



france	moirer	Albanie	or	Albanie	hirlond	roy
dammar	germen	loringale	laucme	armori	angeon	
fland	richland	Almoim	Griffom	Galie	Gres	
ragon	Epaine	mede	Libue	Arge	Capre	
Gurie	habiloine	unry	Dechue	Gones	Dome	

Preiddeu Annwn

Prof. Jane Cartwright

Preiddeu Annwn = the Spoils of Annwn/Annwfn

- Llyfr Taliesin (The Book of Taliesin) – Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 2 first quarter of C14

MS probably given the title by Robert Vaughan of Hergest (C17th owner)

Copy made by a single scribe of an earlier MS – contains poetry drawn from a variety of sources; the title of the poem is a later addition probably by John Lewis d. 1616 who owned the MS in late C16th

Haycock, 'I believe that it is only by setting Preiddeu Annwn alongside the other declamations which purport to emanate from the omniscient Taliesin persona that we may come to a fuller understanding of the poem's form and diction, its content and purpose.' (Haycock 'PA and the Figure of Taliesin', p. 2)

Speaker = Taliesin although he is not specifically named/ Taliesin persona used in poem; fictional figure, warrior-poet with supernatural abilities

purpose of poem = a vehicle for Taliesin to display his knowledge and familiarity with a range of story episodes and characters; contains many allusions to material in other written sources. Arthur named 5 times. By associating himself with Arthur T emphasises his own status

Arthur goes on a dangerous raid to the Otherworld in his ship Prydwen

Difficult to date the poem – language deliberately archaic? Many Latin loanwords give it gravitas

‘Most impressively and entertainingly, it is a chance for him to provide a glittering kaleidoscopic view of the Otherworld.’ (Haycock, p. 434)

- *Caer Siddi /Annwn*; *síd* = fairy mound in Irish.
- Many names given for the Otherworld – 7 forts cf. the islands visited in the Irish *Immrama* (sea voyage texts, e.g. *Immram Brain*, Brendan and Máel Dúin); 7 = an important number (poem composed in 8 sections but 7 if final two are joined) or a motif associated with the ascent through the 7 heavens?
- Three full loads venture on the journey but only 7 return (including Taliesin). IN PKM2 T = one of 7 survivors who return from Ireland
- Sims-Williams has suggested that the poem was used as courtly entertainment to ‘strike a playful blow for the secular poets or *cyfarwyddiaid* against the vain pretensions of the Welsh clerical orders’

Golychaf Wledic, Pendeuic gwlat ri,
I praise the Lord, the Ruler of the kindly realm,
ry¹ ledas y pennaeth dros traeth Mundi.
who has extended his sway over the extent of the world

Bu kyweir karchar Gweir yg Kaer Sidi,
Maintained was Gwair's prison in Caer Siddi
trwy ebostol Pwyll a Phryderi.
throughout Pwyll and Pryderi's story.

Neb kyn noc ef nyt aeth idi —
No-one went there before he did —
y'r gadwyn tromlas kywirwas ² ketwi.
into the heavy grey chain guarding the loyal lad.

A rac preideu Annwfyn tost yt geni,
And before the spoils/herds of Annwfn he was singing sadly,
ac yt Urawt, parahawt yn bardwedi.
and until Doom shall our poetic prayer continue.

Tri lloneit Prytwen yd aetham-ni idi:
Three full loads of Prydwen we went into it:
nam[yn] seith ny dyrreith o Gaer Sidi.
save seven, none came back from Caer Siddi.

Praise to God —

commonplace at start of poem

Note — first person and first person plural I/We

Audience may already have

been familiar with these tales — Annwn/Annwfn — Four Branches

to us they are fragmentary

Ref to Gwair singing sadly cf. a similar tale in

CO involves freeing Mabon

who has been a prisoner since

the beginning of time.

Unusual to mix PKM (Four Branches) and Arthurian Tales

Prydwen not mentioned in CO but

Rhongymyniad — spear, Carnwennan —

dagger, Caledfwlch — sword, Gwenhwyfar — wife.

Neut wyf glot geinmyn: cerd ochlywit³

I'm splendid of fame — song was heard

yg kaer pedryuan pedrychwelyt.⁴

in the four quarters of the fort, revolving [to face] the four directions.

Yg kynneir, o'r peir pan leferit:

My first utterance was spoken concerning the cauldron

o anadyl naw morwyn gochyneuit.

kindled by the breath of nine maidens.

Neu peir Pen Annwfyn, pwy y vynut,

The cauldron of the Head of Annwn, what is its disposition

gwrym am y oror a mererit?

[with its] a dark trim, and pearls?

The cauldron which gave Taliesin his poetic gift and magical talents – will not boil food for a coward. 1st of many questions posed.

Cf Trioedd Ynys Prydain (TYP) – the 13 Treasures of the Island of Britain: one = the cauldron of Dyrnwch

Previously Gwair = TYP one of 3 Exalted Prisoners of the Island of Britain;

Pwyll is Head of Annwn in PKM1 but

Nerys Jones suggests that this does not necessarily refer to Pwyll here;

The 9 maidens whose breath kindles the cauldron of the 9 sisters of Avalon described by Telgesinus in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Life of Merlin*

Ny beirw bwyd llwfyr, ny ry tyghit;

It does not boil a coward's food, it has not been destined to do so;

cledyf lluch Lleawc idaw ry dyrchit,

Lleog's flashing sword was thrust into it,

ac yn llaw Leminawc yd edewit.

and it was left behind in Lleminog's hand.

A rac drws porth Vffern, llugyrn lloscit.

And in front of the door of Hell's gate lamps were burned

a phan aetham-ni gan Arthur, trafferth lethrit,⁵

and when we went with Arthur, famed in tribulation,

namyn seith ny dyrreith o Gaer Vedwit.

save seven, none returned from the Mead-Feast Fort.

Cf. Llenlleog, the Irishman, in CO who slew Diwrnach the Irishman in order to take his cauldron on an expedition to Ireland with Arthur; in CO A's sword Caledfwlch used to kill him.

Nerys Ann Jones – Lleminiog may be identified with him or Lleminiog could be a nick name for Arthur

'lleawc' could also be interpreted as an adjective and the line may have been misinterpreted and given rise to the character 'Llenlleog'

Caer Feddwid – another name for the Otherworld

'med' = mead

'gweit' = feast, liquid, hone'

save seven
Neut wyf glot geinmyn: kyrd glywanor⁶
I'm splendid of fame: songs are heard
yg kaer pedryfan, ynys pybyrdor.
in the four quarters of the fort, stout defence of the island.
Echwyd a muchyd kymyscetor;
Fresh water and jet are mixed together;
gwin gloyw eu gwirawt rac eu gosgor⁷
sparkling wine is their drink, set in front of their battalion.
Tri lloneit Prytwen yd aetham-ni ar vor:
Three full loads of Prydwen we went by sea:
namyn seith ny dyrreith o Gaer Rigor.
save seven, none came back from the Petrification Fort.

Name Caer Feddwid may have prompted this description of feasting in the Otherworld

According to Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (etymological encyclopaedia) c. 600-625 – jet set alight by water

Caer Rigor – another name for the Otherworld. Haycock suggests 'rigor' = Latin 'stiffness, hardness, rigidity' in physical or metaphorical sense

save seven, none
Ny obrynaf-i lawyr llen Llywyadur,
I don't rate the pathetic men involved with religious writings,
tra Chaer Wydyr ny welsynt wrhyt Arthur:
those who hadn't seen Arthur's feat beyond the Glass Fort:
tri vgeint canhwr a seui ar y mur;
six thousand men were standing on its wall;
oed anhawd ymadrawd ae gwylyadur.
it was hard to communicate with their watchman.
Tri lloneit Prytwen yd aeth gan Arthur:
Three full loads of Prydwen went with Arthur:
namyn seith ny dyrreith o Gaer Golud.
save seven, none came back from the Fort of Impediment.

negative depiction of clerics
and monks – typical of Taliesin
He is wiser and more experienced,
they derive their knowledge from
books

cf. *Historia Brittonum* ch13–
glass tower in the middle of
the sea with mute
inhabitants

(probably derives from a
legend about the origins of
the people of Ireland)

Haycock 'golud' = 'impediment' (not 'colud' =
'bowels, intestines' (figuratively – hidden
interior))

Ny obrynaf-i lawyr llaes eu kylchwy

I don't deserve to be stuck with pathetic men with their trailing shields,

ny wdant-wy py dyd peridyd pwy,

who don't know who's created on what day,

py awr ymeindyd y ganet Dwy,⁸

when at mid-day was God born,

pwy gwnaeth ar nyt aeth Doleu Defwy;

[nor] who made the one who didn't go to the Meadows of Defwy;

ny wdant-wy yr Ych Brych, bras y penrwy,

those who know nothing of the Brindled Ox, with his stout collar,

seith vgein kygwng yn y aerwy.

[and] seven score links in its chain.

A phan aetham-ni gan Arthur, auyrdwl gofwy,

And when we went with Arthur, sad journey,

namyn seith ny dyrreith o Gaer Vandwy.

save seven none returned from Mand(d)wy Fort.

llaes eu kylchwy – could refer to round shields or llaes = slack, loose girdle/garment of a monk

Series of questions to which T knows the answers;

The poem 'Kad Godeu' and C12 Anglo-Norman writer Wace suggest that T had prophesied the birth of Christ.

Dol usually accompanied by a river name – this one not known, could mean 'black river' i.e. Styx

Caer Fandwy also ref. in Black Book of Carmarthen, dialogue between Gwyddno Garanhir and Gwyn ap Nudd as place in Otherworld.

save seven none returned from Mand(d)wy Fort.

Ny obrynaf-y lawyr llaes eu gohen,

I don't deserve to be stuck with pathetic men, with no go in them,

ny wdant py dyd peridyd Pen,

[those] who don't know on what day the Lord is created,

py awr ymeindyd y ganet Perchen.

[nor] when, at noon, the Ruler was born,

py vil a gatwant, aryant y pen.

[nor] what animal is it they guard, with his silver head.

Pan aetham-ni gan Arthur, afyrdwl gynhen,

When we went with Arthur, sad conflict,

namyn seith ny dyrreith o Gaer Ochren.

save seven none came back from the Angular Fort.

monks scorned – do not know about scientific scholarship and Biblical chronology

Pen = chieftain, ruler

Nerys Ann Jones suggests it could be a corruption of 'nen' = 'roof' used figuratively for Lord

'Mil' could mean animal here – the 'ych brych' referred to earlier or haycock suggests it is a riddling question referring to a silver-headed crozier.

Caer Ochren – Angular Fort ochr = side a fort with sides

The C15th Hywel Swrdwal refers to Caer Ochren

C12th poet Cynddelw refers to a fearful figure called Ochren – a giant?

Myneich dychnut val cunin cor

Monks congregate like a pack of dogs

o gyfranc udyd ae gwidanhor

because of the clash between masters who know

ae vn hynt gwynt, ae vn dwfyr mor,

whether the wind [follows] a single path, whether the sea is all one water,

ae vn vfel tan, twrwf diachor.

whether fire — an unstoppable force — is all one spark.

Myneich = monks

dychnut + cunin = obscure

cnud = pack cun = whelp, dog

- Master of learning = native poets?
- Clash (Haycock) Contest (Jones)
- Contest between the poets or between the poets and the monks?

Myneych dychnut val bleidawr
Monks congregate like wolves
o gyfranc udyd ae gwidyanhawr.
because of the clash between masters who know.
Ny wdant pan yscar deweint a gwawr,
They [the monks] don't know how the darkness and light divide,
neu wynt, pwy y hynt, pwy y rynnawd,
[nor] the wind's course, its onrush,
py va a diua, py tir a plawd;
what place it devastates, what land it strikes,
bet sant yn diuant, a bet allawr.
how many saints are in the void, and how many altars.
Golychaf-y Wledic, Pendefic mawr:
I praise the Lord, the great Ruler:
na bwyf trist: Crist a'm gwadawl.
may I not endure sadness: Christ will reward me.

catalogue of questions
reaches climax;

Concludes with praise to
God and assurance that T
will be rewarded by Christ

Similar refrain found in
C9th/C10th poem 'Echrys
Ynys' in Book of Taliesin

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