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III

Welsh Prophetic Poems in the Four Ancient Books.

IN this section we propose to deal with the oldest Welsh verse prophecies which are to be found in the *Four Ancient Books of Wales*. They are attributed chiefly to Myrddin and Taliesin while there are a few anonymous poems. Those attributed to Myrddin are to be found in the Black Book of Carmarthen and the Red Book of Hergest. In the Black Book there are three of these poems, the "Bedwenni," the "Afallenneu," and the "Hoianeu."

The "Bedwenni" consists of three stanzas each beginning "Gwin y bid y vedwen" "Blessed is the birch tree."

The first stanza prophesies battles at Ardudwy and around Rhyd Vochno when Edwin rules in Mona, and describes how even clothes will be soaked in blood :

Gwin y bid hi y vedwen in diffrin guŷ.
Asirth ychegeu pop un pop dvŷ.
Ac auit pan vo y gad in arduduy.
A chimrevan biv am rid vochnuŷ.
a pheleidir a gaur inyanhuŷ.
Ac edwin imon ban guledichuŷ.
Argueisson gleisson yscawin travodi.
Ar dillad rution in ev roti.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 47, ll. 1-6.

The second verse describes the birch tree in "pimlumon" which will witness the coming of the Normans in their coats of mail—a time when even monks will arm :

. . . Ac a wil. y freige in lluricogion.
Ac am gwin iraeluid bvid balawon.
a mineich in vŷnich invarchogion.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 47, ll. 8-10.

The third stanza refers to the birch tree above "dinvythuy," and here again there is a reference to a battle in Ardudwy. A bridge will be built on the Taf and the Towy and another on the Wye, by some one named "Garvy." Then comes a

reference to the famous one of Môn, Cadwaladr, in whose time there will be happiness :

. . . ban vo ýgad in ardudwý.
Ar peleidir kýchuin amedrýwuý.
A. phont ar taw. ac arall ar tawuý.
Ac arall amwall am dwýlan gwy.
Ar saer ae gunelwý bid ý env garvý.
Arbenýgaul mon ae guledýchuý . . .
amser kadwaladir. kert a ganhwi.

—*B.B.C.*, pp. 47-8, ll. 11-16, 1-2.

It is difficult to say to what particular battles these verses refer, for during the period in which they were written—that is the period of the Norman invasion, when the Welsh were fighting tooth and nail for their supremacy—there was scarcely a spot in Wales which was not the scene of numerous battles. Gwenogvryn Evans¹ asserts that these verses refer to events in the life of Cadwaladr, son of Gruffudd ap Cynan, and his brother Owain, whom he identifies with the “gweisson gleisson” of the first stanza, the battle in Ardudwy being the siege of Kynvael by Howel ap Owain Gwynedd. This is quite possible, but on the other hand, it may have been a battle against the Normans, especially when we remember that the Normans are referred to in the second stanza. But most probably the poem is a genuine prophecy not referring to any particular event. The bard would know that he could not go far wrong in prophesying a battle to happen in Ardudwy. All we can say definitely is, that it was written during the period of the Welsh struggle against the Normans.

The setting of the poem is interesting as it has a parallel in the Irish legend of *Suibhne Geilt*. *Suibhne* addresses the birch tree, and like *Myrddin* calls it blessed :

O birch smooth and blessed.²

The next poem in the Black Book is the “*Afallenneu*.” We have already discussed the historical and legendary setting, which we concluded was very old. This old setting however is only used as a background for vaticinations of a much later

¹ *B.B.C.*, *Introd.*, p. xxiii.

² O’Keefe, *Adventures of Suibhne Geilt*, p. 66, st. 3.

date. *Myrddin* the sixth century prophet and bard was a convenient figure on whom later poets could foist their own productions.

The first stanza predicts a “Wednesday of blood,” bringing joy to the English with their ruddy blades in the valley of *Machavuy*. Their triumph however will be short lived for on Thursday joy will come to the Welsh at *Cyminawd* where the Welsh will play ball with the heads of the Saxons. Then a youth will arise in some outpost of the South :

Afallen *peren per* ý chageu . . .
Ami disgoganave rac *perchen machrev*.
In diffirin *machavuý merchýrdit crev*.
goruolet ý loegýr gorgoch lawneu.
Oian aparchellan dýdau dýwiev.
gorvolet ýgimrý goruawr gadev.
In amuin kýminaud clefýtaud clev.
Aer o saesson. ar onn verrev.
A guarwýaur pelre ac ev pennev.
Ami dýsgoganafe gwir heb gev.
Dýrchafaud maban inadvan ý deheu.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 48, ll. 4-13.

This stanza with its drastic realism and savage hatred, is characteristic of the type of prophecy which is found in Wales in the twelfth and succeeding centuries. Whether the bard is describing scenes which he actually witnessed, or whether he is brooding over imaginary vengeance,³ these prophecies throw into glaring relief the attitude of the Welsh towards the Saxons at this period, and behind it all we may discern the cruelty and oppression which the Welsh must have suffered, before they would express such intense bitterness and hatred in their poems ; for after all, prophecies such as these reveal the hopes and desires of the people.

The second stanza describes a battle and an assembly at *Shrewsbury*, and again refers to *Cyminawd*, where the Saxons will be killed by a leader of *Eryri*. The next verse after a reference to battle amongst the Picts, describes the incident of the seven hundred and seven ships which will come

³ This is suggested by the conclusion of the stanza : “*Dedwýtach no mi ae harhowe. Amser Kadwaladir. kert a ganhwi.*”—*Ed.*

across the sea to conquer, but of which only seven empty ones will escape destruction :

Seithlog. y deuant dros lŷdan lin.
A seith cant. dros mor y oreskin.
Orsaul y deuant. nŷdant y kenhin.
Namuin. seith lledwac gwŷdi ev llettkint.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 49, ll. 4-7.

Skene thinks this is an old tradition of an Irish invasion of Scotland⁴ while Stephens believes it refers to the defeat of the fleet of Henry II at Tal Moelfre, 1157.⁵ There is a danger, however, in referring the lines to any particular event, for they are vague enough to be a genuine prophecy.

Stanza IV is chiefly concerned with the legend of Myrddin, but there is a prophecy at the end of princes who "will come across the sea on a Monday : blessed will be the Welsh from that design." These princes probably are meant to be the usual two, Cynan and Cadwaladr, but the writer may have had in mind Rhys ap Tewdwr and Gruffudd ap Cynan. Both came across the sea, one from exile in Brittany and the other from Ireland, and they were both princes of the royal line of Maelgwn. They joined together and defeated their enemies at Mynydd Carn in 1081.

The sixth and seventh stanzas deal with the legend of Myrddin while the eighth refers to a prophecy of the Sibyl that the English will tremble before a "maban huan," but that the bards will prosper. This description too, would fit Gruffudd ap Cynan who was a patron of bards, and who held up the Anglo-Norman invasion for many years.

The last two stanzas deal with the Cynan-Cadwaladr episode, but as this prophecy occurs again very frequently in the poems in the Book of Taliesin we shall reserve the discussion of it until we examine those poems.

The date of the "Afallenneu" depends on the interpretation of the prophecies. Gwenogvryn Evans thinks that the first stanza refers to the defeat and death of Rhys ap Tewdwr in 1090, and identifies the youth who rises in an

⁴ Skene, *Four Ancient Books*, Vol. II, pp. 335-36.

⁵ Stephens, *Literature of the Kymry*, p. 226.

outpost of the south as Gruffudd ap Rhys⁶ But the youth from the South could equally well be Rhys ap Tewdwr himself who championed the Welsh cause so ably against the Anglo-Normans. Before he came from exile there must have been severe fighting throughout Wales. The battles referred to in the poem are Machavwy, where the English are victorious, and Cyminawd where the Welsh triumph, and an assembly and battle at Shrewsbury. If Machavwy is Bachwy in Elvel as Evans suggests, then it may refer to one of the victories of Roger of Montgomery, the Norman knight posted at Shrewsbury by William I, for we know that he had penetrated into Breconshire before the coming of Gruffudd ap Cynan and Rhys ap Tewdwr.

Shrewsbury is the natural door to mid Wales, just as Chester is to the North and Hereford to the South, and during the Norman period it was the most important place from a military point of view in the west. The bard then would be safe in prophesying a battle and assembly at Shrewsbury.

As for Cyminawd, this may be Cyminod or Cymunod near Trefdraeth in Anglesey.⁷ Gruffudd ap Cynan made Anglesey his base in his first attempt to conquer Gwynedd. Whether any battle was actually fought there it is impossible to say, but it would not be unnatural for a bard in the time of Gruffudd ap Cynan to prophesy a victory for the "leader of Eryri" at Cyminawd.⁸ Most probably the battle never actually took place, for in subsequent Welsh prophecies the bards still await the coming of a conqueror who shall be victorious at Cyminawd.

As we have seen, Stephens⁹ dates the prophecy in the twelfth century, but he bases all his conclusions on passages which do not occur in the Black Book version, but which are in the Myfyrian Archaeology, and are later additions. Skene¹⁰ goes to the other extreme and thinks that it is a genuine old poem written about 623. It is difficult to see how such

⁶ *B.B.C.*, *Introd.*, p. xxiv.

⁷ Cp., the frequent references, at a later period, to battles near bogs and fords. *Ed.*

⁸ Prof. Gwynn Jones, *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, Vol. II, pp. 559-60.

⁹ *Literature of the Kymry*, *ut supra*.

¹⁰ *Four Ancient Books*, Vol. I, p. 224.

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a poem could contain prophecies of the return of Cynan and Cadwaladr, unless Skene regards these as later interpretations. The most reasonable conclusion seems to be that it was put together in its present form at least as early as the beginning of the Norman fighting in Wales. It may, of course, be earlier, but the description of the two princes coming across the sea, and the events mentioned fit in very well with the history of the coming of Gruffudd ap Cynan and Rhys ap Tewdwr.

The next poem, the "Hoianeau," in its old setting, resembles the "Afallenneu," and has already been discussed in this connection. It consists of twenty-five stanzas, so space will not allow the examination of each stanza separately. The predictions generally refer to events of the twelfth century, and the poem cannot be much older than the manuscript in which it is written, as will be clearly seen from such prophecies as that in the fourth stanza, where there is a reference to five chieftains of Normandy, the fifth of whom crosses to Ireland where he will cause war and confusion. He is represented as honouring the grave of Dewi; then trouble is prophesied from the quarrel of father and son, of which the country shall know:

Oian aparchellan oed reid gweti,
Rac offin pimp penaeth o nortmandi.
Ar pimhed in myned dros mor heli.
ÿ oreskin iwerton tirion trewi.
Ef gunahaud rýuel a difissci.
Ac arfev coch. ac och indi.
Ac winttuý in dihev a doant o heni.
Ac awnant enrýdet ar bet. Dewi.
Ami disgoganafe bid divisci.
o ýmlat mab a thad gulad ae guýbi.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 54, ll. 1-9.

This is obviously a reference to the conquest of Ireland by Henry II in 1172. The "five chiefs from Normandy" are William I, William II, Henry I, Stephen, and Henry II, the fifth who crossed "the salt sea" to Ireland being Henry II, who also made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint David on his way to Ireland. It is interesting to note that in Geoffrey's "Historia" it is the sixth and not the fifth who is prophesied to conquer Ireland. The quarrel between father and son probably refers to the quarrels between Henry and his sons, who aided the barons in their revolt against the king.

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There is another reference to King Henry in the last stanza where a "king who is not a king" is prophesied to follow Henry:

Ami dýsgoganawe gwýdi henri.
breenhin na breenhin brithwýd dybi.
ban vo pont ar taw ac arall ar týwi.

—*B.B.C.*, pp. 62-3, ll. 15-16, 1.

This is generally taken as referring to Henry, son of Henry II, who was crowned during his father's lifetime, so that he held the name of king without any of the power.¹¹ This prophecy however was not fulfilled for he never succeeded to the throne; he died before his father.

A certain Llywelyn of the line of Gwynedd figures in the first stanza:

Ami discoganafe a gwir uit.
Hid inaber taradir rac trausev prydein
kimrý oll inýeu kýfluit.
llyuelin y env oeissillit gwinet gur digorbit.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 52, ll. 11-14.

Dr. Evans considers this to refer to Llywelyn ap Cadwgan in Gwynedd, and a place called Aber Taradr in Hereford was laid waste by the Welsh in 1055.¹² This is possible, but the poet may have in mind one of the many expeditions of the great Llywelyn ap Ierwerth at a later period.

Other stanzas also seem to relate to his reign such as:

o g[yfuranc] lloegir allyvelin
aduit mab arwarr a[charr] kychuin . . .
ad vit frangc ar ffo fort ný ofin.

—*B.B.C.*, pp. 55-6, ll. 15-16, 1.

This stanza evidently refers to the burning of Bangor by King John in his expedition against Llywelyn in 1211, when he set out from Oswestry and passed through Corwen and Bangor. The bard prophesies that vengeance will be inflicted on the foreigner, who, through this outrage, has incurred the wrath of Deiniol the patron saint of Bangor.

¹¹ *B.B.C.*, *Intro.*, p. xxvii.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. xxvii.

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Stanza X seems to refer to the enmity between Llywelyn and Gwenwynwyn, prince of Powys :

Ry dibit div maurth dit guithlonet.
Kýwrug glýu powis achlas guinet.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 57, ll. 3-4.

and the petty quarrels of the Welsh chieftains are again referred to in Stanza VI :

Ami discoganaue haf guithlonet.
kýwrug brodorion brad owinet.
Ban diholer taguistil inhir otir guinet.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 55, ll. 8-10.

This stanza also has an interesting description of seven hundred ships with Danes coming to Aber Cleu (probably Aberdeugleddeu). Both Welsh and English kings were in the habit of getting Danish fleets from Dublin to aid them. Henry II in his first invasion of Wales had such a fleet which set out from Pembroke in 1157, so that the appearance of such a fleet of Danes would be no uncommon occurrence.

Stanza XI prophesies joy to the Cymry when an armed force sets out from Carmarthen to defend "dev kenev . . . o hil ris." This may refer to Llywelyn's expedition in South Wales in 1215, when he led the Southern princes, and Carmarthen surrendered.

In Stanza XVI we have a prophecy of a battle at "Machavvi," which was one of the battles prophesied in the "Afallenneu." In the same stanza it is said that a bear will arise from the South :

advit bore och, acoch ofuý
Arth odeheubarth adirchafuý.
Rýllettaud ý wir ew tra thir mýnvý.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 59, ll. 12-14.

In Stanza XVIII a dragon from the South is expected who will cause confusion in Dyfed. Both the bear and the dragon probably refer to an ideal deliverer such as Cadwaladr or Cynan. (Possibly we should read "kynan" for "kyuan" in the line "gurt kyuan uaran o lan teivi" in this stanza.)

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Cynan is also mentioned in stanza II in connection with some religious institution in Dyfed ; and the reference to a white bearded one of Dyfed :

unic bariffuin gvehin dived.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 53, l. 5.

recalls the prophecy of Merlin in the *Historia*, of the "old man . . . snowy white" . . . who "shall turn aside the river of Pereiron."

Cynan and Cadwaladr are several times mentioned. Stanza XIV opens with a vivid description of warfare in Gwynedd ; of the blare of trumpets, of battered armour ; of battles when the Normans come over the "wide pool" :

Ban dottint. ve. guir guinet ev gueith maur.
laffnev in ertirn kirn aganhaur.
Briuhauð llurugev rac llim waewaur.
Ban diffon nortmin yar lldan llin
advit imurthrin ina gan vitinaur.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 58, ll. 7-11.

Then comes the prophecy of the two chieftains Cynan and Cadwaladr, who will rule justly and generously, bringing relief after long affliction :

Ami disgoganaue. Deu priodaur.
a luniont tegnevet onef. hid laur.
Kýnan kadwaladir Kýmri penbaladir
bitaud eu kinatil aedmýccaaur.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 58, ll. 10-13.

Stanza XVII also refers to Cadwaladr and mentions Owain and the battle of "Coed Lluiuein" :

Ami discoganaue. kad coed lluiuein.
a geloraur rution rac ruthir Owein.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 60, ll. 2-4.

This seems to be a reference to the battle of Argoed Llwyfain, where Owain ap Urien in the sixth century defeated "Fflamddwyn." Taliesin has a poem on the event.¹³ The bard of the "Hoianeu" was probably thinking of Owain Gwynedd when writing this prophecy and foretells that he will be victorious just as the other Owain was.

¹³ See J. Morris-Jones, Taliesin. *Cymmrodor*, XXVIII, p. 154.

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Stanza XX gives a list of battles which are to come :

Ami discoganawe. Kad ar ýton.
A chad machavvy. Achad avon.
Achad cors mochno. Achad im mon.
Achad kyminaud. Achad caerlleon.
Achad aber gweith. Achad ieithion.

—B.B.C., p. 61, ll. 1-4.

This list is very interesting, because we find these battles named again and again in later prophecies. As we have already seen, Machavvy and Cyminawd were mentioned in the "Afallenau," and a Rhyd Vochnwy mentioned in the latter is probably the same as Cors Fochno here. This battle is the most popular battle in later prophecies. Cors Fochno is the name given to the dreary stretch of bog on the southern side of the estuary of the Dyfi which flows into the sea in Cardigan bay not far from Aberystwyth. Skene thinks that the fame which Cors Fochno attained has something to do with King Maelgwn, who was supposed to have gained supremacy over the other three kings of Wales on the sandy shore of the estuary which was afterwards called Traeth Maelgwn.¹⁴ This may be so, for there is no record of any actual battle at Cors Fochno, but there seems to be another reason for its popularity in the vaticinations. The Welsh in their wars against the Saxons and Normans frequently profited from the fact that they knew their wild country well, whereas the Saxons being strangers would be lost in the woods and bogs. We know that the unwieldy armies of the English kings suffered much in the marshy country on the western side of the Dee. The Welsh, then, might well expect to gain a victory in a district like Cors Fochno, for they would know the paths across the bog, while their enemies, not knowing these paths, would most probably come to grief in trying to follow them.¹⁵

The bard was also quite safe in predicting battles to happen at the other places he mentions. In the wars against the English kings, fruitful Anglesey played a very important part as a basis for the Welsh from which they were able to draw supplies. The English kings realised this with the result that

¹⁴ Skene, *Four Ancient Books*, Vol. I, p. 65.

¹⁵ See note by T. Gwynn Jones, *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, Vol. II, p. 559.

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battles in Mona were of no uncommon occurrence. Chester, too, was the scene of frequent battles for it was the key to North Wales, and a starting point for the English in their expeditions against the Northern princes. The river Ieithon, a tributary of the Wye, which falls into it about seven miles above Builth, must have witnessed many struggles. We see, then, that prophecies of these battles had every chance of coming true.

The "Hoianeu" also contains several interesting prophecies which throw light on events of the time. In the fifth stanza we have a picture of the perjury of petty chieftains and the oppression of the English stewards :

Penaetheu bychein anudonauc.
Meiri manged am pen keinhauc.

—B.B.C., p. 54, ll. 13-14.

Then come a few lines which reveal the impression made on the popular mind by the ships and two-edged lances of the Normans :

Pan diffon dros mor guir eneichauc.
Kad meirch. y danunt ve. deu wynepauc.
Deuwlaen. ar euguaev anoleithauc.

—B.B.C., pp. 54-55, ll. 14-16, 1.

The "two faced war steeds" on which they come across the sea, are, of course, the ships of the Normans, which had figures and heads on their prows. With this we may compare the description of the coming of the Normans in the "Vita Merlini"¹⁶ :

"Then the Normans sailing over the water in their wooden ships, bearing their faces in front and in back, shall fiercely attack the Angles with their iron tunics and their sharp swords."

Stanza V continues with a description of the desolation brought by war—a time of ploughing without reaping, when the wretched people will long for death :

erti hep medi ymbid dyhetauc
guell bet. no buhet pop yghenauc.

—B.B.C., p. 55, ll. 1-2.

¹⁶ Parry, *Vita Merlini* I, 654-7, trans. p. 71.

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This is followed by a description of a kind of four cornered head-dress which women will wear :

Cirrn ar y guraget pedryfanhauc.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 55, l. 3.

Stanza XIII also refers to dress :

atuit dillad hoev a gloev dullin.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 58, l. 6.

The evils of the church are portrayed in Stanza IX for bishops will protect thieves and monks will be sinful. Stanza XXI refers to the faithless bishops of a strange tongue :

Escÿp agkÿueith diffeith difid.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 61, l. 9.

The Welsh church practically lost its independence in the reign of Henry I, but it continued to struggle for some time afterwards. Owain Gwynedd was a stalwart defender of the national church, and rather than accept the nominee of Canterbury kept the see of Bangor vacant. Giraldus Cambrensis three times journeyed to Rome to lay his case before the Pope.¹⁷

He wished to be appointed to the see of St. Davids, and was supported by the Welsh princes, who, in an epistle, pointed out the evils of appointing English bishops who could not understand the language of the people. Giraldus' mission failed and an English bishop was appointed to the see. This stanza reflects the hatred which was felt for these bishops and moral depravity is prophesied :

Mortruan. ydyuod ac ew dÿbit.
Morÿnion moelon. guraget revit.
Karant nÿ pharchant eu kerenhit.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 61, ll. 6-8.

and again in stanza XXIV :

Ami discoganawe kin. gorffen bid.
Gwraget heb gvilet. Gwir heb guruhid.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 62, ll. 10-11.

¹⁷ Lloyd, *History of Wales*, Vol. II, pp. 625 *et seq.*

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Stanza XXII tells us that minstrels, though they wait around the doorway, shall have no reward :

Kertorion allan heb ran teithi.
Kÿn safont inÿ drvs thus nys deuipi.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 61, ll. 11-13.

The same stanza refers to a meeting of "Gwtil a brithon a romani," who will cause confusion on the banks of the Teifi.

From this analysis of the poem we see that it cannot possibly be earlier in the form we have it than the twelfth century.

The next poem we shall deal with is the "Cyfoesi Merddin" which we have also previously discussed in its relation to the "Vita Merlini." It is found in the Red Book of Hergest, and also a portion of it in Peniarth MS. 3, a manuscript dating from about 1300.

As we have seen, it is in the form of a dialogue between Myrddin and his sister Gwenddydd. The date of the poem in its present form cannot be earlier than the twelfth century, as we see from the reference to the son of Henry II in some of the stanzas :

keneu henri ryuyget.
byth ynyoes nyt oes waret.
—*R.B.*, col. 580, ll. 27-28.

Gwenddydd then asks who will rule after "mab henri" and is told :

Pan uo pont ardaf ac arall ardywi
y daw ar loegyr dyuysgi.
ami disgogaf wedy mab henri.
brenhin na vrenhin brithuyt aui.
—*Col.* 580, ll. 30-34.

This is almost identical with the prophecy in the last stanza of the "Hoianeu," except that here the "brenin na vrenhin" is prophesied to follow the son of Henry and not Henry himself, as in the "Hoianeu." There seems to be some confusion here, for if the "brenhin na vrenhin" is actually the son of Henry as was suggested in the case of the "Hoianeu," then it seems strange that the bard should here prophesy that the "brenhin na vrenhin" is to follow the son of Henry. Possibly this represents an attempt on the part of a later scribe, after the

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death of the son of Henry II, to adapt the prophecy to later events by making "brenhin na vrenhin" refer to Richard I, who spent but a few months of his reign in England.

The poem is a composite one and undoubtedly, as has been suggested by Stephens and Skene, it consists of portions compiled at different dates. Many of the stanzas are very corrupt, and it is practically impossible to make much sense of them. The first portion of the poem gives a summary of the Kings of Britain down to the time of Cadwaladr. (Stanzas 1-26).

Gwr hir . . . yn kadw kynnydyl.
a phrydein . . . yn un paladyr
goreu mab . . . kymro katwaladyr.

—R.B., col. 578, ll. 19-22.

Then comes a list of the princes of Wales down to Hywel Dda (Stanzas 26-40) and this is followed by a list of other princes, who cannot be identified, such as Cynan of the Dogs, Gruffudd, Macwy Deu Hanner and the like (Stanzas 40-65). Stephens attempts to identify these with real people but his account is rather far-fetched,¹⁸ and the suggestion of Skene, that this poem must have been composed during the reign of Hywel Dda, and that the kings prophesied to follow him are purely imaginary, seems more reasonable.¹⁹ Then comes the portion (Stanzas 66-102) dealing with events of the twelfth century, and this is followed (Stanzas 102-end) with purely legendary material.

The poem therefore consists of material which belongs to at least two different periods, the twelfth century portion being a later addition to what was probably a composition of the time of Hywel Dda.

The first portion calls for little comment as it is only a list of kings with occasional interesting details, as in the stanza prophesying the coming of Anarawd, which refers to his victory over the English at Conway in 880 :

Arlann konwy kymwy
duw merchyr etmyckawr ydauawt.
arbennic aryen anarawt.

—R.B., col. 579, ll. 4-6.

¹⁸ *Literature of the Kymry*, p. 215.

¹⁹ Skene, *Four Ancient Books*, Vol. I, p. 239. [This suggestion had already been made by Ed. Lhuyd, *Arch. Brit.*—Ed.]

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Some of the stanzas describing the imaginary princes to follow Hywel are interesting because they are cited in later prophecies. One describes Cynan as a lone man arising from concealment :

Dyrchauawt unic o gud.
nyt achatuo ydeurud.
kynan ykwn kymry bieuyd.

—R.B., col. 579, ll. 19-21.

In Stanza 59 "deu idas am dir" are referred to and these are probably the same as the two Judases in Stanza 23 of the "Hoianeu."

The cryptic "Macwy deu hanner," whose retinue is compared with the stars in number, is frequently mentioned in later prophecies.

The later part of the poem, with its reference to Henry and his son, has already been compared with the "Hoianeu." But the Cyfoesi goes further than the "Hoianeu" and prophesies the coming of a "foolish king" after "brenhin na vrenhin," who will be deceived by the men of Lloegr and under whom there will be no prosperity :

Llet ynuyt urenhin adaw
agwyr lloegyr ynydwyllaw
nybyd gwlatlwyd y danaw . . .
Panuo lloegyr yn griduan
achymr[y] yn d[r]jycanyan
ybyd ylluyd bwhwman.

—R.B., col. 580, ll. 36-38, 40-42.

This seems to refer to King John who caused trouble in England and Wales, and the phrase "a gwyr lloegyr yn y dwyllaw" might well refer to the rebellion of the barons against him.

The next stanza predicts the coming of one of the six who have been in long concealment :

Ef a gyfyt un orchwech.
ary uu ynhir ynlllech.
ar loegyr auyd gortrech.

—R.B., col. 581, ll. 1-3.

This is seen to be Owain who will conquer as far as London :

Deuot yw dyuot owein.
agoresgyn hyt lundein.
arodi ygymry goeluein.

—R.B., col. 581, ll. 5-6.

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and who will rule "pump mlynedd a dwy ualkynt." Owain is connected with Manaw :

Pan uo Owein ym manaw
a chat ymprydyd geirllaw.
biawt gwr ef agwyr idaw.

—R.B., col. 581, ll. 13-15.

This is the earliest reference we have come across to Owain in the prophecies. From this passage we see that Owain has been long in concealment, and like Arthur and Cadwaladr is expected to return to lead the Welsh to triumph. We see from the line "Devod yw dyuot owein," that this was a well-known prophecy probably of long standing. Who this traditional "Owein" of the bards originally was, it is difficult to say. As he is associated with the Isle of Man here, it may be that Owain ap Edwin was in the bard's mind.²⁰ As we shall see, Owain became one of the most popular long looked-for deliverers of later vaticinations, and the prophecy of his return was applied to more than one Owain in succession. In this poem it is not improbable that the glory of Owain Gwynedd, the champion of Wales against Henry II, influenced the bard. It does not seem necessary to assume as Stephens does, that the passage refers definitely two to Owains, Owain Gwynedd, in the stanzas 75-9, and Owain ap Edwin in Stanza 81. The bard may have had both these Owains in mind, but he makes it quite clear that he is referring to the return of a traditional Owain who has long been in concealment, and not to any particular historical figure.

After Owain, Beli Hir is to reign, and then Cadwaladr will come with his men to defend Gwynedd, and he will rule three hundred and three years and three months. He is followed by Cynda. Then comes a very obscure passage referring to the misery of the Cymry. There will be no place for priest or for minstrel, and altars will be neglected, and finally the heavens will fall to earth. There is a criticism of the monks implied in stanza 129 :

Ny chymmeraf gymun gan ysgymun uyneich
ac eu twygeu ar euclun.

—R.B., col. 583, ll. 31-33.

²⁰ See Stephens, *Lit. Kymry*, p. 216.

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The poem ends with the expression of the lament of Myrddin and Gwenddydd at the thought of their coming separation, and they commend each other to God.

It is obvious that the "Myrddin" of such a late poem as this is far removed from the Myrddin of the sixth century.

The last prophetic poem attributed to Myrddin which occurs in the Red Book of Hergest is "Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y bedd." It is found also in the detached portion of the White Book of Rhydderch.²¹

The poem consists of prophecies which are supposed to be spoken by Myrddin from his grave, and begins with the words "Gwr a leueir yny bed." It describes how he formerly drank wine from a goblet, and gives his name as Myrddin son of Morfryn. Then Myrddin begins to prophesy and says that the coming of an opposer will bring distress :

Pan del gwr gwrthryn yar olwyn du.
y lad lloegyr llwybyr wehyn . . .
hir neuet giwet gymry.

—R.B., col. 584, ll. 8-9, 11-12.

The "olwyn" of the first line is probably an epithet referring to a horse.²²

This "gwr gwrthryn" seems to be followed by a "red one of Normandy" :

Panduyo [pandyuo] coch nordmandi
y holi lloegyrwys treul diffwys.

—R.B., col. 384, ll. 14-16.

This may be William Rufus for there is a reference to a castle at Aberhodni, and we know that Bernard of Newmarch, during the reign of William II, "began to build a castle with ten towers, some square and some round, at Brecon."²³

Then comes a prophecy of the coming of a "strong freckled one" to the ford of Pengarn, and afterwards Henry is described as coming to Mur Castell.

Pandyuo henri yholi mur kastell
y deruyn eryri.
galwawt gormes dragweilgi.

—R.B., col. 584, ll. 20-22.

²¹ P. 12 (mid 14th cent.).

²² See T. Gwynn Jones, *Rhieingerddi'r Gogynfeirdd*.

²³ O. M. Edwards, *Wales*, p. 56.

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This refers to the expedition of Henry I against Gruffudd ap Cynan in 1114. Henry made elaborate preparations and divided his army into three sections, but his powerful forces met at Mur Castell in Ardudwy. Gruffudd ap Cynan had to surrender. The last line possibly refers to the fact that Henry I had to leave Wales quickly to go to France, for at this period 1100-19 he was continually at war with his elder brother Robert, who claimed the English throne.

After Henry a "white feeble one" is described as coming to London. This is probably a reference to Stephen, a generous but weak king.

Then suddenly will come a youth of high degree,

aoresgyn mil dinas
hoedel egin brenhin o was.

—R.B., col. 584, ll. 27-28.

This may be Henry of Anjou, the young son of Matilda, who was victorious in the civil war 1139-53. He afterwards became Henry II.

However, the references to "y gwyn gwan," and the "mab mawr y urdas" who follows him, are vague enough to be genuine prophecies written by a bard in the reign of Henry I. All that we can say definitely is, that the poem was written during the twelfth century, probably during the first half.

After the list of rulers there are several stanzas beginning "Byt a uyd," foretelling what will happen in the life of the people. A period of moral depravity will come:

Byt avyd bryt wrth uawrdes.
ydydant gwragedeint llaes vuches.
bydant llu meibyonein eukyffes.

R.B., col. 584, ll. 30-33.

The same "tes" is referred to again:

Byt auyd bryd wrth ydes.
yt wnahe taeawc yles.
disgiwen bun gwrthbwyth²⁴ gwas.

—R.B., col. 584, ll. 33-35.

²⁴ Professor Gwynn Jones suggests "gwrthbwyll."

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Evils of the church are described in another stanza. Oaths will be broken, churches neglected, and faith weak:

Byt avyd bryt wrthlyeu.
byw mall agwall arlanneu.
torredawd geir achreiren
eudiuanwawt gwir lletawt geu.
gwan ffyd bob eildyd dadleu.

—R.B., col. 584, ll. 39-43.

Men will delight in nothing but hunting:

Byt auyd bryt wrth erchwys.

—Col. 584, l. 37.

and clothes:

Byt auyd bryt wrth dillat.

—Col. 584, l. 43.

which will be expensive:

heb werth mawr nychaffawr crys.

—Col. 584, ll. 38-39.

The bard will be empty-handed, but the priest will be gay:

gwacillaw bard hard effeiryat.

—Col. 585, l. 1-2.

Men will be without manliness:

Pandyuo yr gwyr heb wryt.

—R.B., col. 585, ll. 5-6.

and young men will die of adversity; even the cuckoos in spring will perish of cold:

Byt auyd agorffen oet
pallant ieueinc rac adwyd.
mei marw cogeu rac annwyd.

—Col. 584, ll. 35-37.

Then shall come a period of bad harvests:

Byt auyd heb wynt heb law.
heb ormod eredic heb drathreulyaw.
tir digawn uyd un erw ynaw.

—Col. 585, ll. 3-5.

The evils described in this poem resemble those described in the "Hoianeu." In both, periods of moral depravity are foretold; the evils of the church are referred to, and the fondness for dress. The bards suffer and are empty-handed, men are without manliness. This resemblance is natural, for the poems deal mostly with events of the same century.

After this description the poem ends with a list of battles to occur at Aber Sor, Aber Auon, Aber Dwfyr, and Aberydun, where there will be "gwaet rud ar rud saesson." The list is incomplete in the Red Book and the White Book, for the poem breaks off suddenly. Later manuscripts have a version of the poem²⁵ which continues for many lines referring chiefly to contention in Gwynedd and the destruction of Llandudoch by the Danes²⁶:

disgoganaf y lan tudoch.
na bydd na c[h]ledir na chloch.

but this may be a later addition.

The five poems, "Bedwenni," "Afallenneu," "Hoianeu," "Cyfoesi," and "Gwasgargerdd," represent the oldest vaticinal poems in Welsh attributed to Myrddin. They contain, as we have seen, references to events of the eleventh and twelfth and possibly thirteenth centuries, so that they cannot, in their present form, be earlier than that period. They contain, however, some stanzas which have none of this late vaticinatory material, and are concerned with Rhydderch Hael, Gwenddoleu, and Gwenddydd, who were northern characters and with whom Myrddin is associated in Welsh tradition. Stanzas 5, 6 and 7, in the "Afallenneu," and Stanza 3 in the "Hoianeu," with the close of "Cyfoesi Myrddin," are examples of this kind, and these may be old and at any rate may have formed the model on which the other stanzas with their spurious prophecies were composed. Probably there were much shorter forms of these poems, having as their subject the madness of Myrddin, the sixth century bard. The fact that there exists an Irish parallel to the Welsh legend in "The Adventures of Suibhne Geilt," proves that poems dealing with such a subject might have existed in Welsh. The Irish poem, too, free as it is from late vaticinations, gives us an idea of what such Welsh poems would have been like. Suibhne addresses various trees, and a little stag, and the present form of the Welsh poems suggests that they were originally addresses of the same type. Myrddin

²⁵ See *Myf. Arch.*, p. 108-113, also P. 50, p. 41 and P. 26, p. 46.

²⁶ Lloyd, *Hist. of Wales*, Vol. I, p. 351, refers to the sacking of Llandudoch in 988.

addresses the birch tree in the "Bedwenni," the apple tree in the "Afallenneu," and the little pig in the "Hoianeu." Such poems would invite interpolation, and this, combined with the fact that Myrddin was famed as a prophet, accounts for the vaticinations which were superimposed on the original material.

Frequently the first lines of a stanza contain only the legendary material, as in Stanza X of the "Hoianeu." The first six lines describe the feasting of Rhydderch Hael and the suffering of Myrddin, and this may represent a portion of the old poem. Then come six lines containing late vaticinations, which have no connection whatever with the first part of the stanza, and were probably tacked on to it by a twelfth century scribe, by the simple expedient of using the same end-rhyme.

The "Afallenneu" contains more of the original material than any of the other poems and less of the late vaticinations. The "Hoianeu" has more of these later prophecies, but the original material has not altogether been ousted.

It is possible that the "Hoianeu" is modelled on the "Afallenneu" as Skene, following Stephens,²⁷ has suggested,²⁸ for the phrase "Oian a parchellan" occurs twice in the "Afallenneu," Stanzas I and IV. In the "Cyfoesi" the vaticinations gain the upper hand and references to the legend are scattered, though the dialogue form of the poem is probably old. The "Bedwenni" is purely vaticinal and except for the fact that the poem is supposed to be addressed by Myrddin to the birch trees, it has no connection with the legend at all. The same is true of the "Gwasgargerdd." Myrddin is mentioned in the first two stanzas, but afterwards there is nothing to connect it with the older material. We see then, that these Welsh poems attributed to Myrddin represent different stages in the adaptation of the older poems for vaticinatory purposes. The "Afallenneu" and "Hoianeu" represent the earliest stage we have, then comes the "Cyfoesi," and lastly the "Bedwenni" and "Gwasgargerdd," which have lost practically all connection with the older material.

²⁷ Stephens, *Lit. Kym.*, p. 277.

²⁸ *Four Ancient Books*, Vol. I, p. 223.

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It is interesting to notice too, that these poems have very little in common with Geoffrey's prophecies of Merlin. There are, as we have seen, one or two resemblances, but apart from the Cadwaladr prophecy, which, as we shall prove later, is not borrowed from Geoffrey, there is nothing to suggest that the Welsh poems owe anything to the "Historia" or the "Vita Merlini."

There is practically no animal symbolism in the Welsh poems. The bear and the dragon are mentioned in the "Hoianeu,"

Arth odeheubarth adirchafuŷ.

—B.B.C., p. 59, ll. 13-14.

Dirchafaud dreic faud fau isperi.

—B.B.C., p. 60, ll. 9-10.

and a "whelp" is referred to in the "Hoianeu" and "Cyfoesi," but that is all. Now, if these poems were modelled on Geoffrey's prophecies of Merlin, they would surely have reproduced what is the most prominent characteristic of those prophecies—the abundant animal symbolism. The fact that they do not, leads one inevitably to conclude that these poems belong to a class of material which was independent of Geoffrey. As we have seen, the "Afallenau," even in its present garb, seems to belong to a period before Geoffrey wrote, and it is by no means impossible that poems of this type, attributed to Myrddin, existed in Wales centuries before the appearance of the Historia.

A fragment of a prophecy attributed to Myrddin occurs in the History of Gruffudd ap Cynan, which was probably composed in the reign of Owain Gwynedd, at least before 1171.²⁹ The writer, after giving the pedigrees of Gruffudd "herwyd byd" and "herwyd duw," quotes a prophecy of "merdin vard y brytanyeit," which foretold the triumph of Gruffudd. "Ef ae daroganws merdin ef ynni val hynn. Llŷminauc lletfer a daroganer anaeth diarvor dŷgosel llegrur ŷ enw llŷcraut llawer. Sef ŷu henne en lladin. Saltus ferinus praesagitur," etc.³⁰ This fragment is obviously in verse and the rhymes lletfer, daroganer, dŷgosel, llawer, prove that it must

²⁹ Arthur Jones, *Hist. of Gruffydd ap Cynan*, Introd., pp. 16 et seq.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 110.

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be early, as pointed out by Professor Ifor Williams.³¹ It shows that there were in existence Welsh prophecies attributed to Myrddin which were held in high esteem by Welshmen of the twelfth century. The writer of the history picks out a fragment of one of these prophecies and applies it to Gruffudd ap Cynan in order to enhance the glory of his hero.

There is also a reference to Myrddin in a poem "Arymes Prydein Vawr," which is considered to be much earlier than the twelfth century. In it Myrddin is said to have prophesied a battle between the Cymry and the Saxon stewards at the river Dee.

Dysgogan Myrdin kyferuyd hyn.

ŷn aber perydon meiryon mechteyrn.

—B.T., p. 13, ll. 15-16.

The next group of predictive poems to be found in Welsh manuscripts is that in the Book of Taliesin, also reproduced by Gwenogvryn Evans. In this manuscript which dates from the late thirteenth century, there are thirteen poems containing vaticinatory material in addition to historical and mythological poems, all attributed to Taliesin.³² Much has been written on the historical poems and there have been many theories put forward as to the date of Taliesin, most of which have been summarised by J. Morris-Jones,³³ who puts forward a very strong case for the existence of a bard Taliesin in the sixth century. He deals chiefly with the historical poems, passing over the predictive poems because he considers them to be spurious. This is undoubtedly the case. As in the case of Myrddin, Taliesin attained fame as a prophet. Like Myrddin, too, Taliesin was connected with the court of Rhydderch Hael and probably posed as a prophet during his lifetime. Later bards made use of his name as they did of that of Myrddin, to give authority to their own predictions.

The first predictive poem that occurs in the Book of Taliesin, is the "Erymes detbrawt," which we have previously discussed. The next is a long predictive poem

³¹ *Y Beirniad*, 1916, p. 131.

³² Evans, *Facsimile and Text, Book of Taliesin*.

³³ J. Morris-Jones, *Taliesin. Cymmrodor*, Vol. XXVIII.

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called "Arymes prydein vawr"³⁴ which foretells the eventual triumph of the Welsh over the English. Ifor Williams has an excellent analysis of this poem in his criticism of Evans' theories and treatment of the text.³⁵

The poem opens with a prophecy that the men of Dublin and the Irish of Ireland, the men of Anglesey, Cornwall, and the men of the Clyde will all join with the Welsh to scatter the foreigner as far as Durham :

Gwaethyl gwyr hyt gaer weir gwasgarawt allmyn.
gwnahawnt goruoled gwedy gwehyn.
achymot kymry agwyr dilyn.
Gwydyl iwerdon mon aphrydyn.
cornyw achludwys eu kynnwys genhyn.
—B.T., p. 13, ll. 6-10.

Then comes a description of the oppression of the stewards of the Saxon King, who will come to the Dee to collect extortionate taxes :

Meiryon eu tretheu dychynnullyn.
Ygketoed kymry nat oed atelhyn.
—B.T., p. 13, ll. 18-19.

It is suggested that the English bought Thanet at the expense of the Cymry :

Eu kynnyd bu ywrthym yn anuonhed.
—B.T., p. 14, l. 1.

Great misery will result from oppression :

dechymyd aghen agheu llawer.
decymyd anaeleu dagreu gwraged.
—B.T., p. 14, ll. 3-4.

and eventually the Cymry will refuse to pay the taxes. Then will ensue a battle and Welsh and English will meet " . . . yam lan . . . ac am allt . . . ac am gwy." The Saxons will fall and the stewards for their deceit will wallow in pools of blood :

Meiryon yg werth eu geu yneu creinhyn.
Eu bydin ygwaetlin yn eu kylchyn.
—B.T., 14 ll. 24-25.

³⁴ B.T., Evans' reprod., pp. 13-18, *Myv. Arch.*, pp. 72-4.

³⁵ *Y Beirniad*, 1916, p. 207, *et seq.*

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The stewards of Cirencester will regret that they ever came to the Dee, and the few that will return will relate their experiences to their wives who will wash out their blood-soaked shirts :

dyhed yeu gwraged adywedant.
eu crysseu yn llawn creu a orolchant.
—B.T., p. 15, ll. 7-9.

The men of the South will not spare the Saxons :

llym llifeit llafnawr llwyr ylladant.
—B.T., p. 15, ll. 10-11.

The armies of the mighty Cadwaladr will come and Cynan will be in the van.

Then there will be

creu rud ar rud allmyn.
—B.T., p. 15, l. 22.

(This line is found also in the "Gwasgargerdd" describing a battle at "Aberydon," which probably stands for Aberperrydon.)

Blessed will be the Cymry when these two leaders come, and the south need no longer fear the king's stewards, who will have little to boast of. As a result of the battle there will be widows, riderless horses, and piteous groaning.

Atui guraged gwedw ameirch gweilyd.
Atui obein vthyr rac ruthyr ketwyr.
—B.T., p. 16, ll. 14-15.

The armies of the Cymry, Irish and Danes of Dublin, will fight under the banner of Dewi (*ibid.*, ll. 22-23). They will challenge the rights of the Saxons who have trampled on them since the time of Vortigern, and have not respected their saints :

Gofynnant yr saesson py geissyssant.
pwy meint eu dylyet or wlad adalyant.
cw mae eu herw pan seilyassant.
cw mae eukenedloed py vro pan doethant. . .
neu vreint an saint pyr ysaghyssant.
neu reitheu dewi pyr ytorrassant.
—B.T., p. 16, ll. 25-26; p. 17, ll. 1-2, 4-5.

With the aid of "Garmawn garant" the Cymry will pay back to the Saxons "y pedeir blyned ar petwar cant." Ifor Williams suggests an explanation of this difficult passage.³⁶ The "kindred of Garmon" he considers to be the Irish, as Garmon was the nephew of Saint Patrick. The "four hundred and four years," according to him, is a reference based on a mistaken idea that the Saxons came in 400 B.C., so that the meaning would be that the Irish would aid the Cymry in avenging some such event as "Brad y Cyllyll Hirion."

Not only the Irish, but the men of Dumbarton and of Brittany will aid the Cymry, and the writer expresses a wish that the Saxons should lose their possessions and also :

Boet creu boet agheu eu kyweithyd.

—*B.T.*, p. 17, l. 22.

This is followed by a description of the two leaders Cynan and Cadwaladr :

Kynan achatwaladyr kadyr ynlluyd.
Etmyccaur hyt vrawt ffawt aedeubyd.
Deu unben degyn dwys eu kussyl.
deu orsegyn [*sic.*] saesson opleit dofyd.
deu hael deu gedawl gwlat warthegydyd.
deu diarchar barawt vnffawd vnffyd.
deu erchwynawc prydein mirein luyd.
deu arth nys gwna gwarth kyfarth beunydyd.

—*B.T.*, pp. 17, ll. 22-26; 18, ll. 1-3.

They will rule "O Vynaw hyt lydaw . . . o dyuet hyt danet . . . o wawl hyt weryt" according to the prophecies of the "derwydon," and the Saxons will be expelled, fleeing through the port of Sandwich, which, as Ifor Williams points out³⁷ was one of the most famous ports during the period from the seventh to the eleventh centuries.

The poem concludes with a claim that it is the only true prophecy :

Na cheisswynt lyfrawr nac agawr brydyd.
Arymes yr ynys hon namyn hyn ny byd.

—*B.T.*, p. 18, ll. 20-22.

This is followed by a prayer.

³⁶ *Y Beirniad*, 1916, pp. 211-2.

³⁷ *Y Beirniad*, 1916, p. 136.

We see then, that the poem is a prophecy of the triumph of the Welsh and their allies led by Cynan and Cadwaladr against the Saxon oppressors. As it contains a reference to Cadwaladr it cannot possibly be a genuine poem of the sixth century bard Taliesin. There is, however, no reference to the coming of the Normans or to any events after the Norman conquest. According to Stephens the form "allmyn," which occurs more than once in the poem, proves it to be late, but Ifor Williams refutes this argument, pointing out that "allmyn" is a form derived from "all" (cf. *allfro*) and "myn" plural of English "mon" (man).

The rhyme scheme of the poem shows evidence of antiquity. Classed rhymes occur; for example: *gwagedd*; *lletfer* (ll. 37-8); *gweilydd*; *ketwyr* (ll. 118-9); *kyfergyr*; *kytffydd* (ll. 125-6); *kussyl*; *dofydd* (ll. 164-5). This type of rhyme is not used by twelfth century bards. The absence of regular cynghanedd is also evidence of antiquity.

There is frequent mention of the Danes in the poem, so that it probably belongs to the period of Danish invasions. "Gwyr dulyn" are mentioned apart from "Gwydyl iwerdon," the reference most probably being to the Danes who settled in Dublin in the ninth century. The poem therefore was probably composed towards the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century, as Ifor Williams states in the conclusion of his article: "Sut bynnag, ni welaf ddim yn nefnydd y gân nac yn ei hiaith, wrth ei chymharu â'r nodiadau o'r wythfed a'r nawfed ganrif (a elwir y Glosses) i'm rhwystro i gredu ddarfod ei chyfansoddi tua diwedd y nawfed ganrif neu ddechrau'r ddegfed yn y fan bellaf."³⁸

This poem is the longest, and from a literary point of view the best and clearest of the prophecies attributed to Taliesin. It is rarely that these predictive poems have the poetic fire and ringing challenge which we find in the "Arymes."

In the course of this work we have frequently mentioned the Cynan-Cadwaladr prophecy, and as this prophecy occurs in very many of the poems attributed to Taliesin, it will be convenient to consider its origin and development here. As

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 212.

we have seen, several versions of it exist in Welsh poems attributed to Myrddin and in the Merlin prophecies of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Cadwaladr was the last of the Welsh princes who held the title of Gwledig or chief sovereign of Britain. His father Cadwallon succeeded in holding the crown of Britain for a year, but was killed by Oswald in 635. His son Cadwaladr had to face powerful enemies, and in his time the country was distracted by a plague. With Cadwaladr's death the struggle for the North practically came to an end, and was decided in favour of the Angles.³⁹

There are different accounts of Cadwaladr's death. According to Nennius he died of the plague. "Oswin, son of Ethelfrid, reigned twenty eight years and six months. During his reign there was a dreadful mortality among his subjects, when Cetgualart (Cadwaladr) was king among the Britons succeeding his father; and he himself died among the rest."⁴⁰

It is not very clear from this passage whether it was Oswy or Cadwaladr who died of the plague, but most probably it was Cadwaladr, for in the *Annales Cambriae* under the year 682 he is said to have died of the plague.

Cadwaladr is mentioned in the Triads more than once. According to one, he was struck by Golyddan, a bard. "Teir gwith baluawt ynys prydain . . . ardryded adrewis golydan uard ar gadwaladyr vendigeit."⁴¹ Another triad mentions him as one of the "tri hualog eur ynys brydain,"⁴² while in a third he is one of "Tri Menwedigion Teyrned ynys Prydain," and is praised for helping those who fled from the Saxons.⁴³ The triads are not always reliable as historical evidence but they record the traditions of the people.

After his death Cadwaladr was made a Saint and soon a legend developed that he would again return to lead the Cymry to victory. A form of this tradition appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Historia," where there is an account of

³⁹ See Lloyd, *Hist. of Wales*, Vol. I, p. 230.

⁴⁰ Translation quoted in Gould and Fisher, *Lives of Brit. Saints*, Vol. II, p. 43.

⁴¹ Triads, Rhys and Evans, *Mabinogion*, p. 301.

⁴² *Op. cit.*, p. 305.

⁴³ *Myv. Arch.*, p. 404, No. 35.

Cadwaladr fleeing from the Plague to Armorica where he was received by Alan. When the plague had ceased, Cadwaladr prepared to return but an angel forbade him "for that God had willed the Britons should no longer reign in Britain before that time should come whereof Merlin had prophesied unto Arthur."⁴⁴ He was told to go to Rome and the Voice added that "the Britons should again possess the island by merit of their faith when the appointed time should come, but that this time should not be until the Britons had obtained his relics and had translated them from Rome into Britain." Cadwaladr obeys the command and is duly confirmed by Pope Sergius at Rome where he dies in 689.

This tradition of the return of Cadwaladr is, as we have seen, referred to in the prophecies of Merlin, in the *Historia*, Book VII. "Cadwaladr shall call unto Conan and shall receive Albany into his fellowship . . . The island shall be called by the name of Brutus, and the name given by the foreigners shall be done away."⁴⁵ It is also to be found in the *Vita Merlini*:

"The Britons shall through weakness lose their noble kingdom for a long time, until Conan shall come in his chariot from Brittany and Cadwaladr the venerated leader of the Welsh, who shall join together Scots and Cumbrians, Cornishmen and men of Brittany in a firm league, and shall return to their people their lost crown, expelling the enemy and renewing the times of Brutus."⁴⁶

It has sometimes been said that the prophecy of the return of Cadwaladr was invented by Geoffrey, but as a matter of fact it existed in Welsh long before Geoffrey's time, as is proved by the poem "Arymes Prydain Fawr," which we have just examined, where it is prophesied that Cynan and Cadwaladr will lead the Welsh against the English oppressors. It is also interesting to note that in this poem a league of Welshmen, Irishmen, Danes, the men of Scotland, Cornwall and Brittany, is described as being formed against the English (ll. 9-11; ll. 147-154). This is very similar to

⁴⁴ *Hist. of Kings of Britain*, p. 221.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁴⁶ Parry, *Vita Merlini*, p. 85, ll. 965-73, trans., p. 87.

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Geoffrey's account in the "Vita" and probably Geoffrey took his account from some such prophecy as this.

That the prophecy of Cadwaladr and Cynan was well-known when the "Arymes" was written is suggested by the line :

dysgogan derwyden meint a deruyd

—*B.T.*, p. 18, ll. 3-4.

in connection with the description of the lands which the two princes will rule. Probably the legend of the return of Cadwaladr took shape soon after his death in 682,⁴⁷ according to the chronicle in Harl. MS. 3859. It is exactly the same process as we have previously described in the case of Arthur and Owain. Stephens in his notes on the *Afallenneu*⁴⁸ concludes that this legend must have grown up amongst the Celts of Brittany, for the Celts of Britain knew that Cadwaladr had died, and moreover he proved himself such a poor ruler that they could scarcely have wished for his return. But however poor he might have been as a ruler, he represented in the eyes of the Cymry, in the centuries following his death, the last of their great kings and was the symbol of their departed glory, and it would be quite natural for them to long for his return. Also the prosaic records of a period cannot be a true index of the popular sentiments of that period, and although Cadwaladr's death is recorded in such documents, it is quite possible that the people believed that he had only gone across the sea just as Arthur had done, and would return to them again in their time of need.

At what time Cynan came to be associated with the legend and who Cynan was, it is almost impossible now to tell. In some of the Welsh poems Cadwaladr is represented as coming to meet Cynan at Rhyd Rheon :

ynŷ del kadwaladir oe kinadyl. rid Reon.
Kinan inŷerbin ef kychwin ar saesson.

—*Afallenneu*, *B.B.C.*, p. 52, ll. 3-5.

It is interesting to notice that in "Englynion y Beddau," in the Black Book of Carmarthen, it is said that a certain

⁴⁷ Lloyd, *Hist. of Wales*, Vol. I, p. 230, suggests the date 664 as the year of Cadwaladr's death.

⁴⁸ Stephens, *Lit. Kymry*, pp. 241, *et seq.*

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"Kinon" was buried at "reon rid." This may be the Cynan son of Clydno Eiddyn, whose grave is said in the previous stanza to be in the low-lying ground :

. . . inisel gwelitin. bet kynon mab clytno idin.
Bet run mab pŷd inergrid avon.
in oervel ig gverid.
bet kinon in reon rid.⁴⁹

—*B.B.C.*, p. 64, ll. 1-3.

It is possible therefore that the original Cynan of the legend was some old hero of the North, who lived in the sixth century, for Clydno Eiddyn is mentioned as one of the four leaders of the North in the Chirk Codex.⁵⁰ On the other hand he may be some other hero who came to be associated with the Kynon whose grave is at Rhyd Rheon. All that we know is, that by the ninth century his name was associated with Cadwaladr, for the return of both leaders is prophesied in "Arymes Prydein Vawr."

It is not stated in the "Arymes" to what part of the country these leaders will come, though the great battle is to happen at Aber Peryddon in the North. In a stanza of the "Afallenneu," Cadwaladr is prophesied to come to the South.

inŷdel kadwaladir oe kinadil. kadwaon.
ŷ erir tŷwi a teiwi affon.

—*B.B.C.*, p. 51, ll. 16-17.

It was not only the bards of the South, however, who were expecting these deliverers, for the next stanza in the *Afallenneu* describes their meeting at Rhyd Rheon, and as Stephens points out,⁵¹ from a line in a poem by Gwilym Ddu,

Neud gweigion Arfon is Reon Ryd

—*Myv. Arch.*, 1870, p. 276.

it seems that this place must be in North Wales, though Skene identifies it with Loch Ryan in Wigtonshire.⁵²

⁴⁹ It may be noted that the internal rhyme in this line establishes the form *Kynon*. ED.

⁵⁰ See J. Morris-Jones, *Taliesin*, p. 47.

⁵¹ Stephens, *Lit. Kymry*, p. 270.

⁵² Skene, *Four Ancient Books*, II, 337.

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In the "Hoianeau," stanza 17, Cadwaladr is represented as coming to conquer Mona :

A phan del kadualadir y orescin mon
dileaur saeson otirion prydein.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 60, ll. 5-6.

while a possible Cynan in stanza 18 seems to have been connected with Glan Teifi in the South :

Kynan⁵³ uaran o lan teivi
—*B.B.C.*, p. 60, ll. 10-11.

Stanza 19 describes the coming of the two chiefs whose meeting will be famed throughout Wales :

Kynan kadwaladir. Kymri penbaladir.
bitaud ev kinatil aedmyccaur.
—*B.B.C.*, p. 58, ll. 12-13.

In the "Cyfoesi," Cadwaladr is described as coming to the North and to the South. According to Stanza 91 he is to come to Gwynedd :

Pan disgynno kadwaladyr allu llydan gantaw kymwed.
duw merchyr yamwyn gwyr gwyned.
—*R.B.*, Col. 581, ll. 32-34.

while according to Stanza 93 he is to come to the valley of the Tywi :

Pandisgynno kadwaladyr yndyffryn tywi.
—*R.B.*, Col. 581, ll. 37-38.

It is interesting to note that he is not associated with Cynan in this poem, so that this may reflect an early form of the legend. Stanza 45 prophesies the coming of "Cynan of the dogs," who is to possess Wales :

Dyrchauawt unic o gud.
nyt achatuo ydeurud.
kynan y kwn kymry bieiuud.
—*R.B.*, Col. 579, ll. 19-21.

The association of Cadwaladr and Cynan with places in North and South Wales shows that the legend must have

⁵³ The actual MS. reading here is *kyuan*. See *ante*, p. 92. ED.

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been widespread, and probably princes of both North and South were hailed as Cadwaladers or Cynans, the long looked for deliverers.

In all the Welsh prophecies Cynan and Cadwaladr are to lead the Cymry against the Saxons and to bring peace to the land :

deu orsegyn saesson opleit dofyd.
deu hael deu gedawl gwlat warthegyde.
—*B.T.*, *Arymes*, p. 17, ll. 25-26.

Kimry aorvit kein bid eudragon.
Kaffaud paub y teithi. llauen vi bri brýthon.
Kenhittor kirrn eluch. Kathil hetuch a hinon.
—*Afallenau*, *B.B.C.*, p. 52, ll. 5-7.

Dileaur saeson otirion prydein.
—*Hoianeau*, *B.B.C.*, p. 60, l. 6.

a chiureithau gulad, a chistutia gwad.
allu alledrad a divahaur.
Anbi ni inaeth guared guýdi gúaeth.
Neb ohaelonaeth nididolaur.
—*Hoianeau*, *B.B.C.*, p. 58, ll. 13-16.

According to the "Cyfoesi," Cadwaladr is to reign three hundred and three years and three months, and then he will be slain by a spear from a ship.

as gwan gwaew o ergrywyd llog.
a llaw kynndiwedyd.
dybyd gymry gwarth or dyd.
—*R.B.*, Col. 582, ll. 8-10.

There is no mention in the Welsh poems that Cadwaladr and Cynan will come from Brittany, though their sway after they have triumphed will extend as far as Brittany.

ovynaw hyt lydaw yn eu llaw yt vyd.
—*Arymes Prydein*, *B.T.*, p. 18, ll. 4-5.

Neither is there any hint of Cadwaladr's journey to Rome and the prophesied return of his relics to Britain. It is in Geoffrey's prophecies of Merlin that we have the first reference to these traditions, and they grew out of the confusion by Geoffrey of Cadwaladr with Ceadwalla, King of Wessex, who did go to Rome and died there in 688.⁵⁴ From this Geoffrey was quite capable of evolving the story of the eventual translation of the relics of Cadwaladr from Rome to England.

⁵⁴ Rees, *Essay on Welsh Saints*, p. 300.

Then, finding in the Welsh prophecies at his disposal that a certain Cynan was connected with Cadwaladr, he transformed him into Conan of Brittany and made Cadwaladr call for him on his way to Britain from Rome. Possibly versions of the Welsh prophecy existed in which Rhys ap Tewdwr was identified with the deliverer Cadwaladr, and if such prophecies did exist then they would naturally prophesy the coming of the deliverer from Brittany, for Rhys ap Tewdwr returned from exile there in 1077. As for the account of Cadwaladr's flight to Armorica from the plague (*Historia*, Book XII), this may be a genuine old tradition recorded by Geoffrey, or it may have been invented by him to prepare the way for the prophecy of the coming of the deliverers from Brittany. As in the Welsh prophecies, so in these recorded by Geoffrey, the two chieftains lead the Britons to victory, but Geoffrey adds the detail of the change in the name of the island, which became very popular in later prophecies.

We see then that the Cadwaladr prophecy is undoubtedly of Welsh origin. Geoffrey found it along with the other prophecies, altered and embroidered it a little to suit his purpose and translated it into Latin, and it is this form found in Geoffrey with the account of the changing of the name of the island, that became popular in subsequent prophecy.

To return to the examination of the predictive poems attributed to Taliesin, the next poem of this type is "Cerdd Daronwy."⁵⁵ This is a very curious and obscure poem. At the beginning the bard seems to be seeking the protection of God for "Nefwy" against some danger which is to come across the sea. From the line "Py pren a vo mwy noget daronwy," it would seem that "daronwy" is a tree, probably the oak, or possibly the reference is to a forest.⁵⁶

The poem prophesies the coming of Cynan :

yg koet pan tyfwy.
firwytheu nwy kymrwy.
ar lan gwylllyonwy.
kynan ae kaffwy. 55.

⁵⁵ *B.T.*, XI, pp. 28-29, ll. 26, 1-2. *M.A.*, p. 55.

⁵⁶ For this and many valuable suggestions in the analysis of the following poems, I am indebted to private notes on poems of the *Book of Taliesin*, kindly lent to me by Professor Gwynn Jones.

When he rules, four strong, brave chieftains will come to Britain followed by a fifth :

Pryt pan wledychwy.
dedeuant etwaeth tros trei athros traeth.
pedeir prif pennaeth, ar pumhet nyt gwaeth.
gwyr gwrđ ehelaeth ar prydein aruaeth.

—*B.T.*, p. 29, ll. 2-5.

Then will come two women (if we may read "dwy riein" for "dwy rein")⁵⁷ :

gwedw agwryawc vein
heyryn eu hadein ar wyr yn goryein.

—*Ibid.*, p. 29, ll. 7-8.

Afterwards chieftains are to come from "Rhufain" :

Dedeuho kynrein o amtir rufein.
eu kerd a gygein eu gwawt a yscein.

—*Ibid.*, p. 29, ll. 9-10.

Then comes an obscure reference to a dog, a steed, an ox, a sow, and a fifth creature, described as "white," possibly with the meaning of "blessed," "fashioned by Jesus," ("pymhet llwdyn gwyn a wnaeth iessu"). A reference to Rhun follows, and the poem ends with a prayer for protection. It is impossible to make much of this poem, and the events to which it refers cannot be identified with any certainty. One is tempted to suggest that the "dwy r[i]ein— . . . heyryn eu hadein," one a widow and one a young wife, may be the two Matildas, one the widow of Henry I, and the other the wife of Stephen, but there is nothing else in the poem to support this.

We can make out sufficient to see that the author is awaiting the coming of chieftains across the sea to aid the Cymry, and the mention of Cynan brings it into relation with the other prophecies attributed to Taliesin, such as "Arymes Prydein Vawr."

Poem XIV⁵⁸ is chiefly an account of the transformation of Taliesin. Then, Gwydion and other legendary characters figure in the poem, but there is also a little predictive matter

⁵⁷ The reading in *M.A.*, 55, 27, is "Dyddeu dwy rain." A footnote gives *riain* for *rain*. This suggests the reading "Dyda dwy riein." Ed.

⁵⁸ *B.T.*, p. 33; *M.A.*, p. 56.

embedded in it. The Irish are called devils in one line and then strangely enough are soon after described as one of the nations of good qualities :

a gwydyl diefyl diferogion. . .
teir kenedyl gwythlawn o iawn teithi.
Gwydyl a brython a romani.

—*B.T.*, pp. 33-34, ll. 27, 3-4.

We have already noted the combination "Gwydyl brython a romani" in the "Hoianeu" Stanza 22. It is prophesied that these allies will cause "dyhed adyuysci . . . am teruyn prydein kein y threfi."

The next poem "Glaswawt Taliesin"⁵⁹ contains more predictive material. The writer describes how messengers will come to him and cause him to be sad. He prophesies conflict on the Menai and at Conway. Death and injury will result from the strokes of sharply penetrating iron blades :

Atvyd mei ar venai crei gyflogawt.
Atvyd mwy ar gonwy creith gwynieith gwnahawt.
Adoer lleith dyrreith anaw barawt.
O heyrn erchwyrn edyrn dynawt.

—*Ibid.*, p. 31, ll. 3-6.

Three heavily laden ships will come across the sea, and in the battle for three days amongst three claimants, boats will serve as graves :

Tri dilyn diachor droch drymluawc.
Teir llyghes yn aches arymes kyn brawt.
Tri diwedyd kat am tri phriawt gwlat.
Gwnahawt bat betrawt.

—*Ibid.*, p. 31, ll. 6-9.

Snowdon will be a hill of judgment, and there will be three hosts, Saxons, Danes (*gynt*) and a third, described as "dygnawt."

Then Cynan will come causing desolation and conflagration. Cadwaladr will be there and the country will be devastated :

Ygkymry yd erhy gwraged gweddawt.
Rac baran kyan tan tardawt.
katwaladyr ae cwyn. brihwawt bre a brwyn.
Gwellt a tho tei. ty tandawt.

—*Ibid.*, p. 31, ll. 11-14.

⁵⁹ *B.T.*, No. XII, pp. 30-32 ; *M.A.*, p. 56.

Wonders will happen and there will be a call for a brave one of the line of Anarawd, who will not spare his kindred and who will curse those who offend him.

Atvyd ryfedawt. gwr gan verch y vrawt.
Dyfynhyn durawt olin anarawt.
o honaw ytyfhawt coch kattybrudawt.
Nyt arbed nanawt. na chefynderw na brawt.
wrth lef corn kadwr naw cant yn afyrdwl. . .

—*B.T.*, p. 31, ll. 14-19.

This poem, then, prophesies the coming of Cadwaladr and Cynan, and several battles to be fought in North Wales which will cause devastation of the land. There is here again no reference to the Norman conquest or any events after it. The poem deals with the strife of some Welsh princes in North Wales after the death of Cadwaladr, in the time of the invasion of the Danes who are mentioned in the poem. As one of the line of Anarawd is referred to, the poem must have been written after his death in 915.

Poem XLVII of the Book of Taliesin⁶⁰ opens with four lines which occur at the beginning of "Arymes Prydein Vawr." The muse prophesies a time of peace and plenty after a period of contention :

Dygogan awen dygobryssyn.
maranhed ameuued ahed genhyn.
a phennaeth ehalaeth, affraeth unbryn.
a gwedy dyhed anhed ympopmehyn.

Seven sons of Beli are mentioned ; then it is said there will be turmoil in the country, and tired knights along the borders. Wales will lose her nobility through alliance with servitors.

kollawt kymry oll eu haelder
ynrygystlyned o pennaeth weisson.

—*Ibid.*, p. 70, ll. 24-25.

Then will come an ambitious proud chieftain to conquer Mona and Gwynedd, who will submit neither to Welsh nor English :

Rydybyd llyminawc auyd gwr chwannawo.
y werescyn mon a rewinyaw gwyned.
oe heithaf oe pherued oe dechreu oe diwed. . .
Ystic ywyneb nyt estwg y neb na chymry na Saesson.

—*Ibid.*, pp. 70-71, ll. 25-26, 1-4.

⁶⁰ *B.T.*, XLVII, p. 70 ; *M.A.*, p. 61.

We may compare this "llyminawc" with the "Llyminauc lletfer" of the fragment of prophecy quoted by the author of "Hanes Gruffudd ap Cynan," which we have already referred to. The author there quotes it as a prophecy of Myrddin and applies it to Gruffudd ap Cynan, but as we saw, rhyme peculiarities prove the fragment to be early. Here is a prophecy attributed to Taliesin, which must have resembled the lost pseudo-Myrddin prophecy from which the fragment in the "Hanes" was taken. For the description of the "llyminawc" (from *llam*, *in* and *awc*⁶¹) coming to conquer Mona and devastate Gwynedd in this pseudo-Taliesin poem, might also be applied to Gruffudd ap Cynan.

The poem may possibly have been composed in the time of Gruffudd ap Cynan, but as there is no reference to the Normans or any events after the Norman conquest, it is more probable that the "llyminawc" refers to Cadwaladr. The "gŵr o gudd" who will battle against the Danes, of the next line, would then be either Cadwaladr himself or Cynan, and with this we may compare the stanza describing Cynan in the "Cyfoesi":

Dyrchauawt unic o gud . . .
kynan y kwn kymry bieuyd.

—*R.B.*, Col. 579, ll. 19-21.

Besides this "gŵr o gudd," another is to come:

arall adfyd pellenawc y luyd llewenyd y vrython.

—*B.T.*, p. 71, ll. 5-6.

Probably then this poem with its reference to the Danes, and its expectation of deliverers to lead the Cymry belongs to a period prior to the Norman Conquest.

The next poem, beginning with the words "Kein Gyfedwch"⁶² opens with a description of a feast, but it contains some vaticinatory material. It appears to describe the coming of five chieftains of the Irish Picts "o wydyl ffichti . . . o genedl ysci." After these, five others of the Norman race will

⁶¹ See Ifor Williams, *Y Beirniad*, 1916, p. 131.

⁶² *B.T.*, No. XLIX, p. 72-3; *M.A.*, 62.

come, and a sixth, between sowing and reaping; a seventh crosses the sea, while the eighth will be a linx:

Pymp pennaeth dimbi o wydyl ffichti
opechadur kadeithi o genedyl ysci.
pymp ereill dymgoi o mordmyn mandi.
Whechet ryfed ri. o heu hyt vedi.
Seithuet o heni yweryt dros li.
wythvet linx a dyui nyt llwyded escori.

—*B.T.*, p. 72, ll. 16-20.

Skene in his notes on this poem comes to the conclusion that it was written before 655⁶³. He thinks "Nordmyn mandi" refer to the kings of Northumbria, and takes the eighth to be Cadwallawn. But this is scarcely credible, and it seems almost certain that the chiefs of "Nordmyn mandi" are the kings from Normandy, and the poem must have been written some time after the Norman Conquest. The mention of the linx (Skene reads "lin" and translates "of the line of Dyvi," but the MS has linx) recalls Geoffrey's prophecies of Merlin, and indeed the whole passage resembles parallel passages in the "Historia" and the "Vita Merlini"⁶⁴. The five chieftains and the Sixth and the Lynx are all mentioned in Geoffrey, but there is a difference, for there is no seventh or eighth in Geoffrey's version, and it is the sixth who crosses the sea to conquer Ireland, whereas here it is the seventh who goes across the flood. It does not seem probable therefore that this is borrowed from Geoffrey, but whether Geoffrey owes anything to such a poem as this is another matter. J. J. Parry believes⁶⁵ that this poem or a similar one gave Geoffrey his idea of the five kings and the sixth who was to go across to Ireland, and it is possible that this does represent the type of material which Geoffrey says he translated. It must, however, have been written after the Norman Conquest, as the reference to the Norman chieftains prove.

Poem L., beginning "Rydyrchafwy duw ar plwyff brython" prophesies the return not of Cadwaladr but of his father Cadwallawn. It opens with the expectation of an army from Mona which will betoken joy to the Brython:

arwyd llewenyd lluyd o von.

—*B.T.*, p. 72, ll. 23-24.

⁶³ Skene, *Four Ancient Books*, Vol. I, pp. 234-5.

⁶⁴ See *Hist. Kings of Brit.*, p. 120, and *Vita Merlini*, ll. 672-9.

⁶⁵ *Vita Merlini*, p. 121.

Powys, too, will join, and the two armies will march together :

Powys dybydant dwys yg kyfleudon . . .
Deuluydant bydant gysson.
yn vn redyf vn eir kyweir kymon.
—*B.T.*, pp. 72, l. 26 ; pp. 73, ll. 1-3.

Ceredigion too will do its share :

kyfranant yn iawn keredigyawn vaon.
—*P.* 73, l. 3.

and there will be battles in Glyn Aeron and around the Tywi and Teifi and at some "Llys lonyon."

Pan welych wyr ryn am lyn aeron.
Pan vo trwm tywi a theiui auon.
wy gwnant aer ar vrys am lys lonyon.
—*B.T.*, p. 73, ll. 4-6.

When Cadwallawn comes from Ireland there will be a battle at Chester :

Pan dyfu (*sic.*) gatwallaun dros eigyawn iwerdon. . .
Marchawc lu mor taer am gaer llion.
adial idwal ac aranwynyon.
agware pelre aphen saesson.
—*B.T.*, p. 73, ll. 9, 11-13.

This last sentiment is the same as that expressed in the "Afallenneu" Stanza 1, where it is said that at Cyminawd "gwarwyaur pelre ac eu penneu." The line "a dial idwal ac aranwynion," probably refers to an old battle at Garanwynion where the Welsh suffered, and which the prophesied triumph of Cadwallawn is to avenge. "Garanwynion" is referred to in the Taliesin poem, "Gweith Gwen Ystrat," and seems to be a ford in the North near Gwenystrat or Wensleydale.⁶⁶ A battle at Garanwynion is also referred to in the ninth century, "Arymes Prydein Vawr."

After a description of this battle, the poem has a reference to "y gath vreith" and ends with the same line as it begins with. It is, then, of the usual type of predictive poem found in the Book of Taliesin—a prophecy of the coming of a deliverer under whom Wales will be united, and there are no references to any events after the Norman Conquest.

⁶⁶ J. Morris-Jones, *Taliesin, Cymmrodor* 28, pp. 160-1.

"Gwawd Ludd ymawr"⁶⁷ is a long and extremely obscure prophetic poem. It opens with a prophecy of what is to happen each day of the week.

Duw llun dybydant peithiawc yd ant.
Duw mawrth ytrannant gwyth yn yscarant . . .
Duw ieu escorant eidyolyd anchwant . . .
Duw sul yn geugant diheu dybydant.
Pymp llong a phymcant o ranant o niant.⁶⁸

This is followed by an extremely obscure portion of which it is impossible to make much sense ; then comes the familiar prophecy of Cadwaladr and Cynan ; and the "derwyd" will prophesy among other things :

Gwedi eur ac euryrnni. diffeith moni [Mon ?] a lleenni.
ac eryri anhed yndi.
—*B.T.*, p. 75, ll. 3-5.

Then comes a statement that the Welsh of "pedeir ieith" (probably four races or families) will change their speech :

kymry pedeir ieith symudant euhareith.
—*B.T.*, p. 75, ll. 5-6.

This is followed by an obscure reference to a speckled cow, and what seems to be a description of the Welsh, Angles, Irish and Scots. A time of confusion is described :

Yt vi brithret alliaws gyniret.
agofut amwehyn.
—*B.T.*, p. 76, ll. 1-2.

and the druids and astrologers prophesy a summer without fair weather :

dysgogan syweddydon. . . Dysgogan deruydon . . .
haf ny byd hinon.
—*B.T.*, p. 76, ll. 7-10.

The text of this poem is extremely corrupt, and in its present form it is impossible to understand much of it, but the prophetic portion seems to belong to the Cynan-Cadwaladr type prior to the Norman conquest.

⁶⁷ *B.T.*, No. LII, p. 74, ll. 13-20 ; *M.A.*, 62-3.

⁶⁸ For *o ranant o niant*, Professor Gwynn Jones suggests *dra nau ton llant*.

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The next poem, "Ymarwar Lud Mawr"⁶⁹ is clearer, and is the same type of prophecy. It describes the coming of a "romani kar" who has no equal, and who will take part in a great battle when crows and eagles will revel in blood:

Yn wir dymbi romani kar.
odit ovabdyn arall ypar.
Racdaw ryglywhawr maw[r] gyfargar . . .
athriganed kyrn a gwerin trygar . . .
brein ac eryron gollychant wyar.

—*B.T.*, p. 76, ll. 15-20.

This "romani kar" is Cadwaladr who will rule his ships on the sea like swans on the waves. A bear and a lion will come, and Cadwaladr will defend the borders with ruddy spears:

Ef dibyn ytervyn o rud vereu.

—*B.T.*, p. 77, l. 2.

Collars will be broken in the strife of Cadwaladr. A dragon will arise from the South (compare "Hoianeu" Stanza 18) and the lord of Gwynedd shall be of seven races:

Hyt pan vwynt seith ieith yri gwyned.

—*B.T.*, p. 77, ll. 9-10.

With this we may compare Stanza 95 of the "Cyfoesi":

Pan vo teir ieithyau taeauc ym mon.

—*M.A.* (1870), p. 113, st. 100.

The Angles will have to go into exile:

treis areigyl ahynt o alltuded.
trwy vor llithrant eu heissilled.

—*B.T.*, p. 77, ll. 11-12.

for the lawful prince of Mona will come to defend the Britons according to the prophecy of the divines:

Yn wir dymbi teithiawc mon.
ffaw dreic diffreidyat ypopyl brython . . .
Dwfyn darogan dewin drywon.

—*B.T.*, p. 77, ll. 12-15.

⁶⁹ *B.T.*, No. LIII, p. 76; *M.A.*, p. 33. [There is no title to the poem in *B.T.* It follows a poem bearing the title, "Gwawt Lud ymawr," and is followed by "Ymarwar llud bychan." In the *M.A.* it is entitled "Ymarwar Ludd Mawr." Ed.]

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A bear from the South will join Cadwaladr in Gwynedd and then a battle will ensue from which the English will flee:

Arth odeheubarth yn kyfarth gwyned. . .
ygynnif katwaladyr ar ior gwyned. . .
lloegyr oll ymellun eu meuoed genhyn . . .
Galwhawr ar vor gwaywawr aegryn . . .
Hallt ac ynyssed vyd eu budyn.

—*B.T.*, p. 77, ll. 19-26, p. 78, ll. 1-2.

Then a ruler is described as coming from the Severn district to join Cadwaladr in the strife and there will be battles around the Severn, and Dyved will be conquered. The poem ends with a reference to Reged and Elved.

In the poem a dragon, a bear and a ruler are all described as rising in the South and being associated with Cadwaladr in his battles. These symbols may possibly all stand for Cynan, who is usually associated with Cadwaladr and is frequently connected with the South.

Poem LIV, "Ymarwar Llud Bychan"⁷⁰ predicts the coming of some strange, arrogant tribe to conquer Britain:

llwyth lliaws anuaws eu henwerys.
dygorescynnan prydein prif van ynys.
gwyrr gwlat yr ascia agwlat gafis.
pobyl pwyllat enwir eu tir nywys . . .
amlaes eu peisseu pwy eu heuelis.

—*B.T.*, p. 78, ll. 19-24.

This description is reminiscent of the Crusades, and the people referred to are probably the Saracens. It seems strange, therefore, that these people should be expected to come to Britain. Professor Gwynn Jones suggests that the reference is probably to the Danes, as the Irish and Welsh, as Christians, seem to have regarded the pagan Danes as Saracens.

The bard appears to have seen the people he describes:

. . . nyt kyfrwy . . .
arywelei aryweleis o aghyfyeth.

—*B.T.*, p. 79, ll. 3-4.

and we gather that he is asking God's protection for the Welsh who had gone to fight these enemies:

Rythalas mab grat rwyf yareith.
kymry yndanhyal ryfel ar geith.
Pryderaf pwyllaf pwy yhymdeith.
Brythonic yniwis dydyrchefis.

—*B.T.*, p. 79, ll. 5-8.

⁷⁰ *B.T.*, pp. 78-9; *M.A.*, 63-4.

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This poem, therefore, with its possible reference to the Crusades, does not seem to be earlier than the eleventh century.

The last poem in the Book of Taliesin, "Darogan Katwal'," is only a fragment, but is, as its title suggests, a prophecy of the coming of Cadwaladr:

marchawc mwth misterin

—*B.T.*, p. 80, ll. 17-18.

When he comes there will be "yn eryri ymoloi" and the English will lack food:

ys deubi seis yna yerchi bwytta

—*B.T.* 80, l. 22.

Many strange things will happen such as:

Ieuhawt gwreic gan y gwas

—*B.T.* 80, l. 23.

The fragment ends with a question:

a weleisti vyg kar am brawt

and the answer:

Gweleis i gelein vein abrein ar gnawt
ac arall ar darwein gwall grein cledyfawt.

—*B.T.* 80, ll. 24-26.

The first poem in the Book of Taliesin is also incomplete, as the first page is illegible, but it is found in a complete form in the Red Book of Hergest.⁷² It is chiefly a poem of the "riddle" type but contains a little prophetic material. The Cymry are referred to as "prif diryeit," and it is stated that there will be groaning, and bloodshed. Ships will come across the sea; the English will take counsel; and there will be vengeance on the Saxons:

gwydueirch dyaruor. eingyl yghygor.
gwelattor arwydon. gwynyeith ar saesson.

—*R.B.*, col. 1054, ll. 27-29.

The Picts are mentioned, "ffichit lewon," and the "marini brython." The rest of the poem is extremely obscure, containing several Latin phrases, probably glosses included in the

⁷² *B.T.*, No. 57, p. 80.

⁷³ *R.B.*, p. 20, col. 1054-5.

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text by a scribe who did not understand them. There is a reference to conflict around the Severn:

a medi heon. am hafren auon.

—*R.B.* col. 1054, l. 31.

The poem then continues with an account of the transformations of Taliesin.

From this survey of the predictive poems of the Book of Taliesin it is clear that a sixth century Taliesin could not have been the author of any of them, for most of them refer to the return of Cadwaladr and Cynan. Only in one of them, however, is there any definite reference to the Normans⁷³ while another⁷⁴ seems to have been written during the Crusades. Most of the poems, however, have no reference to events after the Norman conquest, and the frequent mention of "Gynt" and "Gynhon" seems to point to the conclusion that they were composed during the period of Danish invasions from the eighth or ninth to the eleventh century.

Another poem attributed to Taliesin which contains predictive material is "Anrec Urien," which is found in the Red Book⁷⁵ and in the detached portion of the White Book. Stephens, in a clear analysis of this poem,⁷⁶ has pointed out that it consists of three unrelated parts of which he considers the first and third to be genuine, and the middle predictive portion to be a late interpolation, tacked on to the first portion by means of using the same metre and rhyme.

The predictive portion opens with the description of a period of barbarous fighting and of great distrust:

Dydaw collet. or ymdiryet. ywardelyd.

allaw heb uawt. allauyn argnawt. athlawt luyd.

—*R.B.* col. 1049, ll. 23-24.

Then is described a dragon from Gwynedd who will come and join with the English, and engage in battle. He will benefit the Venedotians and the Brython will triumph:

Dreic owyned. diffwys dired. dirion dreuyd.

lloegyrwys yd aa. llettawt yna. yhatch[w]etlyd.

Torrit meinweith. yn anoleith orgyfuergyr.

Mwy agollir noc ageffir. owyndodyd . . .

Kyuyt ogud. gwr auyd bud. ywyndodyd.

—*R.B.* col. 1049, ll. 27-33.

⁷³ "Kein Gyfedwch," *B.T.*, No. XLIX.

⁷⁴ *Ymarwar Llud Bychan*, No. LIV.

⁷⁵ Col. 1049.

⁷⁶ *Arch. Cam.*, 1851, pp. 204, et seq.

During this period of battle there will be no cherishing of song, and there will be slaughter from Eleri⁷⁷ to Chwilfynydd :

Ef adaw byt. nybyd kerdglyt. nybyd keluyd. . .
llad abodi. o eleri. hyt chwilynyd
—*R.B.* col. 1049, ll. 34, 36.

Stephens also thinks that the expedition referred to in these lines is that of 1055, when Gruffudd ap Llywelyn ap Seisyllt, king of North Wales—the “dreic o wyned”—made an alliance with the English earl Aelfgar, and defeated Ralph and the English at Hereford and Leominster.

The poem continues with a prophecy of the alliance of a “bear from the South,” with the English, who will defeat the Powysians at Cors Fochno :

Arth ordeheu. kyuyt ynteu. dychyueruyd.
lloegyrwys lledi. af riuedi. o bowyssyd.
Gweith cors uochno. odiangho. bydawt detwyd.
—*R.B.* col. 1049, ll. 39-41.

The slaughter will be so great that

Deudeng wraged. ac nyt ryued. am vn gwr vyd.
—*R.B.* col. 1049, l. 42.

Stephens identifies the “bear from the South” with Caradoc ap Rhydderch ab Iestin, a prince of South Wales, who in 1060 joined Harold and fought and slew Gruffudd ap Llywelyn somewhere on the borders of Powys and South Wales. Cors Fochno, Stephens thinks, would be a likely spot for this battle.

Stephens’ identification may be correct, though it is risky to apply the prophecies to actual events, especially when we see that Cors Fochno seems to be used almost conventionally in the prophecies, as a name of one of the battles to come. However, Stephens is probably right in assigning the prophecy to the eleventh century.

It is interesting to note certain resemblances between this poem and the “Hoianeu.” The “arth o ddeheubarth” is found in both,⁷⁸ and the battle of Cors Fochno⁷⁹ and the

⁷⁷ A Cardiganshire river, falling into the estuary of the Dyfi.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hoianeu, Stanza 16.

⁷⁹ Cf. Hoianeu, Stanza 20.

reference to the neglect of minstrelsy.⁸⁰ The “arth” figures also in “Ymarwar Ludd Mawr,”⁸¹ a poem prophesying the return of Cadwaladr. It seems, therefore, as if these predictions of the bear and Cors Fochno, like the Cynan-Cadwaladr prediction, must have been very popular in early vaticinations, and that they were used by successive bards to refer to events of their own time.

Besides the predictive poems attributed to Myrddin and Taliesin in the oldest Welsh manuscripts, there is also a group of anonymous poems in the Red Book.

The first of these⁸² opens with the line :

Mal rot yntroi tramhweilyeu
—*R.B.* col. 1, l. 7.

and this seems to be a reference to a wheel bringing misfortune in its train, which we may compare with the classical wheel of fortune. Here its turning brings :

trallawt meth trachymell tretheu. . .
trin engyrth am byrth am borthuaeu.
—*Ibid.*, ll. 7-8, 9-10.

The French will come on a Thursday (“diuieu”) and “am gwyn riei ryueleu a vyd” (ll. 11-12).

During this period of unrest homes will be destroyed :

a diffeith elvyd heb aelwydeu
—*Ibid.*, ll. 12-13.

The Venedotians will make a successful attack on the South ; the English will plot treachery—

a gwynvyt gwyndyt yn gwan yr deheu. . .
a lloegyr yn brydyon brat y rieu
—*Ibid.*, ll. 14-17.

The French are again referred to, and a battle at Dover :

agwrth ffreinc ae ffrawd arlongheu.
agweithdofyr yn dyfrys agheu
—*Ibid.*, ll. 17-18.

Then a “dreic didwyll tywyll a goleu” is mentioned and the poem ends with a prayer for the blessing of God.

⁸⁰ Cf. Hoianeu, Stanza 23.

⁸¹ *B.T.*, No. 53.

⁸² *R.B.*, col. 1050, ll. 7, *et seq.*

This poem, as the references to the French prove, must have been written during the period of the Norman conquest. Metre, alliteration, cynghanedd and cymeriadau, remind one of the style of the Gogynfeirdd.⁸³ Probably then, the poem belongs to the late eleventh or early twelfth century, so that the events described probably reflect the campaigns of Gruffudd ap Cynan and his sons.

The next poem, "Moch daw byt yngryt yngredyf carant"⁸⁴ is of the same type but the reference to "mab henri" brings it into line with the "Cyfoesi" and "Gwasgargerdd" and shows that it cannot be earlier than the twelfth century.

A period of unrest is prophesied in this poem in which the men of Manaw will take part and throughout Britain there will be "pryder a chwant." England will complain and all will be amazed at the fall of Henry's son:

ac amdeutu lloegyr llafar yt gwynant.
am lithraw mab henri anryuedant . . .
—R.B. col. 1050, ll. 31-32.

This "son of Henry" might be one of several persons, possibly it is a reference to the drowning of the son of Henry I in the White Ship, or to Robert of Gloucester, illegitimate son of Henry I and Nest, daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr; or it may refer to the son of Henry II, who was crowned during his father's lifetime but who died before his father. In a Welsh prophecy it seems most probable that the reference is to Robert, the supposed son of Nest, who died in 1147.

During this period of unrest "gwrion ual geuawc" will be cut down, and there will be battles on sea and land. Strong towers will be made weak and thousands will fall in a single day's battle. Eventually however the Brython will triumph:

Oesuot adyuyd douyd aediuant.
brythyon aetreaula penna vydant
—R.B. col. 1, l. 44 col. 2, l. 1.

⁸³ For example: Lines 1-4 have alliteration (*troi*: *trallawt*: *trachymell*: *tretheu*: *traws*: *treigl*: *trin*). Also Lines 11-12 (*Gwynvyt*: *gwander*) and Lines 15-16 (*gwrth*: *gweith*). There are also examples of alliterative development, such as "*trin engyrth am byrth am borthuaeu*." ["Cymeriadau" is a metrical term denoting the beginning of lines with the same consonant. Ed.]

⁸⁴ R.B., col. 1050, ll. 25, *et seq.*

The following poem beginning "Llynghes von dirion direidi,"⁸⁵ also mentions "mab Henri," and so cannot be earlier than the twelfth century. It prophesies a battle at Conway, when a fleet from Mona will play a part; and apparently streams of blood will hinder the rowing:

llesteir creu trwst rwyueu trosti
—R.B. col. 1051, ll. 4-5.

A time of great heat will come and the men of the leader of Eryri will fall:

llithrawt gwyr eryr eryri.
dywres amser teskynn tewi.
—*Ibid.*, ll. 7-8.

With this reference to "tes" we may compare the lines in the "Gwasgargerdd":

Byt auyd bryt wrth uawrdes . . .
—R.B., col. 584, ll. 30-31.

Byt auyd bryt wrth ydes
—*Ibid.*, col. 584, ll. 33-34.

The son of Henry will be the "dreic darogan" who seems to have been prophesied by the bards:

Penn beird pob eluyd oth hen ovynnon.
mi ath ogyuarchaf ar arwydon.
py uynych gymhwylly vabon.
—R.B., col. 1051, ll. 13-15.

This is most probably Robert of Gloucester who "after the drowning of the heir to the crown in the shipwreck of 1120 assumed new importance in the royal circle."⁸⁶ As he was reputed to be the son of Nest of South Wales it was not unnatural for the Welsh bards to look to him as the long-prophesied deliverer.

He is identified with the traditional Owain

Mabonoed brythyon pandelon yw hurdas.
ac owein auyd ryd rwyf teyrnas.
Gwr coch ygcochwed gorawen.

—*Ibid.*, ll. 17-19.

⁸⁵ R.B., col. 1051, l. 4.

⁸⁶ Lloyd, *Hist. of Wales*, Vol. II, p. 441.

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He is the "carannawc vabon" who will bring about what has been long desired by the writer :

carannawc uabon ymbron gwaret.
kyuarwyd yw duw ymdamunet
allmyn ar gychwyn gochwed dyghet
—*R.B.* col. 1051, ll. 20-22.

The poem ends with a statement that the writer's knowledge comes from Christ :

Crist amrodes ymlles ymllywyr wybot
—*Ibid.*, ll. 27-28.

This is the usual type of prophecy looking forward to the return of the deliverer Owain who is here probably identified with Robert of Gloucester.

Poem XXI, "Crist iessu llwyr vedu lleuuer,"⁸⁷ is a much longer poem written in the same style, and belonging to the same period, as we see from the mention of Henry. After a religious opening, the prophecy begins with an account of strife between princes in "maelenyd," "am uael dir," "am lann gwy," "am vuellt," and "am aber kammarch."

A man will rise from concealment⁸⁸ who will inspire fear, and will cause the Saxons to flee :

Gwr o gud parawchrud wythver
adaw ylywyaw ylawer.
hwnn abeir dechryn pan dechreuer.
—*Ibid.*, col. 1052, ll. 8-10.

The Saxons will flee on a Friday :

Duw gwener coeler nat kelwyd.
kilyawd seis oedreis dros elvyd.
—*Ibid.*, ll. 11-13.

Then the battle of Aber Kammarch is described and the battle of Buellt, where Henry will engage in conflict. This probably reflects the expeditions of Henry I in South Wales. Afterwards is described "cyfranc barwn" and slaughter in a battle around Ceri :

atuyd kelein wenn heb penn heb perthi.
atuyd meirch gweilyd gwael eudiffodi.
agolwc digu ar wyr tu keru.
—*Ibid.*, ll. 35-37.

⁸⁷ *R.B.*, col. 1051-3.

⁸⁸ Cf., Cyfoesi, *R.B.*, p. 2, col. 579, l. 19, and *B.T.*, No. XLVII, p. 71, l. 4.

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There will be sighs heard throughout the country and the Welsh will call on Dewi to aid them :

acoch ympop tref ac adef trueni.
escut gymry plant galwant ar dewi.
—*R.B.* col. 1052, ll. 38-39.

More strife is described in which the leader of Gwynedd takes part, then the poem ends as it began with a supplication to God.

In the last three poems Henry and the son of Henry have been mentioned, and it is most probable that the battles and events described refer to the campaigns of Henry I against Gruffudd ap Cynan in North Wales, and Gruffudd ap Rhys and other princes in South Wales.

Poem XXII⁸⁹ too is probably of about the same period, as we see from the resemblance in style. It opens with the lament for the unrest and confusion of the time :

Mor yw gwael gwelet. kynnwryf kynniret. . .
ac yrduw dywet. ydywan gollet.
—*Ibid.*, col. 1053, ll. 17, 19-20.

Then the author cheers up a little at the thought of the prophesied deliverer, who will unite the Welsh and bring joy to them. A great battle such as Camlan will be fought again, and after the battle there will be moaning :

gwir y daw gwaret. drwyrdyn damunet. . .
kymry ungyffret. eullu alluchet. . .
Gogonet anrann . . . atgigleu gamlan.
atwelir griduan. ac amvwyn kwynuan.
—*Ibid.*, ll. 23-25, 27-30.

The eagle-like warriors will have a red banner ; there will be ships on the sea ; and in the tumult 'throughout Wales, taxes or high offices will count for naught :

Lumangoch gwnn vot. lleitheu oruot.
arwyd eudyuot. aerwyr eryrot. . .
ef a daw ual diheu. aches lyghesseu
ar treth nathretheu ny lluyd naswydeu.
—*Ibid.*, ll. 32-34, 36-38.

After this the poem ends in the usual way with a prayer to God.

⁸⁹ *R.B.*, col. 1053.

We have now dealt with the earliest prophecies extant in Welsh manuscripts, and it will be well to sum up the conclusions which we may draw from this analysis.

The first is that the prophecies attributed to Myrddin and Taliesin are all spurious, and were forged in a period long after those prophets of the sixth century had died. They deal with events ranging from about the eighth or ninth century to the twelfth or thirteenth, and are the natural outcome of the long struggle of the Cymry against the English for independence. In Arthur the Cymry had a stalwart defender against the Saxons, and again under Cadwallawn for a short time their hopes were raised, so it was natural for them to long for the return of Arthur and Cadwaladr, the son of Cadwallawn, their last king, to lead them in their long and arduous struggle. Each leader of promise was hailed as a Cadwaladr, an Owain or an Arthur, returned again to triumph over the English, and predictive poems centred around him for a time till he too fell into oblivion, beaten by overwhelming odds. The predictions served to keep up the spirit of the people, and in order to give them authority, they were passed off as the genuine prophecies of Myrddin and Taliesin, who as prophets were held in high esteem amongst the Cymry.

We may conclude too that these prophecies owe nothing to Geoffrey of Monmouth's work. Many of them, as we have seen, were written before Geoffrey's time, and even those which refer to events of the twelfth century do not seem to reflect the influence of the "Historia" or the "Vita Merlini." They belong rather to native Celtic tradition, which developed naturally as a result of the political problems of the race.

Whether these poems represent the material which Geoffrey says he translated, and whether there were earlier versions which he saw, is another problem. From the fragmentary nature of the prophecies in Geoffrey's works it seems most likely that he gathered his material from oral sources. As we have seen the chief characteristic of Geoffrey's prophecies is animal symbolism, and if Geoffrey obtained his material from a Welsh source, then we should expect to find the germ at least of such a characteristic in that source. In the Welsh poems extant, there is not very much animal symbolism but there is a little. In "Arymes Prydein Vawr,"

Cadwaladr and Cynan are referred to as "deu arth," and an "arth" figures in "Ymarwar Llod Mawr," in "Anrec Urien" and the "Hoianeu." In "Ymarwar Llod Mawr," the bear is mentioned in connection with a Lion, while the dragon is frequently used as a symbol in these prophecies.

The evidence of these poems, if it existed alone, would not be sufficient to prove that Geoffrey obtained his material from Welsh sources, but we can at least say that it does not militate against the evidence which has already been brought forward to prove that Geoffrey did use such sources. Moreover the prophecies extant in the "Four Ancient Books" can only represent a very small fraction of the material which actually existed, and it is possible that animal symbols were found in greater profusion in some of the prophecies which have been lost.

As the animal symbols seem to refer generally to the expected deliverers, they form the crux of the prophecies, the part which would therefore be remembered and circulated orally amongst the people. If, as we have suggested, Geoffrey obtained his material from oral tradition, then it was not unnatural that he should exaggerate this element, so that we find the prophecies he records overflowing with animal symbols.

We may conclude, therefore, that the type of prophecy found for the first time in Geoffrey's "Historia" was not, as has often been supposed, invented by him, but was a genre of Welsh origin which came into existence long before the twelfth century.