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THE FOUR BRANCHES OF THE MABINOGL.

Chapter III. **Their structure.**

(Continued.)

The extent to which the Four Branches refer to particular localities will become clear from the following lists. In Pwyll Pt. I, i. e. the history of the relations between Pwyll and the king of Amwn, we have the place-names which follow:

- (1) Arberth, the 'priflys' of Pwyll.
- (2) Glym Cuch.
- (3) Penn Llwyn Diarwya.

In Pt. II of Pwyll the following localities are mentioned:

- (1) Arberth, the birthplace of Pryderi.
- (2) Gwent-is-coet, the domain of Teyrnon Twrv Vliant.

while at the end of the Mabinogi the domain of Pryderi himself is given as follows:

'Seith cantref dynet', to which were afterwards added, 'tri chantref ystrat tywi, and 'pedwar cantref keredigyaon'.

In the Mabinogi of Branwen, the second of the Four Branches, the following are the places mentioned:

- (1) Hardlech yn Arduôy, a 'llys' of Bendigeitfran.
- (2) Aberffraw.
- (3) Talebolon in Anglesey.
- (4) 'Llyn y peir' in Ireland.
- (5) Kaer saint yn aruon.
- (6) Edeirnon.

- (7) The rivers 'Lli & Archan'.
- (8) Llinon auon yn iwerdon.
- (9) Kymry.
- (10) Ynys y kedym.
- (11) Y guynuryrn yn llundein.
- (12) Freinc.
- (13) G6ales (and G6alas) ym penuro.
- (14) Aber hennueleu y tu a cherny6.
- (15) Aber ala6 yn talebolyon.
- (16) Glan ala6.
- (17) Diffeith6ch iwerdon.
- (18) Pump rann iwerdon.

In the 3rd of the Four Branches, viz, Manawyddan fab Llyr, the following are the places mentioned:

- (1) Y g6ynvryn yn llundein.
- (2) Arberth.
- (3) Lloegyr.
- (4) Kent.
- (5) Ryt ychen.
- (6) Henffordd.

When we come to the last of the Four Branches, it will at once be seen that the number of local allusions is far greater than in the other three, but the allusions themselves are as a rule more definite in character. Here in a marked degree the stories are distinctly local in character. It is noticeable that the 'Mabinogi' of Math ab Mathon6y begins with a reference to the domains of Math on the one hand and of Pryderi on the other. The reference to the domains of Pryderi here may possibly be an interpolation in the old 'kyuar6ydyt' employed by the compiler. However, it is worth our while to note that the districts over which Pryderi is represented as ruling are the same as those named at the end of Pwyll but with the important addition of 'seith cantref morganh6c'. Why these places are here added is not clear. Possibly they ought to have been included in the list at the end of Pwyll, while the story of the relations between Pryderi and Teyrnion Twrv Vliant may be at bottom, only an explanation of the relations subsisting between Dyfed and the Eastern portion of South Wales. At any rate, the mind of the writer of 'Math fab Mathon6y' in its present

form seems to have been preoccupied with 'Morgannóc', for he says' (Rhŷs-Evans-Mab. p. 71, l. 30): 'Y porthaór heb ef dos y myón a dywet uot yma beird o uorgannóc'. Turning now to the actual place-names mentioned, we have the following list:

- (1) Gwyned, the domain of Math ab Mathonóy.
- (2) Dol pëbin yn aruon.
- (3) Kaer dathyl yn aruon.
- (4) Gwyned a phowys a deheubarth.
- (5) Y Dehen.
- (6) Rudlan teiui yg keredigyaón.
- (7) Mochdref yg góarthaf keredigyaón.
- (8) Elenit.
- (9) Mochtref y róng kerí ac aróystli.
- (10) Kymót ym powys a elwir mochnant.
- (11) Mochtref yn cantref ros.
- (12) Kedernit gwyned, also called Kedernit gwyned yn aruon.
- (13) Creuwryon, y dref uchaf o arllechwed.
- (14) Pennard yn aruon.
- (15) Kymperued y dóy uaenaór, — maenaór pennard a maenaór coet alun.
- (16) Nant call.
- (17) Dol penn maen.
- (18) Y traeth maór.
- (19) Y uelemryt.
- (20) Maen tyuyauc uch y uelemryt.
- (21) Kaer aranrot.
- (22) Aber menei.
- (23) Dinas dinllef.
- (24) Yr aruordir y uynyd parth a brynn aryen.
- (25) Y penn uchaf y geuyn clutuo.
- (26) Dinodig a elwyr yr aór homm eiwynyd.
- (27) Ardudóy.
- (28) Mur y castell yg góρθdir ardudóy.
- (29) Penllyn.
- (30) Auon gynwael.
- (31) Brynn kyuegyr yg glan auon kynuael.
- (32) Ardudóy coupled with Penllyn.
- (33) Góyned coupled with Powys.
- (34) Maenaór bennard yn aruon.

((35) Nant y llew.

(36) Llyn (y morwynyon).

(37) Llech gron6 ar lan auon gynuael yn ardud6y.

When we compare the local allusions here found with those given in the other three, the meagreness of the latter becomes at once clear. The stories collected in *Math ab Mathon6y* bear the impress of stories connected with places of interest seen by a person on his travels. At the same time it is clear from the Four Branches themselves that they presuppose previous stories, not improbably in a written form. The term for such a story is 'kyfar6ydyt'. No reference is made to a 'kyfar6ydyt' at the end of *Pwyll*, but in the other three branches distinct reference is made to such narratives. For example in *Branwen, Rh6s-Evans* p. 42, l. 29, we are told 'A hynny a dyweit y kyfarwydyt eu kyfranc h6y. y g6yr agychwymm6ys o iwerdon y6 h6nn6', while on p. 43, l. 12 we are told: 'A llyna ual y teruyna y geinc honn or mabinogi. o achas6 palua6t bran6en. yr honn a vu tryded anuat palua6t yn yr ynys honn. Ac o achas yspada6t bran pan aeth niner deg wlat a seith ugeint y iwerdon y dial palua6t branwen. Ac am y ginya6 yn hardlech seith mlyned. Ac am ganyat adar riannon. Ac ar yspya6t benn pedwar ugeint mlyned'. The stories here enumerated were probably originally distinct and condensed by the writer of *Branwen* and the earlier part of *Manawyddan* into one narrative. At the end of *Manawyddan fab Llyr* reference is made to a kyfar6ydyt called 'mabinogi mynnweir a mynord', while at the close of *Math fab Mathon6y* we are told 'Ynteu lle6 lla6 gyffes eilweith a oresgynn6ys y wlat. ac ae g6ledych6ys yn ll6ydy-annus. A herwyd y dyweit y kyuarwydyt ef a nu argl6yd wedy hynny ar wyned'.

There is much to be done in the way of analysing the 'four branches' in the present form in order to discover the remains of the older narratives used in their composition together with the traces of later accretions, interpolations and additions. When we turn to the 'Book of Taliessin'¹⁾ which, in its incoherent

¹⁾ Comparison with the allusions in the Book of Taliessin is of some service as shewing what legendary characters were associated together, and as illustrating a fusion of legends which, in the original narratives of the Four Branches does not seem to have taken place.

and fragmentary allusions, contains in almost inextricable confusion much of the débris of Early Welsh legends, we find that the stories which there rise into greatest prominence are the Gwyned narratives of the Don-cycle of Math ab Mathon6y. At the same time we do not there find, as in the Four Branches, that clear line of demarcation between the 'Don'-cycle and the Kerridwen-cycle. The merging of the two legends may have arisen through the fusion of Penllyn with Ardu6y and Aruon. The reader will see, from the following extracts from the Book of Taliessin, on the one hand the prominence of the Don-stories, on the other, their combination with legends originally distinct. In Poem I of the Book of Taliessin¹⁾ we read as follows:

Gan ie6yd gan elestron.
 Ry ganhymdeith ach6ysson.
 Bl6ydyn yg kaer ofanhon,
 6yf hen 6yf newyd. 6yf g6ion
 6yf ll6yr 6yf syn6yr keionon
 Dy gofi dyhen vrython
 G6ydydyl kyl diuerogyon.

Here 'Elestron' though not mentioned in the Four Branches belongs to the Don-cycle, and the same is true of Gofanhon; G6ion on the other hand belongs to the cycle of Kerridwen. The poem in question was certainly produced in an ecclesiastical milieu, for we read in it the line,

Si ffradyr yn y ffradri.

In poem VII called Angar kyfynda6t (Tr6y ieith taliessin) we read:

Ac ef ae darogant
 Lladon verch lliant
 * * * *
 G6a6t n6y mefyl gogyffra6t
 Aches g6yd g6ydyon.

This, too, is a poem referring to various metamorphoses like so many others of the Kerridwen-cycle. Another poem of the metamorphic type is No. VIII, called Kat Godeu, a subject in some manner connected with the Don-cycle, though it has no place in Math fab Mathon6y. The following references are made in it to characters known to us from the Mabinogion:

¹⁾ The quotations are from Skene, Four Ancient Books of Wales.

Bum ygkaer uefenhit
 Yt gryssynt welt a g6yd
 Kenynt gerdoryon
 Kryssynt katuaon
 Dat6yrein y vrythron
 A oreu g6ytyon
 * * * *
 Am s6yn6ys i vath
 Kyn bum diaeret
 Am s6yn6ys i wytyon
 Ma6nut o brython.
 * * * *
 Artha6on eil math
 Neu bum yn yscor
 Gan dylan eil mor.

Dylan eil mor, or, as he is called in Math fab Mathon6y, Dylan eilton, is mentioned in Poem IX called Mab Gyfreu Taliessin:

Pan y6 gofaran
 T6r6f tonneu 6rth lan,
 Yn dial dylan.

Again in Poem X, called Daron6y, we have the lines quoted in the last chapter:

Odit ae g6yp6y
 Hutlath vathon6y
 Ygkoet pan tyf6y.

This latter is one of those poems into the scope of which 'Y Gogledd' enters, for we read:

R6g kaer rian a chaer ry6c
 R6g dineidyn a dineid6c
 Eglur dremynt a wyl gol6c.

How completely stories from different cycles had come to be looked upon as forming a common stock in the Book of Taliessin, will be clear from the following quotations from Poem XIV. There are distinct references to stories concerning the children of Llyr, similar, though not identical, with those found at the end of Branwen, in the words:

Keint yn yspya6t uch g6ira6t a7awen
 Keint rac meibon llyr in ebyr henuelen.

Even the names of historical personages are included in the strange medley which we have here:

Keint rac 6d clotleu yn doleu hafren
 Rac brochuael powys a garwys ry awen
 Keint yn adu6yn rodle ym more rac 6ryen

* * * * *

Keridwen too is mentioned in the words:

Neut amuc yggekadeir opeir kerritwen.
 Handit ryd vyn tafa6t yn ada6t g6a6t ogyrwen.

After various references to 'tired sulli', 'ynys von', 'degan-
 h6y', 'mallg6n n6yhaf y ach6ysson': 'Elphin pendefic ryhodigy6n',
 we have a reference which implies legends similar to those of
 Branwen and Math ab Mathon6y:

Bum ygkat godeu gan llen a g6ydyon
 Vy aryth6ys g6yd elnyd ac elestron.
 Bum y gan vran yn iwerdon
 Gweleis pan lad6yt mord6yt tyllon.
 Kiglen gyfarfot am gerdolyon
 A g6ydyl diefyl diferogyon
 O penren 6leth hyt lneh reon

* * * * *

Teir kenedyl g6ythla6n o iawn teithi
 G6ydyl a brython a romani.

To complete the references found in this poem to stories
 similar to those of the Four Branches, the following two lines
 may be quoted:

Ys kyweir vyg kadeir ygkaer sidi
 Nys pla6d neb heint a heneint a no yudi,
 Ys g6yr mana6yt a phryderi.

Kaer sidi is not mentioned by name in the Four Branches,
 but it is not impossible that this was the name of the Kaer
 into which Pryderi and Rhiannon entered in the account of the
 vengeance of Gwawl fab Clut, the completion of the story of
 the meeting of Pwyll and Rhiannon.

No. XV is a poem called 'Kadeir Teyrnon'. Whether this
 is the Teyrnon Twrv Vliant of Pwyll it is difficult to say. In
 this poem he is called 'Teyrnon' hennr? The writer of this, as
 of the other poems, clearly had several legends in his mind, for
 in one place we find the line

'Bum myna6e mynweir'

and in another a reference to Dylan in the words:

Tohit y banec tra gro
 Tir dylan dirbo.

It is a curious fact that the poem called *Kadeir Kerrituen*, No. XVI, is full of references to the Don-cycle:

Myna6c hoedyl mina6c ap lleu
 A weleis i yma gynten
 * * * * *
 Diwed yn llechued lleu
 Bu g6ed y h6rd ygkaden
 * * * * *

But the fullest references are the following:

Keluydaf g6r a giglen
 G6ydyon ap don dygynuerthen
 A hud6ys g6reic a vloden.
 A dyd6c moch o dehen.
 Kan bu ida6 disgoreu
 Dnt ymyt a g6ryt plethen.
 A rith6ys gor6yda6t
 Y ar plaga6t
 Lys, ac enwerys kyfr6eu.
 Pan varnher y kadeireu
 Arbenhic vdm y veu.
 Vygkadeir am peir am deduon
 Am areith tryadyl gadeir gysson.
 Rym gelwir kyfr6ys yn llys don.
 Mi ac euron6y ac euron.
 G6leis ymlad taer yn nant ffrangeon
 Du6 sul pryt pylgeint
 R6g bytheint a g6ydyon.
 Dyf ieu yn geugant yd aethant von
 Y geisa6 yscut a hudolyon.
 Aran rot drem clot tra g6a6r hinon
 M6yhaf g6arth y marth o parth brython.

It is worthy of note that in this poem we have a reference to Bede in the words:

Nyt 6y dyweit gen llyfren beda.

In poem XXV there is a reference to a 'Lleu lletvegin', while in poem XXIX we read:

Mi a wydyon beis deallon rac kewilyd
 * * * * *
 Selyf ygnat a gennis g6lat. bu g6ell noc yd
 Mab Teyrnon.

In the poems from which quotations have hitherto been made, the accretions to the combination of legends which form

the basis of the Four Branches have been mainly from the Kerridwen-cycle. There is one poem however, viz. Poem XXX, where we find references even to Arthur. This poem is interesting among other things because it tends to corroborate the view that Kaer-sidi was a place closely connected with the Dyfed legends, and also because it suggests that there may have been several other explanations of the name of Pwyll as 'Pwyll penn Annwfn' besides the one given in Pwyll pt. I. So far as Annwfn enters into the Welsh legends, it appears to enter only into those of South Wales. The quotations from this important poem are the following:

Bu kyweir karchar gweir ygkaer sidi
 Trôy ebostol pŷyll a phryderi
 Neb kyn noe ef nyt aeth idi.
 Yr gadŷyn tromlas kywirwas ae ketwi
 A rac preiden annŷfyn tost yt geni.
 Ae yt uraŷt parahaŷt yn bard wedi
 Tri lloneit prytwen yd aetham ni idi
 Nam seith ny dyrreith o gaer sidi.

In this poem a certain mythical cauldron is described as follows:

Yg kyneir or peir pan leferit
 O anadyl naŷ morŷyn gochyneuit
 Nen peir pen annŷfyn pŷy y vynnud
 Gŷrym am y oror a mererit
 Ny beirŷ bŷyt llŷfyr ny rtygghit
 Cledyf lluch lleaŷc idaŷc rydyrchit
 Ae yn llaŷ leminaŷc yd edewit
 A rac drŷs porth vffern llugyrn lloceit
 A phan aetham ni gan arthur trafferth lethrit.
 Namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer vedwit
 Neut ŷyf glot geimryn, kerd glywanaŷr
 Ig kaer pedryfan ynys pybyrdor
 Echwyd a muchyd kymysgetor
 * * * * *
 Tri lloneit prytwen yd aetham ni ar vor,
 Namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer rigor
 * * * * *
 Tra chaer wydyr ny welsynt ŷrhyt arthur
 * * * * *
 Tri lloneit prytwen yd aeth gan arthur
 Namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer golud
 * * * * *
 A phan aetham ni gan arthir auyrdol gofŷy
 Namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer vandŷy

* * * * *
 Pan aetham ni gau arthur afyrd6l gynhen
 Namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer ochren.

Other references to characters in the Four Branches are the following. Poem XLIII is a Mar6nat Dylan eil ton, while in Poem XLV we read:

Pan doeth aedon o wlat wytyon seon te6dor
 * * * * *
 Math ac euuyd. hut6yt geluyd ryd eliunor
 Y my6 g6ytyon ac amaethon. at oed kyghor.

If 'euuyd' is Eveyd Hen the father of Rhiannon, then it is not impossible that Rhiannon herself belongs to the Don-cycle, as the form of her name would suggest.

The number of references to 'Beli' in the book of Taliessin seem to be confined to the two following: (1) in Poem XLVII

Seith meib o veli dyrchafyssyn
 Kaswall6n a ludd a chestudyn.

(2) In Poem XLIX:

Budic veli
 A mhanogan. ri
 rygeid6 y teithi
 Ynys vel veli
 Teithia6c oed idi.

These quotations will serve to shew that several of the legends of the Four Branches were familiarly thought of in combination by the writers of the Book of Taliessin. There are, however, some important omissions to which reference will be made in the next article.