

Hysbysiad Hawlfraint

Dyma atgoffa staff a myfyrwyr y Brifysgol hwn fod hawlfraint yn gymwys ar y darn hwn ac ar y gwaith y mae'n dod ohono. Gwnaed y Copi Digidol hwn yn unol â thelerau Trwydded yr Asiantaeth Trwyddedu Hawlfraint, sy'n golygu eich bod yn cael:

- Gweld a lawr lwytho copi
- Argraffu copi

Mae'r Copi Digidol hwn ac unrhyw gopi digidol neu argraffedig a roddir ichi neu a wnaed gennych yn ôl telerau'r Drwydded hon i'w ddefnyddio yng nghyd-destun y modiwl hwn neu'r cwrs astudio hwn. Cewch gadw'r copïau hyn ar ddiwedd y cwrs, ond dim ond at eich defnydd eich hun.

Rhaid i bob copi (gan gynnwys copïau electronig) gynnwys yr Hysbysiad Hawlfraint hwn a rhaid iddynt gael eu dinistrio neu eu dileu os bydd y Brifysgol yn gofyn ichi wneud hynny.

Ac eithrio'r hyn sy'n dderbyniol yn ôl darpariaethau cyfraith hawlfraint, ni cheir copïo, cadw na dosbarthu (gan gynnwys dosbarthu drwy e-bost) heb ganiatâd y sawl sy'n dal yr hawlfraint.

Mae gan yr awdur (ymadrodd sy'n cynnwys arlunydd a'r sawl sy'n creu gweithiau gweledol eraill) hawliau moesol ar y gwaith ac ni chaiff staff na myfyrwyr achosi na chaniatáu i'r gwaith gael ei anffurfio, ei lurgunio na'i addasu fel arall, na'i drin mewn unrhyw fodd difrifol arall, a fyddai'n gwneud cam ag anrhydedd neu enw da'r awdur.

Teitl y darn: **Clas Beuno and the Four Branches of the Mabinogi**

Enw'r Awdur: **Sims-Williams, P.**

Teitl/Awdur/Argraffiad y llyfr (os yw'n berthnasol): **150 Jahre "Mabinogion" :**

deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen. Batke, C.; Maier, B.; Zimmer, S.

Enw Crëwr Gwaith Gweledol neu

gydnabyddiaeth arall (os yw'n berthnasol):

Manylion cyfnodolyn -

teitl/Cyfrol/Blwyddyn (os yw'n berthnasol):

Cyhoeddwr: **Walter De Gruyter and Company**

Tudalennau a sganiwyd: **111 - 127**

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Enw'r sawl a awdurdododd

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Dyddiad y rhoddwyd awdurdod: 16.03.17.

Moodle/Powerpoint

Clas Beuno and the Four Branches of the Mabinogi

This lecture is a summary of work in progress on the topography of three medieval Welsh texts which I believed to be linked in some way with Clynog Fawr in Arfon (on the north-west Welsh coast): *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (The Four Branches of the Mabinogi), *Englynion y Beddau* (The Stanzas of the Graves), and *Buchedd Beuno* (The Life of St Beuno).

The topographical approach to these texts is not one that readily appeals to modern audiences. Having attempted to expound this topic in lectures since 1974, I am sure of that! It is comforting, however, to recall that attitudes were different in the Middle Ages. Robin Flower's *The Irish Tradition* begins with an Old Irish story. Some novice clerics challenge the chief poet of Ireland to recount the story behind six standing stones. Flower explains that a poet was obliged to recall such knowledge, "and if faced by a demand to relate the associations of some deserted rath or lonely pillar-stone he failed to render an exact and credible account, he was shamed to the very roots of his being". The chief poet ventures a bad guess, and the clerics put him right: the stones were raised by certain Ulster warriors over the graves of their enemies. So too in the Welsh *Englynion y Beddau* (l.42-43), a patron, Elffin, takes his would-be bard, Taliesin, to the top of a sea-battered tumulus, the grave of one Rhufawn, to test his 'bardic knowledge' (*barddrin*); evidently he expects his bard to identify the hero within the tumulus and tell his story.

Place-lore is in fact central to Celtic heroic literature, including the Four Branches of the Mabinogi. The story of Branwen in the Second Branch, for example, ends with the Britons returning from Ireland to Anglesey:

'And they came to land at Aber Alaw in Talebolion .. And [Branwen] heaved a great sigh, and with that broke her heart. And a four-sided grave was made for her, and she was buried there on the bank of the Alaw.'

Thus the storyteller explains the Bronze Age burial mound by the river Alaw known traditionally as "Bedd Bronwen" (Jones 1966). Again, the Fourth Branch ends with a story explaining the existence of a pierced stone called Llech Ronw, in the Cynfal valley in Ardudwy, near Ffestiniog, Merionethshire. (Frank Ward in 1935 and Geraint V. Jones in 1992 have both claimed to have discovered the stone; unfortunately, their

descriptions of it are incompatible, and one or other – and possibly both – must be mistaken.)

Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi

The topographical analysis of the Four Branches was pioneered by Sir Edward Anwyl in the *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* in 1897–1901. Describing them as essentially “precis from various sagas very skilfully pieced together”, he argued that the stories were “very closely connected with certain districts of Wales”, especially Dyfed (the south-west) and Gwynedd (the north-west):

In point of structure the Four Branches of the Mabinogi are composed of a number of local legends collected together, probably by some travelling bard or bards, from various places in Dyfed, Gwynedd and Mon [*Môn*, Anglesey] (1897:278 and 292).

Sir Ifor Williams, too, thought that the hegemony of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn over most of Wales in 1055–63 would have given bards and storytellers from Morgannwg and Dyfed the opportunity of travelling through Gwynedd in peace and there hearing the story of Lleu and seeing Caer Aranrhod, the graves of Pryderi and Branwen, and other sites. He concluded that “a man of Dyfed united the old tales of Gwent, Dyfed, and Gwynedd around 1060, when the three countries were united” (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, pp. xl–xli).

More recent scholars have preferred to think in terms of clerical authorship for the extant text, and have contemplated a rather later, perhaps twelfth-century, date. This requires us to reconsider how the stories were joined together; for example, the stories of Gwynedd could have been brought south to Dyfed in manuscript form, rather than by bards or other travellers. Alternatively, could it be, as Ellis and Lloyd suggested in their translation of the Fourth Branch, that “the story assumed its final form in North Wales, and was, in all probability, redacted by a North-Welsh monk” (I, 99)? We need not go into these problems now, however, for our concern is not so much with the final text of the Four Branches as the provenance of the stories that lie behind it. Here Anwyl’s observation that the Four Branches include elements of “precis from various sagas [which] were undoubtedly at one time far more extensive” (1897:278) still stands, being confirmed by the existence of early references and allusions, in the Book of Taliesin, the *Triads*, *Englynion y Beddau*, and elsewhere to stories about characters such as Caswallon, Lleu, and Dylan which are omitted, or only summarized, in the Four Branches. Clearly its author selected only what he needed for his own literary purposes.

The wider geo-political framework of the Four Branches is that of the ancient, pre-Roman kingdom of the Island of Britain, based in London. Within this imaginary island-wide kingdom, the narrative focusses most frequently on the lordships of Dyfed and Gwynedd, and, within these lordships, on particular regions and even minor places. It seems reasonable to follow Anwyl in supposing that we have to do with

local stories here. Of course, we cannot atomise the text very far along geographical lines without rendering its narrative incoherent. The story of Lleu, for example, disintegrates if we attempt to divide it between episodes in Arfon and episodes in Arduwy; it is more reasonable to suppose that the storytellers of Gwynedd could cope with a story embracing both areas. A further reason for caution in breaking down the tales geographically is the fact that traditional narratives frequently involve a shift in location, as the hero moves from place A (“home”) to place B (“abroad”) and, often, back to A again. Evidently it would be absurd to treat such a narrative as a fusion of a story localized at A and one localized at B.

Despite these problems, it still seems valid to seek the place of origin of the narratives used by the author of the Four Branches (wherever he was based) by an examination of their topography. This examination will suggest that *some* of the narrative materials came from the region of Arfon in Gwynedd, and probably from the *clas* church of Clynnog Fawr. The general assumptions I am making are already set out in a study of the narrative *englynion* connected with the name of Llywarch Hen, in which I argued for provenance in Brycheiniog, probably at the royal court and monastery at Llan-gors (1993).

The relevant material is mostly contained in the Second and especially the Fourth Branch. By contrast, the First Branch is centred on Dyfed – its “home” location – with Annwn and Gwent as subsidiary “away” locations. A good deal of the action of the Second Branch is set in the “away” location of Ireland, but the main “home” focus is on various prominent locations in north-west Wales such as Harlech in Arduwy, Aberffraw, Talybolion, and Aber Menai in Anglesey, and Caer Saint (*Segontium*) in Arfon, as well as the minor site of Branwen’s grave by the Alaw in Talybolion. The main peculiarity, which involves an odd shift of scene to north-east Wales, is an onomastic tale set in Saith Marchawg (now Bryn Saith Marchog) in Edeirnion, where seven men are left to guard Britain. It is interesting to note that two miles south of Bryn Saith Marchog there is a place named Gwyddelwern. The correct etymology for this is probably *gwyddel* ‘thicket’ + *gwern* ‘swamp’ (Padel 1985:122–23; Charles 1992: I, 117 and 147; II, 780–81; Richards 1998:246), but we know from *Buchedd Beuno*, §10, that the first element was taken to be *Gwyddel* ‘Irishman’. Proinsias Mac Cana made the attractive suggestion that *Gwern*, the name of Branwen’s half-Irish son, was extracted from this place-name *Gwyddelwern* (1958:165, n. 1). If so, we should perhaps imagine that an earlier version of the Branwen story explained not only the name *Saith Marchawg* but also *Gwyddelwern*: the latter would be held to take its name from an Irishman called Gwern. What was he doing in Wales? The story might explain that he was Branwen’s son by an Irish king, Matholwch or Mallolwch. This version may have been discarded in favour of the hagiographical interpretation of *Gwyddelwern* as being named after an (unnamed) Irishman, slain by his wife and raised from the dead by St Beuno. This hagiographical story in *Buchedd Beuno* (see below) is radically different from the story of Branwen, but shares with it the motif of kin-slaying and resurrection. Moreover, some scholars identify Brân fab Llŷr with the Brân who according to *Gwarchan Tudfwlch* fought ‘in Cynwyd’, a name found just

south of Gwyddelwern (Jones 1973; Rowland 1990:239). Further evidence for a version of Branwen's story set in north-east Wales may be provided by the place-name *Caerfallwch* (near Northop) in Flintshire, which if not derived from the name of *Mallotwch* (cf. Mac Cana 1958:30 and Richards 1974) may have given rise to the eponym *Mallotwch* by a sort of back-formation. A possible association between Brân and *brân* place-names in Denbighshire such as Dinas Brân, while impossible to prove, has often been advocated (cf. Mac Cana 1958: 134–39; Jones 1973; Rees 1977).

The “national” backdrop of the Island of Britain is thus rather perfunctory in the Second Branch. The main emphasis is on Gwynedd, with a subsidiary and partly submerged connection with the north-east. Only near the end of the Branch does Dyfed enter the narrative, with the feasting on Gwales, and this is regarded as an added variant version of the earlier feasting at Harlech rather than an integral part of the Gwynedd-based story (Jones 1974).

The Third Branch combines characters from the First and Second Branches, but the Welsh emphasis is wholly on Dyfed (with England as the “away” location). By contrast, a dual focus is announced at the beginning of the Fourth Branch:

‘Math son of Mathonwy was lord over Gwynedd, and Pryderi son of Pwyll was lord over one-and-twenty cantref in the South.’

In fact, however, the emphasis throughout, except in Pryderi's death tale (where Dyfed may function as the “away” location), is entirely upon Gwynedd. The level of topographical detail is too great to be examined exhaustively here (see especially Ifor Williams's notes and Jones 1988). In brief, however, the Branch can be divided into various episodes:

Episode (a) introduces Math, with his “fixed abode” at *Caer Dathyl* in Arfon (possibly the Iron Age hillfort Tre'r Ceiri), Goewin, the virgin daughter of Pebin of Dôl Bebi(n) in Arfon, and the expedition by Gilfaethwy and Gwydion, the sons of Dôn, to steal Pryderi's magic pigs from Dyfed. Their expedition brings in a scatter of place-names containing porcine elements (*moch*, *creu*), but it is noteworthy that the storyteller knows more ‘pig’ names in the north than in the south. Gwydion and Gilfaethwy then join Math at *Caer Dathyl*, and his army takes up position in Pennardd in Arfon, usually identified with the farm-name Pennarth (formerly Pennardd) near Clynnog. Places mentioned in the ensuing campaign are Maenawr Bennardd (the Pennardd just mentioned) and Maenawr Coed Alun (“Coed Helen” on Ordnance Survey maps), Nant Call, Dôl Benmaen, Y Traeth Mawr (the more northerly of the two great beaches from which Penrhyndeudraeth is named), and Y Felenrhyd. Finally, Gwydion slays Pryderi: ‘and at Maentwrog (MSS *Maen Tyuyawc*), above Y Felenrhyd, was he buried and his grave is there’. Thus the entire campaign takes place in Gwynedd, from Pennardd near St Beuno's church at Clynnog down south to Maentwrog. It will prove relevant to note that St Twrog, the eponym of Maentwrog, was regarded as Beuno's disciple and as the scribe of the lost ‘Book of St Beuno’ at Clynnog (see below).

Episode (b) introduces Aranrhod daughter of Dôn and her two sons: Dylan, who will die from a blow by his uncle Gofannon (the eponym of a *lacus de Lyngouannon* in Arfon Uwch Gwyrfa, perhaps at Nantlle: Ellis 1965); and Lleu. Lleu is reared by Gwydion, who takes him to get a name from Aranrhod of *Caer Ar(i)anrhod*; this is now a tiny island off the coast of Arfon, although Lleu and Gwydion seem to go there overland from the court. Aranrhod refuses to give a name and they return south to *Caer Dathyl*. Next day they walk northwards along the shore towards Aber Menai, and Gwydion makes a magic ship in which they sail to *Caer Aranrhod* and trick Aranrhod into giving him a name, *Lleu Llaw Gyffes*. She now swears that he will never bear arms. Then Lleu is brought up in Dinas Dinlleu (‘The fort of Lleu's Fortress’, now Dinas Dinlle), a hillfort on the coast opposite *Caer Aranrhod*. One morning they go south along the shore towards “Bryn Arien”, and at the top of “Cefn Clun T(y)no” (cf. *Coed-tyno* on the high ground a little east-north-east of Clynnog) they turn northwards again and go on horseback to *Caer Aranrhod*, pretending to be bards coming up from Morgannwg in the south. This episode is very precisely localized along the coast near Clynnog. Since Dinas Dinlle and the point on the shore nearest *Caer Aranrhod* are little more than a mile apart it is possible, as Ifor Williams suggests, that the author makes Gwydion and Lleu take a deliberately circuitous route which would confirm to a lookout in *Caer Aranrhod* that they were bards from Morgannwg. On the other hand, as the author makes them approach on horseback he may have in mind the hypothetical ancient geography of the region before the inundation around *Caer Aranrhod* (compare the account of Brân crossing the Irish Sea in the Second Branch). This imaginary geography may have involved a single land route from the south, for the author seems to imagine Dinas Dinlle itself as being on the coast (*aruordir*) as now. Possibly the late tradition that St Beuno used to cross *on foot* from Clynnog to Llanddwyn chapel in Anglesey (Rhys 1901:I,219; cf. Eben Fardd 1863:58) is a reflection of such a tradition – his route would pass by the reef called “Gored Beuno” and by *Caer Aranrhod*.

In episode (c) Part 1, the scene shifts to Ardudwy. Math gives Lleu a wife and the cantref of Dunoding, consisting of the commotes of Eifionydd and Ardudwy. Lleu's court is in Ardudwy at Mur Castell – the Roman site of Tomen y Mur – and there his wife Blodeuedd encounters and sleeps with Gronw Bebyr, lord of Penllyn (the cantref to the east), who is hunting by the river Cynfal. Gronw hides on the bank of the Cynfal by the hill called Bryn Cyfergyr (‘hill of the cast’, now Bryn Cyfergyd), and casts a spear at Lleu, who flies away in the form of an eagle and disappears. Gronw vanquishes Ardudwy and rules it together with Penllyn.

In episode (c) Part 2, Gwydion travels through Gwynedd and Powys looking for Lleu. From Maenawr Bennardd in Arfon (near Clynnog, as we have seen), Gwydion follows a sow ‘along a river upstream’, probably the River Llyfni, till it leads him to Lleu at the top of an oak ‘between two lakes’ at Nantlleu (‘Lleu's valley’), now Nantlle – the lower lake has dried up now, but Llyn Uchaf remains. The text quotes some linguis-

tically archaic *englynion* mentioning the oak 'between two lakes', which confirms that the topography is older than the extant version of the story. One of the lakes seems to have been called Llyn Gofannon, after Lleu's uncle, c. 1303 (Ellis 1965).

In episode (c), Part 3, Math and Lleu muster Gwynedd and set out for Ardudwy. Blodeuedd and her maidens take flight into the mountains. The maidens drown in an unnamed lake, clearly an allusion to the remote mountain lake still called Llyn y Mor(w)ynion ('Lake of the maidens'). Gronw stands with a stone to defend him, but Lleu's spear pierces it and kills Gronw: 'and there the stone is, on the bank of Cynfael river in Ardudwy, and the hole through it. And for that reason it is still called Llech Ronw'. Thus Gronw's grave is some three miles east of Pryderi's at Maentwrog.

It will be seen that the topographical indications in the Four Branches suggest that the stories originated mainly in Dyfed and in Gwynedd and were joined together secondarily (in Dyfed according to the general consensus, but that is not relevant here). Although one might try to break down the Gwynedd stories into those referring to Anglesey, Arfon, and Ardudwy, this is neither justifiable theoretically (as we have seen) nor easy to carry out in practice without spoiling them. The story of Lleu, for example, is clearly based in both Arfon and Ardudwy, and that of Brân and Branwen is localized both in Anglesey and in Ardudwy (Harlech). In such instances it is clear that if there ever was a stage when independent stories of these characters were told in different localities, that stage lies far in the past. As we have them, the narratives set in the various north-westerly places are interwoven.

The topography of the northern stories in the Four Branches points to a source in Arfon, both because of the centrality of Arfon in the world of the stories and because of the sheer number of detailed references to it – references confirmed to some extent by allusions in early poetry and elsewhere to Dylan, Gofannon, and the rest. We shall see that much the same is true of *Englynion y Beddau*.

Englynion y Beddau

Englynion y Beddau are an invaluable key to the topography of Welsh narrative tradition, since they locate the graves of heroes, many of them otherwise unknown. The extant *Englynion y Beddau* were grouped into four "series" in the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, and Thomas Jones follows this arrangement in his edition and translation (1967). Really, however, there are only two series – Series I and III – plus a number of scattered and more or less isolated *englynion* in various medieval and later manuscripts.

Series I is found in the Black Book of Carmarthen, written c. 1250. The last four of its 73 stanzas are in a slightly later hand, which is good evidence for the composite nature of this series. All versions of Series I derive from the Black Book itself. Series III has 18 stanzas. None of the manuscripts is earlier than 1596, and only four of them

(all unpublished) are of any textual value (Sims-Williams 1978); one of these four (Peniarth 111) was the source of the text in Peniarth 98B printed by Thomas Jones. Five stanzas of Series I (nos 4, 10, 24, 33, 35) have variants or doublets in Series III (nos 13, 9, 18, 1, 10), but neither Series depends directly on the other. It seems probable that the bulk of the *englynion* date back to the twelfth century or earlier, although some may have been composed later (see Sims-Williams 1978 on III.17).

Series III is of particular interest because of the number of references to Arfon, as the following analysis will reveal.

III.1 is Ffyrnfael ap Hywlydd's grave on "y gorfynydd", but this may well be an error for *Hirfynydd*, as in Series I.32, plausibly identified by Moses Williams (MS Llanstephan 18, p. 11), with the Long Mountain in Montgomeryshire, in north-east Wales, usually called Cefn Digoll or Hirfryn in Welsh (cf. Williams 1974).

III.2 is the grave of Gwanwyn (Granwen fab Llŷr?) 'between the Llifon and the Llyfni', two streams which converge until they run into the sea about half a mile apart to the north of Clynnog. The Maen Llwyd, a conspicuous standing stone, was the site favoured by nineteenth-century antiquarians (see *North Wales Gazette*, 12 Feb. 1818 – a reference I owe to the late Bedwyr Lewis Jones).

III.3 is the grave of Gwydion ap Dôn on Morfa Dinlle, just north of Dinas Dinlle, the coastal hill-fort in Arfon associated with Gwydion in the Fourth Branch. Line c may refer to Garannawg Glewddigar ap Cynwas, a Gwynedd hero, perhaps on Yr Eifl, the mountain between Arfon and Llŷn, eight miles down the coast from Morfa Dinlle.

III.4, on Ceredig (?), is obscure.

III.5–8 refer to Llofan's grave on the shore of the Menai, and perhaps, according to Ifor Williams (*Canu Llywarch Hen*, p. 244) at Pennardd, now Pennarth near Clynnog.

III.7, line c, also refers to 'the grave of Dylan at Llanfeuno' (now Clynnog Fawr). We know from the Four Branches that Gofannon slew Dylan, and the elegy on him in the Book of Taliesin mentions the 'shore' and 'violence in the stream' (Haycock 1985). There is thus a possibility that Maen Dylan, a gigantic boulder two miles up the shore from Clynnog church, marks the site of Dylan's supposed grave (assuming that "yn Llanfeuno" is not a precise reference to the church enclosure or *llan*). Maen Dylan is just over a mile from Bryn Gwdion, which is presumably named after Dylan's uncle Gwydion.

III.9 is the grave of Panna fab Pyd – the Mercian king Penda (d. 654) – *yng ngorthir Arvon* 'in the uplands of Arfon', an error for *in ergrid avon* 'in a river's tumult' (Series I.10), referring to the river *Winwæd* in England, which overflowed during the battle in which Penda was slain, according to the Venerable Bede. The error *Arvon* for *avon* may be due to the frequency of references to Arfon in Series III.

Line c of III.9 is the grave of Cynon (fab Clydno Eidynd) at Rheon Ford, which was somewhere in or near Arfon, according to Gwilym Ddu o Arfon (Gwaith, ed. Daniel, no. 7:58: "... Aruon is Reon ryt"). An Arfon tradition of the thirteenth

century relates that Cynon's father Clydno Eidyn was one of those who came south to Arfon in connection with the disputed succession of Maelgwn Gwynedd (see on III.15 below). Perhaps Cynon himself was supposed to have been killed on this occasion.

III.10 is 'The grave of Lleu Llawgyffes under cover of the sea' – the Series I doublet adds: 'where his kinsman [i.e. Dylan] was'. This seems incompatible with the statement in the Book of Taliesin (p. 35) that 'Lleu's end (was) on a mountain-side (*llechued*)'. The two can be reconciled, however, if the latter reference is to Arllechwedd, the name of the cantref to the north-east of Arfon, often called "Y Llechwedd" by the bards. Lleu's grave would be somewhere off the coast between Bangor and Conway.

III.11 refers vaguely to an expedition *ar afon* 'on a river'. Some of the late manuscripts have "ar Arfon" instead, and while this has no authority, originating in a transcript of NLW MS 1506 by Ieuan Fardd in NLW MS 2020ii, it is possible that *Aruon* was the original reading and was corrupted to *auon*. There is also a reference to the death of "Agen ap Yvgri" – could he be the twelfth-century Aser ap Gwrgi of Uwch Aled, Denbighshire (*Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, p. 118)? – at *Aber Bangori*, possibly originally a reference to Bangor (Bangor in Arfon?), which has been forced into the -i rhyme-scheme of the *englyn*.

III.12 is hopelessly corrupt.

III.13 refers again to the 'grave of Dylan at Llanfeuno', but also to the grave of Tedai (or Tydai) Tad Awen (a Cynfardd?) 'on the top of Bryn Arien'. This obscure site is also mentioned in the Fourth Branch, as we have seen. There *Brynn Aryen* must lie somewhere on the coast south of Dinas Dinlle. Ifor Williams suggested the promontory called "Bryn Beddau", by Trwyn Maen Dylan, pointing out that it would be the first striking feature Lleu and Gwydion would come upon on their way down the coast from Dinas Dinlle. (The name does not appear on maps, but Professor Geraint Gruffydd kindly informed me in about 1975 that the field-names "Cae Bryn Beddau" and "Cae Maen Dylan" were still in use then.) In view of the coupling of the grave of Tedai at Bryn Arien with that of Dylan "yn Llan Beuno", the identification is very probable. The graves from which Bryn Beddau took its name may be Dylan's and Tedai's.

III.14 refers to an unlocalized grave on the shore, that of 'Disgyrinn [?son of] Disgyffeddawt' (perhaps a Cynfardd like Tedai Tad Awen, cf. *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, no. 10).

III.15 is the grave of Elidir Mwynfawr on the banks of the Meweddus. Elidir's death and its consequences, which, it is said, led to Rhun ap Iarll granting the 'privileges of the men of Arfon' (*Breiniau Gwŷr Arfon*), are recounted in an addition to Llyfr Iorwerth, the laws of Gwynedd, contained in two closely related mid-thirteenth-century copies, the Black Book of Chirk (MS A, NLW Pen. 29) and BL Add. 14931 (MS E):

Eman y llas Elydyr mvynvaur gvr or gogled, a gwedy y lad y doeth gwyr y gogled yma yu dyal. Sew gwyr a doythant yn tywysogyon udunt, Clydno Eydyn, a Nud Hael uab Senyllt,

a Mordaw Hael uab Seruan, a Ryderch Hael uab Tudawal Tutclyd. Ac a doythant Aruon. Ac urth lad elydyr yn Aber Meweddus (*aber meuhedus* A) yn Aruon y llosgasant Aruon yn ragor dyal. (Text based on 'Privileges of the Men of Arvon', p. 308; cf. 'Black Book of Chirk', ed. Lewis, p. 75.)

'Elidir Mwynfawr, a man of the North, was slain here, and after his death the men of the North came here to avenge him. The men who came as their leaders were Clydno Eidyn, and Nudd Hael fab Senyllt, and Mordaf Hael fab Serfan, and Rhydderch Hael fab Tudawal Tudclud. And they came to Arfon, and because Elidir was slain at Aber Meweddus in Arfon they burned Arfon as a further revenge.'

In connection with the sequel, the authority of Iorwerth ap Madog (fl. c. 1220–40) is appealed to over a detail: "Ioruerd uab Madauc druy audurdaut y kyuaruydyt ay cadarnaa" ('Iorwerth fab Madog through the authority of the tradition confirms it'). This is interesting from the point of view of the grave-stanza because Iorwerth ap Madog is known to have belonged to a family of lawyers in Uwch Gwyrfai, Arfon. His brother Einion was a poet and his grandfather is recorded as holding land in the vill of Dinlle (Jenkins 1973; "Gwaith Einion ap Madog ap Rhahawd", ed. Williams). Iorwerth would thus have been in a good position to know the local tradition. The quotation of a lost poem (ascribed to Taliesin) on the part played by the men of Arfon suggests that the Elidir *cyfarwyddyd* may have been current in literary form for some time. The lost exemplar of the two manuscripts of Llyfr Iorwerth cannot have been written much after Iorwerth's time and the addition in them evidently derives from someone conversant with Arfon traditions and literature.

Eben Fardd correctly identified the *Aber Menwedus* of the Laws (as he spells it) with the *Moweddus* which belonged to Clynnog church according to Edward IV's confirmation charter and with the stream which runs into the Desach near Tai'r-lôn, less than two miles east of Clynnog church, which he says was called 'yn nhafodiaith bresennol yr ardal, "Afon Rhyd Beirion"; ond dywed y brodorion fod arni enw arall, sef "Yr Afon Wefus"' (1863:62 and 65–67). The confluence of this river Wefus with the Desach is thus the most likely position for Elidir's grave. It is noticeable that it lies on the old route to the south, and near Bron yr Erw, the scene of more than one battle.

III.16 is the grave of Mabon fab Madron (*sic*, i.e. *Maponos* son of *Matrona*) on 'the height of Nantlleu', the place in Arfon so important in the story of Lleu in the Fourth Branch. No other Welsh literary source associates Mabon or Modron with this area, but in the French romance *Le Bel Inconnu* and its Middle English version *Libeaus Desconus* an enchanter Mabon appears as the oppressor of the "cité de Sinaudon" (Synadoun, Synadowne), which is clearly somewhere near Snowdonia (Loomis 1956:11–15).

III.17 is the grave of "An ap Llian" or "Myrddin Emrys", the former appellation being derived from *anap y lleian* 'the nun's mishap', referring to Merlin's illegitimacy (Sims-Williams 1978); it is perhaps located (allowing an easy emendation) "yn Emrais fynydd", referring to the mountain overlooking Dinas Emrys in Beddgelert, where

Arfon, Ardudwy, and Eifionydd meet, the site most anciently and continuously associated with Myrddin Emrys.

III.18 (corrupt) is the grave of Rhun ab Alun Dyfed on a ford. This ford can be located in the region of Llanfor, near Bala in Penllyn, Merionethshire, on the basis of a sixteenth-century prose note on the graves of Rhun and Pryderi. The oldest copy, in Pen. 177, p. 129 by Gruffudd Hiraethog, is mostly illegible, but it is identical in length and content with the following version by Edward Thelwal in Pen. 283, fol. ir:

Run ap Alun dyfed yr hwn a gladdwyd yn yml y rhyd galed yn y gwynfynydd ymhenllyn ac
yno y llas ef pan giliodd o giltalgarth
Maen tyuyawc vwchben y velen rhyd lle llas ac y claddwyd Pryderi

'Rhun ab Alun Dyfed, who was buried close by the hard ford [cf. Pen-rhyd-galed, SH 9237] in the White Mountain [cf. 'Nurse Gwyn-fynydd', SH 9337] in Penllyn, and there he was slain when he fled from Ciltalgarth.

Maen Tyuyawc (Maentwrog) above the Felenrhyd (is) where Pryderi was slain and buried.'

Possibly the story of Rhun's flight is taken from some prose account of his life, just as the note on Pryderi is drawn from the Four Branches (and not from the relevant *englyn* in *Englynion y Beddau*, I.7).

We have seen that "Series III" has a clear Arfon bias, but is not confined to that region, since it may allude to places on the English border (Long Mountain, 1) and in England (the river Winwæd, 9, corrupted to "Arfon"), in northern and eastern Caernarfonshire (Arlechwedd, 10 and Bangor(?) 11), and in Merionethshire (Rhyd Galed, Penllyn 18). The matter is complicated by the probability that the extant *englynion y beddau* came from many different sources, and were transmitted in small groups of stanzas. Some such groups may still be detected in Series I as groups linked by chains of verbal repetition or by subject matter (I. 1-3, 8-11, 12-16, 17-19, 20-23, 24-25, 28-30, 31-33, 36-38, 42-43, 46-47, 60-61, 70-71). In turn, some of these groups are stylistically linked to stanzas in Series III and, as we have seen, there is some direct overlap between the two series. To cut a long story short, it seems that if we put the apparently related stanzas together (ignoring purely geographical relationships to avoid a circular argument), we get back to a core "proto-series":

I.4/III.13 (Tedei, Dylan), I.7 (Pryderi, Gwallog), I.8 (Gwalchmai, Cynon), I.9 (Cynon), I.10/III.9 (Panna, Cynon), I.11 (Cynon), I.12 (Osfran, Bedwyr), I.13 (Owain, Rhydderch), I.14 (Owain), I.15 (Cynddylan), I.16 (Gwên ap Llywarch Hen), I.31 (Llwch), I.32 (Gwrien, Llwyddog), I.33/III.1 (Ffyrnfael), I.35/III.10 (Lleu), I.56 (Baint), III.2 (Gwanwyn), III.5 (Llofan), III.6 (Llofan), III.7 (Llofan, Dylan), III.8 (Llofan), III.14 (Disgyrinn).

I believe that Series I and III originated in the disintegration of this proto-series of stanzas and in the accretion of other, originally unrelated, stanzas. It is noticeable that all the Series I stanzas listed above (except I.56) fall within the first half of Series I

(stanzas 1-35). This suggests that the above proto-series underlies this half of Series I and was added to at various stages. The additions come in intrusive blocks (1-3, 17-19, 20-23, 24-25) and in apparently isolated stanzas (5, 6, 26, 27). The second half of Series I does not seem to have any organizing principle and perhaps grew by simple accretion. Indeed, with the last few stanzas we can actually see another scribe adding to the Black Book text. Series III may also have been added to: III.18/I.24 is a possible addition at the end, and III.17, on "An ap [y] lleian", cannot be old because *anap* is derived from the English loan-word *hap*. On the other hand, since Series III is fairly short it is more likely than Series I to be an essentially unified work, even though stylistic links cannot be detected between all its stanzas.

If we look for thematic links in our hypothetical proto-series we find three interwoven tendencies:

- (i) a bias towards north-west Wales, especially Arfon, similar to that seen in Series III;
- (ii) an interest in characters in the early *englyn* cycles associated with the characters Llywarch Hen and Cynddylan;
- (iii) a preoccupation with graves in rivers and under the sea – which recalls the interest in the underwater world in the Book of Taliesin, the various submerged kingdom legends, and the existence of the Irish tale-type known as *tomaidm* 'bursting-forth (of lake or river)'.

The natural inference is that the proto-series originated in Arfon – hence the bias towards north-west Wales, especially Arfon – but that the author(s) had a particular interest in the heroes of the early *englynion* about Llywarch and Cynddylan (who were connected especially with Brycheiniog and Powys, i.e. mid- and north-east Wales), and in heroes who met their ends in rivers and seas, a theme perhaps of particular interest in coastal regions such as Arfon.

The regional bias of the proto-series, and even more, that of Series III as a whole, points to Arfon as the place of origin. We should probably look for an ancient *clas* church in Arfon as the place of recording and preservation (cf. Sims-Williams 1993). Admittedly, clerics did not have an exclusive interest in the characters of the *englynion*. We know from the tract *Breiniau Gwŷr Arfon* that recounts the *cyfarwyddyd* of Elidir Mwynfawr that the thirteenth-century Arfon lawyer Iorwerth ap Madog took an active interest in such material, and we may surmise that he may have had means to have it written down – it was claimed that Pennardd in Arfon was the *hynaf kynghellaurdref* 'the most senior chancellor's township' (Bartrum 1963; Jenkins 1998). Yet it is significant that the tract ends with the statement that the *clas* of Bangor and those of Beuno (Llanfeuno Fawr, i.e. Clynnog, next door to Pennardd) were to preserve the text:

Ac o byd a amheuo un or breynnyeu hynny clas Bangor a rey Beuno ae keydv. ('Privileges of the Men of Arvon', p. 311.)

'And if someone doubts any of these privileges, the clas of Bangor and those of Beuno shall keep them.'

Of these two centres of recording in Arfon, the obvious choice is Clynnog, since the grave sites in our proto-series are concentrated around it: Gwanwyn between Llifon and Llyfni; Braint near the Llyfni; Tedei at Bryn Arien; Llofan at Pennardd(?); and Dylan at Llanfeuno itself – a name, significantly, repeated twice. Other stanzas in Series III point in the same direction: Gwydion on Morfa Dinlle; Garannawg on Yr Eifl (?); Elidir at the confluence of the Meweddus; Mabon on Nantlle. If these stanzas are later additions to the nucleus of the proto-series, they at least suggest that the nucleus was transmitted at Clynnog; and if they are original parts of the nucleus, they support Clynnog origin.

There appears to be a relationship between the Four Branches (especially the Fourth Branch) and the "proto-series" and Third Series of *Englynion y Beddau*. We find the same characters – Llew, Gwydion, Dylan, Pryderi – and the same places – Bryn Arien, Nantlle, Pennardd, and Maentwrog (assumed to be the *Aber Gwenoli* of *Englynion y Beddau* I.7). Moreover, the majority of places associated with the Gwynedd characters of the Fourth Branch are clustered in Uwch Gwyrfaï around Clynnog. This suggests the hypothesis that it was at Clynnog that the stories of Llew and Gwydion (and, less certainly, those of Brân and Branwen) were redacted, and that it was directly or indirectly from Clynnog that they passed into the hands of the author of the Four Branches. To pursue this hypothesis further, we need to consider the history of Clynnog and the evidence for literary activity there.

Clynnog and *Buchedd Beuno*

Clynnog Fawr, or Llanfeuno, was the most wealthy church in Arfon at the time of the papal taxation of c. 1291. Its origins may go back to a seventh-century church centred on the grave of the founder St Beuno. Like other *clas* churches (mother churches served by groups of presumably married clerics), Clynnog survived as a portionary or collegiate church (Sims-Williams 1996). Later medieval records show that it had many estates and daughter churches in Arfon and Llŷn, but also some more distant ones at Llangelynnin, the place of this name in Caernarfonshire, in Arllechwedd (*Valor Ecclesiasticus*, IV, 420–21) – recall Llew's death in Arllechwedd (?) –, in Treffynnon (Holywell, Flintshire) right over in the north-east (*Valor Ecclesiasticus*, IV, 438), and in various places in Anglesey, of which a distant outlier was Alaw'r-beirdd in Llanbabo, Talybolion. In Alaw'r Beirdd those who "held of St Beuno" in the 1352 Extent of Anglesey were called as "tenants and abbots", "a survival from the pre-Norman Welsh church" according to Professor Carr (Extent of Anglesey, p. 208, n. 41; *Record of Caernarvon*, p. 62; Carr 1982: 274 and map on 281). It can hardly be

coincidence that this remote spot (now Glan Alaw, Jones 1966: 34, n. 10a) is *precisely* the site of Branwen's grave, which would therefore have been well known at Clynnog.

The general distribution of estates in the records agrees with that of the grants to Clynnog by members of the Gwynedd royal line from the time of Cadwallon (d. 634) to that of the sons of Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170), as confirmed c. 1470 by Edward IV (*Record of Caernarvon*, pp. 257–58; Sims-Williams 1996). These estates included *Moweddus* – the site of Elidir's grave – granted by Rhodri Mawr (d. 878), and *Dolbebin* – the home of Goewin in the Fourth Branch – granted by Anarawd ap Rhodri (d. 916).

Clynnog's unbroken history makes it a likely centre for the preservation of literary materials; indeed, by the end of the Middle Ages it was even supposed that a particularly ancient 'Book of St Beuno' had been written by St Twrog, a contemporary of the seventh-century founder, St Beuno. This book was clearly the source for some of the "Celtic" charters abstracted in Edward IV's confirmation charter (Sims-Williams 1996; 1998:22 and 26).

Clynnog first appears in annalistic sources in 978, when Llŷn and Clynnog Fawr were ravaged by Hywel ab Ieuaf and the Vikings (Lloyd 1939: I, 351). Despite this attack, Clynnog church was still in existence about a century later, and of sufficient importance to be a place of sanctuary: when Trahaearn ap Caradog seized control of Gwynedd in 1075, the three sons of Merwydd of Llŷn 'were in Clynnog taking sanctuary there for fear of the men of Powys who were threatening them' (*Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, p. 8). These sons of Merwydd briefly allied themselves with the invader Gruffudd ap Cynan, but soon turned against him, slaying his Irish troops in their billets – an episode recalling the Second Branch of the Mabinogi – and helping to defeat him at Bron yr Erw above Clynnog (p. 10). Along with these traitors, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* names two brothers from Anglesey, who 'had received their *cyfarws* in Clynnog Fawr from Gruffudd', a phrase which implies that Gruffudd had held court at Clynnog in 1075. Towards the end of his life, Gruffudd gave 10 shillings to Clynnog, among other local and distant churches, most of them, as J. E. Lloyd noted, "known to have been ancient mother churches having a 'clas'" (1939: II, 469, n. 26). Among those listed in *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* as attending Gruffudd's deathbed in 1137, was the distinguished churchman and archdeacon of the diocese of Bangor, Simeon of Clynnog (d. 1152), whose name suggests that Clynnog "was the clas from which he came" (Davies 1946:101, n. 595). If so, it was certainly a place of learning. In this connection it is worth recalling the late Simon Evans's tentative suggestion in his edition of *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (p. ccxlix) that Simeon of Clynnog may have had something to do with the composition of the Latin Life of Gruffudd which underlies the vernacular text.

A more certain literary product of Clynnog is the Latin Life of St Beuno which underlies the extant fourteenth-century *Buchedd Beuno*. Edward IV's confirmation charter echoes this lost *Vita*, and it is already cited c. 1140 by Robert of Shrewsbury in his *Vita* of St Gwenfrewi (§20) and is also exploited by the author of a slightly earlier

anonymous *Vita Sancte Wenefrede*. As I hope to show elsewhere, *Buchedd Beuno* is an abridged translation of the lost *Vita Sancti Beunoi*, augmented with an episode (§§ 12–13) based on Robert of Shrewsbury.

The geographical pattern of events in *Buchedd Beuno* bears a striking resemblance to the distribution of churches and wells dedicated to St Beuno and saints associated with him, such as Twrog and Gwenfrewy (mapped by Bowen 1956:85 and Jones 1954:220). Just as the dedications form an arc swinging round from Llanveynoe in Ewias in south-east Wales, northwards through Powys, and westwards to Arfon, Llŷn and Anglesey, so *Buchedd Beuno* takes the saint on an anti-clockwise journey from Gwent to his final resting-place at Clynnog, acquiring various churches and disciples on the way. In accordance with the well-known conventions of Celtic hagiography, the close correspondence between the dedications and Life can be taken to reflect the wider territorial interests and spiritual ties of the community of Clynnog in the early twelfth century – and probably earlier, in view of the outdated dynastic preoccupations of the Powysian sections of *Buchedd Beuno* and the anonymous *Vita Sancte Wenefrede*. In the case of St Gwenfrewy, we know that her subservient relationship to Beuno in the Lives was mirrored in the dependence of Treffynnon (Holywell, Flints.) on Clynnog as late as the sixteenth century, when rents were paid to Clynnog from Gwesbyr and Holywell, “where the said Beno is called chief Lord” (Sims-Williams 1996:236; cf. *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, IV, 438).

The topography of *Buchedd Beuno* and the related dedications to Beuno, Twrog, etc., is broadly similar to that of the non-Dyfed Branches of the Mabinogi, and of the Series III and reconstructed “proto-series” of *Englynion y Beddau*. Apart from the major overlap in north-west Wales, including the association of the Pryderi and Gronw death-tales with the Maentwrog area and the remarkable coincidence of “Bedd Bronwen” and Alaw'r Beirdd, we have noted that the Second Branch strays into Beuno country in north-east Wales with its onomastic tale set in Saith Marchawg in Edeirnion, and that it possibly alludes to Gwyddelwern (two miles south), to Caerfallwch in Flintshire, and to the *brân* place-names in Denbighshire. Series III seems to refer to the Long Mountain in Montgomeryshire, on the English border close to Beuno's church at Berriw (*Buchedd Beuno*, §§ 7–8), while the “proto-series” seems to have showed an interest in the *englynion* cycles associated with Cynddylan and Llywarch Hen. The topography of the Cynddylan cycle belongs to the part of Powys just mentioned – for example *Gyrthmwl* (*Canu Llywarch Hen*, XI.76) is probably Garthmyl, adjacent to Berriw – and it may be significant that Cynddylan was associated with Panna (Penda) vab Pyd, whose grave is the subject of *Englynion y Beddau* III.9/I.10 (*Canu Llywarch Hen*, XIII.28; Sims-Williams 1990:28). The Llywarch Hen cycle is probably from Brycheiniog, further south, adjacent to Beuno's church in Ewias (*Buchedd Beuno*, §4), but there are secondary Llywarch localizations in the north-east around Llangollen and also at Llanfor, near Rhun ab Alun Dyfed's grave in III.18/I.24 (Sims-Williams 1993).

This degree of overlap is most easily explained by supposing that Clynnog was the centre at which much of the materials behind the Four Branches, *Englynion y Beddau*,

and *Buchedd Beuno* were redacted, and that those materials reflected the geographical horizons of its inmates.

Two episodes in *Buchedd Beuno* may be noted in particular. The first is *Buchedd Beuno* §10, where Beuno comes to King Cynan son of Brochwel

‘and asked him for a place to pray for his soul and his friends. And then the king gave him Gwyddelwern, the place which got its name from the Irishman whom Beuno raised from the dead there – and his wife had been responsible for his death. And there Beuno made a church [...]’

The name Gwyddelwern name probably mean ‘thicket-swamp’, as we have seen, but the first element is here reinterpreted as *Gwyddel* ‘Irishman’. In later sources he is provided with a well-known Irish name Lorcán – he is called Llorcan Wyddel in the lists of those whom Beuno raised from the dead (Sims-Williams 1982:615) – and he seems to have enjoyed a cult at Llanwyddelan, west of Berriw. The story of his murder and resurrection does not survive, but it has been suggested above that it may have been a hagiographical replacement of a version of the story of Gwern's murder, which is set in Ireland in the Second Branch.

Secondly, in §§ 17–19 one of the workmen of Aberffraw in Anglesey goes to the court of Ynyr Gwent, Beuno's old patron. Ynyr's daughter falls in love with him and Ynyr, mistaking him for a prince, allows her to marry him. On their way back from the south-east to Anglesey they reach ‘Pennardd in Arfon’ (Pennarth, near Clynnog). There they dismount and rest. The youth, overcome with shame at his humble station, cuts off her head. He takes the dowry and horses home and buys the office of steward from the king. Meanwhile Beuno's shepherds discover the body and Beuno restores the maiden's head. She chooses to remain with the saint, serving God. A spring appeared where her blood fell ‘and from the name of the maiden the well got its name, that is, Ffynawn Ddigiwg’. Clearly the couple had been approaching the remarkably wide but disused road that can still be seen at Pennarth farm, running up to Ffynnon Ddigiwg (SH 42965046), now a large marshy hollow but the site of offerings in the nineteenth century (Jones 1954:19, 132, 134, and 155). This site would of course have been well-known to the inmates of Clynnog nearby. What is more striking is that the unhappy couple ride along exactly the same route from the south-east as Gwydion and Lleu do in the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi, when they are pretending to be bards on horseback from Morgannwg en route for Caer Aranrhod: “Cefn Clun T(y)no” (cf. *Coed-tyno* on the modern map), the high ground where they ostentatiously turn northwards, is only half a mile above Pennarth, and Ffynnon Ddigiwg is on its northern slope. Both stories, then, reflect the same local knowledge. The *clas* of St Beuno at Clynnog Fawr nearby is the obvious common denominator. And there I rest my case.

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