mae yna colwyn yr arglwydes, a hwnnw a gyfyt y karw ac a daw attat ac ef. A'r karw a'th gyrch ti'. Y colwyn a aeth yn gyfarwyd y Peredur, ac a gyfodes y karw, ac a doeth parth a'r lle yd oed Peredur ac ef. A'r karw a gyrchawd Peredur ac ynteu a ellygwys y ohen heibyaw ac a trewis y pen y arnaw a chledyf. A phan yttoed yn edrych ar pen y karw, ef a welei

varchoges yn dyfot attaw ac yn kymryt y colwyn yn llawes y chapan a'r pen y rygthi a choryf, a'r torch rudeur oed am y vynwgyl. 'A unben' heb hi 'ansyberw y gwnaethost, llad y tlws teccaf oed y'm kyfoeth'. 'Arch a uu arnaf am hynny. Ac a oed wed y gallwn i kaffel dy gerenhyd ti?' 'Oed. Dos y vron y mynyd ac yno ti a wely lwyn Ac ymon y llwyn y mae llech, ac erchi gwr y ymwan teir gweith ti a gaffut vyg kerenhyd (4)".

The stag here is in the process of becoming a character out of a bestiary -a unicorn, though never so named- instead of an animal with otherworld connotations. This stag is an 'imaginary' animal, as so many other things which are becoming imaginary after the twelfth century. It is not a sacred animal related to the otherworld anymore, for otherworld beasts are, after all, 'real'.

The way Peredur finishes the stag is worth remarking on since he never attempts to hunt it properly; he remains in the same place, waits for the lapdog (not a hound) to bring the animal towards him (it even sounds like a parody), and just cuts off its head as it passes him. This scene could be said to be anticlimatic, since the stag is killed in just two sentences after the long explanation of the maiden and the extensive 'build-up' about its majesty and destructiveness, and moreover it does not cost Peredur the slightest effort. Nevertheless, the paragraph should be viewed from a different light: this scene is just one link in the long chain of adventures in which Peredur involves himself. The encounter with the unicorn-stag, if anything, serves to herald still another adventure this time brought

in by the empress who readily sends him off to joust.

The shift in meaning that can be found in "Peredur" when compared to the older tales is still more evident in "Gereint".

"Nachaf was gwineu hir yn dyuod y myvn a pheis a swrcot o bali cayrawc ymdanaw a chledyf eurdwrn am y uynwgyl, a dwy eskid issel o gordwal am y drayd. A dyuod a oruc hyd rac bron Arthur, 'Henpych gwell, arglwyd', heb ef. 'Dyw a rodo da it', heb ynteu, 'a gresso Dyw vrtyt. Ac a oys chwedleu o newyd gennyd ti?' 'Oes, arglwyd', heb yr ynteu. 'Nyd adwen i di', heb yr Arthur, 'Ryued yw genyf nam atwaynost, a forestwr iti, arglwyd vyf i yn forest y Dena, a Madauc yw uy enw, uab Twrgadarn.' 'Dywed ti dy chwetleu', heb yr Arthur. 'Dywedaf, arglwydd', heb yr ef, 'carw a weleis yn forest, ac ny weleis yr moet y gyfryw'. 'Pa beth yssyd arnaw ef', heb yr Arthur, 'pryt na welut eiroyd y gyfryw'. 'Purwyn, arglwyd, yw. Ac ni cherda gydac un aneuail o ryuyc a balchder rac y urenhineidet. Ac i oyn kyghor iti, arglwyd, y dodwyf i. Beth yw dy gyghor amdanaw?' 'Jawnaf y gwnaf i' heb yr Arthur, 'mynet y hely ef yuory yn ieuengiit y dyt, a pheri gwybot heno ar bawb o'r llettyeu hynny ac ar Ryuerys oed ben-kynyd y Arthur ac ar Eliuri oed penn maccwyf ac ar bawb y am hynny (5)".

The old wonderful warband with their extraordinary characteristics who were essential to help Arthur in the hunting of Twrch Trwyth has become a head huntsman and a head groom in this romance. This couple of courtly servants belong to the officers of the court attested in Hywel Dda's Law, so that it points to a stage much later than "Culhwch"

but one in which the ancient Welsh laws were still common or at least remembered. This is what the laws say regarding the chief groom and the chief huntsman:

"The Chief Groom; Sixth is the chief groom. He is entitled to his land free, and his horse in attendance, and his woollen clothing from the King and his linen clothing from the Queen. His place is across the screen from the King. His lodging is the house nearest to the barn, because it is right for him to share out the horse-fodder. He is entitled to two shares of the fodder for his own horse. He is entitled to fourpence for every horse which the King gives, except from three persons, and those are the bishop and the chief falconer and the jester.(...)He and the grooms are entitled to the foals up to two years old from the King's third of the booty. He is entitled to the King's rain-capes, and his old saddles with coloured wood, and his old black-stained bridles and his old black-stained spurs. It is right for him to carry the King's arms. He is entitled to an ox's skin in winter and a cow's skin in summer, to make halters. He is entitled to the legs of the cows slaughtered in the kitchen. No one is entitled to any of the lees but the chief groom is entitled to a handsbreadth between drink and lees. His protection is while the King's fastest horse continues to run. He is entitled to a third of the dirwy and camlwrw of the grooms, and to the amobr of their daughters. He is entitled to a hornful of drink from the King, and another from the Queen, and the third from the steward; and it is right for these to be his provision, with a dish of food. His sarhaed is six kine and six score pence; his worth is six kine and six score kine with augmentation (6)."

"The Chief Huntsman: Tenth is the chief huntsman. He is entitled to his land free and his horse in attendance, and his woollen clothing from the King and his linen clothing from the Queen. His place in the court is across the screen from the priest of the household, with the huntsmen with him. His lodging is in the kiln. His provision is three hornfuls of mead and a dish one hornful from the King, another from the Queen, and the third from the chief of the

household. He is entitled to a third of the dirwy from the huntsmen, and to the amobr of their daughters. He is entitled to twenty-four pence from everyone to whom the Lord grants office. He shall have four legal pence from every greyhound huntsman and eight legal pence from every stag-hound huntsman, when they take office.(...) He is entitled to an ox's skin in winter to make leashes, and to a cow's skin in summer to make brogues.(...) The chief huntsman's hounds are of the same value as the King's hounds.(...) The chief huntsman protection is to take the person who commits the offence so far that the sound of his horn can hardly be heard. His sarhaed is six kine and six score pence; his worth is six kine and six score kine with augmentation (7)".

The Welsh laws say nothing regarding foresters, and it may be suspected that this is a recently-invented post in the tale. Arthur knows the head groom and the chief huntsman by name, but he does not know the arriving forester at all. The feeling of this text is one of mixed times; on one hand the court officers with presumably the rights and duties mentioned above, and on the other hand this unknown forester coming in dressed like a prince, with a tunic of brocaded silk, a gold-hilted sword and the low boots of cordwain as opposed to the 'woollen clothing' and the 'linen clothing' of the previous officers. This youth in slippers belongs to the twelfth century, or perhaps the thirteenth, and therefore he is in great contrast to the ninth century's Rhyferys and Eliffri. The forester has to name himself to Arthur, and says he is one of his foresters, in the Forest of Dean. The fact that Arthur has a forester appointed at a specific forest and that Arthur seems to be the lord of that forest points towards the Norman forest laws being already

known. In the time of Hywel Dda, the king was free to hunt in every place in his country, but so was everybody else in their own land provided they did not interfere with the king's hunting (8). However, with the arrival of the Normans, the enclosed areas preserved for the king's hunting, i.e. royal forests, started to appear. The first of the Norman hunting forests in Wales were established in the late eleventh century. "With the conquest of territories in eastern and southern Wales, the Marcher Lords set up 'forests' in their lordships, with the appropriate organization, imitating those of the Norman kings of England. Aforestation...involved the creation of permanent hunting preserves with defined boundaries, under the highly restrictive and oppressive 'forest law' administered by forest courts (9)". The scene in "Peredur" in which the empress bemoans that he has killed the fairest jewel in her dominion might also point to the existence of private parks or enclosures. The forester in "Geraint", then, seems straight out of one of the Norman forests, of which the Forest of Dean was a prime example. Still another hint of his French origins is the term used for his garment, 'swrcot', which differentiates the description of his dressing from that of an otherworld resident. There is, in fact no otherworld atmosphere at all in the quoted paragraph, despite the exotic appearance of the young forester.

In the same quotation a white animal is discussed.

Although there are traits which may lead one to think of it as an otherworld stag, it is not, in fact, comparable with animals that have been discussed previously. Despite its pride and regal appearance and its solitary nature, it is the whiteness which is stressed by the forester. In earlier texts, this would have had sacred connotations, but in this text the colour seems to be an exotic characteristic only - there is no supernatural aura to this scene at all. Because the romances move in a different orbit, the whiteness which would have been a sign of sacredness or an otherworldly characteristic in 'the old times', i.e. the "Four Branches" and "Culhwch and Olwen" has come to mean something else.

"Ac yna y dywawd Gwenhwyuar wrth Arthur, 'Arglwyd' heb hi, 'a genhedy di uyui auory y uynet i ydrych ac y warandaw ar hely y carw a dywawd y maccwyf?' 'Canyhadaf yn llawen', heb yr Arthur. 'Mineu a af' heb hi. Ac yna y dywawd Gwalchmei wrth Arthur. 'Arglwyd' heb ef, 'ponyd oed iawn i titheu canhadu y'r neb a delei hwnnw attaw yny helua llad y benn a'y rodi y'r neb y mynhei, ay y orderch itaw ehun ae y orderch y gydymdeith itaw, na marchawc na phedestyr y del itaw? 'Canhadaf yn llawen', heb yr Arthur (10)".

The first striking thing in this paragraph is the fact that ladies take part in the hunting, or at least hunting is now a suitable diversion for ladies, even if they only join it to 'see and listen'. It was the whole warrior world who took part in Twrch Trwyth's hunting but now although it is the world and his wife going after the white



stag it is already becoming apparent that hunting has changed substantially since Twrch Trwyth's times. The other relevant feature here is Gwalchmei's idea of making a love-token out of the stag's head. Again we are in a different time, and new values like courtly love are starting to leave their imprint on Welsh literature. What was being written on the continent might be drawing important material from what has been called the 'Matter of Britain', but to a certain extent the age-old meaning is lost and it is the clichè or literary formula that now prevails. At the same time other matters of new coinage are introduced making the old 'pagan' values still more distant to us.

The white stag, then, is no divinity now, no sacred animal which should be regarded and hunted as such: "D'une manière generale, le Moyen Age a tenté de desacraliser la bête, de rejeter tout caractère totemique, tout tabou intrinseque, et même d'assimiler son culte a celui du Diable (11)". Animals no longer embody the dawning of myth and religion in man. They are symbols, as seen in the bestiaries, of vices and virtues, of Christian values and morals, of love, and so on. The white stag is then, from now on, 'le blanc cerf', the 'stag of love' (12).

Not only the animal but the whole act of hunting has lost its sacredness. The rituals once followed as part of a sacred hunt have now become the rules of a game -an important courtly feat, but nevertheless a game. It does not

seem to matter that the ladies and even the eponymous hero sleep late. They are content to follow and observe, as Gwenhwyfar says:

'Ac ef a allei uod yn gyn digriued yni  
o'r hela ac udunt hwynteu, canys ni a  
glywnn y kyrn pan ganer ac a glywnn y cwn  
pan ellygher a phan dechreuwyt alw'. Ac  
vynt a doethant y ystlys y forest ac yno  
seuyll a wnaethant. 'Ni a glywnn od yma',  
heb hi, 'pan ellynger y cwn (13)'.  
'

It is worth remarking the paradox the so-called 'pagan' society conveyed the sacredness of such important enterprises as hunting in its earliest literature, while the theoretically civilized and christianized society of the twelfth century does, in fact, turn the sacred matters into pagan ones.

Hunting then, becomes either a courtly game or a sport, played by people of high rank whose aim is either group entertainment or the starting of an adventure for the individualized hero. They no longer perform any sacred ritual which may bring them in contact with the otherworld whilst hunting; they are no longer aware of such a place.

The fact that the hunt is a group entertainment is made clear in "Gereint" when Arthur insists on everybody taking part in it. Even Gwenhwyfar and her maidens are allowed to attend it. And to add further excitement, he accepts Gwalchmai's idea of making a love-token out of the head of the stag. Altogether it sounds like a day out for the whole court, with entertainment guaranteed even for the

ladies, and the extra suspense, once back in the court, of who is going to present whom with the love-token, 'l'enor del blanc cerf'.

Gereint though, is late in joining the hunt and meets up with Gwenhwyfar who was herself late. This literary device leaves our hero out of the general enterprise and puts him on the way to adventure. It is on the pursuit of this adventure that Gereint finds himself involved in another of those courtly games.

'A vrda' heb y Gereint, 'a uenegy di i mi pa dyuotyat uu un y marchawc a doeth y'r dinas gynheu, a'r uarchoges a'r corr, a faham y may y darpar a weleis i ar gweiryaw arueu?' 'Managaf', heb ef, 'Darpar yw yuory ar chware yssyt gan y iarll ieuanc; nit amgen, dodi ymywn gweirglawd yssyd yno dwy forch ac ar y dwy forch gweilging aryant a llamystaen a dodir ar y weilging. A thwrneimeint a uyd am y llamystaen. A'r niuer a weleist ti yn y dref oll o wyr a meirch ac arueu a daw y'r twrneimeint, a'r wreic uwyhaf a garo a daw ygyt a fob gwr. Ac ny cheif ymwan am y llamystaen y gwr ny bo gyt ac ef y wreic uwyhaf a garo. A'r marchawc a weleist ti a gauas y llamysten dwy ulynet ac o'r keif y drydet, y hanuon a wneir itaw pob blwydyn gwedy hynny ac ny daw ehun yno; a Marchawc y Llamysten y gelwir y marchawc o hyn allan'. 'A wrda', heb y Gereint, 'may dy gyghor di y mi am y marchawc hwnnw am syrhaet a geueis gan y corr ac a gauas morwyn y Wenhwyuar, wreic Arthur?'. A menegi ystyr y syrhaed a oruc Gereint y gwr gwynllwyd. 'Nyt hawd im allu roti kyghor it, canyt oes na gwreic na morwyn yd ymardelwych ohonei yd elut y ymwan ac ef. Arueu a oed y mi yna, y rei hynny a gaffut, ac o bei well gennyt uy march i no r teu dy hun'. 'A vrda', heb ynteu 'Dyw a dalo it. Da digawn yw genhyf i uy march uy hun yd vyf geneuin ac ef, a'th arueu ditheu. A ffony edy ditheu, vrda, y mi ardelw o'r uorwyn

racco yssyd uerch i titheu yn oet y dyt yuory? Ac o'r diaghaf i o r twrneimant, uygkywirdeb a'm careat a uyd ar y uorwyn tra uwyf uyw; ony dianghaf uinheu, kyn diweiret uyd y uorwyn a chynt'. 'Miui', heb y gwr gwynllwyd, 'a wna hynny yn llawen. A chanys ar y metwl hwnnw yd wyt titheu yn trigyaw, reit uyd it, pan uo dyt auory. bot dy varch a'th arueu yn barawt, canys yna y dyt Marchawc y Llamysten gostec, nyt amgen, erchi y'r wreic uwyhaf a gar, kymryt y llamysten, 'canys goreu y gveda iti, a thi a'y keueist', med ef 'Yrlllyned ac yr dwy. Ac o'r byd a'y gwarauunho it hediw o gedernit, mi a'y hamdiffynnaf it'. 'Ac am hynny', heb y gwr gwynllwyd, 'y may reit y titheu uot yno pan uo dyt. A ninheu yn tri a uydwn gyta thydi (14)".

The text makes clear that the tournament is a game and that love is the excuse for it. The rules and regulations that became fashionable after the twelfth century turned love itself into a game. This so-called courtly love is in great contrast to that which fills Culhwch for Olwen. Culhwch is fulfilling his destiny when he falls for Olwen; his love is fated, as the endless tasks were, to achieve a sort of cosmic harmony because in that tale everything is meaningful and not part of any game. However, it is by playing the game that Gereint wins Enid. And, moreover, it is going to be Enid on whom 'l'enor del blanc cerf' is going to be bestowed since the final decision is postponed till Gereint and Enid go back to the court.

It is remarkable that this paragraph is the only one referring to hawking in the Mabinogion despite the importance attached to falconry in Wales throughout the Middle Ages. This is made evident in the Law of Hywel Dda, where the chief falconer is in a much higher position in the

list of court officials than, for example, the head groom and chief huntsman referred to previously

"The Chief Falconer: Fourth is the chief falconer, He is entitled to his land free and his horse in attendance, his woollen clothing from the King, and his linen clothing from the Queen. His place in the court is as the fourth man from the King, in his mess. His lodging is the King's barn, lest smoke affects his birds. He is entitled to take a vessel to the court to put his liquor in, for he is entitled only to quench his thirst, the reason for this is, lest he should neglect his birds. He is entitled to a handsbreadth of wax candle from the steward so as to feed his birds and make his bed. He is not bound to pay grooms' money, for the King serves him in three places; . when he looses his hawk, by holding his horse; this is what is right, to hold his horse while he dismounts, to hold his stirrup while he mounts; and to hold his horse when he goes to relieve himself. He is entitled to the hearts and lungs of the wild animals killed in the kitchen, for feeding his birds. He is entitled to a dry sheep or fourpence from the King's villeins. He is entitled to a circuit round the King's villeins once a year. He is entitled to a third of the falconers'dirwy, and to the amobr of their daughters. He is entitled to a hart's skin in autumn, and in spring to a doe's skin to make gloves for carrying his birds and jesses. He is entitled to be honoured with three gifts on the day his hawk kills one of three birds, a bittern, or a heron or a crane. Whatsoever day the falconer kills a heron or a bittern or a mountain curlew by the power of his hawks, the King does three services for him: to hold his horse while he recovers the birds, and to hold his stirrup while he dismounts, and to hold it while he mounts. Three times the King serves him with his own hand at meat that evening; for he serves him daily by the hand of his messenger, except at the three special feasts and on the day that he kills a notable bird. On the day that he takes a notable bird when the king is not at the place, when the falconer brings the bird to the court it is right for the King to rise before him; and if he does not rise it is right for him to give the raiment he is wearing to the falconer. He is entitled to the mantle in which the King rides at the three special feasts. His protection is as far as the Queen; others say that it is as far as the last

place where his hawk killed a bird. He is entitled to the tiercels, and to the nests of the hawks and sparrowhawks on the King's land. From when he puts the hawk into mew until he takes it out, he is not bound to answer any one for a claim, save one of his fellow-officers. His sarhaed is six kine and six score pence with augmentation; his worth is six kine and six score kine, with augmentation (15)".

As this quotation shows the chief falconer was an important person and hawking a most dignified pastime. It retained its importance in Wales to the times of the Norman kings and Wales was famous as a breeding ground of exceptionally fine hawks as was witnessed by Gerald of Wales in his "Journey"(16):

"I must not forget to tell you about the falcons of this region [Pembrokeshire]. They are remarkable for their good breeding, and they lord it over the river birds and those in the open fields. When Henry II, King of the English, spent some time in this neighbourhood making preparations for his journey to Ireland, he occasionally went hawking. By chance he saw a noble falcon perched on a rock. He approached it sideways and then loosed at it a huge and carefully bred Norwegian hawk which he had on his left wrist. At first the falcon seemed slower in its flight. Then it lost its temper and in turn became the agressor. It soared to a great height, swooped fiercely down and gave the hawk a mighty blow in the chest with its sharp talons, striking it dead at the King's feet. As a result from this year onwards Henry II always sent to this region at nesting-time for some of the falcons which breed on the sea-cliffs. Nowhere in the whole of his kingdom could he find more noble or more agile birds!".

In "Gereint" it is possible to observe, then, all these new and foreign influences taking over the main

corpus of the tale, leaving older, native beliefs in the background, when present at all. "Gereint" shows how ancestral values move on finally into those of a new era, with its new rituals and ways of life.

Though belonging to the Four Branches, "Math" does not relate to the other three branches in the treatment of hunting. There is only one hunting scene in Math and it is difficult to liken it to any of the others seen up till now.

"Ac yna treigylgueith kyrchu a wnaeth parth a Chaer Dathyl e ymwelet a Math uab Mathonwy. Y dyd yd aeth ef parth a Chaer Tathyl, troi o uywn y llys a wnaeth hi. A hi a glywei lef corn, ac yn ol llef y corn llyma hyd blin yn mynet heibaw, a chwn a chynydyon yn y ol. Ac yn ol y cwn a'r kynydyon, bagat o wyr ar traet yn dyuot. 'Ellynghwch was' heb hi, 'e wybot pwy yr yniuer'. Y gwas a aeth, a gouyn pwy oedynt. 'Gronw Pebyr yw hwnn, y gwr yssyd arglwyd ar Benllyn', heb wy. Hynny a dywot y guas idi hitheu. Ynteu a gerdwys yn ol yr hyd. Ac ar Auon Gynnwael gordiwes yr hyd a'y lad. Ac wrth ulingyaw yr hyd, a llithyaw y gwn, ef a uu yny wascawd y nos arnaw. A phan ytoed y dyd yn atueilaw, a'r nos yn nessau, ef a doeth heb porth y llys. 'Dioer' heb hi, 'ni a gawn yn goganu gan yr unben o e adu y prytwn y wlat arall onys guahodwn'. 'Dioer, Arglwydes', heb wy, 'iawnhaf yw y wahawd'. Yna yd aeth kennadeu yn y erbyn y wahawd. Ac yna y kymerth ef y wahawd yn llawen ac y doeth y'r llys, ac y doeth hitheu yn y erbyn y graessawu, ac y gyuarch well idaw. Arglwydes, Duw a dalho it dy lywenyd'. Ymdiarhenu, a mynet y eisted a wnaethant. Sef a wnaeth Blodeued, edrych arnaw ef, ac yr awr yd edrych, nit oed gyueir arnei hi ny bei yn llawn o'e garyat ef. Ac ynteu a synywys arnei hitheu; a'r un medwl a doeth yndaw ef ac a doeth yndi hitheu. Ef ny allwys ymgelw o e uot yn y charu, a'e uenegi idi a wnaeth. Hitheu a gymerth diruawr

lywenyd yndi. Ac o achaws y serch a r  
caryat, a dodassei pob un o honunt ar y  
gilyd, y bu eu hymdidan y nos honno. Ac  
ny bu ohir e ymgael o honunt, amgen no'r  
nos honno. A'r nos honno kyscu y gyt a  
wnaethant (17)".

This example, on the one hand, resembles those found in the romances in the sense that it bears no relationship to the otherworld. On the other hand, it goes one step further ahead since it is not a situation which heralds an adventure for the hero but just uses the hunt as a plot device. The hunting scene is the narrative way of bringing the two characters together, as well as a literary link to introduce a new state of affairs in the tale. That such an utilitarian consequence of the hunt is found in one of the Four Branches might echo the late redaction of some of its parts since the characteristic otherworld connotations are totally absent in this example. Nevertheless, this hunting scene seems to illustrate the importance of hospitality in Welsh tradition. Despite the fact that she is no earthling herself, having been created by Math and Gwydion from flowers, Blodeuedd does not in any way act like a fairy mistress. Her concern at first is purely domestic - she is worried that the noble huntsman will bring dispraise on her court if he is not suitably entertained; it is only after he has been courteously greeted by his hostess that she becomes full of love for her. Her primary concern, and what the hunt led to in the first instance was a domestic crisis. She had obviously assimilated the mores of her society as exemplified once more in Gerald's comments.



"In Wales no one begs. Everyone's home is open to all, for the Welsh generosity and hospitality is the greatest of all virtues. They very much enjoy welcoming others to their homes. When you travel there is no question of you asking for accomodation or of they offering it you just march into a house and hand over your weapons to the person in charge. They give you water so that you may wash your feet and that means that you are a guest. With these people the offering of water in which to wash one's feet is an invitation to stay. If you refuse the offer, it means that you have only dropped in for refreshment during the early part of the day and do not propose to stay the night (18)".

The hunting scene in "Math", therefore, may reflect the ancient Celtic customs but at the same time it is also an example of courtly protocol of a much later date.

- (1) GOETINK,G. : Historia Peredur vab Efracw. (pp.47-48).
- (2) GOETINK,G. : Historia Peredur vab Efracw. (pp.62-63).
- (3) GOETINK,G.: Historia Peredur vab Efracw. (p.42).
- (4) GOETINK,G. : Historia Peredur vab Efracw (pp.67-68).
- (5) EVANS G. : The white Book Mabinogion.
- (6) JENKINS,D.: The Law of Hywel Dda. (pp.18-19).
- (7) JENKINS,D. : The Law of Hywel Dda. (pp.21-22).
- (8) JENKINS,D.: The Law of Hywel Dda. (p.185).
- (9) LINNARD,W.: Welsh Woods and Forests.
- (10) EVANS,G. : The White Book Mabinogion.
- (11) Le Monde Animal et ses Representations au Moyen Age.
- (12) THIEBAUX,M. : The Stag of Love.
- (13) EVANS,G. : The White Book Mabinogion.
- (14) EVANS,G. : The White Book Mabinogion.
- (15) JENKINS,D.: The Law of Hywel Dda . (pp.14-16).
- (16) GERALD OF WALES: The Journey Through Wales.(p.156).
- (17) WILLIAMS,I : Pedeir Keinc Y Mabinogi. (pp.84-85).
- (18) GERALD OF WALES: The Journey Through Wales. (p.236).

## C O N C L U S I O N

The questions proposed in the Introduction have been dealt with on each tale separately. Some conclusions can be drawn if they are considered together.

It has been shown that in the early tales with the exception of "Math" the almost inevitable outcome of hunting was the bringing together of this world and the otherworld, of human and supernatural beings. Through the act of hunting, mortals contact unknown forces which nevertheless have always been there. These forces, sometimes hostile, cannot be overcome or defeated, as Twrch Trwyth, who disappeared into the sea, or the couple coming out of the Lake of the Cauldron, who escaped from Ireland only to settle down -and multiply- in Wales. Conflict may arise as in "Manawydan", when the eponymous hero sees his family disappearing into an enchanted caer, or, on the other hand, a pact may be reached like the one sealed by the Prince of Dyfed and the King of Annwn. The otherworld can present itself in many ways, even in the form of a dream as happened to the Emperor Macsen. Hunting, then, had at one point a sacred status, a religious connotation, and a ritualistic form. This can be gathered by analysing "Culhwch", "Pwyll", "Branwen", "Manawydan" and "Macsen". However long this sacred status persisted, hunting was desacralized and became a pagan matter in a couple of centuries.

Compared with the complexity of the exchanges and involvement of the characters with the supernatural world in the early tales, Peredur's involvement with the otherworld is nil despite the many opportunities offered him by his numerous encounters with the seemingly supernatural. What he seeks is "adventures", and the outcome is, for him, very satisfactory, since hunting is a way of getting involved in many of those adventures which became fashionable in the late twelfth century. Not only adventures but some kind of courtly love as well are the outcome of the more French-influenced romance of "Gereint", in which hunting is at its peak as a social and courtly pastime. The adventure-seeking and courtly love background is going to be the major influence of a substantial part of the poetry and prose written in Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, when "Don Quijote" becomes the epitaph to knighthood and chivalry.

There is still one other possible outcome of hunting: the fact that the hunt is only part of the plot, a literary device without any transcendental connotations as can be found in the extreme example of "Math". It is strange that in such an early stage, which is suffused by ritual and sacred hunts, the most banal use of the hunt as a plot device is found. However, there are no other hunting scenes in "Math", and it fits in perfectly with the social mores of the time as exemplified in Gerald of Wales's descriptions

The tales of the Mabinogion display, then, this changing meaning in the outcome of the hunt, which in turn is one way of becoming aware of the drastic changes taking place in society at the time the tales were finally written down.

Despite the massive changes in every other aspect of the hunt through the tales of the Mabinogion, there is one point which is steadily maintained from the oldest tale, "Culhwch", to the one which shows the most marked French influence, "Gereint", and that is the status of the people engaged in the hunts: Arthur and the best of the warrior caste, the King of Ireland, the Prince of Dyfed and the King of Annwn, Manawydan lord of Dyfed, the Emperor Maccsen and a retinue of accompanying kings; the Arthur of the romances with his best knights and the highest officers of the court in attendance, squires of princely mien and arrogant knights are to be found hunting all through the Mabinogion.

In the case of the older tales it cannot reflect only the fact that the powerful had more resources and more time to go out hunting since they echo and portray an era when hunting was still a principal means of survival and therefore something practised by the whole community or tribe. One possible explanation of this could be the fact that, in ancient societies, the shaman caste intermediaries between the collectivity and the supernatural (as for example were the druids at one point of Celtic tradition)

were regarded as members of a high status, their importance raising them to the level of the aristocracy or ruling class. Therefore, the conclusion that can be drawn from the older tales is not that the hunt is an activity for aristocratic people but that the hunt, i.e. the relationship with the otherworld, is an important matter that has to be dealt with by "important" people (that is what the tales want to convey when they choose aristocratic people as main characters) people who know and follow the rules because they have been trained to do so.

The later tales reflect the evergrowing popularity of hunting among royalty and aristocracy, and the new hunting rules and habits that were introduced with the arrival of the Normans. Hunting increasingly became a recurrent theme in literature until the end of the Middle Ages. Not only because books on hunting were in great demand (1.2), but because hunting became a literary device 'per se', whether as a similee, or a metaphor, or as a whole allegory (2,3).

CONCLUSION : REFERENCES

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- (2) CUMMINS,J. The Hound and the Hawk.
- (3) THIEBAUX,M. The Stag of Love.
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