

BOOK REVIEWS

The use of Welsh: a contribution to sociolinguistics. Ed. Martin J. Ball. Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1988. x + 341 pp. ISBN 0-905028-99-6, 0-905028-99-8 (pbk). £42, £14.95 (pbk).

This book adds significantly to the present vitality of Welsh linguistics in that it is the first volume devoted to general issues in Welsh sociolinguistics. Although the collection is not fully comprehensive (nor could it be at this stage of the discipline), it nevertheless covers a wide range of social and geographical varieties and touches on the most central and controversial issues in Welsh today, whether socio-political in nature or purely scientific. It therefore does a very good job of introducing variation studies to non-expert audiences and presenting the Welsh situation to non-Welsh readers. It strikes an admirable balance, between introduction and historiography on the one hand and empirical studies on the other, between surveys and detailed investigations, between discussion and experimentation, between theory and practice.

This balance of topics, however, is combined with an unevenness of quality in the individual papers. It is particularly regrettable that so many of the chapters are merely summaries of earlier works.

The contributions are organized into six parts covering 20 chapters by 13 authors, a little over a third of them being by the editor. A brief introduction uses the conflicting statements of mutation rules in grammars as an illustration of variation in language (perhaps a better illustration of the confusion of linguistics than of actual variation in usage). The other two chapters of Part 1 describe the basic tenets of dialectology and sociolinguistics respectively. Much of this will be well known to linguists, but it is concisely and interestingly written. Most interesting are the historical précis of Welsh dialect studies in chapter 2, and the contrasting of the methods of dialectology with those of sociolinguistics in chapter 3. The discussion of speech community is a particularly useful introduction, since the 'network' model of L. Milroy, *Language and social networks* (Oxford 1980), has been adopted in nearly all the subsequent empirical studies.

Part 2 contains three articles on lexical, phonological and morphological features of certain varieties of Welsh. chapter 4 by Alan Thomas describes the procedure used in his lexical survey of Wales and the results of using computer mapping of the returns. The computer confirms Thomas's earlier positing of two major dialects (north and south), each with eastern and western subdialects. The data also show a shift towards English and southern forms since the original survey. Ball follows this with a short description of the principal phonological differences between the dialects of Welsh (taking the south-west and north-west dialects as 'standards'), and classifies these into four categories. The next chapter deals with grammatical variation (mostly literary vs colloquial rather than geographical). The data are largely restricted to morphological

variation in the verb and preposition, with a portion devoted to syntax. The discussion of the latter seems confused and idiosyncratic. The examples chosen relate more to lexical differences; better examples might include the use of the auxiliary, *ISIO* vs *MOYN* constructions, *GAN* vs *GYDA* syntax, etc. Next comes Ball's report on a sociolinguistic experiment concerning use of the aspirate mutation. This is a model of good sociolinguistic research, demonstrating a decline in the use of mutation, which correlates with lexical and extra-linguistic factors.

This last paper might more appropriately have been placed in the third part, which is devoted to individual studies of variation in Welsh. These include a study of provection by school children in Ystalyfera (Siân Thomas), a survey of the features of the Breconshire dialect (Glyn Jones) and a discussion of the variation found in Pwllheli Welsh (Anna Roberts). The first of these is rather unsatisfactory, being imprecise and vague. Jones's short review reveals some unique features about Breconshire Welsh, such as its lexical link with dialects further north in eastern Wales beyond a large bight of English speakers (links confirmed by Alan Thomas's article, pp. 44-6). Roberts's summary of her 1975 thesis covers the range of grammatical variations in the Pwllheli dialect, those related to English influence as well as age, and so provides needed information on a surprisingly underdescribed area of Wales (see also the map on p. 22, revealing the paucity of research on northern Welsh).

The fourth part is surely the most controversial in the book, since it is concerned with more than purely linguistic issues. Its four chapters respectively cover Literary Welsh (Dafydd Glyn Jones), Official Welsh (Berwyn Prys Jones), Broadcast Welsh (Ball, Griffiths and Jones) and *Cymraeg Byw* (Cennard Davies). The two middle contributions provide fascinating accounts of the form of Welsh used for these public purposes and, more pointedly, the sorts of factors considered in consciously choosing a particular variety for the purpose at hand. But it is the first and third chapters which confront a truly thorny issue in Welsh language policy: the relative value of the literary language as a standard. Jones provides an excellent historical sketch of Welsh and Welsh linguistics, but is not equally thorough in summarizing the principal differences between literary and colloquial Welsh. The discussion is also at times legislative, arbitrary and inaccurate (e.g. as relates to the use of mutations on pp. 140-41, contradicted by more than one paper in this volume). He is determined to see the literary language as more flexible and speech as more rigid, even in a case where the latter allows more options (p. 168). The features of the registers are described impressionistically and often refer to some idealised native speaker whose knowledge mysteriously arbitrates any issue of acceptability. This is contrary to the explicitness of distribution and explanation ('there may well be a grammatical rule at work', p. 168) found in other chapters. Davies's article is something of a reply, in that he defends the learner's standard called *Cymraeg Byw*, saying that what a native speaker already intuits

is one thing, what to teach a beginner is something else. He adduces quotes which rebuff Jones's claims for the flexibility of Literary Welsh and argues well for the usefulness of a learner's standard more colloquial in form than *yr iaith lyfr*. Each article makes many good points in favour of its views and together they do well in introducing newcomers to the crux of one of the most controversial issues in Welsh language policy.

The fifth section is about children's use of Welsh. Wynford Bellin discusses phonological acquisition. He describes in abstract some of the observed stages and then reports the results on an experiment in mutation by pre-school children in London. Glyn Jones then has a study of the pronouns of address in schoolchildren and the results reflect differences in rural versus urban speakers, sex of speakers and first-versus second-language users. Interesting extra-linguistic factors were also at work in the data reported in Lynfa Hatton's admirably competent study of nasal mutation by schoolchildren. These included effects of the degree of Welsh in the home and parental dialect. Surprisingly, children with only a single Welsh-speaking parent sometimes fared better, as did children who had no Welsh-speaking background and used Welsh only in school. The last chapter in this section is Siân Munro's description of issues in diagnosis of speech pathology in bilingual children, taking two case-studies as illustration. The analysis is interesting and provocative but suffers greatly from overcondensation.

The final section deals with theoretical issues, with a paper by Robert Owen Jones on language change in progress and one by Ball on how to formalize variable rules in a grammar. Jones, in a sterling example of sociolinguistic research, deals with the realisation of final unstressed diphthongs in Patagonian Welsh over four age-groups and two classes differing in degrees of Welsh-oriented cultural activity. The data clearly show a gradual change through the groups, which was initiated in the less-Welsh of the second-oldest age-group; Jones argues that this contradicts the Neogrammarian tenet of across-the-board language change. He shows forcefully the need to consider models of gradual, spreading change (and even later reversal of a trend) which take due account of social as well as linguistic factors. Ball's discussion considers the previous attempts to formalize variable rules and then proposes two options for Welsh, one based on feature redundancies, the other on optional features in lexical entries. He does not express a preference for either one, but it seems that neither would be very appropriate for capturing statistical probabilities of variation or the effects of S-curves mentioned in the previous chapter.

In sum, this is a very useful, stimulating advance in an exciting, young field of Welsh studies. Overall the book is packed with useful information. This, and the breadth of the topics covered, should make it required reading on any Modern Welsh or Celtic Studies syllabus.

JAMES FIFE

Ymryson Edmwnd Prys a Wiliam Cynwal. Ed. Gruffydd Aled Williams. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986. cxcv + 347 pp. ISBN 0-7083-0918-6. £12.95.

The debate between Edmwnd Prys and Wiliam Cynwal, which began in 1581 and came to an end in 1587 or 1588, is one of the best known as it is certainly the most voluminous of Welsh poetic contentions. Censure of the professional learned poets and their work has a long history in Wales, beginning as it does with the fulminations of Gildas in the sixth century, but it was in the post-Norman period, and in the new intellectual environment produced throughout western Europe by the Renaissance, that voices more in sympathy with the new learning were raised with relative frequency in criticism of the traditional canons of bardic art. Prys studied for some twelve years at St John's College, Cambridge, where he came to share the contemporary humanism; he claimed for example – by way of contrasting his own richer experience with that of Cynwal – that he was familiar with poetry in eight languages. The fact that he was a cleric – he was appointed archdeacon of Merioneth in 1576 – in his case doubtless added emphasis to the moralizing element which coloured contemporary criticism of native bards.

The central vice of traditional court poetry in the view of its critics from Gildas to Prys was that which in fact constituted its *raison d'être*. Historically the status and influence of the bard was bound up with his function as praise-poet, a role which, in traditional perspective, was not only socially respectable but even essential, whereas for Prys poetic eulogy amounted to nothing more than the retailing of self-evident falsehoods for the sake of personal profit. Poets ascribed virtues and achievements to their benefactors which conflicted with reality, and forged for them arms and genealogies lacking any semblance of historical basis, and this fatal flaw vitiated the whole Welsh poetic tradition, including its archetypal figures, Myrddin and Taliesin. Cynwal furnished the immediate occasion for this kind of criticism, but in fact the main target was the whole configuration of Welsh poetic learning and practice which he represented.

For Prys, as for other critics of like mind, the remedy was twofold. First the poets should abandon their fraudulent muse and set about creating a poetry shaped and inspired by the truths of the Bible, and, secondly, they should repair to the universities and equip themselves with the new learning of the humanists, thus opening up their verse to consideration of the endless wonders of creation and the revelations of scientific enquiry. Unfortunately there was more confrontation than dialectic in the *ymryson*, and both Prys and Cynwal were impregnable in their complacency, each wholly immune to what good sense the other's arguments might have contained. As a result a large part of the exchanges are devoted to indecisive wrangling over such issues as the worth, or worthlessness, of bardic training and bardic grades, or the many defects

which each of them claims to discover in the other's control of metrical technique. Cynwal repeatedly dismisses his opponent as an untaught amateur ('If you are in fact a poet . . . who is your teacher?'), and counsels him to leave the art of poetry to those qualified in it and to content himself with the priestly office to which God had called him. Prys's response is to reject Cynwal's premises and to advance the humanist view of the interrelation of the arts.

Inevitably the substantive argument is inconclusive, though in terms of enthusiasm, intelligence and sheer debating skill Prys is the clear winner on points. It must be conceded that Cynwal is an uninspiring champion of his order: not merely does he contribute fewer, and on the whole, shorter, poems to the contention, but he shows little zest for the fray, preferring rather to stand doggedly on his poetic dignity. One of his more gifted fellow-poets might have made a more lively and balanced debate of it, but it is doubtful, as the editor remarks, whether his reaction to Prys's criticism would have been essentially different to Cynwal's; whether, for example, he would have been more willing to recognize the signs foreshadowing the declension of his profession. The *ymryson* gives unusually extended expression to a deep-set and growing tension between opposing perceptions of the nature of poetry and of its role in society, and for that reason alone it is an important event in the history of Welsh literature.

Dr Williams's splendid edition contains all the usual apparatus of the standard editions of the Welsh *cywyddwyr*: texts, variants, notes, indexes and, in this case, an exceptionally comprehensive introduction containing a useful discussion of the intellectual background to the debate. The one point in which he deviates notably from normal editorial practice is his decision not to modernize and standardize the orthography of the manuscript on which he bases his edition, on the grounds that this is a holograph of Edmwnd Prys.

PROINSIAS MAC CANA

Sprachkontakt in der Bretagne: Sprachloyalität versus Sprachwechsel.

Marianne Renate Berger. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1988. xii + 174 pp. (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, Band 220.) ISBN 3-484-52220-8. DM 74.

This sociolinguistic study of language loyalty and language shift in Brittany is based on field studies conducted in 1983 and 1984 in Bigouden (especially in rural Tréméoc and urban Loctudy / Ile Tudy), in the south-west of the Cornouaille dialect-area. It sets out to explore speakers' attitudes towards Breton and French and their use of the two languages in various contexts, in order to correlate the speakers' loyalty towards Breton with their actual linguistic behaviour. To obtain her data, Berger used two questionnaires, the second of which contains two semantic differentials to elicit attitudes towards French, the local

Bigouden variant of Breton, and KLT (the standard, literary form of Cornouaille, Léon, and Trégor), informally defined in her questionnaire as the Breton spoken on radio and television.

It is one of the merits of Berger's study that she discusses the methodological foundation in detail, and her presentation will make interesting reading for anyone engaged in similar sociolinguistic research. She describes, for example, how to translate the questions relevant for her study into the format of a questionnaire that will be accepted by the interviewees. The answers she wants to elicit concern bilingual competence, the realization of this competence depending on the participants of the discourse, its subject and place, and the attitudes towards the languages used. The list of antonyms for the semantic differential is established on the basis of stereotypes informally used by the local speakers to evaluate Breton and French and is meant to cover the abstract concepts of aesthetic and emotive value of the two languages, their utility, modernity, and regularity.

Here it must suffice to summarize some of Berger's findings. For Tréméoc and Loctudy / Ile Tudy 53.42% and 44.05% of the interviewees respectively report an active Breton competence. Competent speakers of Breton rarely use it as a written medium; 99.3% in rural Tréméoc and 95.46% in urban Loctudy / Ile Tudy say that they rarely or never write Breton. Rating linguistic ability in Breton by age shows that among those aged 40 to 60 and over 60 the highest active competence is found (between 58.33% and 91.07%), whereas for the under-20 age-group 82.98% in Tréméoc and 86.67% in Loctudy / Ile Tudy report low passive Breton competence or no competence at all. However, this number is considerably lower (33.33%) for some other places in Bigouden where Berger conducted additional interviews. She could find no gender-specific difference in bilingual competence and only slight gender-specific difference in the use of Breton, women using it somewhat less often than men. She points out that this appears to be peculiarly characteristic of the situation in Brittany, since another study has shown that women in a village in Languedoc revert to French significantly more often than men. A situation similar to the latter seems to obtain for Scottish Gaelic: K. McKinnon ('Gender, occupational and educational factors on Gaelic language-shift and regeneration', *Third International Conference on minority languages: Celtic papers* (ed. G. Mac Eoin et al., Clevedon and Philadelphia 1987) 47-71) draws attention to the fact that younger women have the lowest levels of Gaelic speaking ability and usage and that they show a more negative attitude towards it as well. He also reports similar findings from Wales.

For the future of Breton it may become significant that in Tréméoc only 8.94% of the parents with an active competence in Breton and 3.33% of those in Loctudy / Ile Tudy speak it to their children – although 29.61% and 13.33% respectively speak it to their spouses. On the other hand, Berger points out that a new type of bilingual speaker is coming

into existence in Brittany: the young, politically motivated intellectual, who, however, would rather learn the standard KLT than one of the local dialects. Trends with similar implications are also reported for other Celtic languages where, due to more formal teaching, regional variants are neutralized – see e.g. S. E. Thomas, ‘A study of *Calediad* in the Upper Swansea Valley’, in M. J. Ball (ed.), *The use of Welsh: a contribution to sociolinguistics* (Clevedon and Philadelphia 1988) 85–96, for the disappearance of phonetic features in the Welsh of the Upper Swansea Valley.

With regard to loyalty towards Breton, Berger found inconsistencies in so far as the number of those who claim to have a positive attitude towards it is higher than the number of those who actually favour speaking Breton to their children, especially in rural Tréméoc. The local Bigouden variant of Breton is very often considered by its speakers to be a deformed, inferior variant of true Breton – an identical evaluation of the local variant of Welsh is reported from Pont-rhyd-y-fen: B. Thomas, ‘Accounting for language maintenance and shift: socio-historic evidence from a mining community in Wales’, Mac Eoin et al. (1987) 13–26, p. 24.

The semantic differential for the evaluation of French and the local Breton dialect displays a consistently lower rating for the latter. Only for the *intime-public* scale does French rate higher for what Berger interprets as the negative value, i.e. *public*; but it may well be that this supposition was not shared by the interviewees, since public use could be associated with the high status language of French without having negative connotations. The comparative evaluation of French, Bigouden Breton, and KLT shows that KLT scores higher than the local dialect for modernity and regularity (roughly the same rating as French), both Bigouden and KLT rate lower than French for utility, but KLT rates considerably lower than both French and Bigouden on the emotive scale *chaleureux-froid*. This is probably the attitude of the speakers of the local Bigouden dialect, not of what Berger terms the new type of young urban KLT learner. It is therefore possible to question her conclusion that emotive distance from KLT will render language loyalty in Brittany largely ineffective for language maintenance. As she points out, considerable attitudinal differences exist between the older, rural speakers of Breton and the evolving new type of bilingual. The latter’s appreciation of Breton as a cultural asset may play an important role in its maintenance, even if this language is a form of KLT. But such criticism should not detract from the many merits of this carefully researched and documented book, which is a welcome addition to the growing body of modern sociolinguistic studies on Celtic languages.

ERICH POPPE

Bildungsidol – Ritter – Held: Herkules bei William Caxton und Uilliam Mac an Léaga. Bianca Ross. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989. 271 pp. (Britannica et Americana 3. Folge, Band 10.) ISBN 3-533-04059-3, 3-533-04058-5 (pbk). DM 120, DM 90 (pbk).

This comparative study explores in depth the shape which the story of Hercules took in two medieval literatures, English and Irish, based on the vernacular adaptations of William Caxton and Uilliam Mac an Léaga, and supplements this by further reference to a version in another Celtic literature, Elis Gruffudd's Welsh adaptation. Here I will concentrate on the results of B. Ross's analysis of Mac an Léaga's *Stair Ercuile 7 a bhás*; but it should at least be mentioned that she is the first to treat Gruffudd's *Ystoria Erkwulf* as a work of literature (pp. 193–204) and that she gives a paraphrase of the Welsh story in an appendix (224–44).

B. Ross's discussion of *Stair Ercuile* is an important contribution to Irish literary studies, especially to the largely neglected area of later medieval translation literature. With constant reference to Caxton's treatment of the same story, she shows how Mac an Léaga used established Irish literary concepts and devices to create a text which would appeal to native literary taste. The underlying theme of her study is thus the contrast between Caxton's presentation of the story as a didactic, chivalric romance and Mac an Léaga's as a heroic saga, both approaches being shaped by the authors' cultural and literary background. To set the scene for her analysis, B. Ross surveys this background and the authors' lives and works (9–49) as well as the changing images of Hercules in classical and medieval literature (50–76). In the first main chapter of her book, 'Die Biographie des Helden' (77–161), she deals with the hero's birth, his youthful exploits and his intellectual development, his relation to women, his role as a warrior, and his moral values. Here she is primarily concerned with adaptations on the level of content. Among the significant features of the Irish text she adverts to, are the conscious parallels between the heroic biographies of Hercules and Cú Chulainn, which are strengthened, e.g. by changing Hercules's age when he took arms to seven. She draws attention to the use of native terms such as *file* and *aes dána* and of native concepts such as fosterage and *caradradh*, 'friendship' between two warriors, which play an important role in Irish heroic saga. Another feature of Irish saga she finds in *Stair Ercuile* concerns the relation between the sexes: here the Irish version is more realistic and less given to the description of emotions and to psychological explorations of the hero's feelings, whereas Caxton, following the French version of Raoul Lefèvre, highlights the ideal of courtly love. Note that daughters of the kings and captains of the world are described as being in love with Hercules *ot urscelaib do clos* (527), just as e.g. Flidais loved Fergus *ara airscelaib* (*Táin Bó Flidais* (ed. J. Corthals, Hamburg 1979) 152.3–4).

Another interesting detail in Mac an Léaga's version to which B. Ross refers is the use of the exclusively Christian term *dúilemh* 'creator'

when Hercules dies: *do díriġh a rosc osa cinn docum an Duileman* (*Stair Ercuil*, lines 2536–7). This could be called a Christian slip of the pen, and Mac an Leagha did indeed copy and adapt much religious prose. Secular stories are represented by his versions of *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Hampton* (see *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 6 (1908) 9–104, 273–338, 556), presumably also based on English originals. In a recent article Andrew Breeze (*Celtica* 19 (1987) 111–19, pp. 117–18) has drawn attention to his translations of two Middle English religious poems. This too shows that Mac an Leagha was familiar with contemporary English literature.

In her second chapter, 'Deskriptionen und Deskriptionstechniken in *Stair Ercuil*' (162–92), B. Ross analyses in detail stylistic and linguistic characteristics of the Irish story. Here she discusses loanwords found in the text and the various applications of traditional terms such as *athach* and *fomhóir*. She devotes particular attention to Mac an Leagha's methods of describing people's appearance, clothing and weaponry and points up differences between his descriptions and Caxton's, which again place his work in the Irish tradition. Another typically Irish feature are alliterative descriptions, and she exemplifies this by a few well-chosen parallels from other texts. She also adverts to chapter-endings (instead of chapter-headings) using native terminology to classify stories (e.g. *tochmharc*, *toghail*) as a means of structuring the narrative.

In her final chapter 'Tradition und Wandel bei William Caxton und Uilliam Mac an Lega' (205–223) she characterizes *Stair Ercuil* as a heroic narrative modelled on an Irish saga ('einer irischen Saga nachempfundenen Heldenerzählung'), but she points up some important differences between the blatantly heroic Cú Chulainn and Hercules, the latter being also involved in various kinds of intellectual activities. In the discussion of the applicability of the term 'romance' to *Stair Ercuil* she concentrates on Mac an Leagha's blending of a foreign plot with native concepts, which impressively testifies to the vigour of the Irish literary tradition in the later Middle Ages. It is the great merit of B. Ross's work to have presented detailed evidence of how this blend was achieved.

ERICH POPPE

Kilian, Mönch aus Irland - aller Franken Patron: Aufsätze. Ed. Johannes Erichsen in collaboration with Evamaria Brockhoff. München: Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte. 1989. (Veröffentlichungen zur bayerischen Geschichte und Kultur 19.) 477 pp. ISBN 3-9801342-9-6. DM 25.

This generously illustrated (and very reasonably priced) volume is the scholarly companion to the Würzburg exhibition celebrating the thirteenth centenary of the death of the Irish missionary Kilian (Killena), who, together with his compatriots Kolonat and Totnan, is supposed to have suffered martyrdom in Würzburg in 689. Three aspects are discussed: the Irish background, the historical and cultural situation in

and around Würzburg in the Middle Ages, and Kilian's place in art and literature. The aim of the volume is to present up-to-date summaries of research in these areas; and the articles on medieval Ireland, which constitute the first part, will be very welcome and helpful, especially for the German student of early Irish history and culture.

Tomás Ó Fiaich (pp. 17–27) sets the scene with a survey of Irish missionaries and scholars on the Continent, and this topic is again taken up in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín's discussion (49–55) of the early Irish missionaries and their impact on Europe. Charles Doherty (29–37) and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (39–47) provide important insights into the structure and organisation of the early Irish Church and its place in society. Doherty discusses monastic and episcopal elements in the development of the Irish Church from the late fourth to the eighth century and the social impact of the monastic reorganisation of the seventh and eighth century. Ó Corráin surveys the complexities of early Irish church organisation and highlights the influence of the monastic *civitates* on contemporary society. From an archaeological point of view this question is taken up by Ann Hamlin and Christopher J. Lynn (57–73). They compare early Irish ecclesiastic and secular settlements and stress the basic similarity of their distribution and structure, the defining features of an ecclesiastic settlement being church and cemetery. Michael Ryan (75–83) discusses Irish metalwork up to the ninth century; and Peter Harbison (85–92) summarizes his ideas about the continental models for the iconography of the Irish High Crosses and their implications for dating. Günther Haseloff (93–106) describes Irish manuscripts of the seventh and early eighth centuries; he now favours a date for the *Cathach* around 560 on the basis of archaeological evidence for trade between Ireland and the Mediterranean region.

Four articles in the second part touch on Irish matters: Friedrich Prinz (109–132) defines the role of the Irish missionaries in Franconia and their impact on the development of monastic organisation. Paul-Werner Schlee (299–311) analyses the two earliest lives of Kilian in the light of Irish spirituality. Hans Thurn (313–27) gives a brief description of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the library of Würzburg cathedral – among these the Pauline Epistles with the famous Old Irish glosses. Elmar Hochholzer (329–45) surveys the Irish presence in Würzburg up to 1498, when the Schottenkloster was taken over by the local Benedictines.

Only the articles of Irish interest have been mentioned here. They summarize important results of recent research and thus provide a short and reliable introduction to many aspects of early Irish history and culture which will considerably deepen an understanding of a significant facet of European culture for many others besides its intended German readership.

ERICH POPPE