

Institution: Cardiff University
Unit of Assessment: UoA 28 Modern Languages
Title of case study: Transforming the Mabinogion
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The tales of the Mabinogion are one of the highlights of Welsh literature. Grounded in Celtic mythology, Arthurian romance and a view of the past as seen through the eyes of medieval Wales, they are replete in meanings, imaginative constructs, linguistic richness and insights into the relationship between the human condition and the supernatural realm. Davies' translation and research into the performative aspects of these tales has become the stimulus for a range of innovative acts of presentation, telling and reception in English language creative writing, heritage management and tourism, and contemporary storytelling.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>For over thirty years the School of Welsh has undertaken research into aspects of the Mabinogion and its cultural, literary and linguistic context. The keystone piece of research which underpins this impact study is Davies' (joined as Lecturer in 1979, SL 1995, Professor 1998) acclaimed translation of the Mabinogion into English.^{3.1} This translation foregrounds Davies' new insights on the interplay between orality and literacy, and in particular on written text as a performative event. As a performance-oriented translation, the work also contributes to the field of translation theory and its application. The comprehensive collection of explanatory notes, with its frequent cross-referencing, offers new interpretations, while the detailed indices of personal names and place-names is aimed at enhancing the reader's understanding of inter-textuality within the tales.</p> <p>The translation builds on Davies' previous award-winning research on the art of the medieval storyteller^{3.4} which applies and develops theories in the field of formulaic composition, memory and cognitive psychology to the Welsh tales of the Mabinogion. Current research, widely disseminated via research seminars and guest lectures, and examining late 19th and early 20th century translations/adaptations of the Mabinogion together with the function of illustrations in these versions, are making a significant contribution not only to the fields of translation and illustration studies but also to research in children's literature and in particular the cross-over of classics from adult to young readers. Davies' ongoing research in the area of translation studies was a central feature of an AHRC-sponsored research network on translation in non-state cultures.^{3.8}</p> <p>Davies' research, with its focus upon the interplay between orality, literacy and performance in medieval prose narrative texts (e.g. Davies, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2004),^{3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5} together with issues regarding tale transmission, has been supplemented and enriched by the detailed linguistic analysis undertaken by Professor Peter Wynn Thomas (1978-2007, Emeritus Professor 2010 to date)^{3.6} and the comparative textual analysis by Dr Diana Luft (Research Fellow 2004-2012, funded by the British Academy, independent Research Associate since 2012).^{3.9} The construction of an electronic data base of Welsh prose literature, 1350-1425, led by Thomas and funded by the AHRC and also the University of Wales Board of Celtic Studies, is an important feature of the intellectual infrastructure of this work.^{3.10} The manuscripts in this resource may be subject to various types of searches including individual words, word clusters and Boolean searching. This data base, of which different versions of the Mabinogion tales are an integral feature, has now been expanded by Luft to include 54 manuscripts and some 2.8 million words under the revised title 'Welsh Prose 1300-1425'.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Davies, S. <i>The Mabinogion</i> (2007) Oxford University Press, pp. xxxviii, 293 (ISBN: 9780192832429). A paperback edition was published in 2008 in Oxford's World's Classics series (ISBN: 9780199218783). Originally conceived as a paperback in the World's Classics series, OUP decided to publish the translation first in hardback, making it one of their season's highlights. Shortly after its publication it was top of the Critics' Choice of

books in the *Independent on Sunday*. The translation was widely reviewed outside academia including reviews in *The Guardian*, *The Times (Books)*, *The Independent on Sunday* and the *TLS*.

2. **Davies S.** 'Performing *Culhwch ac Olwen*' (2004) in *Arthurian Literature XXI*, ed. Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan (D.S. Brewer), 29-51. ISBN: 9781843840282
3. **Davies S.** 'Written Text as Performance: The Implications for Medieval Welsh Prose Narrative' (1998) in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. Huw Pryce (Cambridge University Press), 133-148. ISBN: 9780521025331
4. **Davies, S.** *Crefft y Cyfarwydd: Astudiaeth o Dechnegau Naratif yn y Mabinogion* (1995) Cardiff: University of Wales Press, pp. 261. ISBN: 9780708313190. Awarded Vernam Hull Prize, 1996. A section of the monograph has been translated into German as 'Der Aufbau der mündlichen Erzählung', in *150 Jahre "Mabinogion" – Deutsch-Walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, eds B Maier, S Zimmer and C Batke, (Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 2001). ISBN: 9783484429192
5. **Davies, S.** *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (1993) Llandysul: Gomer Press pp. 86. ISBN: 9781859020050
6. **Davies, S. & Thomas, P. W.** (eds.) *Canhwyll Marchogyon: Cyd-destunoli Peredur* (2000) Cardiff: University of Wales Press, pp. xii, 162. ISBN: 9780708316399

All of the above outputs are available in the HEI on request.

Research Funding

7. Grant of £34,830.54 awarded to *Writemedia* via the Welsh Government's Digital Tourism Business Framework Programme (March – July 2013) to produce a Mabinogion Digital Platform in collaboration with Sioned Davies. The total eligible costs of £65,718.00 will be matched (47% Claimant contribution) by the *Writemedia*.
8. AHRC Network Grant (2012), £16,256: 'Translation in Non-State Cultures: Perspectives from Wales'. In collaboration with Bangor University. Sioned Davies (Co-I).
9. British Academy (2007-2010), £192,031: 'Texts out of Time: Medieval Welsh Prose in the Early Modern Period'. Diana Luft (PI).
10. AHRB Resource Enhancement Grant (2004-07), £285,526: 'An Electronic Corpus of Medieval Welsh Prose' <<http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/>>. Peter Wynn Thomas (PI), D. Mark Smith, Diana Luft, Sioned Davies (Steering Committee member).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has had an impact on the cultural life of both individuals and groups. It has also had commercial impact increasing economic prosperity in the publishing, creative and tourism industries.

Domain 1: English language creative writing

Davies' work, and in particular her approach to the translation of the Mabinogion,^{3.1} has made this medieval Welsh language classic newly accessible, especially as a source of literary inspiration in English. Seren Books has commissioned award-winning authors to reinvent the original stories in a series entitled *New Stories from the Mabinogion*; at the end of each novel the reader is directed to Davies' translation for a text of the original story. According to editor Penny Thomas, 'the series is certainly indebted to Davies' work in that it has provided author, and myself, with a reliable and inspiring translation of the original tales that has been invaluable in writing our own retellings.' Direct impact of Davies' translation is acknowledged, for example, in the novels of Owen Sheers

Impact case study (REF3b)

(*White Ravens*, 2009), Niall Griffiths (*The Dreams of Max and Ronnie*, 2010), Gwyneth Lewis (*The Meat Tree*, 2010),^{5.1} and Cynan Jones, *Bird, Blood, Snow* (2012). Lewis claims that 'the translation has changed what's possible for writers in both Welsh and English in Wales and beyond', arguing that 'it was impossible for contemporary writers and readers to appreciate the full impact of these medieval tales [before Davies' translation] because the available translations were so out of date.' The translation has also been the source for children's books such as Margaret Isaac's *Arthur and the Twrch Trwyth* (Apeps Press, 2012; illustrations by Margaret Jones) for which Davies wrote the foreword,^{5.2} and international storyteller Daniel Morden's *Tree of Leaf and Flame* (Pont Books, 2012; illustrations by Brett Breckon) which won the Tir na n-Og Award for 2013, an award presented annually by the Welsh Books Council to the author of the best book for children and young people. Morden claims that Davies' translation 'was a constant reference point throughout the research and writing process. My intention was to create a version of these tales that could be read out aloud, and had the terse clarity of a performance text. Davies' translation, with its emphasis on the performance aspects of the tales, helped me to do so.'

Domain 2: Heritage management and tourism

Davies' translation has had an impact upon the tourist industry and the presentation of Wales' Celtic heritage. As noted above, her research informed Margaret Isaac's *Arthur and the Twrch Trwyth* (2012), a re-telling of the tale of 'How Culhwch won Olwen' based on Davies' translation (2007, pp.179-213), together with an associated website <http://www.arthurandthetwrchtrwyth.org.uk/>. In turn, Isaac has collaborated with the Black Mountain Centre, the Fforest Fawr Geopark, the Brecon Beacons National Park and Cwmaman Council to develop and promote the Twrch Trwyth Trail in greater Carmarthenshire (the Twrch Trwyth is the fantastical wild boar hunted across Wales by King Arthur), a project supported by Literature Wales and the Welsh Government. The Cwmaman portion of the trail was officially opened in October 2012 in the presence of some 150 people; Davies was an invited speaker at the event which included a musical re-enactment of the story by the children of Ysgol y Bedol, Garnant (see <http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/English/news/Pages/HistoricAmmanfordRiversideWalklaunched.aspx>).^{5.2} The Twrch Trwyth Trail and similar initiatives will be boosted by the development of Davies' mobile app (see below).

Since 2012, Davies has been working closely with the Pembrokeshire-based SME *Writemedia Partnership* (see <http://www.writemedia.co.uk/>), a multi-media agency that delivers projects to a wide range of clients such as Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Welsh Rugby Union and the Mary Rose Trust.^{5.3} In March 2013, *Writemedia*, in collaboration with Davies, was awarded a grant via the Welsh Government's Digital Tourism Business Framework Programme^{3.7} to produce a sustainable Mabinogion Digital Platform which will support tourism objectives in terms of growth, employment and the footfall of visitors into convergence funded areas of Wales. The total eligible costs of £65,718.00 is matched (47% Claimant contribution) by *Writemedia*. This is enabling the creation of a Mabinogion web portal and mobile app, providing users with extracts from the texts (both in the original and in Davies' translation) together with geo-locational data to guide them to designated Mabinogion sites and access resources such as videos, stories and anecdotes associated with these locations. Specific trails and walks are also being created in partnership with local tourist authorities, e.g. the Narberth Trail, the Rhonabwy Trail, and the Trail of the Severed Head. GPS marketing solutions are being provided to assist visitors with their travel information, stopovers, food and beverage. The aim is to introduce the Mabinogion tales to a new audience whilst engaging with tourism in Wales so as to enhance the visitor experience.

Domain 3: Contemporary storytelling

Davies' research on performativity and storytelling has contributed to the renewal of the practice of telling the Mabinogion by contemporary practitioners of the art of storytelling. In July 2010, Davies held a session for storytellers on performing the Mabinogion at the Beyond the Border International Storytelling Festival (St Donat's, Vale of Glamorgan) and in October 2011 led a weekend workshop at a Storytelling Retreat in Aberporth, organised by international storytellers Hugh Lupton and Eric Maddern (attendance: 20). A further workshop, entitled *Performing the Mabinogion: A Workshop for Storytellers*, was held at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, in July 2013, attended by 13 participants.

Impact case study (REF3b)

Ninety percent of those who completed a questionnaire (n=10) indicated that they would use the information and insights gleaned in the workshop in the future. All participants stated that they would welcome further workshops on the topic and this has been actioned. These workshops confirmed and developed the use of Davies' translation by a community of professional storytellers. So, for example, Michael Harvey^{5.4} and Cath Little attended the July 2013 workshop and will be collaborating with Davies on planned future projects. According to Little, 'I have used the translation in my piece inspired by *The Lady of the Well*. The show has been well received in venues across England and Wales and was recently performed at the opening night of the Settle Storytelling Festival... the translation has really helped me bring the stories to a wider audience.' In addition, Harvey claims that two of the strongest influences on his ability to seriously begin performing the Mabinogion were Davies' *Crefft y Cyfarwydd* together with her translation of the tales; he states, 'I have been lucky enough to have performed stories from the Mabinogion throughout Wales as well as the rest of the UK, Europe and America and the fact that these strange yet recognisable landscapes have become real for so many audiences is in no small part due to Professor Davies' rigorous and accessible scholarship.'

Domain 4: Commercial sales

The scholarly and popular reach of Davies' OUP translation is reflected in the global sales of the book (32,325 total sales since publication) of which 22,767 were in the period 1st January 2008 to 31st July 2013, comprising 4,909 hardback, 16,596 paperback and 1,262 in electronic format.^{5.5}

This reflects a major commercial success for a translation originally intended for primarily academic use. Davies' publication was translated into Hungarian in 2008 (General Press Kiadó), ISBN 9789636430559 (current sales 1,186).

The translation has also benefitted the digital publishing community since its inclusion in 2012 as a featured book on the commercial website Book Drum,^{5.6} a platform which offers an original, multimedia interpretation of international bestsellers. According to the Editorial Director, the total page views for the Book Drum profile of Davies' translation is 10,200.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)**Domain 1: English language creative writing**

1. Factual statement: Internationally acclaimed poet and author of *The Meat Tree* (2010) confirms the impact of Davies' translation in terms of the commissioning of the Seren Books series *New Stories from the Mabinogion* and the influence on her own creative writing.

Domain 2: Heritage management and tourism

2. Factual statement: Author of *Arthur and the Twrch Trwyth* (2012) confirms the impact of Davies' translation and research on her English language volume for children and on the creation of the Twrch Trwyth Trail as a tourist attraction.
3. Factual statement: Director of *Writemedia* confirms the impact of Davies' research on the company which specialises in digital tourism, whose product range includes the ongoing development of a Mabinogion app, providing opportunities for tourism providers and businesses.

Domain 3: Contemporary storytelling

4. Factual statement. Freelance professional storyteller corroborates that Davies' research and translation have influenced his performances of the *Mabinogion* tales and their international reach.

Domain 4: Commercial sales

5. Factual statement: Editor Oxford World's Classics series, Oxford University Press, confirms the commercial sales statistics of Davies' translation.
6. www.bookdrum.com/books/the-mabinogion/9780199218783/index.html confirms Davies is a featured author on Book Drum.