

Buchedd Catrin

An edition

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BA thesis Celtic Studies

August 2015

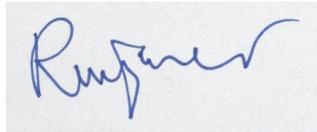
Plagiaatverklaring

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List of abbreviations

Pen 15: NLW MS. Peniarth 15

Pen 5: NLW MS. Peniarth 5

Llist 27: NLW MS. Llanstephan 27

Introduction

Hagiography was a very popular literary genre in medieval Europe, and Wales is no exception, having its own collection of texts concerning both native and foreign saints that were active in Wales, in both Latin and Welsh. Some of the more well-known of these saints are St. David, Beuno, Cadog and Brigit¹. However, cults and texts also appeared for saints that were neither of Welsh origin nor active in Wales, and St. Catherine² of Alexandria was one of them. Her Welsh life, *Buchedd Catrin*, is found in seventeen manuscripts dated between the fourteenth and nineteenth century³, of which this edition will be using three: Llanstephan 27⁴, Peniarth 5⁵ and Peniarth 15⁶. The large number of manuscripts the text is found in provides an indication of her popularity in medieval Wales, but there are also a number of other types of sources which indicate popularity, such as calendars containing her feast day, visual depictions of her in art but also on household items, dedicated churches (although only three of the ones extant now were founded in the middle ages) and chapels (mentioned in older sources but no longer extant)⁷.

The Welsh life of saint Catrin has been edited before. There are three editions that I know of, but two of these editions are very dated and one is unavailable to me. The first edition is found in Rees' *Lives of the Cambro-British saints*⁸, which was published in 1853, featuring the edited Welsh text and a translation. Bell's edition, found in his *Vita Sancti Tatheï and Buched Seint y Katrin*⁹, was made in response to Rees' editions of the saint's lives, noting that these editions would be very useful to students, but that Rees' work is too full of mistakes to be of use: Bell calls Rees' work 'so full of blunders that without verification it is unsafe to use them for any purpose'¹⁰, and states that his renderings are

- 1 Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh saints* (Cambridge 1987) 161. There were saints of multiple origins called Brigit, from Ireland, Wales and Sweden, and stories about them may overlap. The Welsh name for Brigit is Ffraid.
- 2 In Welsh, her name is spelled *Catrin*; to remain consistent, I will be using this spelling, as well as the Welsh spelling for any other names found in the text. Their Latin equivalents will be provided in a footnote.
- 3 Jane Cartwright, 'Buchedd Catrin, a preliminary study of the Middle Welsh life of saint Katherine of Alexandria and her cult in medieval Wales', *Saint Catherine of Alexandria, texts and contexts in western medieval Europe*, ed. Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (2003) 65-66: the footnotes provide a full list of these seventeen manuscripts.
- 4 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Llanstephan 27 (The Red Book of Talgarth); online transcription available from *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425* at <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/ms-home.php?ms=L1st27>
- 5 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 5 (The White Book of Rhydderch); online transcription available from *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425* at <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/ms-home.php?ms=Pen5>
- 6 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 15; online transcription available from *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425* at <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/ms-home.php?ms=Pen15>
- 7 Cartwright, 'Buchedd Catrin', 53-65.
- 8 William Jenkins Rees, *Lives of the Cambro-British saints*, ed. and trans. Thomas Wakeman (Llandoverly 1853) 211-8 and 531-9.
- 9 H. Idris Bell, *Vita Sancti Tatheï and Buched Seint y Katrin* (Bangor 1909).
- 10 Bell, *Vita Sancti Tatheï and Buched Seint y Katrin*, V.

'so inaccurate as to be in many cases worse than useless'¹¹. For his edition of Catrin's life, Bell uses the British Museum Cotton MS. Titus D. xxii, which has been dated to the second quarter of the fifteenth century; more specifically, 1429¹². In his editing, he remains very close to the text as found in the manuscript, keeping the original orthography, capitalization and punctuation but expanding abbreviations and indicating those and all other deviations made¹³. Bell does not include a translation of the middle Welsh text, as the edition was made for the Bangor Welsh Manuscripts Society, and he deems that his audience should have sufficient knowledge of the language to provide their own translations. The final edition that is known to me is by Williams¹⁴, but I will not discuss it as it is written in Welsh and I do not have the skill to understand or translate it.

In this edition, I will first discuss the methodology and framework used. I will discuss the methods that are frequently used in Celtic and other medieval studies, and which of these methods I am using to create my edition. I will also discuss the three manuscripts that I am basing my edition on. Then, I will discuss the heroic biography, the genre of hagiography, how the two fit together and how *Buchedd Catrin* fits in with both. Finally, I will provide an edited version of the Welsh text, some notes on the grammar of the Welsh text and an English translation.

11 Bell, *Vita Sancti Tatheï and Buchedd Seint y Katrin*, V.

12 Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts* (Cardiff 2000) 61.

13 Bell, *Vita Sancti Tatheï and Buchedd Seint y Katrin*, VI.

14 J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Buchedd Catrin Sant', *Bulletin of the board of Celtic studies* 25 (1973) 247-68.

Methodology and theoretical framework

There are a number of ways in which an edition of a medieval text can be created. Murray, in 'Reviews, reviewers and critical texts', published in *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 57¹⁵, discusses the various ways in which medieval Irish texts can be edited, but similar methods can be applied to medieval texts of other origins, including Welsh.

The first of the methods Murray discusses is the Lachmannian approach, which uses multiple manuscript versions of a text and compares them in order to get an idea of genealogical relationships between the manuscripts: is one manuscript a copy of the other, or are they 'siblings' that share a source? The idea is that a manuscript stemma and even a reconstruction of the 'parent' of the text, the archetype, can be created¹⁶. While it is difficult to make strong statements about familial relationships between manuscripts, the approach of working with multiple versions of a text and comparing them is one that is found in other editing methods as well.

The second method is to create a normalized text. This is done by using 'standard' medieval spelling in the edition. The goal may be to go beyond the archetype discussed above, the first written version of a text, and reconstruct an even more original text. However, most of the goal of normalizing a text is to create editions to be used in teaching environments, providing students with a text that is more easily readable. Normalized texts are often presented alongside a diplomatic edition, which remains as close to the text in the manuscript as possible, so both texts can easily be referred to¹⁷.

Next is the best text approach, or the Bédierist technique. When a text exists in multiple manuscripts, the 'best' version is chosen to create an edition of. This can be, for example, the manuscript that has the most complete or undamaged version of the text. The edition remains as close to the chosen text as possible. This method is popular in medieval French studies but also many others¹⁸. It can be used within other editorial methods, as we shall see in a moment: Murray created a best-text edition of one copy of a text, then used another copy where the first manuscript was lacking, to create a multiple-text edition.

A semi-diplomatic edition can be difficult to define. It mainly indicates that contractions from the manuscript have been expanded (marked with italics), and capitalization and punctuation have been added. The term semi-diplomatic can be

15 Kevin Murray, 'Reviews, reviewers and critical texts', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 57 (2009) 51-70.

16 Murray, 'Reviews', 52-3.

17 Murray, 'Reviews', 54.

18 Murray, 'Reviews', 55.

expanded to include adding and removing length-marks and diacritics (more applicable in Irish texts than Welsh ones), and adding and removing letters (marked with brackets). Because the definition is somewhat flexible, what one may see as a semi-diplomatic edition can be viewed by another as a critical edition¹⁹.

The final method discussed by Murray, and the method which he personally prefers, is the multiple-text edition, which 'seeks to present, where possible, all the extant copies of a text in diplomatic transcription, along with a critical edition...'²⁰. Murray used this approach in his edition of the Irish text *Baile in Scáil*²¹. This text exists in two manuscripts²², but only one is complete: he used this text to create a best-text edition, adding readings from the other manuscript where the first is illegible or when the spelling of the second is 'unambiguously superior'²³.

For my edition, I will use the multiple-text method, as it suits the material I am working with and the result I am trying to achieve. As mentioned before, *Buchedd Catrin* is found in seventeen manuscripts, which is a relatively large number, and most of these texts have not been looked at in great detail yet, though it would be useful with such a large number to compare them to see if they all share the exact same content, in which ways they are similar and in which ways they are different. Since seventeen texts are too many for me to look at and discuss for this thesis, and not all manuscripts are available to me, I will be looking at just three of the manuscripts that contain the text: Peniarth 5, Peniarth 15 and Llanstephan 27. These three manuscripts are available as electronic transcriptions at the Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425 website²⁴. The transcriptions are close to the original manuscripts, and their digital medium allows for editorial intervention and suggestions in a way that still clearly indicates what the original manuscript looks like, indicating changes with differently colored text and editorial notes that can be accessed by hovering the mouse over a word or section. In this way changes in word division, expanded abbreviations and other edits in the text can be clearly shown. All punctuation is shown in the same locations as it is written in the manuscript. Aside from editorial additions, the transcriptions also show many aspects of the manuscripts themselves: deleted, faded or otherwise illegible text is indicated, as well as colored text, added text,

19 Murray, 'Reviews', 56.

20 Murray, 'Reviews', 56.

21 Kevin Murray, *Baile in Scáil*, ed. Kevin Murray, Irish Texts Society 58 (London 2004).

22 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B. 512 and London, British Library, Harley 5280.

23 Murray, 'Reviews', 56-7.

24 Diana Luft, Peter Wynn Thomas and D. Mark Smith. eds. 2013, *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425*, <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk>.

decorations, and holes and other damage to the manuscript. There are also downsides to looking at a digital transcription instead of the manuscript itself, for example not being able to deduce information from the script itself, although the website does provide information on the manuscripts and the scribes. Considering the advantages and disadvantages they present, these digital transcriptions are a good alternative when neither the original manuscript nor photocopies of it are available.

For my edition of *Buchedd Catrin*, I have compared the texts from the three manuscripts and found that they are very similar, with only a few small exceptions. In some cases, one manuscript uses a very different verbal form, spelling or general wording than the others. Because they are so similar and there is no single best text, I have decided to represent all three manuscripts in a single text. The concept is the same as a multiple-text edition, though it can not be called that as not all manuscripts that the text occurs in are discussed. In the cases that one of the three manuscripts used does not agree with the others, the alternate reading is added in a footnote, with one exception: the final paragraph of the text in Peniarth 5 is so different from the other two, that I have decided to add it separately at the end of the text. In my edition, I have added punctuation and capitalization as it would appear in a modern text. I have also divided the text into paragraphs. These paragraphs are numbered for easier reference to grammatical notes.

Since the text is too long for me to discuss, I have decided to edit and translate a section rather than the entire text. I chose for this section to be the end of the text, which is about 600 words long, as one of the manuscripts, Llanstephan 27, contains only this section of the text, whereas the other two are complete.

About the manuscripts

As mentioned before, *Buchedd Catrin* occurs in seventeen manuscripts, of which I will discuss only three: NLW MS. Peniarth 5, NLW MS. Peniarth 15 and NLW MS. Llanstephan 27. All three are found in the National Library of Wales, and have digital transcriptions available which I will be using to base my edition on, as discussed above.

Peniarth 5

NLW MS. Peniarth 5, more well-known as one of the two manuscripts that make up the White Book of Rhydderch²⁵, is the oldest manuscript that this text is found in, dating to about 1350²⁶. The manuscript has suffered from centuries of use and restoration. Leaves and quires are missing, the pages are worn and it is now bound in two parts: Peniarth 4 and Peniarth 5. The White Book is very well known and deemed the most important of medieval Welsh manuscripts where prose repertoire is concerned²⁷: it contains geographical, historical and wisdom texts, but also Mabinogion texts, romance and religious texts. The Peniarth 5 manuscript in particular contains mostly religious texts and some romance. Three individual scribes are identified in the manuscript. Two of these are unnamed and referred to as 'A' and 'C', but the other is known as 'the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi' and found in four other manuscripts, one of them being Oxford Jesus College MS. 119, also known as *the Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi*²⁸.

The White Book was composed for and named after Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd ab Ieuan, a descendant of Lord Rhys, who was a ruler of Deheubarth and founder of the Strata Florida abbey. The family was one of literary patrons, and Rhydderch himself became the most renowned patron of the bards of fourteenth-century Cardiganshire²⁹. Though the White Book was probably commissioned by Rhydderch, it also contains texts written down for his relatives at an earlier time, at the end of the thirteenth century.

Buchedd Catrin occurs together with four other lives of female saints, written by the same hand but in a different layout: Huws suggests that it was not originally intended to be part of the manuscript; perhaps to create a larger variety of texts by mixing secular and religious works, perhaps 'in the spirit of piety'³⁰.

The text *Buchedd Catrin* starts on page 21v and ends on page 23r. The section that

25 The other manuscript that makes up the White Book is NLW MS. Peniarth 4.

26 Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts*, 228.

27 Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts*, 228.

28 Information from Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/tei-header.php?ms=Pen5>; The website provides information on each transcribed manuscript, about its location, contents, origin, layout, foliation, hands, the editing policies used to create transcriptions, and any other relevant information.

29 Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts*, 249-50.

30 Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts*, 253-4.

this edition covers begins on line 6 of page 23r.

Llanstephan 27

Llanstephan 27 is the second manuscript containing the text *Buchedd Catrin* that I will be discussing, dating to the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century³¹. It is part of the Red Book of Talgarth, along with sections of Peniarth 12 and Cardiff 3.242 - quires had gotten detached and were rebound in these manuscripts. Llanstephan 27 contains mostly religious texts. Its scribe has been identified as Hywel Fychan, although a few pages are written by another hand ('B'). There are multiple suggestions to who commissioned the manuscript. Evans suggests it was Hopcyn ap Tomas, based on the fact that other manuscripts by Hywel Fychan were written for him, and two *awdl*s stating that there was a copy of 'the Lucidarius' in his court, which the manuscript contains.

Based on references in five Latin prayers in the manuscript, Roberts suggests that the manuscript was commissioned not by Hopcyn ap Tomas himself, but by his relatives.³²

As mentioned, this manuscript contains only a fragment of *Buchedd Catrin*: the beginning of it has gotten lost, along with the ending of the previous text. The fragment of the text starts on page 131r and ends on page 131v. This entire section is covered by this edition.

Peniarth 15

Peniarth 15 is dated by Huws to roughly the same time as Llanstephan 27: between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century³³. Like Llanstephan 27, it contains mostly religious texts. Two hands are identified, though a third and later hand has added a fragment of the Grail story; this has not been transcribed on the Rhyddiaith Gymraeg website³⁴. The origin of the manuscript is not known.

The text *Buchedd Catrin* starts on page 138 and ends on page 144. The section that this edition covers begins on line 2 of page 143.

31 Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts*, 60.

32 Information from Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/tei-header.php?ms=Llst27>

33 Huws, *Medieval Welsh manuscripts*, 60.

34 Information from Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1330-1425: <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/tei-header.php?ms=Pen15>

About the genre

Texts about heroes from different Indo-European cultures tend to follow a certain pattern known as the heroic biography. These heroic texts, whether they are one text or a collection of texts about the same hero, tend to contain, at least partially, the same elements, featuring the general stages of life from birth to death, but also a general pattern in the adventures the hero embarks on. The existence of the pattern has been studied extensively, and there have been multiple formulas suggested for it, ranging from a very broad and somewhat vague definition, such as Campbell's *monomyth*³⁵, to a more narrow and very detailed formula such as Nutt's³⁶, but the one I am most familiar with and deem the most useful to analyze a heroic biography is de Vries', though I will be using Ó Cathasaigh's analysis to discuss it. His formula consists of ten main points which are broad enough to be executed in various ways but still clear on which actual event is discussed, and variants and expansions are offered for each point. De Vries' heroic biography formula looks like this³⁷:

1. The begetting of the hero
2. The birth of the hero
3. The youth of the hero is threatened³⁸
4. The way in which the hero is brought up
5. The hero often acquires invulnerability
6. The fight with a dragon or other monster
7. The hero wins a maiden, usually after overcoming great dangers
8. The hero makes an expedition to the underworld
9. When the hero is banished in his youth, he returns later and is victorious over his enemies. In some cases he has to leave the realm again which he has won with such difficulty
10. The death of the hero

Many of these points represent major new stages in life and are often accompanied by miraculous or supernatural events, from an outside source, e.g. births accompanied by extreme weather, or from within the hero, e.g. a child growing abnormally fast or displaying

35 Joseph Campbell, *The hero with a thousand faces*, 2004 ed. (Princeton 2004) 34-35 for a general overview.

36 Thomas Ó Cathasaigh, *The heroic biography of Cormac mac Airt* (Dublin 1977) 3.

37 Ó Cathasaigh, *The heroic biography*, 6.

38 More precisely, the life of the hero is threatened in their youth.

superhuman strength. These sorts of events indicate that a hero is special, indirectly by surrounding them with a supernatural environment, or more directly by giving them superhuman powers.

However, when considering a saintly hero, not all the points from a heroic biography apply. Henken, in *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives*³⁹, has adapted the heroic pattern slightly to suit a saintly hero. She puts the main motifs as follows⁴⁰:

1. Conception and birth
2. Childhood (education)
3. Performing a miracle which indicates spiritual maturity
4. Going out into the world - founding churches, making pilgrimages, retiring to the wilderness, journeying as a missionary
5. Conflict with secular powers (kings or beasts)
6. Ruling a territory
7. Death

Point three from de Vries' heroic biography, the threatening of the youth, appears to be dropped, but can easily be combined with the childhood of the hero, as many saints have their lives threatened in some way at a young age; as they avoid the threat in some way, their specialness is established. An example is St. Brigid, who as an infant survives a house fire completely unharmed.

Point three from Henken's biography, performing a miracle indicating spiritual maturity, may be adapted slightly, as some saints start performing miracles (as opposed to having miracles happen to them or around them) before they are even born, or at such a young age that it is difficult to say that they are spiritually mature. In my opinion, it would be more useful to make a point of the event that indicates their saintliness, which can be, for example, a prophecy (David's birth is announced 30 years in advance, and Patrick departs from Wales to make way for the new saint, indicating how important he would become⁴¹) or some kind of supernatural event (such as lights appearing in the four corners of a room, found in Cadog's life at his conception). A distinction can be made between these events and other special situations surrounding the saint's conception and birth, as it is common for both secular and spiritual heroes to be conceived from an unusual situation:

39 Elissa R. Henken, *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives* (Cambridge 1991).

40 Henken, *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives* 2.

41 Henken, *Traditions*, 32-4.

out of wedlock, from rape, within a virgin, or from a royal or godly lineage, to name some examples; Henken notes that all saints come of royal lineage. It establishes their specialness, gives them power to rule over an area (which can be the cause of secular conflict), but also creates a contrast when the saint chooses a religious life rather than chase secular rule⁴². This also ties in with Henken's seventh point, ruling a territory, which they would all have a right to do. These situations denote that the child will be special, but not necessarily that they will be saintly. My suggestion is to make a point of which event first indicates saintliness and note that a saint usually performs miracles throughout their lifetime. They frequently heal people, provide food or control elements, among other things. Henken even calls healing a 'primary function of the saints'⁴³. They most frequently heal blindness⁴⁴ but can heal any other ailment, and even raise people from the dead.

The event that indicates maturity is usually what brings the saint to traveling. Often, the saint is a student that outgrows his or her teacher: Cadog, Ieuan Gwas Padrig and David are all told to leave by their teachers⁴⁵.

De Vries' sixth point, the fight with a dragon or a monster, appears to have been adapted by Henken into a conflict with secular powers. A saint may fight a literal monster (such as saint George and the dragon), a demon (Brigit expels a demon with the power of speech) or more figuratively, temptations, most often with male saints in order to remain chaste. Any secular conflict also fits in with this fighting motif.

De Vries' winning of a maiden, point seven, is not found in the saintly biographic pattern. It is very unusual for a saint to seek romantic relationships with someone of the opposite gender, and although there are some saints who are said to have wives or children (Non, David's mother, was also a saint: David was conceived when she was raped by a king, Sant), the ideal Christian spiritual hero is celibate, and especially with female saints, it is specifically noted that they promise their virginity to God. Secular conflict may concern this, and it is not uncommon for women to become nuns in order to avoid marriage.

A saint's death can be as special as the death of any other hero. Often, saints die as martyrs. Their death, whether it be by martyrdom or of natural causes, may be surrounded by visions, miracles and angels. A foretold death is quite a common one; two examples are Gildas and David, who are both told they will die in eight days, in David's

42 Henken, *Traditions*, 289-90.

43 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 49.

44 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 50-51.

45 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 27.

case by an angel⁴⁶. When passing to Heaven they may be guided there by angels, experience visions, hear songs and smell pleasant smells⁴⁷. Another motif that fits this section, and that Henken does not pay much attention to in *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives*, is that saints often keep performing miracles even after death. Their bodies may not decay (for example St. Cuthbert), gain healing powers or otherwise help those who visit the grave; we will see an example of this in Catrin's life. One difference that Henken mentions between secular heroes and saintly heroes is that for a secular hero, death is a fall from grace, whereas for a saintly hero it is an attainment of grace. For a secular hero, death is usually the end, but for a saint the goal was Heaven all along, and from there they can continue their saintly duties⁴⁸.

46 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 120.

47 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 121.

48 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 122.

About the text

Before discussing how Catrin's life fits in with the heroic biography and the life as described in other sources, it is useful to give a summary of the text, as my edition will not feature a complete translation.

Summary

The Welsh life of Saint Catrin opens with the pagan Roman emperor Maxen⁴⁹ ordering all of his people to come to his feast to honour his gods. Those who do not obey are put in prison, Catrin being one of these people. There, she is visited by angels who bring light and joy to her. Maxen discusses with his advisors how he can change her mind, and they decide to send scholars to her to argue about her faith, but instead of them converting her, she converts them; their punishment is death. Maxen next tries to convince her by saying he would take her as his wife if she obeys, but Catrin refuses, is beaten with sticks and put in prison and visited by angels again. The joy that the angels bring is overhead by Porffir⁵⁰, who warns the queen, and when they both visit Catrin in prison they experience a vision and also convert to Christianity. When the queen tells Maxen that he is wrong to punish Catrin and that she too has changed her faith, he orders for her to be beaten to death, hanged by her hair, have her breasts cut off and be fed to the dogs. When Porffir criticizes him, Maxen also orders for him to be killed, but Porffir fights back, killing four thousand of Maxen's men with a ladder. Catrin, however, tells him not to fight, but accept his martyrdom, as Christ did. Porffir and the queen are killed by Maxen's men. Maxen's next offer is to spare Catrin if she starts believing in his gods, and when she refuses yet again, torturous wheels are built. As Catrin is put on them she starts praying, and angels come and break the wheels. Maxen's final offer is that if Catrin changes her faith, he will spare her because of her beauty. When she refuses yet again, Maxen's advisors tell him to cut off her head. Right before she is decapitated, she asks for a moment to pray, and an angel comes to tell her that all her prayers have been heard and will be answered, and that she will go to heaven after her suffering on Earth. When her head is finally cut off, milk flows out of the wound instead of blood, and her soul is taken to Heaven and her body is buried on mount Sinai, where four streams of oil flow from her breasts through her grave and she grants deliverance and health to those who come there to ask for it.

49 Maxentius.

50 Porphyrius.

Discussion

In *Buchedd Catrin* we see a conflict with a secular ruler and the death of a saint caused by the actions taken against them in the conflict with said ruler, two of the final points in Henken's biography. From Henken's *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives* it seems that this secular conflict is often centered around power, especially considering that a saint usually has royal lineage and may have a right to claim land or other power, which would be the cause of the conflict. Catrin is also of royal lineage, as she is the daughter of the king of Alexandria (this is mentioned very briefly at the beginning of the text; "*Merch y vrenhin constantinobyl. Alexandyr y gelwir yn llatin*"⁵¹) but the conflict in *Buchedd Catrin* is not entirely about secular power, but religion: Catrin is tortured and killed for her refusal to believe in Maxen's pagan gods. Though Maxen's reaction, not accepting such disobedience from his subjects, is a way for him to assert his power as a ruler, Catrin was never a threat to his throne and she never made claim to it. Martyrdom as a result of religious conflict is a very common cause of death for a saint, so this situation is not an unusual one. As Catrin is not a Welsh or Celtic saint, there is room to stray from Henken's pattern, as she focuses on Welsh saints only. She mentions in the introduction to *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives* that "the Welsh saints have less in common with the martyred saints of Europe than with the mythological and secular heroes of their own land"⁵².

It is not necessary for a single text to follow the entire heroic pattern to be considered a heroic text. Authors are not required to share all their knowledge of a hero at once. The entire tradition comes together in the minds of the audience, becoming a collective knowledge⁵³. Catrin was a very popular saint in the Middle Ages and she had many cults all over the Christian world. Her tradition extends past the contents of this particular Welsh text. Some parts of the tradition are not found at all in *Buchedd Catrin*, others differ from her life as found in other languages, even in other Celtic languages like Irish and Breton⁵⁴. All texts about Catrin focus on her martyrdom, but most offer more information on her upbringing than the Welsh version does. As mentioned, Catrin's lineage and upbringing is mentioned only very briefly: she is the daughter of the king of Constantinople, Alexander (or in a different interpretation of the Welsh text: the king of

51 NLW MS. Peniarth 5, page 21v, line 21; "(she was) the daughter of the king of Constantinople. He was called Alexander in Latin". The same line is found in NLW MS. Peniarth 15, page 138, line 16-17.

52 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 1.

53 Henken, *The Welsh saints*, 2.

54 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 71.

Constantinople, which in Latin is called Alexandria). In most other versions he is named Costus⁵⁵. There is also usually mention of further lineage (she is often noted as being related to Constantine the Great), her parents (often she is orphaned, though not always⁵⁶), and her conversion, but in the Welsh version all these facts are omitted. A very well-known part of her upbringing and general life which is left out of the Welsh version is her education: she is commonly known to have received a university-style education, which she would reject to dedicate herself to religion⁵⁷. In the Welsh text, she is portrayed as very intelligent, being able to persuade the wisest of men into following her in her religion, but no mention of an education is made.

The events surrounding the conflict and her martyrdom as the Welsh text tells them differ from more well-known versions as well, in the order they are told in but also in the details. Cartwright offers a complete study on these differences⁵⁸; I will briefly discuss a few of the points she makes to illustrate the peculiarities of the Welsh text, as they are relevant to the discussion of possible origins of the text.

One of the great differences between the Welsh text and the more popular versions is that after Maxen orders his men to kill Porffir, he fights back, picking up a ladder and killing four thousand of Maxen's men; in most other versions, he does not do this, though him fighting back does occur a few times: in a German life, he picks up a pole and kills four thousand men, and in an English version, he uses a sword and shield⁵⁹. Another difference is the order of these events: in the Welsh version, Porffir and the queen are killed before the idea of the wheels comes up. After her death, it is described that four streams of oil flow from Catrin's breasts through her grave: usually, the oil comes from her bones. This motif appears to be common among the Welsh; it is also described multiple times in poetry⁶⁰. Based on these differences, it appears that the Welsh tradition of St. Catrin is unique, but there exists an English life which resembles it, found in CUL, MS Ff. 2. 38 and Oxford, Bodl. Lib., MS Rawlinson Poetry 34. It is written in verse rather than prose, but features some similar oddities: Catrin's upbringing is omitted and her lineage is mentioned as briefly as it is in the Welsh version. This is also the version mentioned before in which Porffir picks up a sword and shield and fights Maxen's men. This version also claims that

55 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 72.

56 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 72.

57 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 72-3.

58 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 70-81.

59 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 76.

60 See Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 79-80 for information on this poetry and the relevance of oil coming from her breasts in Welsh tradition.

the oil flows from Catrin's breasts, rather than her bones. Though there are also differences between the texts, their similarities may give an indication of their origin. It is usually assumed that Welsh versions are translations of others, but since it is older, it is not possible that the Welsh version is based on the English. Noting the differences, especially the fact that one is in prose and the other in verse, it is also unlikely that the English is based on the Welsh. They may derive from a common source, but the origin of it is unknown: there is no evidence that it is a translation from Latin like other Welsh lives of saints are or are assumed to be. It does appear that this different version of Catrin's life was popular in both England and Wales⁶¹.

In this section, I have outlined the heroic biography pattern and how the life of St. Catrin, in the Welsh version and in more popular traditions, fits in. It is not unusual for a text to not discuss the entire biography. All of Catrin's lives focus on her martyrdom, but the Welsh version differs in how little other information it offers: usually, more attention is paid to her lineage and education, but this is completely omitted in the Welsh version. The Welsh tradition also has some other peculiarities compared to other versions, which it shares with a fifteenth-century English version. They may derive from a common source, but their exact origin is unknown.

61 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 82-3.

Text and translation

Catrin has just finished praying on the wheels that she would be tortured on and is saved by angels.

§1. Eissoes lessu vab Meir ny atadawd⁶² heb gof y vorwyn. Y englyon ef a anuones attei ac a dorassant y rodeu ac eu drylleu llymyon wy o'r truein ankredadun a ladassant deg mil a deugeint. Llawer oc a weles⁶³ y gwyrtheu hynny a gredassant y'r Arglwyd Duw. A thrwy Vaxen y llas y rei a gredawd ac eu heneittyeu a aethant y Paradwys.

§2. A Maxen vrenhin a littyaud am lad y wyr ac a vedylyawd pa delw y gallei ef lad y vorwyn. Ac yna y dywawd ef wrth y vorwyn Duw, amadrawd geu: "Medylya di, vorwyn dec, etwa, a chret di y'm dwyweu i, ac o achaws dy decket⁶⁴ ti a geffy dy eneit." Yna yd attebawd morwyn Duw idaw: "Ny thal dim dy gelwyd⁶⁵ di. Nyt oes ofyn dim arnaf i o'th boeneu di, canys o lewenyd tragywydawl yd wyf i diogel⁶⁶. Yr hwnn ny deruyd vyth."

§3. Y truan Vaxen a dywat yna wrth y wyr: "Arglwydi, beth a gyghorwch chwi ymi? A pha delw y dielir⁶⁷ y hynvydrwyd ar Gatrin am na chret hi y'm dwyweu i?" Yna y dywawd y gwyr drwc o un⁶⁸ lef erchi y dwyn⁶⁹ y maes⁷⁰ o'r tref a lad⁷¹ y phenn. Yna y ducpwyd y vorwyn o'r dref⁷² ac yspeilwyd. A llawer gwreic⁷³ oed yna yn wylaw ac yn kwynaw am Gatrin morwyn Duw.

§4. Un truan o'r dynyon emelldigedic a dynawd cledyf llym, ac a erchis idi ystynnu y mynwgyl⁷⁴. "A gwedy hynny ti a golly dy benn tec," heb ef. "Vy mrawd i y tec," heb hi, "arho ychydic un wedi a wna i y'm Harglwyd, Creawdyr Nef a Daear. Tat a Mab ac Yspryt Glan. Un Duw yn yscriuenedic y Brenhin Uchaf. Mi a adolygaf it trugared y'm eneit, ac y bop Cristawn a grettont ynot ti yn gadarn. Mi a adolygaf it yr dy enw uchel di, Arglwyd, y neb a greto y'm dioddef i ac a'e coffao; diffryt y rei hynny rac eu gelynyon a rodi trugared o'e heneittyeu, a'r neb a del at vyg korff i, ac a'e keisso trwy dy enw di, rodi iechyt udunt o'e

62 Llst 27: adawd

63 Pen 15: welssant

64 Pen 5: decceti

65 Llst 27: ymadrawd

66 Pen 5 and 15: dirgel; though two of the texts use *dirgel* 'secret', I have decided to use *diogel* 'certain' as found in Llst 27 in the edited text as it suits the context in translation better.

67 Pen 5: A pha delw y gallaf i diall

68 Pen 5: o gyt

69 Llst 27: dygwch hi

70 Pen 15: allan

71 Llst 27: lledwch

72 Pen 5: y'r maes, Llst 27: allan o'r dinas

73 Pen 5: o wraged

74 Llst 27: phenn

drycyeu⁷⁵. Y Brenhin Uchaf yn y drindawt dyro ymwaret y'r dynyon truein hynn yma yssyd y'm poen i. Yr dy garyat ti⁷⁶ madeu udunt eu ffolinep hwnn cany wdant beth y maent yn y wneuthur. A mineu a'e madeuaf udunt. Ac y'th law ditheu, Arglwyd, y gorchymynnaf i vy yspryt."

§5. Yna y doeth engyl att Gatrin, ac y dywat wrthi: "Gennyf i yd anuones lessu vab Meir: y ganhettaw yt oll yr hynn a ercheist idaw. Dyret heb ohir o'r boen honn y'r Llewenyd diogel tragywydawl."

§6. Yna y dywat Catrin wrth y gwr drwc truan: "Llad dy vym penn i yr awr honn, canys vy Arglwyd a anuones attaf i y erchi ym dyuot y'r Llewenyd ny deruyd byth." A'r gwr drwc yna a ladawd y phenn, a llaeth yn lle gwaet a redawd allan, a'r englyon a ducssant⁷⁷ eneit y vorwyn vendigeit y Nef, a'e chorff a gladyssant ym mynyd Sinai.

§7. A'r neb a del yno y geissaw iechyt ac a gretto y diodeifyeint hi wynt a'e kaffant. A phedeir ffrwt yssyd yn redec trwy y bed hi o'e bronneu o olew, a thrwy y rei hynny y kafas llawer o wyr a gwraged waret, ac nyt oes neb dyn a wypo eu rif, a hynny a wnaeth Duw yr di hi. A ninneu a adolygwn y Duw yn iachwyawdyr ni drugared yn heneidyeu ac a rodo ynn vywyt yn y byt hwnn yma, megys y gallom dyuot y diwed da a charu Duw a'e wassanaethu, megys y gallom dyuot y'r llewenyd ny dervyd vyth yr caryat seint y Katrin.

Peniarth 5⁷⁸

§7.2. A'r neb a del yno y geissaw iechyt ac a gretto o'e diodeifyeint hy wynt a gahant iechyt heb ohir. Ac o'e bed hi y maent pedeir ffrut yn dyfot o'e bronneu hy o oleu. Drwy y rei hynny y cavas llawer gwr a gwreic iechyt, ac y caffont rac llaw oc a'e cretto. Ac nyt oes neb a wyppo rif y saul a gavas iechyt yno, a hynny a wnaeth Duw edi ac ychwannec. Ac wrth hynny nynheu a adolygun ac archun y Duw yr y charyat hy, ac yr diodeifyeint a diodeffwys hy ar y chorff hi y'r glan yr caryat Duw, rodi yn trugared yn eneittyeu, a rodi yn bywyt yn y byt hwnn yma, megys y gallom dyuot y diwed da, a charu duw a'e wassannaethy, megys y gallom dyuot y'r llewenyd tragywydawl ny dervyd byth yr caryat seint y Katrin y.

75 Llst 27: heinyeu

76 Llst 27: drugared di

77 Llst 27: dugant

78 The ending of this text differs slightly in Peniarth 5, so I have added a separate paragraph for the final paragraph of both the Welsh text and the translation.

Notes

§1. *ny atadawd (adawd) heb gof y vorwyn*: lit. 'he did not leave/allow without remembering the maiden' or more figuratively meaning 'did not forget the maiden'.

deg mil a deugeint: According to Cartwright⁷⁹, this number should be interpreted as fifty thousand, though it can easily be mistaken for ten-thousand and forty, as it was by Rees. In other, non-Welsh versions of the life of St. Catrin, the number of men slain by the fragments of the wheels is forty thousand.

Llawer oc a weles: *oc* 'from' is followed by a relative clause. I have translated 'many of those who saw'.

§2. *decket*: equative form of *teg* 'fair, beautiful', used as a noun⁸⁰.

canys: *can* 'because' + *ys* 'it is' followed by a mixed order. However, already in the Middle Welsh period *canys* became to mean 'since, because', omitting the mixed order construction⁸¹. In this sentence it is used in the former manner.

Translation

§1. However, Jesus, son of Mary, had not forgotten the maiden. He sent his angels to her and they broke the wheels, and their sharp pieces killed fifty thousand among the wretched infidels. Many of those who saw these miracles believed in the Lord God. And those who believed were killed by Maxen and their souls went to Paradise.

§2. And the king Maxen became angry about the death of his men and he considered in which way he could kill the maiden. And he spoke to the maiden of God the speaking of a lie: "consider again, fair maiden, and believe in my gods, and because of your pleasantness you will get your life." Then said the maiden of God to him: "Do not deliver your lie. I am not afraid of your torments, because I am certain of eternal joy that will never end."

§3. The wretched Maxen then said to his men: "Lords, what do you advise me? In which way shall the foolish of Catrin, because of which she does not believe in my gods, be dealt with?" This said the evil men with one voice: they demanded to take her out of town and cut off her head. Then the maiden was taken out of town and displayed. And many women were there guarding and lamenting about Catrin, the maiden of God.

§4. One wretch of the accursed men drew a sharp sword and ordered her to display

79 Cartwright, '*Buchedd Catrin*', 77.

80 D. Simon Evans, *A grammar of Middle Welsh* (Dublin 1964) 38-43.

81 Evans, *A grammar of Middle Welsh*, 234-5.

her throat, "and after that you will lose your fair head," he said. "My brother the fair one," she said, "wait a little, and I will say one prayer to my Lord, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One Holy Scripture of the Supreme King. I request of you mercy on my soul, and on every Christian who believes in you fully. I pray to you in your high name, Lord, for any who shall believe in my suffering and who commemorate it; protect those against their enemies and give mercy to their souls, and those who decorate my body, and who attempt it in your name, give health to them from their illness. The Supreme King in his Trinity, give salvation to those wretched men here because of whom I am suffering. With your love, cleanse this foolishness from them because of which they do now know what they are doing. And I will cleanse it from them. And to your hand, Lord, I entrust my soul."

§5. Then an angel came to Catrin, and he said to her: "Jesus, son of Mary, sent this with me: He will grant you all of that which you requested of him. You will come to the certain eternal Heaven without delay after this suffering."

§6. This said Catrin to the wretched evil man: "Cut off my head now, because my Lord has sent for me to request my coming to Heaven eternally." And the bad man then cut off her head, and milk flowed out instead of blood, and the angels took the soul of the blessed maiden to Heaven, and they buried her body on Mount Sinai.

§7. And any who came there to seek healing and who would believe in her suffering, they would receive it. And four streams of oil were running through her grave from her breasts, and because of that many men and women received healing, and there was no-one who could know their number, and God did this for her. And we must pray to our saviour God to have mercy on our souls, and that he may give us existence in this world here, so that we may be able to come to a good end, and love God and serve Him, so that we may be able to come to Heaven unending for the sake of the love of Saint Catrin.

Peniarth 5

§7.2. And any who came there to seek healing, and who would believe in her suffering, they would receive healing immediately. And from here grave there were four streams of oil coming from her breasts. Because of that many men and women received healing, and they would receive it from the time they believed it. And there was not anyone who could know the number of those who received healing there, and God did this for her and more. And because of this we must pray and ask God to love her, for the suffering

which she has endured on her body for the purity of her love for God, to give us mercy on our souls and to give us existence in this world here, so that we may be able to come to a good end, and love God and serve Him, so that we may be able to come to eternal Heaven unending for the sake of the love of saint Catrin.

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