Biographical Research

Taliesin is best known for his relation to King Arthur, mostly through the poem the Spoils of Annwn, which details his descent on a raid into the underworld, to capture the cauldron of Ceridwen, along with Arthur, Cei, and others.

The earliest full stories concerning King Arthur and his exploits appear to be the little known Welsh tales of "Culhwch and Olwen" and the "Dream of Rhonabwy". Though dating from before the 11th century, these two stories became a late attachment to a collection of Welsh mythological tales taken from the 14th century White Book of Rhydderch and Red Book of Hergest. Together, they are known as the "Mabinogion": an introduction for aspiring poets. Though the stories have a mythological slant, a certain amount of bardic poetic license is to be expected. Their background, however, is clearly an unfamiliar Dark Age society that gives us some idea of what the real Arthur was probably like.

The poems of Taliesin are fragmentary, and known only through a few sources. It is believed however, that they formed the nexus of material for the Mabinogion. The "Otherworld" was a domain of Celtic deities or supernatural beings such as the "Fairy People". The Otherworld was considered to be the Celtic version of heaven (or even hell to most Christian writers).

They were hidden from mortal eyes by strong Otherworld magic. They were situated in all sort of places. Some of these Otherworlds were located on the islands, the dunes, dun-hills, forests, rivers, and lakes. A grand castle or even humble cottage could be the Otherworld, which would, appeared at night for mortals, but would probably vanish in the morning.

Normal rule does not apply in the Otherworld. A year may seem to pass in the Otherworld, but in the real world centuries may have passed. Time seemed to have stand still. Nor does the people who live there, aged like mortals. They seemed to remain forever young.

The Welsh called their Otherworld – Annwn (pronounced Annoovin). The actual cosmology is fairly complicated, but Arawn ruled a darker part of this this Otherworld kingdom. In the Spoils of Annwn, Arthur his companions (including Cei) steal the magic cauldron of Ceridwen which brings life, from Annwn.

Another popular name for a portion of the Welsh Otherworld, was the Caer Wydyr or Caer Wydr – the "Fortress of Glass". Caer Wydyr is similar to Tower of Glass in the Arthurian Legend, but associated with Glastonbury Tor, England. Glastonbury Tor was supposed to be the location of the "Isle of Avalon" or "Isle of Apples", the finally resting place of King Arthur.

Iolo Morganwg, Edward Williams (1747-1826)
Edward “Celtic” Davies (1756-1831)

Most of what we know of the Bard Taliesin’s writing comes from a very limited number of sources. Potentially the richest source are the manuscripts of Iolo Morganwg. Morganwg, along with Edward “Celtic” Davies (1756-1831) was responsible for the ‘druidic revival’ of the early 19th century, which included the Gorsedd Bardic festivals which continue to this day. Davies a poet, dramatist and collector of manuscripts Celtic Researches (1804) and The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids (1809). Morganwg’s renditions of Taliesin’s work were widely accepted until Celtic Studies began to be properly organized at university level, and serious scholars such as Sir John Rhys (1840-1915) who became the first Professor of Celtic Studies at Jesus College, Oxford, in 1877 began to give such work serious attention. At that point certain rather glaring modernisms in construction and content led Rhys to belive that these works were the fabrications of Williams and his comrades and identified and dismissed them.

The various poems recited in the Tale of Taliesin appear to have been composed at different periods, and it is not improbable that Thomas ab Einion Offeiriad collected the poems attributed to Taliesin, which were in existence before his time, and added others to form the Mabinogi, and the very numerous transformations stated in the poetry, but not given in the prose, must have been much more complete than in its present state.

The Search for the Lost Book of Taliesin

During the late middle ages, a source manuscript existed which was a more or less complete copy of the Songs of Taliesin, probably the source for Thomas ab Einion Offeiriad and the Mabinogion.

A number of Player characters are able to send you useful information which helps you track the probable course of this manuscript. One copy may have been lost with Prince Madoc in 1170 or subsequently when the Louisiana Colony was devastated around 1200.

All the known fragmentary copies of Taliesin's work occur later than this the Black Book of Carmarthen dates from around 1225 to 1250. The now lost White Book of Rhydderch was composed in the 14th century, and some of the material is included in the later Red Book of Hergest. These ancient Codex-Bound books are generally known by their location and cover color. Most sources for Mythology are not much earlier than this - for example the primary source for Ulster Mythology is the Book of Dun Cow, from the mid 11th century.

The final form of Taliesin's work, the Lyfr Taliesin (Book of Taliesin) was composed around 1275, and is thus nearly a century late. The Author of the Lyfr Taliesin obviously did not have a copy of the original Book of

Book of Taliesin 1

Shropshire copy, c. 1460
Taliesin when writing it and was attempting to reconstruct a lost work from fragments.

A conjectural Snowdon Ms. of Taliesin's work may have been at Dolwyddelan Castle in Snowdon where Madoc was born in the time of Edward, survived into medieval times at Harlech. On this rugged promontory, a spur of the Harlech Dome (the oldest known geological rock formation in the world) now stands the architectural grandeur of Harlech Castle.

The castle, was one of Edward 1's "iron ring" of fortresses, built in the 13th century to subdue the newly conquered lands of North Wales.

In 1404 the Castle was captured by Owain Glyndwr during the great national uprising of the Welsh. Harlech became Glyndwr's official residence and court and the place to which he summoned parliaments of his supporters. It was here that he was formally crowned as Prince of Wales, witnessed by envoys from Scotland, France and Spain. The Castle was recaptured by the English in 1409 under the command of Harry of Monmouth, the future King Henry V and victor of Agincourt. Sixty years later Harlech was one of the last Lancastrian strongholds during the Wars of the Roses.

"Kyn Edward", wrote the Chronicler John Warkworth, "was possessed of alle Englande excepte a castelle in North the Wales called Harlake." The Castle gave shelter to Henry VI's Queen, Margaret of Anjou before finally surrendering after a fierce and lengthy resistance to the Yorkist seige in 1468. It was from this seige that the song "Men of Harlech" is said to originate. During the Civil War Harlech was defended for the king and was the last Royalist castle to fall. Its surrender to the besieging Parliament forces in March of 1647 marked the end of the Civil War and brought Oliver Cromwell to the region.

You are eventually (with much help from others) able to determine that the book was taken by Margaret of Anjou, or someone in her party after her surrender. Interestingly, her marriage to Henry was arranged by William de la Pole, 4th earl (later 1st duke) of Suffolk, a relative of Wesley Tudor-Pole. After a further abortive invasion, and her capture, her ransom was paid by Louis XI and enabled her to return to France in 1476, where she spent her last years in poverty.

You are fairly certain that at this point the Book passed into either the Archives of Louis XI, or the personal collection of the La Salle family. At any rate, you are able to confirm that the book ended up in the hands of Georges Laurent La Salle of Bruges before 1581, and that he gave it to Monsignor Andrea de Camora.

There the trail ends. Jeremiah Perry clearly tried to follow it up, and got Camora's letter out of the Spanish Archives. But he did not get the Book, unless he hid it, or it burned at sea with him in 1814. There is no known gravesite, and no will, for Andrea de Camora either. He apparently died shortly after 1581, without a trace. That's not particularly surprising, as it merely may mean that records from that period are lost, and the chaos in Spain prohibits a really thorough search.

All this seems frustrating of course, but with a good bit of help you find that there may be some hope. Several of the Harlech MS. were copied around 1460 in Shropshire. Eventually through reference to Morgwaw and Davies, you are able to find Harlech MS 14 in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, which contains a number of fragments from the Snowdon MS that are found nowhere else.

You are still far from having the original text, but what you have discovered is of some value.

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TALIESIN

The name of Taliesin is commemorated in the Triads: - "The three Baptismal Bards of the Isle of Britain:- Merddin Emrys, Taliesin, Chief of Bards, and Merddin, son of Madoc Moryvn."

The Nine Impulsive Stocks of the Baptismal Bards of Britain. The three primitive baptismal bards of the Cambro-Britons; Madog, the son of Morvryn, of Caerlleon upon Usk; Taliesin, the son of Saint Henwg, of Caerlleon upon Usk; and Merddin Emrys, who was bornless; after whom came Saint Talhaiarn, the father of Tangwyn, Merddin, the son of Madog Morvryn, and Meugant Hen, of Caerlleon upon Usk; who were succeeded by Balchnoe, the bard of Teilo, at Llandaff; Saint Cattwg; and Cynddylan, the bard. These nine were called the Impulsive Stocks of the baptismal bards of Britain; Taliesin being their chair-president; for which reason he was designated Taliesin, Chief Bard of the West. They are likewise called the nine super-institutionists of the baptismal chair; and no institution is deemed permanent unless renewed triennially, till the end of thrice three, or nine years. The institution was also called the Chair of the Round Table, under the superior privileges of which Gildas, the prophet, and Saint Cattwg the Wise, of Lancelvan, were bards; and also Llywarch Hen, the son of Elidr Lydanwyn, Ystuvach, the bard, and Ystolphan, the bard of Teilo.

Tradition has handed down a Cairn near Aberystwyth as the grave of Taliesin, the locality of which agrees with the foregoing account. It contains a Cistvaen, eight feet long by two feet six wide, and about three feet deep, composed of rude slabs of stone. One of the top stones, which lies near it, measures five feet nine by three feet nine.

Taliesin, Chief of the Bards, the son of Saint Henwg of Caerlleon upon Usk, was invited to the court of Urien Rheged, at Aberlychwr. He, with Elfín, the son of Urien, being once fishing at sea in a skin coracle, an Irish pirate ship seized him and his coracle, and bore him away to the Kingdom of Thomond in Ireland, where he lived for a while, but while the pirates were at the height of their drunken mirth, Taliesin pushed his coracle to the sea, and got into it himself, with a shield in his hand which he found in the ship, and with which he rowed the coracle until it verged the land; but, the waves breaking then in wild foam, he lost his hold on the shield, so that he had no alternative but to be driven at the mercy of the sea, in which state he continued for a short time, when the coracle stuck to the point of a pole in the weir of Gwynedd, Lord of Ceredigion, in Aberdyvi; and in that position he was found, at the ebb, by Gwynedd's fishermen, by whom he was interrogated; and when it was ascertained that he was a bard, and the tutor of Elfín, the son of Urien Rheged, the son of Cynvarch: "I, too, have a son named Elfín," said Gwynedd, "be thou a bard and teacher to him, also, and I will give thee lands in free tenure.” The terms were accepted, and for several successive years he spent his time between the courts of Urien Rheged and Gwynedd, called Gwynedd Garanhir, Lord of the Lowland Cantred; but after the territory of Gwynedd had become overwhelmed by the sea, Taliesin was invited by the Dux Bellorum Artur to his court at Caerlleon upon Usk, where he became highly celebrated for poetic genius and useful, meritorious sciences, along with Merddin Emrys, whom he taught much. Taliesin became Chief Bard of the West, from having been appointed to preside over the chair of the Round Table, at Caerlleon upon Usk after the departure of Merddin Emrys. After Artur's death he retired to the estate given to him by Gwynedd, taking Elfín, the son of that prince, under his protection. It was from this account that Thomas, the son of Einion Offeiriad, descended from Gruffydd Gwyr, formed his romance of Taliesin, the son of Cariadwen-Elfín, the son of Goddnou-Rhun, the son of Maelgwyn Gwynedd, and the operations of the Cauldron of Ceridwen.

Thus is the Pedigree of Taliesin, Chief of the Bards of the West, the son of Saint Henwg, of Caerlleon upon Usk, the son of Fflwch, the son of Cynin, the son of Cynvarch, the son of Saint Clydawc, of Ewyas, the son of Gwynnar, the son of Caid, the son of Cadren, the son of Cynan, the son of Cyllin, the son of Caradog, the son of Bran, the son of Llyr Llediaith, King Paramount of all the Kings of Britain, and King, in lineal descent, of the country between the rivers Wye and Towy.
Taliesin, Chief of the Bards, erected the church of Llanhenwg, at Caerlleon upon Usk, which he dedicated to the memory of his father, called Saint Henwg, who went to Rome on a mission to Constantine the Blessed, requesting that he would send Saints Germanus and Lupus to Britain, to strengthen the faith and renew baptism there.

Taliesin, the son of Henwg, was taken by the wild Irish, who unjustly occupied Gower; but while on board ship, on his way to Ireland, he saw a skin coracle, quite empty, on the surface of the sea, and it came closely to the side of the ship; whereupon Taliesin, taking a skin-covered spar in his hand, leaped into it, and rowed towards land, until he stuck on a pole in the weir of Gwynedd Garanhir; when a young chieftain, named Elphin, seeing him so entangled, delivered him from his peril. This Elphin was taken for the son of Gwynedd, although in reality he was the son of Elivri, his daughter, but by whom was then quite unknown; it was, however, afterwards discovered that Urien Rheged, king of Gower and Aberllychwr, was his father, who introduced him to the court of Arthur, at Caerlleon upon Usk, where his feats, learning, and endowments were found to be so superior that he was created a golden-tongued Knight of the Round Table. After the death of Arthr, Taliesin became Chief Bard to Urien Rheged, at Aberllychwr in Rheged."

After the death of Talhaarn, Taliesin, Chief of the Bards, presided in three chairs, namely: the chair of Caerlleon upon Usk, the chair of Rheged, at Bangor Teivy, under the patronage of Cedig ab Ceredig, ab Cuneddav Wledig; but he afterwards was invited to the territory of Gwyddnyw, the son of Gwydion, in Arllechwedd, Arvon, where he had lands conferred on him, and where he resided until the time of Maelgwn Gwynedd, when he was dispossessed of that property, for which he pronounced his curse on Maelgwn, whom Gildas also accursed, and all his possessions; whereupon the Vad Velen came to Rhos, and whoever witnessed it became doomed to certain death. Maelgwn saw the Vad Velen through the keyhole, in Rhos church, and died in consequence. Taliesin, in his old age, returned to Caer-Gwyroswydd, to Riwallon, the son of Urien; after which he visited Cedig, the son of Ceredig, the son of Cunedav Wledig, where he died, and was buried with high honours, such as should always be shown to a man who ranked among the principal wise men of the Cymric nation; and Taliesin, Chief of the Bards, was the highest of the most exalted class, either in literature, wisdom, the science of vocal song, or any other attainment, whether sacred or profane.

It is said that when he was a prisoner in Thomond, Taliesin was set to watch over the cauldron of Ceridwen in which was brewed a drink of knowledge and inspiration intended for her son, Morfran or Afagddu. Three drops splashed out onto his fingers which he then thrust into his mouth, in order to cool them - thus did he have access to all knowledge. He was smart enough to know that Ceridwen would wish to destroy him, so he underwent a series of shape-shiftings, which is a magical art of the Northmen, which they afterwards brought to Less Britain, to avoid her. After several changes, he turned himself into a grain of wheat and she turned into a hen and ate him. He grew in her stomach and was reborn. The story is also attributed to Finn MacCumhal.

After her plan had been spoiled, Ceridwen desired to get rid of him, but he had been born of her and being a goddess of the harvest and pigs could not bear to destroy her own young, she put him in a coracle or a leather bag and sent him sailing down the River Dee. He arrived in Aberdovey where King Elphin the Unfortunate found him on May-Eve at the Salmon Weir and rescued him. The King was struck by the brightness of the baby's forehead and called him Taliesin, meaning Radiant Brow.

Taliesin grew up in Elphin's court and was tutor to Elphin's son, but misfortune befell him and Taliesin was sent packing. He went to Gwynedd and became a bard, putting all others to shame. Some legends have it that that was in the court of King Maelgwn Gwynedd. Others claim that it was the court of King Arthur. Later, Taliesin was associated with another Prince Elphin whose life he saved from the Drowned Hundred, the villages which were submerged when Sienhethryn the Drunkard failed to repair the dikes holding back the ocean. (The legend of Yr Gantref yr Gwaeldod - the drowned villages).

The Welsh poem Preiddeu Annwfn states that Taliesin was a companion of Arthur when the latter went to the Otherworld, and one of the seven men who returned from that expedition. He is also supposed to have accompanied Bran Bendeged in his invasion of Ireland to rescue his sister Rhiannon. It is said too that he made peace with the King of Thomond, and married a Princess there.

Elegy for Ambrose

Before Ambrose, the enemy's scourge,
I saw white horses, tensed, red,
After the war cry, bitter the grave
Before Ambrose, the unflinching foe,
I saw horses jaded and gory from battle,
After the war cry, a great driving force
Before Ambrose, the enemy of tyranny,
I saw horses white with foam,
After the war cry, a terrible torrent.

In Llongborth I saw the rage of slaughter,
And biers beyond all number,
And red-stained men from the assault of Ambrose.

In Llongborth, I saw the clash of swords,
Men in terror, bloody heads,
Before Ambrose the Great, his father's son.

In Llongborth I saw spurs,
And men who did not flinch from the dread of the spears,
Who drank their wine from the bright glass.

In Llongborth I saw the weapons,
Of men, and blood fast dropping,
After the war cry, a fearful return.

In Llongborth I saw Ambrose
Heroes who cut with steel.
The Emperor, ruler of our labour.

In Llongborth Ambrose was slain,
with poison by the Saxon Octa
And before they were overpowered, they committed
slaughter.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, wheat their fodder,
Ruddy ones, swooping like spotted eagles.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, grain was given them,
Ruddy ones, swooping like black eagles.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, restless over their grain,
Ruddy ones, swooping like red eagles.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, grain-scattering,
Ruddy ones, swooping like white eagles.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, with the pace of the stag,
With a nose like that of the consuming fire on a wild
mountain.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, satiated with grain,
Grey ones, with their manes tipped with silver.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, well deserving of grain,
Ruddy ones, swooping like grey eagles.

Under the thigh of Ambrose swift chargers,
Long their legs, having corn for food.

Ewddyr Battle of Argoed Llwyfain

There was a great battle Saturday morning
From when the sun rose until it grew dark.
The fourfold hosts of Fflamddwyn invaded,
Goddau and Rheged gathered in arms,
Summoned from Argoed as far as Arfynydd –
By the Warlord Ewddyr
They might not delay by as much as a day.
With a great blustering din, Fflamddwyn shouted,
'Have these hostages come? Are they ready?'
To him then Owain, scourge of the eastlands,
'They've not come, no! they're not, nor shall they be
ready.'
And a whelp of Coel would indeed be afflicted
Did he have to give any man as a hostage!
And Ewddyr, Duke of the Bretons, shouted,
'If they would meet us now for a treaty,
High on the hilltop let's raise our ramparts,
Carry our faces over the shield rims,
Raise up your spears, men, over our heads,
And set upon Fflamddwyn in the midst of his hosts
And slaughter him, ay, and all that go with him!'
There was many a corpse beside Argoed Llwyfain;
From warriors ravens grew red
And with their leader a host attacked.
For a whole year I shall sing to their triumph.

Urien of Yrechwydd

Urien of Yrechwydd most generous of Christian men,
much do you give to the people of your land;
as you gather so also do you scatter,
the poets of Christendom rejoice while you stand.
More is the gaiety and more is the glory
that Urien and his heirs are for riches renowned,
and he is the chieftain, the paramount ruler,
the far-flung refuge, first of fighters found.
The Lloegrians know it when they count their numbers,
death have they suffered and many a shame,
their homesteads a -burning, stripped their bedding,
and many a loss and many a blame,
and never a respite from Urien of Rheged.
Rheged's defender, famed lord, your land's anchor,
all that is told of you has my acclaim.
Instense is your spear-play when you hear ploy of battle,
when to battle you first come 'tis a killing you can,
fire in their houses ere day in the lord of Yrechwydd's
way,
Yrechwydd the beautiful and its generous clan,
The Angles are succourless around the fierce king
are his fierce offspring. Of those dead, of those living,
of those yet to come, you head the column.
To gaze upon him is a widespread fear;
Gaiety clothes him, the ribald ruler,
gaiety clothes him and riches abounding,
gold king of the Northland and of kings king.

Until I am old and ailing,
in the dire necessity of death,
I shall not be in my element
if I don't praise Urien.
[I am Taliesin of ardent song, which I bestow on Christendom, 
praising the wonders of the lord of Christendom.] 
Between the brine and the high slope and fresh stream water, 
men will cringe before Cunedda, the violent one. 
In Caer Weir [Durham] and Caer Lywelydd [Carlisle], 
fighting will shake the Roman towns [civitates]. 
A tidal inrush of flame, a wave from across the sea; 
champion will set upon champion; 
moved by the man who gained sway across the habitable surface of the world, 
as the sighing of the wind over the ash wood. 
The heirs of Kynvarch and those of Coel will hold fast together in alliance. 
They will adorn the skillful bards who sing. 
It is the death of Cunedda that I mourn and shall 
A song of pain was sung for fear and dread of him before 
a covering of earth became his portion. 
A pack like wild dogs ensheathed him. 
Cowardice is worse than death. For this bitter death I lament, 
for the court and the onslaught of Cunedda. 
For [want of] the abundance of the brine, for the salmon of the sea, 
for the spoils of the oven, I shall now surely perish. 
I shall recite the verse that the bards recite. 
As others reckon, I shall reckon 
the wonders of the battle lord: 
[his] gift of a hundred steeds before Cunedda took his share. 
He used to grant me cattle in mid summer. 
He used to grant me horses in winter. 
He used to grant me bright wine and oil. 
He used to grant me a throng of slaves for a household. 
He was a mighty attacker in conflict -- 
the chieftain whose face was that of a lion. The borderland was always 
reduced to ashes prior to the everlasting overthrow of Edern's son [Cunedda]. He who was brave, unyielding, fierce. 
is cut off by the consuming power of death. 
He was wont to sustain a resplendent shield [ie protection]. 
Heroic men were his captains. 
Grief wakens me, holds back the wine of the man great in feats -- 
the sleep of Coel's descendants destroyed. 

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I shall not be in my element 
if I don't praise Urien.

The Days of Arthur

Hear now of the days of Artur who was Dux Bellorum 
Many years before Artur Came Caesar to Britain 

And for many years The Emperor and his Dux 
Ruled the land in peace In those days St. Germanus 
Fought the Arian Heretics And the Chuch held its Great Council at Arles But the Picts rose in strength 
And the wall was breached From time to time 
And the Empire troubled Within and without 
The Germans came often And defenses were set 
Along the shores Against the saxe-knives 
In those days in Hibernia Were Dyfed, Briceniog, 
And Dalriada Kingdoms And they conquered 
A part of the Pict Lands So that Cunedda fled 
And settled to the south To the lands of Gwynedd 
Where he would be the Ancestor of Urien Rheged 
And Maelgwyn In the time of Theodosius 
The Picts and Germans allied Hadrian’s dyke was cast down 
And as far south as London Towns were burned 
Livestock was slaughtered Macesen Wledig 
Dux Britaniarum, Dux Bellorum Demanded attention 
From far away Rome From Segontium and other 
Garrisons of Britain He marched his men 
Against the Emperor Gratian fell dead 
Slain by Macesen who Ruled the West until his hand 
was raised in just struggle against Valentinian 
Stilcho the Vandal Sent legions to fight 
Against Pict, German, Scot When Macesen died 
Marcus, Gratian and The Third Constantine 
Called Wardewyr Went into Gaul to 
Challenge in arms Vandals, Alans and Suevi 
And Constantine Waredwyr prevailed Until Honorius 
betrayed him 
Marched against him and Drove him down in defeat 
In Iberia where he had kinsmen and he 
Was betrayed by Vortigern who was his troth kinsman 
The counsels in Britain Expelled Honorius’ Dux 
And Honorious wrote To the Civites and bade 
Them look to their own Sword hands for defense 
For a decade of time There were councils and losses 
Then Vortigern rose He who had wed 
The Daughter of the Wardewyr and claimed the Purple 
Murdering the son of Constantine 
And Ambrosius into exile fled to 
The Court of Brittany to his Kinsman Aldrien 
So Vortigern Rose The Superb Tyrant 
Who allowed the Germans Of Hengist 
to come And settle in Kent in return for their sworn swords 
Came Ambrosius to Totne with a full complement of warriors 
and battled Vortigern and Vo rtimer at Guoloph 
And they sued for Peace giving him the whole 
of the Western Kingdoms but betrayed 
Ambrosius at the first sign that his hand was 
Taken away from his shield 
And there was war upon war Briton against German 
Vortigern driven to seige at Caer-Guorthigrin 
Lighting from heaven called as in prophesy 
By Ambrosius’ Myriddn struck down the towers 
Met Hengist at Maesbeli and then at Caer-Conan
Spake then the Queen, low-voiced as one in pain:

"Would ye I came? I could not help but come."

Lo, I am here! --I, Llauyntiauc, am here!

And in their midst a cowled white face he loved,

Beneath the arches nuns and ladies stand,

And in the moonlight, on the balcony, saw

Book of Taliesin  Shropshire copy, c. 1460

With gates wide open unto foe or friend.

Rose-hedged before him stood a nunnery’s walls,

One that he knew, and trembled now to hear.

Was 'ware of voices, and above them all

And at the sainted mid-hour of the night

So, heeding none, seven days he westward rode,

Nor ever more in earthly lists shall ride."

Three days on Gavin’s tomb Lugus Llauyntiauc wept,

Then drew about him baron, knight, and earl,

And cried, "Alack, fair lords, too late we came,

Then lit Lugus Llauyntiauc down, and climbed the stair,

And doffed his helm, and stood before the Queen.

But she that had great fear to see his face:

"Oh, sinless sisters, ye that are so dear,

Lo, this is he through whom great ills were wrought;

For by our love, which we have loved too well,

Is slain my lord and many noble knights.

And therefore, wit ye well, Lugus Llauyntiauc,

My soul's health waneth; yet through God's good grace

I trust, when death is come, to sit with Christ,

Because in heaven more sinful souls than I

Are saints in heaven; and therefore, Llauyntiauc,

For all the love that ever bound our souls

I do beseech thee hide again thy face.

On God's behalf! I bid thee strictly go,

Because my life is as a summer spent:

Yea, go, and keep thy realm from wrack and war,

For, well as I have loved thee, Llauyntiauc,

My heart will no more serve to see thy face;

Nay, not if thou shouldst know love in mine eyes.

In good haste get thee to thy realm again,

And heartily do I beseech thee pray

That I may make amend of time misled.

And take to thee a wife, for age is long."

"Ah no, sweet madam," said Lugus Llauyntiauc,

"That know ye well I may not while I breathe;

But as thou livest, I will live in prayer." 

"If thou wilt do so," said the Queen, "so be.

Hold fast thy promise; yet full well I know

The world will bid thee back." -- "And yet," he cried,

"When didst thou know me to a promise false?

Wherefore, my lady dame, sweet Gwenhwyfar,

For all my earthly bliss hath been in thee,

If thou wilt no more take of this world's joy,

I too shall cease to know the bliss of life.

I pray thee kiss me once, and nevermore."

"Nay," said the Queen, "that shall I never do.

No more of earthly lips shall I be kissed."

Then like to one stung through with hurt of spears,

Who stares, death-blinded, round the reeling lists,

At gaze he stood, but saw no more the Queen;

And as a man who gropes afoot in dreams,

Deaf, dumb, and sightless, down the gallery stairs

Stumbling he went, with hands outstretched for aid,

Who heareth not, nor seeth, nor knoweth not;

At evening, 'twixt two cliffs, came Bedywyr,

Stumbling he went, with hands outstretched for aid,

And as a man who goes blind with excess of bliss,

He doth not know the bliss of life, and death

Who heareth not, nor seeth, nor knoweth not;

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And as a man who roams afoot in dreams,

Deaf, dumb, and sightless, down the gallery stairs

Stumbling he went, with hands outstretched for aid,

And found his horse, and rode, till in a vale

At evening, 'twixt two cliffs, came Bedywyr,

And with his woesome story stayed the knight.

At this, Lugus Llauyntiauc's heart did almost break

For sorrow, and abroad his arms he cast,

And cried, "Alack, fair lords, too late we came,

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And with his woesome story stayed the knight.

At this, Lugus Llauyntiauc's heart did almost break

For sorrow, and abroad his arms he cast,

And cried, "Alack, ah, who may trust this world!"

For sorrow, and abroad his arms he cast,

At this, Lugus Llauyntiauc's heart did almost break

For sorrow, and abroad his arms he cast,

And saw no more the Queen; 

Who stares, death-blinded, round the reeling lists,

At gaze he stood, but saw no more the Queen;

And as a man who roams afoot in dreams,

Deaf, dumb, and sightless, down the gallery stairs

Stumbling he went, with hands outstretched for aid,

And found his horse, and rode, till in a vale

At evening, 'twixt two cliffs, came Bedywyr,

And with his woesome story stayed the knight.
I praise the Lord,  
Prince of the realm, King.  
His sovereignty has extended  
across the world's tract.  
Equipped was the prison of Fril  
in the Caern of the Sidhe  
throughout the account of  
Pwyll and Pryderi.  
No one before Artur  
went into it,  
into a heavy blue/gray chain;  
a faithful servant it held.  
And before the spoils of Annwfn  
bitterly he sang.  
Annwfn the Otherworld  
Beyond the Caern of the Sidhe  
Annwfn the Otherworld  
Beyond the reach of Morgan  
Annwfn the Otherworld  
Beyond the shores of Bresil  
And until Judgment  
shall last our bardic invocation.  
The white ship of Arthur  
Prydwen the fair oared  
Three fullnesses of Prydwen  
we went into it.  
How it came that we went there  
Is a story I tell  
Myrddin Emrys was the husband  
Of Vi Vianna the Goddess of Water  
Gwendoloena.  
He came from her born on wings  
And the time came he needs must  
Return to her having had  
Prophecy that he must be  
Called again and call us Warriors  
To him in the days of the last  
Battle against the Giants  
So we journeyed in Prydwen to Bresil  
To the city of Morgana  
Outside the shores of Middle-Earth  
There I took Myrddin Emrys  
From whom I had learned much  
And taught much as well  
And he passed into the Outer Darkness  
Walking beyond the Fortress of Glass  
How should he be found  
This I record  
He is guardian of the sword which  
Was given by Vi Vianna  
Out of the Lake to Arthur  
And it has been given into  
His hand to return  
When the Aeon has passed  
It shall be handed to him in the first  
Cataclysm of the New Aeon  
In the years before the final battle  
He surrounded himself  
In Runes which little men  
Could not know  
Only those Lords  
Who know the time of the season  
Who know when God was breathed  
And who have seen it  
Could know the path to him  
Up [twenty two] stairways  
Once Emrys Myrddin  
Had taken his leave  
And been placed by Vi Vianna  
Into the sleep of the Morgan  
To go on his journey  
Arthur Resolved  
And would not be dissuaded  
To undertake the destruction  
Of the Fortress of the Four Sides  
With the Eye of Fal  
And myself for its singing  
I had learned the method  
Of singing it of Myriddin  
And had written a song  
Of my own for the riving  
Of that place in shadow  
Perpetual and crespuscular  
So sailed Prydwen  
Sailed with the leave of  
Morgan kinswoman  
Sister of Arthur who was  
Half born of a god  
Past the shores of Breasil  
Into the freezing north  
Sailed Prydwen to Annwyn  
Except seven none rose up  
From the Black Fortress of the Mound.  
I am honored in praise.  
Song was heard  
in the peaked black fortress,  
Four its sides.  
My poetry from the cauldron  
Of Ceridwen it was uttered.  
From the breath of nine maidens it was kindled.  
The cauldron of the chief of Annwfyn:  
what is its fashion?  
A dark ridge around its border  
and pearls.  
It does not boil the food of a coward;  
it has not been destined.  
The flashing sword of Lugus  
has been lifted to it.  
And in the hand of Lluayntiauc  
it was left.  
Lluayntiauc the god born  
Who after loved Gwennwyfar  
And before the door of the Cold Hell  
lamps burned.  
And when we went with Arthur,  
brilliant difficulty, except seven  
one none rose up  
from the Fortress of Mead-Drunkenness.
I am honored in praise;
song is heard
in the Fortress of Four-sides
isle of the strong door
Daytime is jet there
shadow is mingled.
Three fulnesses of Prydwen
we went on the sea.
Except seven none rose up
from the Fortress of Hardness.
I merit not the Lord's
little men of letters.

Beyond the Glass Fortress they did not see
the valor of Arthur.
I learned something of it in Thomond
When I was captive
When the first of the Dalraid came
From Iberia to Hibernia
They encountered a glass tower
In the midst of the sea
Whose people did not respond
To their hailing
And were not of the Sidhe
Of Morgana, or Bresil
With thirty ships they made good
To attack the fastness
All of which foundered
Save one which would rise
To populate all Hibernia
Six thousand men
stood upon the wall.
It was difficult to speak
with their sentinel.
Three fulnesses of Prydwen
went with Arthur.
Except seven
none rose up
from the Fortress of the Middle of the Earth
I do not merit little men,
slack their shield straps.
They do not know which day
the world was created
The hour and words by which
God was born
Who made him
who did not go
meadows of Defwy?
They do not know the golden ox
thick his headband.
Seven score links
on his collar.
And when we went with Arthur,
dolorous visit,
except seven none rose up
from the fortress of God's Peak.

They do not know which day
the chief was created,
what hour of the midday
secret knowledge was born,
The use of what animal they keep,
silver its head.
When we went with Arthur,
sorrowful strife,
except seven none rose up
from the Fortress of Enclosedness.

Was not I a man
Who stood by Artur and Lugh
Of the Angry blows
When they ventured to ride
Upon the castle of four corners
They blew horns and none
Answered their challenge
Heroes rode forth to challenge us
With whom I hesitated
To cross swords
For I knew them for the fashionings
Of my own harp
Song-warriors whom I had
Woven tales of
I bid them let pass
These shades of men
Yet they were no shades
But had taken the forms
Of our own songs
To fight against us
And they fought as demons
When we had vanquished
A new legion arose
From songs of my harp
And did fight with us

The Eye of Fal
The Bright Eye of God
Was focused upon it
And to no avail our arms
Slaughter among us
They wreaked till the snows
Grew red with the perishing
Of good men of Prydwen
The warriors of Artur
Many a corpse lay
Encrusted with hoar-frost
Yet the killing did not end
Till a song was blown
On the Horn of Llyr Sea-God
Which I had crafted
A prayer to Arianrhod
Who is Lady of All that is
Of times and places and of magic
And the song warriors were banished
Great was the slaughter
Among Three fulnesses of Prydwen
Scarce one company remained

Monks pack together howling
like a choir of dogs
From an encounter with masters of secrets
who know:
is there one course of wind?
is there one course of water?
is there one spark of fire
of fierce tumult?

At last we stood on the plain
The blasted ruin of Bile
Lord of the Dead
Vast wasteland of crushed spirits
And broken bodies paying
Eternal homage to Bile
Lord of the Dead
Before the fortress of four corners
We blew a challenge upon the Horn
Of Llyr the Sea-God
The Kinsman of Lugh of Angry Blows
And the Eye of Fal
Was turned upon the Fortress
Where was stored
The spoils of Annwfn
Loud and Long
Sounded the Sentinel of Artur
And echoes rang
Without answer as
The Magical Fires
Burned at the Fortress
The fires which had slain
The Hundreds at Bath Hill
Were nothing to the
Fortress of Fastness
Death rolled upon us
In the form of ****
Yet firm stood the
Company as all fell about us
The shield of Kai
Was turned on the Fortress
Over the shield-rim
Was death and slaughter
Behind stood the seven
Who alone returned from the
Realm of Annwfn
Seeing our ruin
That our hands prevailed not
Seeing none to challenge
No single herald of the
Form of death
I blew upon the Eye
The Horn of Llyr
And called for our succor
So the [ ] Dragon
Laid fire about us
And we were transported
By the winds summoned

By the Sea God of Llyr
By the Leviathan of Llyr
To the Isles of Summer
From thence we came
By many adventures
Seven who walked
From the Cave of Cruachan
Alive and alone
With the spoils of Annwfn

Monks pack together howling
like young wolves
from an encounter with lords
who know.
They do not know when midnight
and dawn divide.
Nor wind, what its course,
what its onrush,
what place it ravages,
what region it strikes.
They do not know how many Saints
Have been lost in the Otherworld
How could they survive
Where Saints and Lords who know
The days and numbers of things
Have perished fully
Or worse than perished
I praise the Lord, great prince,
that I be not sad; Christ endows me.

Song of Myrddin

Eyes of sea peer into mist,
Ever the turning come to not.
All and every chant the magic,
Bring that which is sought.

From air and sky he came,
Future’s histories, upon the wall.
Printed words now to scrolls,
Written scripts await his call.

Swirling mists entrust his presence,
Formed by words and herbs of new.
Waiting for commands he utters,
Mystic force, controlled by few.

Kings and knights do bid his counsel,
He, brought by whims of fate.
Shouldering this mantle never his intention,
To fall backwards, date by date.

Yet he lingers not in Victory,
For him praise and glory never meant.
Knowing well his due is given,
For his blood he was sent.
Ever questing truth and knowledge,
Myrddin's ghosts formed fabled stone.
Excalibur from cold lakeshore given,
Sorcerer and lord destined alone.

Myrddin's boon soon Artur's quest,
Swearing vows they would not fail.
Raising tankards in their passion,
For their Lord, they'd find the Graal.

Artur will wait years uncounted,
None but one found fabled prize.
Medraut seeks the warlord's mantle,
Death, their lord's last cries.

Kinslayer of Dragon White
Orkney's Medraut Son of Lott
Lady's hand the sword did fall
Seek his glory, find it not

Nor to be found upon the land,
Gone the wizard in mists so dense.
Maiden's cup and hand did heal,
Myrddin's mantle now future tense.

Prophesied Red Dragon
Obscured by Saxon Worm
Threatens Britain newly
Myrddin must return

Be it known Myrddin's promise,
Spanning ages it will bring.
Destiny by one man's birthing,
Mantle of Artur, Once and Future King.

The Prophecy of Ambrose

Vortegern, king of the Britons,
was sitting upon the bank of the drained fountain
Two dragons, one of which was white, the other red,
came forth,
and approaching one another, began a terrible fight,
and cast forth fire with their breath
But the white dragon had the advantage,
and made the other fly to the end of the lake
And he, for grief at his flight,
renewed the assault upon his pursuer,
and forced him to retire

After this battle of the dragons,
the king commanded Ambrosius
to tell him what it portended

Upon which he, bursting into tears,
delivered what his prophetic spirit
suggested to him, as follows:-

Woe to the red dragon, for his banishment hasteneth on

His lurking holes shall be seized by the the Saxons whom
you have treated with;
but the white denotes the British nation, which shall be
oppressed by the red
And by the Germans of Hengest and Horsa

The island shall be called by the name of Brutus;
and the name given it by foreigners shall be abolished
From Conan shall proceed a warlike boar,
that shall exercise the sharpness of his tusks within the
Gallic woods
For he shall cut down all the larger oaks, and shall be a
defence to the smaller
The Arabians and Africans shall dread him;
for he shall pursue his furious course to the farther part of
Spain
A blessed king shall prepare a fleet,
and shall be reckoned the twelfth in the court among the
Saints
He shall sail to the land of the Fountain
And drink its waters

and corn shall abound by reason of the fruitfulness of the
soil
Women shall become serpents in their gait
and all their motions shall be full of pride
The camp of Venus shall he restored
nor shall the arrows of Cupid cease to wound
The fountain of a river shall be turned into blood
and two kings shall fight a duel at Stafford for a lioness
Luxury shall overspread the whole ground
and fornication not cease to debauch mankind
All these things shall three ages see
till the buried kings shall be exposed to public view in the
city of London
Famine shall again return
mortality shall return
and the inhabitants shall grieve for the destruction of
their cities
Then shall come the board of commerce
who shall recall the scattered flocks to the pasture they
had lost
His breast shall he food to the hungry
and his tongue drink to the thirsty
Out of his mouth shall flow rivers
that shall water the parched jaws of men
After this shall be produced a tree upon the Tower of
London
which having no more than three branches
shall overshadow the surface of the whole island with the
breadth of its leaves
Its adversary the North wind shall come upon it
and with its noxious blast shall snatch away the third
branch
but the two remaining ones shall possess its place
till they shall destroy one another by the
multitude of their leaves: and then shall it obtain the place
of those two
and shall give sustenance to birds of foreign nations
It shall he esteemed hurtful to native fowls
for they shall not be able to fly freely for fear of its shadow
There shall succeed the ass of wickedness
swift against the goldsmiths
but slow against the ravenousness of wolves

London shall mourn for the death of twenty thousand
and the river Thames shall be turned into blood
The monks in their cowls shall be forced to marry
and their cry shall be heard upon the mountains of the Alps
Three springs shall break forth in the city of Winchester
whose rivulets shall divide the island into three parts
Whoever shall drink of the first
shall enjoy long life and shall never be afflicted with sickness
He that shall drink of the second
shall die of hunger and paleness and horror shall sit in his countenance
He that shall drink of the third
shall be surprised with sudden death
neither shall his body be capable of burial
Those that are willing to escape so great a surfeit
will endeavour to hide it with several coverings: but whatever bulk shall be laid upon it
shall receive the form of another body
For earth shall be turned into stones
stones into water wood into ashes ashes into water
if cast over it

Also a damsel shall be sent from the city of the forest of Canute to administer a cure
who after she shall have practiced all her arts
shall dry up the noxious fountains only with her breath
Afterwards as soon as she shall have refreshed herself
with the wholesome liquor
she shall bear in her right hand the wood of Caledon
and in her left the forts of the walls of London
Wherever she shall go she shall make sulphureous steps
which will smoke with a double flame
That smoke shall rouse up the city of Ruteni
and shall make food for the inhabitants of the deep
She shall overflow with rueful tears
and shall fill the island with her dreadful cry
She shall be killed by a hart with ten branches
four of which shall bear golden diadems but the other six
shall he turned into buffalo’s horns
whose hideous sound shall astonish the three islands of Britain
The Daneian wood shall be stirred up
and breaking forth into a human voice
shall cry: Come O Cambria and join Cornwall to thy side
and say to Winchester the earth shall swallow thee up
Translate the seat of thy pastor to the place where ships come to harbour
and the rest of the members will follow the head
For the day hasteneth in which thy citizens shall perish
on account of the guilt of perjury

The whiteness of wool has been hurtful to thee
and the variety of its tinctures
Woe to the perjured nation
for whose sake the renowned city shall come to ruin
The ships shall rejoice at so great an augmentation
and one shall be made out of two
It shall be rebuilt by Eric loaden with apples
to the smell whereof the birds of several woods shall flock together
He shall add to it a vast palace
and wall it round with six hundred towers
Therefore shall London envy it
and triply increase her walls
The river Thames shall encompass it round
and the fame of the work shall pass beyond the Alps
Eric shall hide his apples within it
and shall make subterraneous passages
At that time shall the stones speak
and the sea towards the Gallic coast be contracted into a narrow space
On each bank shall one man hear another
and the soil of the island shall be enlarged
The secrets of the deep shall be revealed
and Gaul shall tremble for fear
After these things shall come forth a horn from the forest of Calaterium
which shall fly round the island for two years together
With her nocturnal cry she shall call together the winged kind
and assemble to her all sorts of fowls
They shall invade the tillage of husbandmen
and devour all the grain of the harvests
Then shall follow a famine upon the people
and a grievous mortality upon the famine
But when this calamity shall be over
a detestable bird shall go to the valley of Galabes
and shall raise it to be a high mountain
Upon the top thereof it shall also plant an oak
and build its nest in its branches
Three eggs shall be produced in the nest
from whence shall come forth a fox
a wolf and a bear
The fox shall devour her mother
and bear the head of an ass
In this monstrous form shall she frighten her brothers
and make them fly into Neustria
But they shall stir up the tusky boar
and returning in a fleet shall encounter with the fox who at the beginning of the fight shall feign herself dead and move the boar to compassion
Then shall the boar approach her carcase
and standing over her
shall breathe upon her face and eyes
But she not forgetting her cunning
shall bite his left foot
and pluck it off from his body
Then shall she leap upon him
and snatch away his right ear and tail
and hide herself in the caverns of the mountains

Book of Taliesin

Shropshire copy, c. 1460
Therefore shall the deluded boar require the wolf and bear to restore him his members who as soon as they shall enter into the cause shall promise two feet of the fox together with the ear and tail and of these they shall make up the members of a hog With this he shall be satisfied and expect the promised restitution In the mean time shall the fox descend from the mountains and change herself into a wolf and under pretence of holding a conference with the boar she shall go to him and craftily devour him After that she shall transform herself into a boar and feigning a loss of some members shall wait for her brothers but as soon as they are come she shall suddenly kill them with her tusks and shall be crowned with the head of a lion In her days shall a serpent be brought forth which shall be a destroyer of mankind With its length it shall encompass London and devour all that pass by it The mountain ox shall take the head of a wolf and whiten his teeth in the Severn He shall gather to him the flocks of Albania and Cambria which shall drink the river Thames dry The ass shall call the goat with the long beard and shall borrow his shape Therefore shall the mountain ox be incensed and having called the wolf shall become a horned bull against them In the exercise of his cruelty he shall devour their flesh and bones but shall be burned upon the top of Urian The ashes of his funeral-pile shall be turned into swans that shall swim on dry ground as on a river They shall devour fishes in fishes and swallow up men in men But when old age shall come upon them they shall become sea-wolves and practise their frauds in the deep They shall drown ships and collect no small quantity of silver The Thames shall again flow and assembling together the rivers shall pass beyond the bounds of its channel It shall cover the adjacent cities and overturn the mountains that oppose its course Being full of deceit and wickedness it shall make use of the fountain Galabes Hence shall arise factions provoking the Venedotians to war The oaks of the forest shall meet together and encounter the rocks of the Gewisseans A raven shall attend with the kites and devour the carcases of the slain An owl shall build her nest upon the walls of Gloucester and in her nest shall be brought forth an ass The serpent of Malvernia shall bring him up and put him upon many fraudulent practices Having taken the crown he shall ascend on high and frighten the people of the country with his hideous braying In his days shall the Pachaian mountains tremble and the provinces be deprived of their woods For there shall come a worm with a fiery breath and with the vapour it sends forth shall burn up the trees Out of it shall proceed seven lions deformed with the heads of goats With the stench of their nostrils they shall corrupt women and make wives turn common prostitutes The father shall not know his own son because they shall grow wanton like brute beasts Then shall come the giant of wickedness and terrify all with the sharpness of his eyes Against him shall arise the dragon of Worcester and shall endeavour to banish him But in the engagement the dragon shall be worsted and oppressed by the wickedness of the conqueror For he shall mount upon the dragon and putting off his garment shall sit upon him naked The dragon shall bear him up on high and beat his naked rider with his tail erected Upon this the giant rousing up his whole strength shall break his jaws with his sword At last the dragon shall fold itself up under its tail and die of poison After him shall succeed the boar of Totness and oppress the people with grievous tyranny Gloucester shall send forth a lion and shall disturb him in his cruelty in several battles He shall trample him under his feet and terrify him with open jaws At last the lion shall quarrel with the kingdom and get upon the backs of the nobility A bull shall come into the quarrel and strike the lion with his right foot He shall drive him through all the inns in the kingdom but shall break his horns against the walls of Oxford The fox of Kaerdubalem shall take revenge on the lion and destroy him entirely with her teeth She shall be encompassed by the adder of Lincoln who with a horrible hiss shall give notice of his presence to a multitude of dragons Then shall the dragons encounter and tear one another to pieces The winged shall oppress that which wants wings and fasten its claws into the poisonous cheeks Others shall come into the quarrel and kill one another A fifth shall succeed those that are slain and by various stratagems shall destroy the rest He shall get upon the back of one with his sword and sever his head from his body Then throwing off his garment he shall get upon another
and put his right and left hand upon his tail
Thus being naked shall he overcome him
whom when clothed he was not able to deal with
The rest he shall gall in their flight
and drive them round the kingdom
Upon this shall come a roaring lion dreadful for his monstrous cruelty
Fifteen parts shall he reduce to one
and shall alone possess the people
The giant of the snow-white colour shall shine
and cause the white people to flourish
Pleasures shall effeminate the princes
and they shall suddenly be changed into beasts
Among them shall arise a lion swelled with human gore
Under him shall a reaper be placed in the standing corn
who while he is reaping
shall be oppressed by him
A charioteer of York shall appease them
and having banished his lord
shall mount upon the chariot which he shall drive
With his sword unsheathed shall he threaten the East
and fill the tracks of his wheels with blood
Afterwards he shall become a sea-fish
who being roused up with the hissing of a serpent
shall engender with him
From hence shall be produced three thundering bulls
who having eaten up their pastures shall be turned into trees
The first shall carry a whip of vipers
and turn his back upon the next
He shall endeavour to snatch away the whip
but shall be taken by the last
They shall turn away their faces from one another
till they have thrown away the poisoned cup
To him shall succeed a husbandman of Albania
at whose back shall be a serpent
He shall be employed in ploughing the ground
that the country may become white with corn
The serpent shall endeavour to diffuse his poison
in order to blast the harvest
A grievous mortality shall sweep away the people
and the walls of cities shall be made desolate
There shall be given for a remedy the city of Claudius
which shall interpose the nurse of the scourger
For she shall bear a dose of medicine
and in a short time the island shall be restored
Therefore shall the people of the kingdom be at peace
and provoke the lion to a dose of physic
In his established seat he shall adjust the weights
but shall stretch out his hands into Albania
For which reason the northern provinces shall be grieved
and open the gates of the temples
The sign-bearing wolf shall lead his troops
and surround Cornwall with his tail
He shall be opposed by a soldier in a chariot
who shall transform that people into a boar
The boar therefore shall ravage the provinces
but shall hide his head in the depth of Severn
A man shall embrace a lion in wine
and the dazzling brightness of gold shall blind the eyes of beholders
Silver shall whiten in the circumference
and torment several wine-presses
Men shall be drunk with wine
and regardless of heaven
shall be intent upon the earth
From them shall the stars turn away their faces
and confound their usual course
Corn will wither at their malign aspects
and there shall fall no dew from heaven
The roots and branches will change their places
and the novelty of the thing shall pass for a miracle
The brightness of the sun shall fade at the amber of Mercury
and horror shall seize the beholders
And Britain shall its mountains be levelled
as the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall run with blood
Stars will fall from the sky and rain fire upon the Civites
In Iberia the exercise of religion shall be destroyed,
and churches be laid open to ruin
At last the oppressed shall prevail,
and oppose the cruelty of foreigners
For a boar of Cornwall shall give his assistance,
and trample their necks under his feet
The currents of the ocean and the air
shall be subject to his power,
and he shall possess the forests of Gaul
They shall load the necks of roaring lions with chains,
and restore the times of their ancestors
Then from the first to the fourth,
from the fourth to the third,
from the third to the second,
the thumb shall roll in oil
The sixth shall be born in Ireland
His sons shall overturn the walls
and change the woods into a plain
He shall reduce several parts to one,
and be crowned with the head of a lion
His heirs shall be born beyond the seas
And from them shall come the great leader
His beginning shall lay open to wandering affection,
but his end shall carry him up to the blessed, who are above
For he shall restore the seats of saints in their countries,
and settle pastors in convenient places
Two cities he shall invest with two palls,
and shall bestow virgin-presents upon virgins
He shall merit by this the favour of the Thunderer,
and shall he placed among the saints
From him shall proceed a lynx penetrating all things,
who shall be bent upon the ruin of his own nation;
for through him Neustria shall lose both islands,
and be deprived of its ancient dignity
Then shall the natives return back to the island;
for there shall arise a dissension among foreigners
Also a hoary old man, sitting upon a snow-white horse,
shall turn the course of the river Periron,
and shall measure out a mill upon it with a white rod
Six of his posterity and his forbears shall have swayed the sceptre,
but after them shall arise a German worm
The white dragon shall rise again,
and invite over a daughter of Germany
Our gardens shall be again replenished with foreign seed,
and the red one shall pine away at the end of the pond
There shall succeed the goat of the Venereal Castle
Whose father is from Birmingham of the Smiths
having golden horns and a silver beard
who shall breathe such a cloud out of his nostrils
as shall darken the whole surface of the island
There shall be peace in his time
The house of Romulus shall dread his courage,
and his end shall be doubtful
He shall be celebrated in the mouths of the people
and his exploits shall be food to those that relate them
He shall be advanced by a sea-wolf,
And from the the woods of Gaul to Africa shall his Liegeman bear the Legion Standard.
Religion shall be again abolished, and there shall be a translation of the metropolitian sees
The dignity of London shall adorn Dorobernia,
and the seventh pastor of York shall be resorted to in the kingdom of Armorica
Menevia shall put on the pall of the City of Legions,
and a preacher of Ireland shall be dumb
on account of an infant growing in the womb
It shall rain a shower of blood,
and a raging famine shall afflict mankind
And corn shall be sold dearly so that many starve but for having gold to buy it
When these things happen, the red one shall be grieved;
but when his fatigue is over, shall grow strong
Then shall mis fortunes hasten upon the white one,
and the buildings of his gardens shall be pulled down
Seven that sway the sceptre shall be killed,
one of whom shall become a saint
A Queen who is a stranger to Christ
Will sit upon the throne of Israel
Among the Germans
The wombs of mothers shall ripped up,
and infants be abortive
There shall be a most grievous punishment of Israel
that the natives may be restored
He that shall do these things shall put on the brazen man,
and upon a brazen horse shall for a long time harry the gates of London
And he shall assault as well the Red Dragon
And the House of Romulus Hail him
And the Bishop of Rome shall struggle against him
Then bow down before him
After that shall the German worm be crowned,
and the brazen prince upheld and he shall March through Gaul
He has his bounds assigned him, which he shall not be able to pass
For a score of years less one he shall continue in trouble and subjection, but shall bear sway
Then shall the West wind rise against him,
and shall snatch away the flowers
which the west wind produced
There shall be gilding in the temples,
or shall the edge of the sword cease
The German dragon shall hardly get to his holes,
because the revenge of his treason shall overtake him
At last he shall flourish for a little time,
but the decimation of Neustria shall hurt him
For a people in wood and in iron coats shall come,
and revenge upon him his wickedness
They shall restore the ancient inhabitants to their dwellings
and there shall be an open destruction of foreigners
The seed of the nation of Israel shall be swept out of his gardens,
and the remainder of their generation shall be decimated
They shall bear the yoke of slavery,
and wound their mother with spades and ploughs
After this shall succeed two dragons,
whereof one shall be killed with the sting of envy,
but the other shall return under the shadow of a name
Then shall succeed a lion of justice, at whose roar the Gallican towers and the island dragons shall tremble
In those days gold shall be squeezed from the lily and the nettle,
and silver shall flow from the hoofs of bellowing cattle
The frizled shall put on various fleeces,
and the outward habit denote the inward parts
The feet of barker's shall be cut off;
wild beasts shall enjoy peace:
mankind shall be grieved at their punishment:
the form of commerce shall be divided:
the half shall be round
The ravenousness of kites shall be destroyed,
and the teeth of wolves blunted
The lion's whelps shall be transformed into sea-fishes;
and an eagle shall build her nest upon Mount Aravius
And carry men across the sea
Venedotia shall grow red with the blood of brothers,
and the Saxons slay brother and sister
The island shall be wet with night-tears;
which the west wind produced
and shall snatch away the flowers
Therefore, Neustria, shall return
and the native soil
The feet of barker's shall be cut off;
and the ravenousness of kites shall be destroyed,
and the teeth of wolves blunted
The lion's whelps shall be transformed into sea-fishes;
and an eagle shall build her nest upon Mount Aravius
And carry men across the sea
Venedotia shall grow red with the blood of brothers,
and the Saxons slay brother and sister
The island shall be wet with night-tears;
so that all shall he provoked to all things
Woe to thee, Neustria,
because the lion's brain shall be poured upon thee;
and he shall be banished with shattered limbs from his native soil
But shall return and maul the German Dragon
Posterity shall endeavour to fly above the highest places;
but the favour of new comers shall be exalted
After this shall the red dragon return to his proper manners,
and turn his rage upon himself
One shall come in armour
and shall ride upon a flying serpent
He shall sit upon his back with his naked body
and cast his right hand upon his tail
With his cry shall the seas be moved
and he shall strike terror into the second
The second therefore shall enter into confederacy with
the lion
but a quarrel happening
they shall encounter one another
They shall distress one another
but the courage of the beast shall gain the advantage
Then shall come one with a drum
and appease the rage of the lion
Therefore shall the revenge of the Thunderer show itself,
for every field shall disappoint the husbandmen
Mortality shall snatch away the people, and make a
desolation over all countries
There shall he a miserable desolation of the kingdom, and
the floors of the harvests shall return to the fruitful forests
The Severn sea shall discharge itself through seven
mouths
and the river Uske burn seven months
Piety shall hurt the possessor of things got by impiety,
till he shall have put on his Father: therefore,
being armed with the teeth of a boar,
he shall ascend above the tops of mountains,
and the shadow of him that wears a helmet
Albania shall be enraged, and assembling her neighbours,
shall be employed in shedding blood
There shall he put into her jaws a bridle
that shall be made on the coast of Armorica
The eagle of the broken covenant shall gild it over,
and rejoice in her third nest
The roaring whelps shall watch, and leaving the woods,
shall hunt within the walls of cities
They shall make no small slaughter of those that oppose
them,
and shall cut off the tongues of bulls
In those days the oaks of the forests shall burn
and acorns grow upon the branches of teil trees
Fishes shall die with the heat thereof
and of them shall be engendered serpents
The baths of Badon shall grow cold and their salubrious
waters engender death
Then shall there be a slaughter of foreigners;
then shall the rivers run with blood
Then shall break forth the fountains of Armorica,
and they shall be crowned with the diadem of Brutus
Cambria shall he filled with joy;
and the oaks of Cornwall shall flourish
The seas shall rise up in the twinkling of an eye
and the dust of the ancients shall be restored
The winds shall fight together with a dreadful blast
and their sound shall reach the stars

When he was a man and Vortigern defeated,
Ambrose went to the Dans Meyn
and built a circle at the place of the
drained fountain that the prophecy might be swayed
The Intruding Monks
St Brendan and the 14 brothers got into the boat in the name of Our Lord, but before they departed, there came 3 brothers from St Brendan's order. They said to him, "Lord, we wish to come with you since we are prepared to die on pilgrimage and to follow you wherever you are and as far as you wish to go." When God's saint knew what they wanted, he said, "Let it be done, my sons, as you wish." They got into the boat and with the sails hoisted began to sail wherever the wind was willing to take them.

Conclusions of the Voyage
After fifteen days the wind died down and they could go no further in any direction; this caused the brothers to fear that the calm sea would last forever. But St Brendan comforted them and said, "Fear not, for God is our Saviour. Leave the sails hoisted and make our devotions to God that He may be pleased by his servants." They went in search of His miracles. They spent forty days at sea without coming to shore.

The Isle of Birds
They saw another island from which there flowed many fountains and they landed on it. It was the day on which Our Lord celebrated the last supper with his disciples. For that reason they stayed there until the sabbath day came; then they set out over the island and found a large herd of animals. Then St Brendan said to the monks, "You can take some of these animals as our Lord has placed them for you to take; let us celebrate the feast of Easter."

The Isle of Temptation
Immediately there came to them a large dog which neither barked nor made a sound. St Brendan said to the monks, "Our Lord has sent us a good messenger and we can tell that this island is habitable by some creatures." The dog turned its head and decided to go; the monks followed it to a pleasant dwelling lodge and they entered inside. They saw a beautiful hall made welcome with hangings and fine beds. Then St Brendan said to the monks, "Take care lest Satan tricks you, as I foresee that, of the three monks, two will come after and one wretch will go into damnation for Satan's use. Pray for his soul for his flesh is given over to the power of Satan."

St Brendan summoned the monks to bring food that they could eat at the table. One monk stepped forward as his steward and found a table spread with beautiful cloths, and bread of amazing whiteness and fish cooked in many fashions. They ate and drank and praised God. After the meal, St Brendan said, "Brothers, let us take our rest here; give rest to your limbs in these fine beds." They stayed there three days. Then St Brendan instructed the monks that they should take nothing away from that island; they returned to the boat and sailed on.

The Easter Feast
They saw another island from which there flowed many fountains and they landed on it. It was the day on which Our Lord celebrated the last supper with his disciples. For that reason they stayed there until the sabbath day came; then they set out over the island and found a large herd of animals. Then St Brendan said to the monks, "You can take some of these animals as our Lord has placed them for you to take; let us celebrate the feast of Easter."

The Book of Taliesin

Shropshire copy, c. 1460

A Collection of Sacred Magick | The Esoteric Library | www.sacred-magick.com
Once the Easter feast was over, they put to sea and came to another island on which they found a beautiful stream and a tree of great height, full of pure white birds. As they admired the mystery of the tree and its birds, one of them flew down and began to speak to St Brendan, saying to him, "Be not amazed by us, holy father. Know that we are from that large army of the damned belonging to our former master who transgressed God's command. In as much as we sinned in our consent to his teaching, by that measure we stay here; when we asked neither help nor refuge from our Lord, we fell along with the others. Yet, because our Lord created us, He wanted us to come here, and then some others came; He has given us this much grace in that we suffer no hardship, but sends us here where we are at leisure to fly like the other spirits through the different parts of the firmament and the planets. The Lord God commands us to praise our creator on Sundays and this we do. You and your brothers have spent one year on your journey and still have six years more at sea; after six more years you will come to the Promised Land, where there are the saints of the Old Testament."

When he had said this, the bird began to fly back to the others; since it was the hour of vespers, all the birds in the air with one voice began, while beating their wings, to sing these words with their beaks, "To you, Lord God sing praises in Sion and to you will be given homage in the Risen Jerusalem" and the whole time they alternated their words.

When these hymns were finished, the noble saint began to say, "Lord God, may you open my ears." Then they heard the birds say, "Praise God, all His angels, and praise God, all His powers."

Since the dawn was beginning to break, they began to sing, "May the splendor of our Lord God be upon us"; similarly, at the hour of tierce, they sang, "Sing to our King." At the hour of sext, they sang these words, "Behold what a good thing it is to dwell and live as a family in one place."

Thus night and day the birds recited and gave praises to our Lord. Through the fragrant smell which came from the birds and because of their sweet and pleasant song, St Brendan stayed there until Pentecost.

The Crystal Isle
Then they departed that place and came to an island where they found a monastery of monks who were doing God's service; there was a cathedral church as high as it was long. There were two altars here which were of fine crystal and the vessels which served in the church were completely of crystal as were the paten, the chalice, the plates, the candelabra and the censer. The monks maintained the great silence between themselves so that none spoke; occasionally they used signals to show what they wanted. St Brendan took the prior to one side and asked about the existence of the monastery, and with great reverence he replied, "Lord father, before my Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that eighty years have passed since we came here to this island; in all that time I have not heard a human voice except when we sing amongst ourselves the praises of God and when the Holy Spirit replies through the mouth of an angel, most noble words admonishing us to persevere and live at the command of the angels."

St Brendan said to him, "My lord prior, may it please you that we stay here with you." The prior replied, "It is not permitted, as you know well. It has been revealed by our Lord that God has decreed that you must return to the place whence you set out, except for the four brothers." While they were speaking, a shaft of fire entered through the window and extinguished the candles which were standing in front of the altar. After that, the fire, which seemed to have been extinguished, was not so at all, since the light remained in the candles and at no time did they go out but stayed burning night and day.

St Brendan spent the entire night in front of the altar and in the morning he asked permission from the prior to sail away. The prior said to him, "You will celebrate the birth of our Lord here until Epiphany and then leave here."

Vision of the Leviathan
Leviathan of the Prophet Isaiah rose out of the deep, and we saw of vision how he will be killed by God when those days come to pass. Before him rose Balor, who we knew by his appearance and he charged at Leviathan through the waters, with smoke surrounding him.

From the air above Leviathan descended a dragon which felled Balor and which we saw fly off towards the City of Glass in the north. And the stinger of Leviathan darted out as it were a Scorpion, and two dragons of Red sprang into the sky, and flew about the quarters of the earth. And they would have laid waste to the four quarters of the Globe but by the Grace of God Arianrhod rose up from the waves and sent them in different directions, one into the setting sun and one into the rising sun, further than the sunrise and before the sunset.

One went into the far north and laid waste there among the timbers, striking them down with the fire of his breath. The other in vision we saw fall upon a great city of the Persias, and it burned through the streets and slew and none escaped

But the voice of the Angel Arianrhod spoke and said "The time is not yet come. The two dragons are destroyed. All nations are not yet destroyed in war."

Further voyages
St Brendan endured many tribulations and witnessed diverse miracles in the course of his ocean journey, which would be too long to recount.
The smoking mountain

Suddenly there appeared a mountain so high that it soared amidst the sky, and from the highest peak there was a fiery smoke. It was not long before the boat came to shore. They saw the barren top of the mountain throwing long tongues of flame and fire, reaching right to the heavens and then the fire falling down right to the depths of the sea. St Brendan wanted to leave that evil place.

Judas

Not far from the land, he caught sight of something like a blackened and burnt man sitting on a rock; he had a cloth in front of him hanging from two iron spikes and he was not holding the cloth. The monks who were with St Brendan said when they saw it from afar that it was a boat which had capsized. Others said that it was a dead fish, and as they approached the man, they found him sitting on a substantial rock. The waves of the sea battered him right to the top of his head. As the waves ebbed, the rock appeared in its entirety and the cloth in front over his eyes pulled at his face and his nostrils.

St Brendan began to ask him who he was and for what crime he was put there and for what reason he sustained such punishment. He replied, "I am the misbegotten Judas. I am not here in this place through any merit of mine, but through the great mercy of Jesus Christ is this place given to me for my penitence. Know that I am staying here on this rock that I might be punished; yet I have here complete delight by comparison with the fear of the torments which I must endure. I burn like a lump of lead molten in a pot by night and day in the middle of this mountain which you see. This is the mountain of hell which throws out its fiery bolts, consuming the souls of impious sinners. I have indeed a brief time of respite here every Sunday from one hour of vespers to the next and on the day of the birth of Jesus Christ until the day of Epiphany, and from Easter until Pentecost; and on the day of the purification of the Virgin Mary I have this respite that I do not suffer in hell but come here to this place. And then I am tormented in the lowest depths of the demons' lair with Herod, Annas and Caiaphas. For the love of that holy Father, I implore you through the redeemer of the world to beg my Lord Jesus Christ that I may have permission to stay here until sunrise tomorrow so that the demons do not torment me at your coming nor carry me away to the painful destiny which is my price for the evil bargain I made of Jesus Christ."

The noble saint said, "May the Lord's will be done." Then St Brendan asked him whose cloth it was which was hanging before his eyes. Judas replied, "This cloth which you see I gave to a leper when I was with my Lord Jesus Christ; but I do not have any respite because of it; instead it was granted to me as a hindrance since the cloth was not rightfully mine. The iron spikes on which it hangs I gave as a gift to the priests of the temple. The rock on which I sit I placed in a ditch on a public street to assist the passers-by and I did this before I was a disciple of the Lord."

Since the hour of vespers had now come, there arrived a large crowd of demons, shouting, "Be gone from us, Saint of God. We cannot approach our companion until you have completely departed from this area. We dare not approach nor follow our prince, Satan, unless he has his own Judas Iscariot." St Brendan, the noble saint, replied to them, "I will not permit God's enemy to have access to you, neither on the boat nor elsewhere; but I pray our Lord Jesus Christ to grant him respite of his punishment until tomorrow morning. May the Lord grant this to me not because of my merit but through his great mercy and grace that he might stay here tonight until the morning. Therefore I command you in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ to let him go."

The demons cried out at the top of their voices, "How can it be that Jesus Christ has any power to give help or respite to the one full of evil and malice who betrayed Him?" "I command you," said St Brendan, "on behalf of Him whose grace and mercy is all-powerful that you and the others do not touch him nor do him any harm."

It thus happened that the demons returned immediately to hell. In the morning they led him back without a word and returned him to the cruel punishments which he suffered before and will suffer endlessly and forever.

The final voyage

St Brendan sailed towards the south with his companions and the boat went where our Lord wanted to conduct them. They sailed first with one wind and then with another, sometimes from the right, sometimes from the left. They saw so many miracles that whoever would wish to recount them all would become a bore. Each day they praised and glorified God in and for all things.

The Promised Land

When they had been seven years on the sea, our Lord wished them to arrive in the Promised Land. They landed and visited the resting place of the saints who dwelt there without mortal form.

Brendan's return and death

After leaving there, he came to the land of his own monastery. He related those things which he had seen at sea and said that his life would not be long. Our Lord took him, fortified by the sacraments of the church, which he received humbly in the hands of his disciples. With all glory he went to Jesus Christ.

Finished on the twelfth day of June in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord, 1211, in the Castle of Harlech.
Supplement - the Pronunciation of Welsh Names

Despite its formidable appearance to the uninitiated, Welsh is a language whose spelling is entirely regular and phonetic, so that once you know the rules, you can learn to read it and pronounce it without too much difficulty. For young children learning to read, Welsh provides far fewer difficulties than does English, as the latter's many inconsistencies in spelling are not found in Welsh, in which all letters are pronounced.

THE WELSH ALPHABET: (28 letters)

A, B, C, Ch, D, Dd, E, F, Ff, G, Ng, H, I, L
Ll, M, N, O, P, Ph, R, Rh, S, T, Th, U, W, Y

(Note that Welsh does not possess the letters J, K, Q, V, X or Z, though you will often come across "borrowings" from English, such as John, Jones, Jam and Jiwbil (Jubilee); Wrexham (Wrecsam); Zw (Zoo).

THE VOWELS: (A, E, I, O, W, Y)

A as in man. Welsh words: am, ac Pronounced the same as in English)

E as in bet or echo. Welsh words: g est (guest); enaid (enide)

I as in pin or queen. Welsh words: ni (nee); mi (me); lili (lily); min (meen)

U as in pita: Welsh words: ganu (ganee); cu (key); Cymru (Kumree); tu (tee); un (een)

O as in lot or me, Welsh words: o’r (0re); don (don); dod (dode); bob (bohe)

W as in Zoo or bus. Welsh words: cwm (koom), bws (bus); yw (you); galw (galoo)

Y has two distinct sounds: the final sound in happy or the vowel sound in myrrh Welsh words: Y (uh); Yr (ur); yn (un); fry (vee); byd (beed)

All the vowels can be lengthened by the addition of a circumflex (ä), known in Welsh as “to bach” (little roof). Welsh words: Tän (taan), län (laan)

THE DIPHTHONGS:

Ae, Ai and Au are pronounced as English "eye": ninnau (nineye); mae (my); henaid (henide); main (mine); craig (crigle)

Ew and Ei are pronounced the same way as the English ay in pray. Welsh words: deisiau (dayshy), or in some dialects (deeshuh); deil (dale or dile); teulu (taylee or teylee)

Ew is more difficult to describe. It can be approximated as eh-oo or perhaps as in the word mount. The nearest English sound is found in English midland dialect words such as the Birmingham pronunciation of "you" (yew). Welsh words: mewn (meh-oon or moun); tew (teh-ooh)

I’w and Y’w sound almost identical to the English "Ee-you." or "Yew" or "You": Welsh words: clwy (cle-oo); byw (bee-you or b'you); menyw (menee-you or menyou)

Oe is similar to the English Oy or Oi. Welsh words: croeso (croysyo); troed (troid); oen (oin)

Ow is pronounced as in the English tow, or low: Welsh word: Rhown (rhone); rho (hrow)

Wy as in English wi in win or oo-ee: Welsh words: Wy (oo-ee); wyn (win); mwyn (mooin)

Ywy is pronounced as in English Howie. Welsh words: bywyd (bowid); tywyll (towith)

Aw as in the English cow. Welsh words: mawr (mour); prynhawn (prinhown); lawr (lour)

THE CONSONANTS:

For the most part b, d, h, l, m, n, p, r, s, and t are pronounced the same as their English equivalents (h is always pronounced, never silent). Those that differ are as follows:

C always as in cat; never as in since. Welsh words: canu (Kanee); cwm (come); cael (kile); and of course, Cymru (Kumree)

Ch as in the Scottish loch or the German ach or noch. The sound is never in as in church, but as in loch or Docherty. Welsh words: edrychwn (edrych oon); uwch (youch ), chwi (Chee)

Dd is pronounced like the English th in the words seethe or them. Welsh words: bydd (beethe); sydd (seethe); ddofon (thovon); fflyddlon (futh lon)

Th is like the English th in words such as think, forth, thank. Welsh words: gwaith (gwithe); byth (beeth)

F as in the English V. Welsh words: afon (avon); fi (vee); fydd (veethe); hyfryd (huvrid); fawr (vowr), fach (vach)

Ff as in the English f. Welsh words: ffynnon (funon); ffyrrdd (furrd); ffaith (fithe)

G always as in English goat, gore. Welsh words: ganu (ganee); ganaf (ganav); angau (angeye); gem (game)
Ng as in English finger or Long Island. Ng usually occurs with an h following as a mutation of c. Welsh words Yng Nghaerdydd (in Cardiff: pronounced ung hire deethe) or Yng Nghymru (in Wales: pronounced ung Humree)

Ll is an aspirated L. That means you form your lips and tongue to pronounce L, but then you blow air gently around the sides of the tongue instead of saying anything. Got it? The nearest you can get to this sound in English is to pronounce it as an l with a th in front of it. Welsh words: llan (thlan); llawr (thlour); llwyd (thlooid)

Rh sounds as if the h come before the r. There is a slight blowing out of air before the r is pronounced. Welsh words: rhengau (hrengye); rhag (hrag); rhy (hree)