

# Mabinogi Rhiannon

*gwraig o rym a'i theulu;  
safbwyntiau llenyddol, gwleidyddol, thealogaidd,  
celfyddydol a strwythurol*

woman of power & her kindred;  
literary, political, theological,  
arts, & structural perspectives

Shân Morgain (2025)



'Rhiannon' giantess parade puppet created 2010 Nathan Sheen supported by my consultancy. She was dressed by Millbrook primary school children, Newport. Photo Andy O'Rourke, permission 30/12/2021. My family also performed 'Rhiannon' (PKM1) for Gaer School. Both giant puppet and school performance were part of Newport city's celebration of Welsh mythology organised by Andy O'Rourke, multidisciplinary, community artist in consultation with me. I had been a storyteller for almost 30 years, but our family 'Rhiannon' performance affected me considerably. Much reading, research and meditation followed, culminating in PhD registration for this study October 2013. See Ch. II.3. Performance, final passages. (URL pics Bibliography)

***CYFROL I Ffurfioldebau, Cydnabyddiaethau,  
Rhestrau Cynnwys, Darluniau, Rhagymadrodd***  
**VOLUME I** Formalities, Acknowledgements,  
Contents lists, Illustrations, Introduction

***Datganiadau/*** Declarations

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ***Shân Morgain*** (candidate)

Date **31/03/2024**

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed ***Shân Morgain*** (candidate)

Date **31/01/5**

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for electronic sharing.

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Date **31/05/2025**

## *Crynodeb/ Abstract*

The study asks 'Who is Rhiannon?', building a portrait of her personage, through multiple perspectives across centuries.

Rhiannon sources in the pioneering prose revolution *Pedeir Cainc y Mabinogi*, c. 1100. In this work of genius 'Mabinogi Rhiannon' develops from oral traditions through manuscripts, print format and 21stC electronics; gaining mythological, literary, and arts interpretations along with political implications. As a leading Mabinogi protagonist, Rhiannon functions as a substantial Mabinogi spine, or 'tour guide'.

Three principles govern the study.

1. It benefits from the 1970s/1980s paradigm shift, approaching the Mabinogi as predominantly coherent; an intricately layered literature. 'Trusting the text' is primary: commentary is 'unfolding', not reconstruction.

Feminist perspectives, emergent in the same period, are routine.

2. Multiple perspectives draw on broad, supplementary data, building not a monomyth but a mosaic of political, economic, psychological, literary, arts, mythological and structural approaches.

3. The Mabinogi is regarded as invaluable Welsh heritage of international significance. Rhiannon as Welsh is respected by plentiful Welsh content: title, subtitles, key terms, and quotes.

Rhiannon's romance is deconstructed to an elite *marchoges/* equestrian noblewoman of pragmatic ambitions. Her speech and acts analysis finds dominant assertiveness in her *negessau/* purposes, but also intense maternal vulnerability. Characteristically embedded in relationships (hybrid personal/political), Rhiannon is male oriented. Her 'maternal dyad' is found central to her narrative, and to Desolation aetiology.

Rhiannon is presented as a Mabinogi Magician with three paradoxical *hudiau/* enchantments. Rhiannon *Duwies/* Goddess appears rich in theologies: Horse-, Mother-, Sun-, Muse-, Initiation-Goddess; Descent cycle, *bodhisattva*, ambivalence and symbiosis.

Structural analyses array a wealth of interlacings and triplicities. Modern adaptations inspire young women with Rhiannon's strength, reflecting my suggested interpretation of *mabinogi* as 'about the young'.

Deconstruction done, Rhiannon remains romantic, a 'strong woman', a plausible divinity; above all a mediaeval Welsh noblewoman and a mother.

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**Alternative Software**, finding the right tool using comparisons.

**Atlantis Word Processor**, marvellously flexible customisable.  
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**Bookfinder**, searches millions of book sources, finds cheapest, accessible.  
**CCleaner**, cleans clutter.  
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**Ebay** for laptops, key drives, mice, books and pleasure items.  
**Firefox** browser, open source.  
**Discord messenger** connecting my core support web.  
**Gmail**, massive archive of communications over the years, good spam guard.  
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... and of course,  
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## **Mabinogi Rhiannon: Contents**

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**GLOSSARY**

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## Illustrations, Maps, Diagrams, Tables

### Artworks, Photos, Screenshots (SCR)

All art sources were approached for permission. A few have not replied but the work is publicly displayed and publicly owned.

#### # FRONTISPIECE Photo. 'Rhiannon', Newport (2010) giantess parade puppet.

Created by Nathan Sheen supported by my consultancy. She was dressed by children of Millbrook Primary School. Photo Andy O'Rourke team. Permission Andy O'Rourke 30/12/2021.

FRONTISPIECE p. i, and Ch. II.3. Performance, p. 57, and Gallery p. 548 (24).

# **SCR excerpt: Edward Jones, ed. 1802.** *Mabinogi, Part the First; the Juvenile Adventures of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*, in *The Bardic Museum of Primitive British Literature; and Other Admirable Rarities; Forming the Second Volume of the Musical, Poetical, and Historical Relicks of the Welsh Bards and Druids. Bardic Relicks series*, vol. 2 of 3 (London, Printer St.: A. Straban for the author), p. 30. (URLs text PDF and more, Bibliography). Ch. I.3. Etymology, **p. 5.**

#### # 3 SCR excerpts. Pughe. 1803, 1803, 1818.

1) William Owen [Pughe]. 1803. *Geiriadur cenhedlaethol, cymraeg a saesneg.* A dictionary of the Welsh language, explained in English; with numerous illustrations from the literary remains and from the living speech of the Cymry, II of 3 (London: E. Williams), 'Rhianon' entry, p. 466.

2) *ibid.* 1803. *The Cambrian Biography: Or, Historical Notices of Celebrated Men Among the Ancient Britons* (London: E. Williams, 11 The Strand), p. 290. (URL text Bibliography).

3) William Owen Pughe. 1818. 'The Romantic Tales of the Mabinogion', *The Cambrian Register*, III, pp. 231. (URL text Bibliog). Ch. I.3. Etymology, **pp. 5-6.**

# **SCR NLW MS. Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch c. 1350, excerpt** Peniarth MS 4. digitised version NLW, (14/05/19). Online 2004. (URL Bibliography).

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon, **p. 10.**

# **SCR NLW MS.** Diana Luft, Peter Wynn Thomas, and D. Mark Smith. 2007. 'NLW MS. Peniarth 4: Y Gainc Gyntaf (First Branch)', *Llyfr Gwyn - Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425, Welsh Prose 1300 -1425*, p. 4v, 15, Lines 12-16. (URL text Bibliography). Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon, **p. 11.**

**SCR William Owen [Pughe]. 1799.** 'The Romantic Tales called Mabinogion, or Juvenile Amusements', *Cambrian Register*, II, p. 323. SCR slightly edited to clean print showing through from other side of page. Square brackets [Pughe] indicate additional name adopted 1806 onwards; see Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe: pp. 76-77.

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon, **p. 11.**

# **Alan Llwyd, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru.** Photo credit: Aled Llywelyn, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru. Permission: Gwenllian Carr, *Cyfarwyddwr Strategol/ Strategic Director*, EGC 28/02/2024. Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #1 'sitting', **p. 13.**

# **NLW, Sketch. Pughe attributed illustration c. 1826:** the first Rhiannon image of the Gorsedd rider on record, for Pughe's planned Mabinogion publication. Pughe (attributed). c. 1826. Nine Sketches illustrating the First Branch. Pen and ink, NLW MS 13242B. 'Mabinogion', etc., 1826 – 1831 Formerly known as Mysevin 22. Image and comment Ch. IX. Gallery.

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #2 'see', **p. 14.**

# **Photo. Uffington White Horse, aerial view.** Wikipedia public domain image uploaded: 30/06/2008. Geographical location: 51° 34' 39.8" N, 1° 33' 59.75" W, Berkshire. (URL Bibliography). Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #5 'horse', **p. 18.**

# **National Museum of Wales. 3/05/2007.** 'The Llan-gors textile: an early medieval masterpiece.' (URL text Bibliography). 'Llan-gors textile' discovered 1990 near Brecon, lake village. Photograph of the original textile. Here, further enlarged and clarified.

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #7 'silk', **p. 22.**

# **Two Photos. C. S. Lewis Family Wardrobe** (Christine James, USA trip 2019, my slight edit background.) Handmade Welsh Oak. Image evokes 'doors' into the tales, and the intricate craft of the tellers.. See also Lewis, Lewis Family Wardrobe, Bibliography for detailed information. Provenance Wade Center museum, Wheaton College, USA (URL source Bibliography)

Ch. I.5. Text: *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab*, **p. 32.**

# **Three Photos from our family's local 'Rhiannon' performance** (Millbrook School, Newport 2010). Cf. Frontispiece, same town festival. Ch. II.3.

Performance, **p. 55.**

# **Photo. 'Rhiannon', Newport (2010) giantess parade puppet** created by Nathan Sheen on my consultancy. Photo Andy O'Rourke.

Ch. II.3. Performance, p. 57. Also shown as Frontispiece p. i, and Ch. II.3.

Performance, **p. 57**, and Gallery **p. 544** (24).

# **Poster. Rowan Matthiessen, 'Narberth's Mabinogion Carnival Queen Rhiannon!'** (Tenby, 2016). Permission Rowan Matthiessen, Span Arts 28/11/2016.

Ch. II.3. Performance, **p. 56.**

# **Edward Lhuyd.** From cover illustration: Derek R. Williams. 2011. Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709) *A Shropshire Welshman* (Oswestry & District Civic Society).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Lhuyd, **p. 62.**

# **SCR excerpt. *Archaeologia Britannica***, p. 262. Scanned excerpt showing start of the passages on the Mabinogi.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Lhuyd, **p. 64.**

# **Lewis Morris.** Wikimedia Commons, 'Category: Lewis Morris (1701–1765)'. (URL Bibliog)

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Lewis Morris, **p. 65.**

# **William Owen at 42 with his wife**, Sarah Elizabeth [Harper], their children, Aneurin, Ellen, Isabella. B/W photo of original watercolour drawing, c. 1792. NLW Original Drawing Volumes (57, p. 38).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe

# **T. George, 'Pughe', Frontispiece, *Geiriadur***, 2nd ed. (1832), at 73.

See also T. Hodgetts, 'Idrison' [Pughe], steel engraving, NLW Archives (1822). (URL Bibliography).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe, **p. 67.**

# **Daniel Maclise, 'Portrait of W. Owen Pughe D.C.L., F.A.S'**, watercolour (NLW 4671832). Pughe awarded the honorary Oxford degree DCL (1822) at 63. (URL Bibliography, NLW Portrait Collection)

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe, **p. 67.**

# **SCR excerpt. Anonymous Gorsedd rider**, *Cambrian Register* II (1799), p. 323 text excerpt.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe, **p. 72.**

# **Photo Carnhuanawc** (TOP CENTRE). Emmanuel Giaconia. c. 1826. Photo of oil portrait, Founders Library, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. From date, he is aged under 40.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Carnhuanawc, **p. 81.**

# **Carnhuanawc** (LEFT). Charles Augustus Mornewick. 1846. 'Reverend Thomas Price of Llanfihangel Cwmdru (1787–1848)', Oils portrait(1846), at age 59, two years before he died. NLW accession PZ03573.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Carnhuanawc, **p. 82.**

# **Carnhuanawc** (RIGHT). William Meredyth Thomas' (sculptor). c. 1848. Bust of Thomas Price 'Carnhuanawc', post mortem, from memory of meeting Carnhuanawc at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod that year. See his brother John Evan Thomas' poignant account in: Jane Williams. ed. 1855. *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc*, II (Llandovery: Rees; London: Longman), pp. 391–92. John Dillwyn Llewelyn's photo of the bust is shown as frontispiece. It or a plaster copy is kept at Llanover College. (URL text Bibliography)

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Carnhuanawc, **p. 82.**

# **'Charlotte Elizabeth Bertie Guest', *Welsh Outlook***, Vol. 3, no. 4 (April 1916).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 87.**

# **Hsiao-Ron Cheng, 'Charlotte Guest'**, 9/04/2014 imaginative interpretation from the (2012) *Welsh Outlook* portrait above. Illustration for Jason Ward, ed. 'Lady Charlotte Guest', biographical article, in his 'Oh Comely' online magazine, no. 21. (URL Bibliography, but illustration has since been removed). Permission Jason Ward, editor 'Oh Comely!' sent 14/02/2017.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 87.**

# **Samuel Williams, 'Rhiannon'**, foremost engraver of the day, evidently appointed because of his pre-eminence. Illustration Guest, *Mabinogion*, vol. 5. Probably the most well known artwork of Rhiannon, freely available online (URL Bibliog). It inspired the John Cleal artwork (1989) see Ch. IX Gallery.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 89.**

# **Photo, Left. Guest, *The Mabinogion*, 7 vols. (1838–45)**. First edition, Heritage Books.

Photo Paul Motschall. With permission from Ben Weinstein email (21/09/2015). Heritage Book Shop, 9024 Burton Way., Beverly Hills, CA 90211, USA. (URL Heritage Books, Bibliography).

See footnote for provenance data.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 90.**

# **Photo, Right: Guest, *The Mabinogion*, 2nd ed, 3 vols.** (1849). Parnassus Book Service, Inc.

Photograph with permission from Sarah Romano, email 21/09/15. Parnassus Book Service Inc, YarmouthPort, MA, U.S.A.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 90.**

# **Thomas Stephens**, Frontispiece, *Literature of the Kymry* (1849). Bust by J. Edwards YarmouthPort, MA, U.S.A.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Stephens, p. 100.

# **Photo, Edward Anwyl, Welsh Portrait Collection, NLW**. Early 1900s.

Photograph by H. H. Davies & Son, Pier St. Aberystwyth. Public domain, Wikidata. Wiki Commons:

<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edward\\_Anwyl\\_%285292061%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edward_Anwyl_%285292061%29.jpg)> [Accessed 25/02/2024]

Ch. II.6. Academy: Anwyl, p. 108.

# **Book cover. Robin Morgan, ed. 1970. *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*** (NY: Random House). Most of its contributors were, or were becoming, notable 'influencers', though that term came later; we would have called them 'activists'. Contents: (URL Bibliography)

Ch. II.8. Feminism, p. 127.

# **Two SCR Jansen, 'Miss Gien'. 1999**. 'The Mabinogion: The Welsh Mythology' (Netherlands). Arthurian site, edits text into parts. Site now closed, but may be accessed via Internet Archive, Wayback Machine. (URL Bibliography).

Ch. II.8. 21stC Rhiannon, p. 136.

# **Map. *Map yr Mabinogi*** / Map Mabinogi. Shân Morgain, Map Mabinogi (2015). With thanks to Christine James and John Davies. For Mabinogi site photography, see John Bollard. 2006. Landscape. This is a simple map, for a richly imagined alternative see Mair Jones. 2006. 'Poster y Mabinogion: A2 Poster of Wales Based on the Tales of the Mabinogi' (Y Lolfa). Below Ch. III.3. Hierarchy.

Ch. III.1. Map Mabinogi, p. 141.

# **Poster. Mair Jones, 'Poster y Mabinogion: A2 Poster of Wales Based on the Tales of the Mabinogi'** (Y Lolfa, 2006). Still in publication. (URL Bibliography) Illustrator of 'Jones and Jones'. 1949. Mabinogion, Everyman 97 (London: J. M. Dent) and successive editions. Permission Sonia Hughes, Y Lolfa, 29/02/2024. Y Lolfa: <<https://www.ylolfa.com/products/100000000159/poster-y-mabinogion>> [Accessed 29/02/2024]

Ch. III.3. Hierarchy, economics, p. 148.

# **Diagram. Shân Morgain, 'Active/ Passive modes'**, bar chart (2017)

Ch. IV.2. Acts/ Active-Passive Analysis p. 208.

# **Diagram. Shân Morgain, 'Three Kindreds of the Mabinogi Rieni'**, (2017)

Ch. V.1. Genealogy, p. 213.

# **SCR. MS. Llyfr Coch Hergest, incipit letter P**. © Jesus College Oxford.

Reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution licence. Advised by Owen McKnight, College Librarian, 04/03/2024.

Ch. V.5. Pwyll and Rhiannon, p. 238.

# **Jane Starr Weils. 2018. 'Rhiannon's Birds'**, painting. Print available Etsy, and Redbubble; design on poster, Tshirt, mouse mat, laptop bag and cover, cards.

Weils envisages sparrows which in outline are similar to my proposed skylarks, below 'Species'. Permission by Weils 25/11/2018.

Ch. VI.6. Adar Rhiannon, p. 407.

# **Venus of Willendorf**, one of the most famous Palaeolithic figurines. Small, 4.4 ins./ 11.1-centimetres tall, dating c. 30,000 BCE. Carved of oolitic limestone not local to the area, tinted with red ochre. Discovered on an archaeological site near Willendorf, Austria, 1908. Conserved Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, p. 417.

# **Map. Shân Morgain. 2015. Map of Goddess Myths.** Inanna, Isis c. 3,000 BCE. Greek deities, Isianism and Epona spread through the Roman Empire. With thanks for advice on marine navigation by John Davies.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 418.**

# **Photo. Cuneiform.** Akkadian version of Ishtar's Descent into the Underworld from the Library of Assurbanipal, currently held in the British Museum, London.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 419.**

# **Photo. Inanna Ishtar.** From an Akkadian cylinder seal depicting Inanna resting her foot on the back of a lion, c. 2334 – c. 2154 BCE, Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, p. 92. Illustration online (URL Bibliography).

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 419.**

# **Photo. Statuette of Isis suckling Horus.** Late Period, ca. 664-332 BC. Bronze and gold leaf. From Saqqara or Abusir. Now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. JE 91327. (Cropped at knees)

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 421.**

# **Hera, statue at Rotunda of Altes Museum, Berlin.** Wikimedia commons, uploaded by 'Yair Haklai' 27/07/2019.

Wikimedia: <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hera-Rotunda\\_of\\_Altes\\_Museum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hera-Rotunda_of_Altes_Museum.jpg)> [Accessed 29/02/2024]

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 422.**

# **Demeter and Kore, Hellenistic period.** British Museum (C529/ Greek and Roman 1885,0316.1). Terracotta 21cm. Excavated Myrina, Turkey. Purchased from: Charles Merlin 1885. Permission 29/02/2024.

British Museum: <[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\\_1885-0316-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1885-0316-1)> [Accessed 29/02/2024]

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 423.**

# **Photo. Perseus, Athena.** Mixing bowl (bell krater) with Perseus, Athena, and Hermes (cropped). Classical Period c. 400–385 B.C. Apulia, Italy. Ceramic, red figure, 30.5 cm. attributed to the Tarporley Painter. No. 1970.237. Gift of Robert E. Hecht, Jr. 11/03/1970. Viewable George D. and Margo Behrakis Gallery 207. © Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Boston. Permission Carolyn Cruthird, MFA Images, 29/02/2024. (URL see Illustrations list)

Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Boston:

<<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/154107>>

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 425.**

# **Epona.** Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) uploaded by ibex13, 11/08/2016, 11:58:43 'lavoir de Fontenilles'.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 429.**

# **Photo, Mari Llwyd.** Liz Day. 3/01/2015. "It is surprisingly easy to come by a horse skull': Meet a group keeping the Welsh midwinter tradition of the Mari Llwyd alive', *Wales Online*. (URL text Bibliog.)

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 432.**

# **Four Photos, Mari Llwyd at Chepstow, 2018.** Photos by Mark Lewis. South Wales Argus. 20/01/2018. 'Horse skulls, morris dancing, and banter on the bridge - Chepstow celebrates its annual wassail and Mari Llwyd', photos by Mark Lewis. (URL text Bibliography).

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 434.**

# **SCR excerpt. Pughe. 1803. Geiriadur, p. 466.**

Ch. VII.2. Pre-1900, **p. 445.**

# **Photo, Evangeline Walton Ensley pre-1950.** Lower portion cropped by me. According to Douglas A. Anderson, her executor, it first appeared, cropped, without credit, on the rear dust-wrapper of her novel *The Cross & the Sword* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956). Uploaded to wikicommons by her heir Debra L Hammond, marked 1940s. Anderson estimates 1950 or before. (This was approximately the period when Walton was drafting most of the Mabinogi novels.) Anderson provided provenance 28/02/2024.

Ch. VII.3. 20thC, p. 451.

# **Diagram. Quartered Circle mandala.** Shan Jayran (now Morgain). 1994. 'Circle of the Elements' diagram, in her *Circlework*, p. 38. Inserted sketch elements by Terry.

Ch. VII.3. 20thC, p. 461.

# **Photo** 'Traveller's Rest' Surrey; a favourite local, meditation spot for Violet Hillman who co-founded the first Iseum of the Fellowship of Isis, dedicated to Rhiannon. Photo is from an FOI webpage, see Fellowship of Isis in Bibliography.

Ch. VII.4. Temples, p. 464.

# **Sketch. Moon symbol of Triple Goddess,** popular among modern Goddess practitioners. Obscure provenance 1970s, common circulation.

Ch. VII.5. Theologies, p. 486.

# **Photo. 'Rhiannon Room'**, Goddess House, Glastonbury.

Ch. VII.5. Theologies: Avalonian Rhiannon, p. 492.

# **Album cover, Damh the Bard. 26/09/2017.** 'Y Mabinogi: The First Branch', Pagan Music. (URL Illustrations list. Tracklist & detail, URLs incl. sound files, Bibliography).

Ch. VII.5. Theologies: Damh the Bard, p. 499

# **Diagram. Shân Morgain. Feb. 2015. 'Rhiannon Interlace'**, prepared for presentation to MEMO, Swansea. Numbers backed brown indicate the Branch'es in which the character appears.

Ch. VIII. Structures, p. 509.

## Ch. IX.1. RHIANNON GALLERY

Listed, numbered in order of display.

#1 **Phil Forder. 2007. Large, Welsh oak wall-plaque.** Narrative panel, one of six hung above head height at the Rhosygilwen arts centre, near Cilgerranin, in a magnificent Welsh oak hall. Photo John H. Davies. p. 531.

#2 **Maria Hayes. 2015. artist in residence at Peter Stevenson's 'Prosiect Mabinogi'.**

'First Branch' session Mar. 14, 2015. Live illustration in storytelling. p. 532.

#3 **Muriel Delahaye. 2017. 'Narrative from Y Mabinogion** with the characters Blodeuwedd, [mostly] Rhiannon and Taliesin.' Pastel, 59 x 83 cm. Follow the liquid pathways which mark narrative development. p. 532

#4 **William Owen [Pughe] (attr.), 'Lady Rider at Gorsedd Arberth'** (my title), pen and wash, from Nine Sketches illustrating the First Branch (c. 1826). NLW, Aberystwyth. NLW: MSS. 1826-31. 'Mabinogion', etc. (1826-1831), 1326 pp. Formerly Mysevin 22. Scenes from the entire first Branch, evidently intended as illustrations, (1 in pencil, 8 pen & wash), pp. 45- 53. Copy supplied on application May 2016. p. 533.

#5 **Samuel Williams. 1843. Rhiannon rides at Gorsedd Arberth, illustrating Guest,** 'The tale of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved', Vol. 5, The Mabinogion'. Romance

style. Guest's perfectionism selected Williams as the foremost engraver of the times, then at the peak of his career. Also inspired Alan Lee's superb illustration for the Jones and Jones, and Guest Mabinogion versions (1982, 2001). **p. 534.**

**#6 John Cleal. 1989. Tabletop:** Rhiannon rides at Arberth (Workshop Wales, Fishguard), painted leather, Tabletop embellished with gold highlights and including Rhiannon Advent text from PKM1. Commissioned by Angela John to celebrate publication of *Lady Charlotte: A Biography of the Nineteenth Century*; 2nd abbreviated ed. *Extraordinary Life* (2007). **p. 535.**

Photo by John Davies (April 2017), enabled by kind hospitality of Angela John. Permission: Mitchell Cleal, John Cleal's son and heir (28/03/2017).

**#7 John Cleal, excerpt, tabletop, above.** Main focus area. **p. 536.**

**#8 Toin Adams. 2012. 'Rhiannon's Eyes'. Proposed 27-metre-high metalwork sculpture,** 30 metres along the horse tail to nose, envisioned to stand on an earth mound on the A465 at Dowlais where Guest lived and translated *The Mabinogion*. One of two finalists, Landmark Wales. **p. 536.**

Wales Online: <<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/its-a-guest-appearance-2248333>>

**#9 Rowan Matthiessen. 2016. 'The Beastly Procession'. Carnival Queen poster.** Span Arts, Narberth. The event's competition emphasised strength of character. **p. 537.**

Tenby Observer: <<http://www.tenby-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=105171&headline=Join%20the%20search%20for%20Narberth%E2%80%99s%20Mabinogion%20Carnival%20Queen%20Rhiannon!&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>> [Accessed 16/10/2021]

**#10 Rebecca Jane Stockburn. Jan. 2016. 'Rhiannon'.** Large painting touched with gold.

Permission 25/10/2016 with personal note by the artist; 'She came to my mind in this way when reading the passage in the book, a vision of white and gold, of stillness within movement, mischievous, freedom, and wildness. In some paintings she is interpreted as perfect, cold or warrior like, for me she felt 'flawed', warm and gentle. Painting for me is a meditation process and things appear progressively and subconsciously (the reflection comes as I am drawing/painting, I don't prepare or plan them with pages of sketches).

Sometimes the composition and images appear to me in dreams. I imagined her almost like a gust of wind.' Personal communication (25/10/2016). Painting generously purchased for this author by Dr. Roy Davies of Narberth when we clashed in our desire to buy it. See his Rhiannon as mother, life sized statue below. **p. 538.**

**#11 Humphrey Milford attr. 1914, 1920. Pursuit.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 23. **p. 539.**

**#12 Pughe, attr. c. 1826. Rhiannon Pwyll meeting.** NLW MSS. 1826–31 see 'Lady Rider', above. **p. 539.**

**#13 Wenzel Franziska. 2006. Rhiannon Pwyll meeting. (deviantART).** Wenzel said diffidently, 'the picture is very old and does not reflect my current technical skill level'. She did it while at school 'for fun'. Personal communication 2017. **p. 540**

**#14 Signe Fuchs 2014. Rhiannon Pwyll meeting.** Illustration from her *Mythology of the Celts: A comprehensive Survey* (Createspace, and Kindle). She says 'I meant to show the moment when Pwyll sees her first, amazed and

- enraptured, before he started to follow her'. Permission & personal communication May 2016. **p. 541.**
- #15 Reginald Machell. 1914. Wedding.** Woodcut illustrating his fellow Theosophist Kenneth Morris, (Cynedd Morus), *The Fates of the Princes of Dyfed* (Point Loma, California: Aryan Theosophical Press. **p. 542.**
- #17 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920. Rhiannon's Bag.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 31. **p. 543.**
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- #23 Jane Starr Weils. 2018. 'Birds of Rhiannon'.** Weils intuitively saw them as sparrows. 'The birds to me felt very sparrow like. I did try to research what I could (would love to see your research!) and the rest was intuitive. One day I do hope to paint Rhiannon herself'. Personal communication 21/11/2018, and permission 25/11/2018. **p. 539.**
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- #27 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920. Manawydan and Mouse.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 103. Also Manawydan and the Scholar, p. 98; Gwydion herding pigs, p. 113. **p. 552.**
- #28 Ernest Charles Wallcousins. 1905, 1920. 'Gwydion Conquers Pryderi'.** illustrator for Carlton Illustrators. Charles Squire, *The Mythology of the British*

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**#29 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920.** Death of Pryderi', Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*. p. 553.

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**#31 Emily Brunner. 2016. (Tarot Empress) 'Rhiannon: Lady of the Other(world)',** for The Avalonian Oracle. A well circulated version promoting ancestral origins in a stone circle. She sits enthroned, like the other Tarot featured here as the Empress card, the archetypal [sic] Mother and Queen. Her Horse is well to the fore. Walton's influence presents the Adar over her head. Her robe is red in accord with the aberrant Avalonian tradition, see Ch. VI.5. Theologies: Avalonian Rhiannon. Permission 2021. p. 555.

**#32 Anne Marie Ferguson. 2006. (Tarot Empress) 'The Llewellyn Tarot: Empress'.** Llewellyn Publications). Permission 10/01/2017. Rhiannon is here the enthroned Great Mother, golden and green, fecund and abundant, with symbolic Horse and Adar presence. Ch. IX.1. Gallery p. 556

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She said "Tell my story."

For John

# *Rhagymadrodd/* Introduction

Aims & Sources. Research Questions. Overview.  
Focus. Structure. 'Trusting the Text'. Feminism. Cymraeg.  
Translations. Genesis of the study.

The aim of Mabinogi Rhiannon is to build a portrait of the personage 'Rhiannon', who originates almost exclusively in the prose literature *Pedeir Ceinc y Mabinogi* ('the Mabinogi', or 'PKM').<sup>1</sup> Other mediaeval sources for 'Rhiannon' were found to be slight, adding very little to her Mabinogi narrative, though some material is extant about associated Mabinogi characters, e.g. Teyrnon.<sup>2</sup> Mythological material on goddesses resembling 'Rhiannon' is more substantial.<sup>3</sup>

Mabinogi Rhiannon provides a rich, detailed account of 'Rhiannon' developments from pre-12thC oral origins to the present day.<sup>4</sup> 'Rhiannon', initially assumed as a protagonist of the First and Third Branches (of the Mabinogi) only, was found to operate as a 'tour guide' to almost all the Mabinogi.<sup>5</sup>

When reading this main file it may be helpful and enjoyable to keep open the separate documents using Volume II Bibliography, Index and Glossary for consults.

## *Cwestiynau Ymchwil/* Research Questions

The questions my study looks to answer are as follows.

1. Who or what is 'Rhiannon'? (the starting point).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portrait of Rhiannon' forms the key part of Ch. X *Casgliadau /* Conclusions pp. 568-601. Williams' 1930 PKM text is a composite of the texts from all three extant mediaeval manuscripts and is commonly used when making line references. Ifor Williams ed. 1930. Repr. 1951, 1994 hardback, 1996 softback. *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi, Allan o Lyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (PKM) (Cardiff: UWP).

Ch. II.4. *Llawysgrifau/* Manuscripts pp. 57-62.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. I. 6 *Rhiannon mewn Ffynonellau eraill/* Other Rhiannon Sources pp. 33-35.

<sup>3</sup> VII.1. *Mytholeg Duwies /* Goddess Mythology pp. 416-32.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. I. 7 *Rhiannon fel Gwraig o Gyfarwydd/* Rhiannon, Lady of Prose Story-telling, pp. 36-42; II *Stori'r Stori/* Story of the Story, 9 chapters pp. 43-139. Three chapters Rhiannon *hud: VI.4. March Rhiannon /* Rhiannon's Horse pp. 395-400, VI.5. *Cod Rhiannon/* Rhiannon's Bag pp. 400-406, VI.6. *Adar Rhiannon /* Birds of Rhiannon pp. 407-14; VI VII *Rhiannon Duwies /* Goddess Rhiannon, 5 chapters pp. 415-507.

<sup>5</sup> Shân Morgain. 19/02/2015. 'Rhiannon as Mabinogi Tour Guide'. Presentation for MEMO (Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Research), Swansea University. Dir. Daniel Williams. Ch. I. 5 *Testun Mabinogi Rhiannon/* Mabinogi Rhiannon text, pp. 23-33.

2. What is the story of her story, from mediaeval to modern, in different media and genres?

How do these developments affect understanding 'Rhiannon'?

3. What is 'Rhiannon's' world like, as seen principally in the Mabinogi?

How does she situate within it?

4. What kind of woman is 'Rhiannon'?

What is her character and her relationships?

5. Is it valid to regard 'Rhiannon' as a Goddess? or a Magician? If so, what kind?

What are her *hud*/ enchantment aspects like? What might be her theologies?

## Overview

The title 'Mabinogi Rhiannon' inevitably evokes Gruffydd's 1953 *Rhiannon*, but the two works are extremely different, almost diametrically opposed. WJG builds variant 'edifices' out of perceived broken myth. I unfold the text without violating character or plot ('Trusting the Text', below). I belong to the later paradigm post 1970s, seeing the Mabinogi as coherent and intricate ('Coherence Paradigm'). I liberally explore its structural analysis, finding many triplicities and interlacings, and suggesting their meanings. To reinforce distance from WJG I place 'Rhiannon' mythologies towards the end of my study, ensuring realism, politics, economics and psychology take precedence (though I too delight in Rhiannon mythology).

I deconstruct 'Rhiannon' romance to reveal her alternate as a ruthless strategist, concerned with her wealth and foodstocks, in partnership with her loyal executive Pwyll. I dismantle 'Pwyll the fool' needing lordship training, to reveal him as Rhiannon's wise and worthy consort. In exploring 'Rhiannon's Choice' I offer an alternative, feminised route to solving the 'disconnection' of *Pwyll I* (the Annwfn tale).

I emphasise the centrality of 'Rhiannon' as mother. Her maternal vulnerability deepens her characterisation as a mere 'strong woman'. I outline a structural 'Maternal Dyad', a woven *cainc* narrative of mother and son, which extends to their joint responsibility for the Desolation of Dyfed.

Rhiannon is *marchoges*, a mediaeval Welsh noblewoman, unique to a Welsh literature. Aware of how translation and English writing coopts, I use

various simple techniques to enable a *Gwead Cymreig*/ 'Welsh weave' for my work. I also assert a period of Mabinogi development for 150 years or more, pre 1860, when Welsh scholars studied the Mabinogi and published parts of it, without the later concept of broken myth. Instead the focus was ancestral history and the Mabinogi as the origin of European Romance.

I address each of 'Rhannon's' *hudiau* in turn: horse, bag and *Adar*, finding Rhiannon as Magician with spatial and temporal distortions, and a theme of synergy. Seeking comparisons led to Perseus' *kibisis*, and many other Perseus shared components. Comparing Goddesses surprisingly offered an equally rich comparison with ancient Inanna of Sumer. In 'Rhiannon's'; theologies I array Horse Goddess, Mother Goddess, Muse-Goddess, and add Sun Goddess.

I have compiled outlines of 'Rhiannon' artworks in categories with graphics to illustrate; and commented on her imaginary in fiction, film, music and performance.

Scholars who have inspired, influenced and serviced me are Pughe, Anwyl, Ifor Williams, Bromwich, Ford, Pennar, Bollard, Valente, Walton, S.Davies, J.Davies, Parker, Luft, Sullivan and Rodway. I have especially critiqued WJG, Jones & Jones, Mark Williams, Hutton, and the cult of 'Avalonian Rhiannon'.

### **Focus of the Study**

My study stresses the Mabinogi as a work of genius, complex, layered, structurally, politically, psychologically rich. To do justice to all that with any depth focus on the other prose tales as well would overload the project.<sup>6</sup> Other mediaeval Welsh, prose tales (*The Mabinogion*) and other cultures' literatures (e.g. Irish) are generally not treated in depth.

The Mabinogi is not only a revolutionary, sophisticated, and complex literature when it was compiled, its interpretations span centuries and encompass many different social categories and genres. There are therefore many and diverse perspectives to consider, as reflected in the subtitle of the study: *safbwyntiau llenyddol, gwleidyddol, thealogaidd, celfyddydol a strwythurol*/

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<sup>6</sup> It has been powerfully argued in any case that the Mabinogion tales have little connection with each other. John Kenneth Bollard, 'What Is The Mabinogi? What Is "The Mabinogion"?' (online, 2007). Argues confused identity, overlay of modern perceptions. (URL text Bibliography)

'literary, political, theological, arts, & structural perspectives'. Addressing the Mabinogi itself, my investigations are consequently wide-ranging, especially regarding material life, politics and psychology, then and since. Many new pieces of theory emerge in many different spheres. My conscious hope is that the scope of my study will service other scholars as a well-organised compendium to dip and plunder.

The 'sprawling' character of my study is especially apparent in the earlier chapters. As the work progresses the focus gradually tightens. The 'Conclusions' chapter draws the materials together; summarising the main points in four main perspectives, particularly presenting my many original insights.<sup>7</sup> I have not imposed any artificially narrow focus, as in a 'universal' model favoured by 19thC scholars (Bachofen, Frazer, Rhys, and their chief Mabinogi heir, William John Gruffydd). This paradigm was of course uprooted by Wittgenstein's radical U-turn (1953).<sup>8</sup> which generated 'post-modernism'.

However I do compose a tightly focused finale. A closing distillation of extreme brevity gives an intensely condensed summary of the foregoing extended conclusions in 500 words:

*'V Portread o Rhiannon gwraig o rym, o Gymru'r oesoedd canol i'r byd ehangach /*  
V Portrait of Rhiannon woman of power, from mediaeval Wales to wider worlds'.

### ***Strwythur yr Astudiaeth / Structure of the Study***

The first seven chapters are introductory, offering different avenues into the project: Ch. I.1. a succinct paraphrase of Rhiannon's narrative; I.2. a *Dramatis*

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<sup>7</sup> I *Camau paradigmatic: cysyniadau a dadansoddiad dominyddol* / I Paradigmatic stages: dominant concepts and analyses. II *Ffeministiaeth mewn cyd-destun cymdeithasol* / II Feminisms in social context

III *Hudoliaethau a duwiesyddiaethau* / III Enchantments and theologies

IV *Dadansoddiad strwythurol* / IV Structural analysis

Brief note-form summaries of these approaches are given as a Contents page: Y *CASGLIADAU* / The Conclusions, p. 567.

<sup>8</sup> Josef Johann Wittgenstein; C. K. Ogden, trans. 1922. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner; NY: Harcourt, Brace). Josef Johann Wittgenstein; G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. 1953, posthumously. *Philosophical Investigations* / originally *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (posthumously, Wiley-Blackwell).

The *Tractatus* gave just the tightly organised, overarching system of logic yearned by philosophers. A man of 8integrity, Wittgenstein retired from his Oxford professorship, because he had finally solved the core issues of logic. The same integrity brought him back in the 1940s to write *Philosophical Investigations*, rejecting the whole premise of *Tractatus* to universal, tightly focused answers. The non-linear *Investigations* pioneered what became known as post-modernism.

*Personae*; I.3. some etymology on her name; I.4. analysis of her initial appearance text (her advent), creating a mini portrait; I.5. delineation of the relevant 'Mabinogi Rhiannon' text; I.6., list of other sources with brief notes on them; I.7. Mabinogi Rhiannon as a prose text.

The second section of eight chapters addresses research question 2; the story of the story over time, and how the scholars who sustained 'Mabinogi Studies' affected Rhiannon (see below for a brief summary). This includes issues of Rhiannon and feminisms.

The third section of seven chapters responds to research question 3, outlining the world of the Mabinogi, its legendary geography, politics and economics, and Rhiannon positions within it. An important chapter III.5. 'Land, Law, Women', looks at the place of women in this society.

These three sections I-III comprise a substantial introductory infrastructure for the study.

The fourth and fifth sections respond to research question 4, moving into close focus upon Rhiannon.. Ch. IV.1. tabulates all her speeches, direct, indirect, single and joint. It includes the Adar Rhiannon occurrence. These 33 speeches are analysed into types, and some of their language considered in how it reflects Rhiannon's character. Ch. IV.2. examines Rhiannon's acts as the Acts of a playscript, sustaining Mabinogi origins in live performance. The major analysis here is agency, her active and passive modes, how these shape throughout the narrative. There is also some structural analysis on how the Acts and scenes show regular patterns in their locations.

Section V is lengthy, with fifteen chapters, each centred on a particular Mabinogi character in relation to Rhiannon. Not all have direct relations with her e.g. the queen in Annwfn, and Gwydion; but comparing them with Rhiannon is instructive on her character. Some chapters here are very brief when considering secondary characters; two on primary characters (Pwyll, Pryderi) are long.

The sixth and seventh sections approach the mythological aspects of Mabinogi Rhiannon, in response to research question 5. Section VI with six chapters considers Mabinogi enchantments, possible passages of trancework, Magicians and Rhiannon as Magician. Then three chapters address Rhiannon's three particular enchantments: her horse, her bag, and Adar Rhiannon. Section

VII with five chapters explores Goddess Rhiannon in the context of some historical Goddess myths, Western Goddess development, 19thC and 20thC Mabinogi Goddess concepts, examples of key 20thC temples, and finally, Rhiannon theologies both already developed and plausible.

Additional sections collect and comment on some of the plethora of structural patterns in Mabinogi Rhiannon narrative, and applications of its narrative in arts, fiction and other media.

### ***Egwyddorion/ Principles***

#### *Egwyddorion: Ymddiried yn y Testun/ Principle: Trusting the Text*

To anyone acquainted with Mabinogi literature, a new study of Rhiannon recalls William John Gruffydd's (WJG) *Rhiannon* (1953).<sup>9</sup> The two works could not be more different. WJG was working in a different historical period as the leading light of Celticity and Mythological Reconstruction (above). A chorus of late 20thC criticism of WJG is reviewed here, but he is also here sympathetically placed within the context of his time. He is seen as a visionary, a Welsh nationalist seeking to unearth a universal, ancestral myth to service that vision: a Celtic pantheon. It seems less well known that his 'reconstructions' developed from the initiative of his 19thC teacher John Rhŷs (1888).<sup>10</sup>

My study situates in the mature Coherence Paradigm. Unlike WJG's *Rhiannon* my Mabinogi Rhiannon is not primarily focused on Mabinogi mythology, albeit this is substantially presented. Placing the mythic perspectives very late in the study sequence helps to emphasise my priority of politics, economics, and literary psychology, which precedes.<sup>11</sup> WJG cast a long shadow which I felt needs such clearance.

But even more important than the simple focus on the Mabinogi as prose literature, is validating its skilled coherence. I call this 'trusting the text'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> William John Gruffydd. 1953. *Rhiannon: An Inquiry into the Origin of the First and Third Branches of the Mabinogi* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press). Five lectures presented October 1951.

<sup>10</sup> Ch. II.6. *Academia Gymreig/ Welsh Academia: John Rhŷs, and William John Gruffydd (WJG)*.

<sup>11</sup> Section VI: 'Rywedawt', Ch. 1–6. Section VII: *Rhiannon Duwies/ Goddess Rhiannon*, Ch. 1–5.

<sup>12</sup> Shân Morgain. May 2016. 'Trusting the text of the Mabinogi, tracing interlacings into intricacy'. Seminar handout on the Coherence Paradigm, 3pp. of organised notes supporting Christine James'

Mythological Reconstruction views Mabinogi text as in very poor shape, sadly broken remains of myths which must be radically reworked in order to be comprehensible and reveal their former 'glory'.<sup>13</sup> Inconsistencies and oddities supposedly abound. Frequently recourse must be made to the myths of another culture to remedy *lacunae* or peculiarities, or pre-set theory must be imposed to achieve clarity.

In radical contrast, following the Coherence Paradigm, my default position is that the Mabinogi composer knew what they were doing: the text generally makes sense in its own right.<sup>14</sup> Ford said 'Everything known to me that came from the quills of medieval Welsh scribes served a purpose, be it aesthetic, moral, political, or social in some other context.'<sup>15</sup> In drawing out inferences I have only twice suggested a (small) narrative change viz. that an event might be prepared in advance. This does not contradict or distort the source.<sup>16</sup>

Addressing 'inconsistencies' proposed by others it is generally found possible to see how the point can be clarified without violating the text.<sup>17</sup> For example Pendaran (PKM1) is a mature prince but Pendaran (PKM2) is *mab*/ a young boy. I have pointed to the long time gap between them, Pryderi's growing up period and early rule, so the second person might be an heir, and 'Pendaran' possibly a title not a personal name.<sup>18</sup> 'Trusting the text' like this suggests a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you think in terms of inconsistencies a) you will find them, and b) not find it easy to see solutions. Contrariwise if like me you think in terms of trusting the text, you are likely more able to perceive what apparent 'inconsistencies' might mean. Ned Sturzer, as late as 2003, finds nine significant 'inconsistencies' to deplore in the Mabinogi.<sup>19</sup> Only two are not completely

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course, '*Crefft Y Cyfarwydd*' (CY-344), Swansea University, Dept. Welsh.

<sup>13</sup> WJG. 1912. 'Mabinogion', p. 41. He is quoting from William Wordsworth without saying so. Quoted excerpt Ch. II.6. Welsh Academia: William John Gruffydd (WJG).

<sup>14</sup> I use 'they' to refer to the Cyfarwydd, advisedly. Generally assumed to be a male composer, there are some grounds to argue a female one as Andrew Breeze does (see Bibliography). Myself I imagine a female-male partnership or even a family project.

<sup>15</sup> Ford, 'Prolegomena', p. 199.

<sup>16</sup> Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Wedding plot. Ch. V.6. Maids and V.9. Pendaran Dyfed.

<sup>17</sup> Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Wedding plot, n. 379 enumerated list.

<sup>18</sup> Ch. V.9. Pendaran Dyfed.

<sup>19</sup> Ned Sturzer. 2003. 'Inconsistencies and Infelicities in the Welsh Tales: Their Implications', *Studia Celtica*, 37, pp. 127–42. Ch. III.7. Political Parallels: Anglo-Norman on Lloegr towns. Ch. V.7. Teyrnion, Gwent distance, and Pwyll's reputation. Ch. III.4. Equine: Marchogion, no. of Irish horses. Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Rhiannon's Choice, on love at first sight, portraits. Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Wedding plot, n. 379 enumerated list.

explicable within the narrative. Oddly he does not list the often cited 'disconnected' *Pwyll I*, which this study supports as an integrated Preface.<sup>20</sup>

'Unfolding', or expanding Mabinogi text, is accepted and welcomed here, but not rewriting it.<sup>21</sup> When looking to a tale or myth elsewhere this is done to make interesting comparisons, sometimes to suggest a possible narrative context, but the other material is never treated as determinant or superior.

### *Egwyddorion: Ffeministiaeth* / Principle: Feminism

The Mabinogi stretches gender codes with Rhiannon as an exemplar. Gwydion takes such stretching a long way, though recent 'non-binary' perspectives are not explicit in the text.<sup>22</sup> Original 'Rhiannon' may therefore be classified as conventionally female, so it is unavoidable in my cultural context to consider feminist approaches. The issue of applying them as an (apparently) modern ideology to a mediaeval protagonist and her associates, is addressed.<sup>23</sup>

There are three Mabinogi Rhiannon characters who are anonymised as wives. Mediaeval Welsh women's named identity subordinates to fathers, with a seven year transition period into full marriage, then they subordinate to husbands; this is explained here as consequent to the bar on female land ownership. Married women today still predominantly follow the same custom in Welsh society and elsewhere, e.g. 'Mrs. Jones'.<sup>24</sup> The 'three anons' are here given courtesy titles for convenience, but also admittedly due to my feminist aversion to nameless women. They are here 'the Queen' (Arawn's wife), 'Teyrnon's Wife',

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Ch. I.5. Text: Prologue; I note Sturzer does not include the *Pwyll I* disconnect issue, my n. 146.

<sup>20</sup> *Pwyll I* resolved: Ch. I.5. *Testun Mabinogi Rhiannon* / Mabinogi Rhiannon text: *Narratif craidd ac estynedig* / Core and extended narrative. Ch. IV.2. *Ei Gweithredoedd* / Her Acts (playscript); and Ch. V.5. *Dewis Rhiannon* / Pwyll: Rhiannon's Choice.

Mac Cana adds Efnysien's violent reaction (PKM2) as inconsistent because he was present at the Branch opening so he knew about the agreement. Proinsias Mac Cana. 1977. *The Mabinogi*. (University of Wales Press), p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> I am indebted to Liz McAvoy, one of my first Supervisors, for the lovely concept of 'unfolding', personal communication (2020). A similar dedication to my 'Trusting the Text', is stated by Evangeline Walton, perhaps the most famous creator of Mabinogi fantasy; see Ch. VII.5. Rhiannon Theologies: '(1940s/ 1970s) Walton: *'agwedd' ar Modron* / Walton: an 'aspect' of Modron', pp. 498–501.

<sup>22</sup> Valente and others find gender disruption in PKM4. Roberta Louisa ('Rob') Valente. 1988. 'Gwydion and Aranrhod: Crossing the Borders of Gender in Math', BBCS, 35, pp. 1–9. Ch. V.15. *Gwydion y Gwenwyn* / Gwydion the Killer.

<sup>23</sup> Ch. II.8. *Mabinogi Rhiannon a Ffeministiaeth* / Mabinogi Rhiannon and Feminism.

<sup>24</sup> Ch. III.5. *Cyfraith, Tir a Gwragedd* / Law, Land & Women.

and 'Lady Mouse' (Llwyd's wife).<sup>25</sup> I am not the only scholar anxious to attend to the less prominent Mabinogi females, though I am probably the special champion of Lady Mouse.

It is a helpful feminist habit to avoid initials when citing scholars, so as not to obscure the presence of female scholarship. First names are therefore given whenever possible in first instance referencing and the Bibliography. In some cases an initial is used in subsequent occurrences to differentiate a common surname, e.g. 'SDavies', 'RhDavies'. For consistency this is also applied to male scholars, 'JDavies'. Some apparently non-standard usage occurs, e.g. 'Guest' designates 'Charlotte Guest'. When a couple are mentioned their surname alone has historically referred to the male as default. In Mabinogi discourse it is Charlotte Guest who is central as the first publisher and translator of the (complete) text; her husband is secondary and (creditably) supportive.<sup>26</sup>

I was trained in late 20thC feminist codes which require me to 'situate' myself, so that my reader can adjust what I say in terms of my perspectives and theirs. I am female (she); Caucasoid, middle class professional, an elder in my 70s, educated in formal academic Philosophy, often bedridden. I had a country childhood, lived until 40 (1989) as a Londoner, thereafter in Wales. I am not a modern Welsh 'speaker' (I have some reading). I am very proud to be 'adopted Welsh'.

### *Egwyddorion: Gwead Cymreig/ Principle: Welsh Weave'*

The Mabinogi was composed in *Cymraeg Canol*/ 'Middle Welsh' (MW). Translations greatly widened its reach, as have adaptations. Like many others who grew up outside Wales, first language English, my Mabinogi acquaintance was for decades with English translations, until this study. It is a key regret my Welsh language learning has not progressed beyond basics, due to living in English language dominated areas of Wales, and my health restricting available energy.

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<sup>25</sup> Ch. V.2. *Brenhines*/ Queen. Ch. V.8 *Gwraig Teyrnnon*/ Teyrnnon's Wife. Ch. V.13 *Llygoden Arglwyddes*/ Lady Mouse.

<sup>26</sup> Ch. II.5. *Dadeni Cymru*/ Welsh Renaissance: Charlotte Guest.

Nonetheless, my first supervisor Christine James gently but firmly insisted I must learn to work centrally with the Middle Welsh text: Ifor Williams' *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (PKM). What began very nervously gradually became a pleasure. I even came to glimpse a little Mabinogi wordplay.

I have introduced as much of the *Cymraeg* into my text as I could, because once prompted to the familiarisation effort, my politics directed respect for the native source. I understand how translation can coopt, and I suggest how this seems to develop an Anglocentric line from Edward Jones (1802) to Guest; then Walton, and 'Avalonian Rhiannon'.<sup>27</sup> This is part of a colonial history.

I quote PKM liberally in my main text, with John Bollard's English translation footnoted, so the Welsh source text is prioritised.<sup>28</sup> Titles and subtitles, are bilingual *Cymraeg*/ English, even though this impacts the wordcount a fair amount. Regrettably it was found too cumbersome, obstructing reader absorption, to footnote these full, bilingual titles in cross references, so these reverted to an abbreviated English format.

Priority is given to Welsh names unless quoting; e.g. '*Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*' rather than 'White Book of Rhydderch'. Key Welsh terms are frequently used in the main text, e.g. *neges*/ 'purpose, errand', with GPC translation when introduced, and listed in the *Geirfa*/ Glossary. Examples outside the Mabinogi are Welsh where possible without warping meaning. Indexing is Welsh alphabetical order (e.g. Ll follows L).

I do not claim that my Welsh priority usage is slavishly, 100% consistent; some degree of variation to me represents a fluidity characteristic of bilingual praxis. My family and friends' converse for example, is mainly English language, but woven with Welsh vocabulary – or not, as preferred. Living language usage is not tidy, as the later Wittgenstein taught us.<sup>29</sup>

This is still an English language study, but it does try to honour the Welshness of its primary sources. It also promotes the pre-eminence of the Mabinogi as a work of *Welsh* genius. One of the strong themes of Mabinogi

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<sup>27</sup> Anglocentric line from Edward Jones, to Guest, Ch. II.5. *Dadeni Cymru*/ Welsh Renaissance. Walton and 'Avalonian Rhiannon' Ch. VII.5. *Duwiesyddiaethau Rhiannon*/ Rhiannon Theologies.

<sup>28</sup> Bollard, *Landscape of the Mabinogi*. Default translation (below).

<sup>29</sup> Josef Johann Wittgenstein. 1953, posthumously. *Philosophical Investigations* / originally *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Wiley-Blackwell) (URL text Bibliography)

Rhiannon is that she is a *Welsh* mediaeval noblewoman, *marchoges*, not a 'Celtic' princess.<sup>30</sup>

### *Cyfieithu Rhagosodedig* / Default Translation

The choice of default translation was of course difficult; I was spoilt for choice. It had to be reasonably modern and familiar, so while I found Ellis and Lloyd (1929) usefully literal, and Parker's online compilation (2003) very convenient for text searches, the chief candidates were Ford (1977), Bollard (2006), or Davies (2007). These all have maps and glossaries and overviews.<sup>31</sup>

Ford, *The Mabinogi and Other Welsh Tales* (1977) had been my constant companion for 35 years. I liked how he selected out the native tales, explained so much in his 'Introduction', and achieved a comfortable balance between archaic and modern language. He inspired the scope of my Mabinogi Rhiannon narrative by his *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab*.<sup>32</sup> But the other two works are obviously more 'up to date' as there has been lots of new research in the half century since Ford's admirable version.

Bollard's *Landscape of the Mabinogi* (2006) exclusively focuses the Mabinogi, with long, helpful sections before *and* after its translated text, summarised explanation on context, politics, language, as well as neatly placed inline notes, and a lucid translation style. It comes from the foremost architect of the Coherence Paradigm.<sup>33</sup>

Sioned Davies' *The Mabinogion* (2007) seemed the most accessible volume for readers (though Ford has since helpfully gone into Kindle, and Bollard recently posted a free PDF to Academia).<sup>34</sup> Davies' is lively and conversational,

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<sup>30</sup> Critiques of 'Celtic Mythology': John Davies. (1993). *Three Things There Are ...* (HOG). Myself (as Jayran). 2001-05. 'Duwies Cymru'. (online, now defunct, see Appendix. Myself (as Morgain). 2017. 'Mabinogi enchantment and politics', and Simon Rodway. 8/07/2017. 'The Four Branches of the Mabinogi & Celtic Mythology', presented at 'Symposiwm: Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi', Sioned Davies, dir. (School of Welsh, Cardiff). Rodway. 2018. 'The Mabinogi and the Shadow of Celtic Mythology'. *Studia Celtica*, 52, pp. 67–85.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix: Translations. For the major translations their Contents are given in the Bibliography.

<sup>32</sup> Ford, *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab* (Intro. *Welsh Tales*): its scope compared to Mabinogi Rhiannon, Ch. I.5. Text: *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab*.

<sup>33</sup> Bollard's 'Afterword', to his *Landscape*, pp. 110-122, is in my opinion, the best Mabinogi overview.

<sup>34</sup> Bollard. 2006. *Landscape*; online PDF 2021, Academia: <[https://www.academia.edu/27202196/Landscapes\\_of\\_The\\_Mabinogi?email\\_work\\_card=view-paper](https://www.academia.edu/27202196/Landscapes_of_The_Mabinogi?email_work_card=view-paper)> [Accessed 27/05/2023]

reflecting her oral tradition research. As the most recent version (by a year), well publicised, the easiest to obtain and cheapest (at the time), Davies seemed the logical choice. What swung the choice was I felt my study addresses the main, modern experience of *reading* the tales, not primarily their living performance; while Davies' version follows her researches on live performance.

So I opted for Bollard. He rapidly became my stalwart support. He even sent me a PDF of the entire work several years before making it generally available, which made my constant searches for references a lot faster and easier.<sup>35</sup> Thank you JKB.

### *Genesis yr astudiaeth/ Genesis of the study*

I came to this study late in life, benefiting from two major, free gifts. My first ten years of childhood was on a 1950s farming estate. Politically it was feudal, five different types of farms centred around the Lord de Rougemon's manor house. Hierarchy was absolute. At four years old I was curtsying to our amiable Lord Denis in his muddy landrover. Heating was wood fires, food was mostly our own produce. We lived closely with the Lord's horses, cows, pigs, chickens, working dogs. Animals' body needs were our clocks, and the harvest governed our year. I have found that many academic works lack this physical, 'smelly' knowledge my childhood gave me. My stepfather faced down the local Hunt alone with a rifle, cleaning it at night on one side of the fireplace, while mother and I darned socks, patched or knitted, on the other side. That childhood has helped greatly to imagine Rhiannon's world, the class structure, its violence, physicality of animals, and gender polarity.

Secondly, as Rhiannon did, I came to Pembrokeshire, Wales, to visit someone who later became my life partner. For unforgettable, golden days, he conducted me around the lanes and hills of his beautiful native land.<sup>36</sup> To John, Rhiannon and Pwyll were childhood friends, and Mabinogi places were boyhood familiar. It has ever since been a fond joke that he had 'unfair advantages' (Wales)

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<sup>35</sup> PDF kindly emailed to me 20/08/2020. It was then posted to Academia March 2021.

<sup>36</sup> John Bollard's *Mabinogi* (my default translation) is liberally illustrated with landscape photography of Mabinogi locations by Anthony Griffiths, as well as maps, and manuscript images. *The Mabinogi, Legend and Landscape of Wales* (Llandysul, Wales: Gomer Press, 2006).

which won my heart. Our Rhiannon–Pwyll parallel was evident to us both.<sup>37</sup> Very likely if he had not shown me his Welsh splendour this study would never have happened. I inherited his matriarch aunt Phyl Davies' *Mabinogion* (Everyman, 1906); she would have liked this study.<sup>38</sup> John's intently focused discussions, especially his expert knowledge of politics and economics, marine navigation, and subsistence living 'off grid', have been as important as his constant support for my physical limitations.<sup>39</sup> Together we coordinated Mabinogi study groups.<sup>40</sup> Finally in 2013 I made room in a busy professional life for advanced study: this doctoral research began April 2014.<sup>41</sup>

My first, intuitive image of the project was its multiple perspectives. I saw myself as it were, at the top of a high tower with many windows. Each gave a different view of Rhiannon and her world. The metaphorical message resembled the famous tale of blindfolded Hindu sages touching different parts of an elephant, with diverse conclusions. I would try to array my tower views, integrating them where possible, but without artificially forcing a unified system.<sup>42</sup>

Focusing only one literary protagonist I felt merrily reassured I need only examine part of the Mabinogi text. I knew Rhiannon appears in only two of its four Branches, with rare glimpses in other literature. However Rhiannon quickly

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<sup>37</sup> I wrote this tale as part of a year's series on the Mabinogi. *Shân Morgain*. Jan. –Dec. 2017. The Welsh Year of Legends. *Pembrokeshire Life*, ed. by Keith Johnson. --June 2017. 'Mabinogi love stories old and new'. Part 6, illust., pp. 38–40. The parallels are also further explored here as a 'living text', Ch. VII.5. *Duwiesyddiaethau Rhiannon/ Rhiannon Theologies*.

<sup>38</sup> Phyl Davies (1912 -2006) was a redoubtable matriarch well known in Pembroke. Her husband was the locally famed Harry Davies, the last traditional wheelwright, whose workshop was literally beneath the castle wall on the quay. He was a tough man of principle. They were held in such awe her poor undertakers bearing her coffin were sheet white, trembling for fear they might slip when carrying such a VIP. It took many years for me to win Phyl's regard but she eventually accepted me as her niece, and I was given her copy of the *Mabinogion*.

<sup>39</sup> John Davies, MA Oxford PPE (Politics, Philosophy, Economics). Open University lecturer, politics and economics.

<sup>40</sup> Our (1990s) London study groups also led by Bethan Williams, were themed on 'Celtic Myth' but were Welsh and Mabinogi centred. Several key ideas from those discussions resurface here, e.g. questioning the standard view of Pwyll's foolishness, and his Annwfn chastity as virtuous. An online forum was Celtic and Goddess themed, though in practice, 'Welsh Celtic'. <[housemorgain.co.uk](http://housemorgain.co.uk)> (Defunct.)

<sup>41</sup> I wrote of my early encounters with Prof. Christine James in 'Here Be Dragons! An experiential account of working between two linguistic worlds.' Presented at 'Dwy Iaith, Dau Ddiwylliant? Two Languages, Two Cultures?', (Sept. 2014), CAWCS, NLW, Aberystwyth. Dir: Dr. Mary-Ann Constantine.

<sup>42</sup> The tower perspectives metaphor was the basis of my proposal to Swansea, Cardiff, Bangor and Aberystwyth, Oct. 2013. On the Perspectives methodology see above.

became a 'tour guide' leading into ramifications throughout most of the Mabinogi.<sup>43</sup> Fond hopes of a restricted study area had to be abandoned.<sup>44</sup>

This study has taken me into widely varied places: meeting a very solid, Welsh cob mare called Bramble;<sup>45</sup> finding why hill sheep produce inferior parchment;<sup>46</sup> the mediaeval silk cartel politics of Byzantium,<sup>47</sup> a 19thC mysterious manuscript disappearance,<sup>48</sup> a *cornucopia* of Rhiannon artworks,<sup>49</sup> Welsh nationalist poetry,<sup>50</sup> and of course struggles with the Cymraeg.<sup>51</sup> I have had great joy from it though Rhiannon is a tough mistress.

**Shân Morgain**  
Casnewydd/ Newport  
February 2024, January 2025

End of Volume I

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<sup>43</sup> Diagram: Shân Morgain. Feb. 2015. 'Rhiannon Interlace' prepared for presentation to MEMO, Swansea,

<sup>44</sup> Shan Morgain. Feb. 19/02/2015. 'Rhiannon as Mabinogi Tour Guide'. MEMO (Centre for Mediaeval and Early Modern Research), Swansea University. Director. Prof. Daniel Power, dir. Rhiannon as a structural, organising principle of the Mabinogi. Handout PDF 'A Mabinogi Briefing' (URL text Bibliography)

<sup>45</sup> I visited Bramble 3/05/ 2014 as experiential research. Rosie Withey, 'Horses as Teachers' nr. Bristol. Photograph by John Davies, Ch. VI.4. Rhiannon's Horse, end of chapter.

<sup>46</sup> Ch. II.2. *Mabinogi Canoloesol*, Mediaeval Mabinogi. MSS. production in context.

<sup>47</sup> Ch. I.5. *Dyfodiad*, Advent: Silk. Ch. III.2. *Y Marchoges*/The Horsewoman/ Silk. Political economy.

<sup>48</sup> Ch. II.4. *Llawysgrifau*/ Manuscripts: Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch, p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> Ch. VIII.1. *Rhiannon Arlunwaith*/ Rhiannon Artworks, (selection).

<sup>50</sup> Ch. VII.6. *Adar Rhiannon*/ Birds of Rhiannon.

<sup>51</sup> There has been a history of classes, tutors, self study materials, but also ill-health limitations. I very much regret my inadequacy here but (above) have attempted to honour the source text.

# Mabinogi Rhiannon

*gwraig o rym a'i theulu;  
safbwyntiau llenyddol, gwleidyddol, thealogaidd,  
celfyddydol a strwythurol*

woman of power & her kindred;  
literary, political, theological,  
arts, & structural perspectives

Shân Morgain (2025)



'Rhiannon' giantess parade puppet created 2010 Nathan Sheen supported by my consultancy. She was dressed by Millbrook primary school children, Newport. Photo Andy O'Rourke, permission 30/12/2021. My family also performed 'Rhiannon' (PKM1) for Gaer School. Both giant puppet and school performance were part of Newport city's celebration of Welsh mythology organised by Andy O'Rourke, multidisciplinary, community artist in consultation with me. I had been a storyteller for almost 30 years, but our family 'Rhiannon' performance affected me considerably. Much reading, research and meditation followed, culminating in PhD registration for this study October 2013. See Ch. II.3. Performance, final passages. (URL pics Bibliography)

***CYFROL I Ffurfioldebau, Cydnabyddiaethau,  
Rhestrau Cynnwys, Darluniau, Rhagymadrodd***  
**VOLUME I** Formalities, Acknowledgements,  
Contents lists, Illustrations, Introduction

***Datganiadau/*** Declarations

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed            ***Shân Morgain*** (candidate)

Date              **31/03/2024**

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed            ***Shân Morgain*** (candidate)

Date              **31/01/5**

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for electronic sharing.

Signed            ***Shân Morgain*** (candidate)

Date              **31/05/2025**

## *Crynodeb/* Abstract

The study asks 'Who is Rhiannon?', building a portrait of her personage, through multiple perspectives across centuries.

Rhiannon sources in the pioneering prose revolution *Pedeir Cainc y Mabinogi*, c. 1100. In this work of genius 'Mabinogi Rhiannon' develops from oral traditions through manuscripts, print format and 21stC electronics; gaining mythological, literary, and arts interpretations along with political implications. As a leading Mabinogi protagonist, Rhiannon functions as a substantial Mabinogi spine, or 'tour guide'.

Three principles govern the study.

1. It benefits from the 1970s/1980s paradigm shift, approaching the Mabinogi as predominantly coherent; an intricately layered literature. 'Trusting the text' is primary: commentary is 'unfolding', not reconstruction.

Feminist perspectives, emergent in the same period, are routine.

2. Multiple perspectives draw on broad, supplementary data, building not a monomyth but a mosaic of political, economic, psychological, literary, arts, mythological and structural approaches.

3. The Mabinogi is regarded as invaluable Welsh heritage of international significance. Rhiannon as Welsh is respected by plentiful Welsh content: title, subtitles, key terms, and quotes.

Rhiannon's romance is deconstructed to an elite *marchoges/* equestrian noblewoman of pragmatic ambitions. Her speech and acts analysis finds dominant assertiveness in her *negessau/* purposes, but also intense maternal vulnerability. Characteristically embedded in relationships (hybrid personal/political), Rhiannon is male oriented. Her 'maternal dyad' is found central to her narrative, and to Desolation aetiology.

Rhiannon is presented as a Mabinogi Magician with three paradoxical *hudiau/* enchantments. Rhiannon *Duwies/* Goddess appears rich in theologies: Horse-, Mother-, Sun-, Muse-, Initiation-Goddess; Descent cycle, *bodhisattva*, ambivalence and symbiosis.

Structural analyses array a wealth of interlacings and triplicities. Modern adaptations inspire young women with Rhiannon's strength, reflecting my suggested interpretation of *mabinogi* as 'about the young'.

Deconstruction done, Rhiannon remains romantic, a 'strong woman', a plausible divinity; above all a mediaeval Welsh noblewoman and a mother.

## *Cydnabyddiaethau/* Acknowledgments

**John Davies** My bloke, who shoulders the blame for this project. He brought me to Wales in 1989, and courted me by exploiting his unfair advantages in being Welsh.

Heartfelt thanks for making me an honorary Welshwoman, and the shared inspiration from these tales. For the 'dirty science' of political economy, for insider insight about y/our people, for psychology and plot discussion, for practical data on historical travel, for frequent driver services, for photography, for shared courage and pragmatism during each our cancers (my thanks to Dr Parry-Jones] who kept you alive for me against the odds, and her kind interest in my work). For 1,000s of breakfasts, suppers, bath, walking help, fetching things, morale strength; not least the wacky bits.

I could *not* have done it without you John.

**Taliesin 'Tal' Morgan** My Prince of the Plum Trees'. For being beautiful. For stoic patience with his eccentric matriarch. For all the shopping, the treats, and lovely suppers. For many herculean manual stair lifts and beautiful beds. For fetching. For strong arm when walking. For courage and maturity during the cancer journey both parents in series. Most of all for laughter, millions of adorable pictures, net humour, lifting and supporting me. For his own unique zen, holding me. For respecting my work, research help, total bibliog checking, sharing his own angles on issues. For the pats.

**Etsaana the Empress** Loyal companion, at my side almost 24/7, dark hole in the universe, sleek, solid, endlessly elegant, passionately affectionate prima donna, gracefully sharing my lap with the laptop. For the purring (research proved to steady my health), for her assiduous nursing passages, for her unique singing. For her ineffable beauty and love. For her predecessors Sws, Tissy, Theia, Cija who taught and trained me.

**Yr Athro Emerita Christine James**

My first supervisor 2013- 2020. Before I met her, as Wales' ArchDruid she scared me, but she swiftly quashed that and drew me into a nourishing liaison. I was a late-life contemporary, a mature, professional writer, an acutely anxious perfectionist, and a pigheaded temperament sometimes taking very different routes to my results to what she would have chosen. This would all be far beyond most supervisors. Christine's wisdom and compassion brought us through many barriers. Her patience as I floundered in her native language has been extraordinary. Her meticulous scrutiny of my text, many generous gifts of research resources, firm but gentle critique, make this a collaboration deserving a traditional eulogy; but alas I am no bard.

**Professor Liz McAvoy** Liz performed the sacred messenger role with notable kindness, conducting me to Christine James, October 2013. She has made a series of vital interventions and rescues, guiding me in the bureaucratic maze, encouraging me when it was all too much. I treasure her golden words of praise which fed my strength. If there is anyone more efficient on the planet it would surprise me. She has critically assisted with structural concerns, and of course feminism which as she said when we first met, is everywhere.

**Yr Athro Alan Llwyd** took over a shocked, traumatised me, having lost Christine. I was rude and unpleasant. Alan was unfailingly courteous and patient, gradually winning my trust. I came to see I am lucky to have his eminent expertise on the PhD cult. His generous praise for my work has time and again lifted me from the pit as I struggled with cancer terrors, NHS bureaucracy, and the inevitable anxiety of final completion. He is one of the greatest poets of Wales, but more than that he is a greathearted man.

**Professor Kirsti Bohata** my thanks for calmly, efficiently, managing the horrors of bureaucracy to keep me going.

## Academic and other assistance, particular thanks (A-Z).

Appreciation for artists is noted in the Illustrations list.

Douglas A. **Anderson**, for sharing his research and answering queries on Evangeline Walton and Kenneth Morris.

Edward **Anwyl**, for his pioneering research.

Kirsti **Bohata**, second supervisor, late stage in my PhD for bureaucratic guard.

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# *Mabinogi Rhiannon: Cynnwys*

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### Artworks, Photos, Screenshots (SCR)

All art sources were approached for permission. A few have not replied but the work is publicly displayed and publicly owned.

#### # FRONTISPIECE Photo. 'Rhiannon', Newport (2010) giantess parade puppet.

Created by Nathan Sheen supported by my consultancy. She was dressed by children of Millbrook Primary School. Photo Andy O'Rourke team. Permission Andy O'Rourke 30/12/2021.

FRONTISPIECE p. i, and Ch. II.3. Performance, p. 57, and Gallery p. 548 (24).

# **SCR excerpt: Edward Jones, ed. 1802.** *Mabinogi, Part the First; the Juvenile Adventures of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*, in *The Bardic Museum of Primitive British Literature; and Other Admirable Rarities; Forming the Second Volume of the Musical, Poetical, and Historical Relicks of the Welsh Bards and Druids. Bardic Relicks series*, vol. 2 of 3 (London, Printer St.: A. Straban for the author), p. 30. (URLs text PDF and more, Bibliography). Ch. I.3. Etymology, **p. 5.**

#### # 3 SCR excerpts. Pughe. 1803, 1803, 1818.

1) William Owen [Pughe]. 1803. *Geiriadur cenhedlaethol, cymraeg a saesneg.* A dictionary of the Welsh language, explained in English; with numerous illustrations from the literary remains and from the living speech of the Cymry, II of 3 (London: E. Williams), 'Rhianon' entry, p. 466.

2) *ibid.* 1803. *The Cambrian Biography: Or, Historical Notices of Celebrated Men Among the Ancient Britons* (London: E. Williams, 11 The Strand), p. 290. (URL text Bibliography).

3) William Owen Pughe. 1818. 'The Romantic Tales of the Mabinogion', *The Cambrian Register*, III, pp. 231. (URL text Bibliog). Ch. I.3. Etymology, **pp. 5-6.**

# **SCR NLW MS. Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch c. 1350, excerpt** Peniarth MS 4. digitised version NLW, (14/05/19). Online 2004. (URL Bibliography).

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon, **p. 10.**

# **SCR NLW MS.** Diana Luft, Peter Wynn Thomas, and D. Mark Smith. 2007. 'NLW MS. Peniarth 4: Y Gainc Gyntaf (First Branch)', *Llyfr Gwyn - Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425, Welsh Prose 1300 -1425*, p. 4v, 15, Lines 12-16. (URL text Bibliography). Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon, **p. 11.**

**SCR William Owen [Pughe]. 1799.** 'The Romantic Tales called Mabinogion, or Juvenile Amusements', *Cambrian Register*, II, p. 323. SCR slightly edited to clean print showing through from other side of page. Square brackets [Pughe] indicate additional name adopted 1806 onwards; see Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe: pp. 76-77.

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon, **p. 11.**

# **Alan Llwyd, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru.** Photo credit: Aled Llywelyn, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru. Permission: Gwenllian Carr, *Cyfarwyddwr Strategol/ Strategic Director*, EGC 28/02/2024. Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #1 'sitting', **p. 13.**

# **NLW, Sketch. Pughe attributed illustration c. 1826:** the first Rhiannon image of the Gorsedd rider on record, for Pughe's planned Mabinogion publication. Pughe (attributed). c. 1826. Nine Sketches illustrating the First Branch. Pen and ink, NLW MS 13242B. 'Mabinogion', etc., 1826 – 1831 Formerly known as Mysevin 22. Image and comment Ch. IX. Gallery.

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #2 'see', **p. 14.**

# **Photo. Uffington White Horse, aerial view.** Wikipedia public domain image uploaded: 30/06/2008. Geographical location: 51° 34' 39.8" N, 1° 33' 59.75" W, Berkshire. (URL Bibliography). Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #5 'horse', **p. 18.**

# **National Museum of Wales. 3/05/2007.** 'The Llan-gors textile: an early medieval masterpiece.' (URL text Bibliography). 'Llan-gors textile' discovered 1990 near Brecon, lake village. Photograph of the original textile. Here, further enlarged and clarified.

Ch. I.4. Advent of Rhiannon: #7 'silk', **p. 22.**

# **Two Photos. C. S. Lewis Family Wardrobe** (Christine James, USA trip 2019, my slight edit background.) Handmade Welsh Oak. Image evokes 'doors' into the tales, and the intricate craft of the tellers.. See also Lewis, Lewis Family Wardrobe, Bibliography for detailed information. Provenance Wade Center museum, Wheaton College, USA (URL source Bibliography)

Ch. I.5. Text: *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab*, **p. 32.**

# **Three Photos from our family's local 'Rhiannon' performance** (Millbrook School, Newport 2010). Cf. Frontispiece, same town festival. Ch. II.3.

Performance, **p. 55.**

# **Photo. 'Rhiannon', Newport (2010) giantess parade puppet** created by Nathan Sheen on my consultancy. Photo Andy O'Rourke.

Ch. II.3. Performance, p. 57. Also shown as Frontispiece p. i, and Ch. II.3.

Performance, **p. 57**, and Gallery **p. 544** (24).

# **Poster. Rowan Matthiessen, 'Narberth's Mabinogion Carnival Queen Rhiannon!'** (Tenby, 2016). Permission Rowan Matthiessen, Span Arts 28/11/2016.

Ch. II.3. Performance, **p. 56.**

# **Edward Lhuyd.** From cover illustration: Derek R. Williams. 2011. Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709) *A Shropshire Welshman* (Oswestry & District Civic Society).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Lhuyd, **p. 62.**

# **SCR excerpt. *Archaeologia Britannica***, p. 262. Scanned excerpt showing start of the passages on the Mabinogi.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Lhuyd, **p. 64.**

# **Lewis Morris.** Wikimedia Commons, 'Category: Lewis Morris (1701–1765)'. (URL Bibliog)

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Lewis Morris, **p. 65.**

# **William Owen at 42 with his wife**, Sarah Elizabeth [Harper], their children, Aneurin, Ellen, Isabella. B/W photo of original watercolour drawing, c. 1792. NLW Original Drawing Volumes (57, p. 38).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe

# **T. George, 'Pughe', Frontispiece, *Geiriadur***, 2nd ed. (1832), at 73.

See also T. Hodgetts, 'Idrison' [Pughe], steel engraving, NLW Archives (1822). (URL Bibliography).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe, **p. 67.**

# **Daniel Maclise, 'Portrait of W. Owen Pughe D.C.L., F.A.S'**, watercolour (NLW 4671832). Pughe awarded the honorary Oxford degree DCL (1822) at 63. (URL Bibliography, NLW Portrait Collection)

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe, **p. 67.**

# **SCR excerpt. Anonymous Gorsedd rider**, *Cambrian Register* II (1799), p. 323 text excerpt.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Pughe, **p. 72.**

# **Photo Carnhuanawc** (TOP CENTRE). Emmanuel Giaconia. c. 1826. Photo of oil portrait, Founders Library, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. From date, he is aged under 40.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Carnhuanawc, **p. 81.**

# **Carnhuanawc** (LEFT). Charles Augustus Mornewick. 1846. 'Reverend Thomas Price of Llanfihangel Cwmdru (1787–1848)', Oils portrait(1846), at age 59, two years before he died. NLW accession PZ03573.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Carnhuanawc, **p. 82.**

# **Carnhuanawc** (RIGHT). William Meredyth Thomas' (sculptor). c. 1848. Bust of Thomas Price 'Carnhuanawc', post mortem, from memory of meeting Carnhuanawc at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod that year. See his brother John Evan Thomas' poignant account in: Jane Williams. ed. 1855. *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc*, II (Llandovery: Rees; London: Longman), pp. 391–92. John Dillwyn Llewelyn's photo of the bust is shown as frontispiece. It or a plaster copy is kept at Llanover College. (URL text Bibliography)

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Carnhuanawc, **p. 82.**

# **'Charlotte Elizabeth Bertie Guest'**, *Welsh Outlook*, Vol. 3, no. 4 (April 1916).

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 87.**

# **Hsiao-Ron Cheng, 'Charlotte Guest'**, 9/04/2014 imaginative interpretation from the (2012) *Welsh Outlook* portrait above. Illustration for Jason Ward, ed. 'Lady Charlotte Guest', biographical article, in his 'Oh Comely' online magazine, no. 21. (URL Bibliography, but illustration has since been removed). Permission Jason Ward, editor 'Oh Comely!' sent 14/02/2017.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 87.**

# **Samuel Williams, 'Rhiannon'**, foremost engraver of the day, evidently appointed because of his pre-eminence. Illustration Guest, *Mabinogion*, vol. 5. Probably the most well known artwork of Rhiannon, freely available online (URL Bibliog). It inspired the John Cleal artwork (1989) see Ch. IX Gallery.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 89.**

# **Photo, Left. Guest, *The Mabinogion*, 7 vols. (1838–45).** First edition, Heritage Books.

Photo Paul Motschall. With permission from Ben Weinstein email (21/09/2015). Heritage Book Shop, 9024 Burton Way., Beverly Hills, CA 90211, USA. (URL Heritage Books, Bibliography).

See footnote for provenance data.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 90.**

# **Photo, Right: Guest, *The Mabinogion*, 2nd ed, 3 vols. (1849).** Parnassus Book Service, Inc.

Photograph with permission from Sarah Romano, email 21/09/15. Parnassus Book Service Inc, YarmouthPort, MA, U.S.A.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Guest, **p. 90.**

# **Thomas Stephens**, Frontispiece, *Literature of the Kymry* (1849). Bust by J. Edwards YarmouthPort, MA, U.S.A.

Ch. II.5. Welsh Renaissance: Stephens, p. 100.

# **Photo, Edward Anwyl, Welsh Portrait Collection, NLW**. Early 1900s.

Photograph by H. H. Davies & Son, Pier St. Aberystwyth. Public domain, Wikidata. Wiki Commons:

<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edward\\_Anwyl\\_%285292061%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edward_Anwyl_%285292061%29.jpg)> [Accessed 25/02/2024]

Ch. II.6. Academy: Anwyl, p. 108.

# **Book cover. Robin Morgan, ed. 1970. *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*** (NY: Random House). Most of its contributors were, or were becoming, notable 'influencers', though that term came later; we would have called them 'activists'. Contents: (URL Bibliography)

Ch. II.8. Feminism, p. 127.

# **Two SCR Jansen, 'Miss Gien'. 1999**. 'The Mabinogion: The Welsh Mythology' (Netherlands). Arthurian site, edits text into parts. Site now closed, but may be accessed via Internet Archive, Wayback Machine. (URL Bibliography).

Ch. II.8. 21stC Rhiannon, p. 136.

# **Map. *Map yr Mabinogi*** / Map Mabinogi. Shân Morgain, Map Mabinogi (2015). With thanks to Christine James and John Davies. For Mabinogi site photography, see John Bollard. 2006. Landscape. This is a simple map, for a richly imagined alternative see Mair Jones. 2006. 'Poster y Mabinogion: A2 Poster of Wales Based on the Tales of the Mabinogi' (Y Lolfa). Below Ch. III.3. Hierarchy.

Ch. III.1. Map Mabinogi, p. 141.

# **Poster. Mair Jones, 'Poster y Mabinogion: A2 Poster of Wales Based on the Tales of the Mabinogi'** (Y Lolfa, 2006). Still in publication. (URL Bibliography) Illustrator of 'Jones and Jones'. 1949. Mabinogion, Everyman 97 (London: J. M. Dent) and successive editions. Permission Sonia Hughes, Y Lolfa, 29/02/2024. Y Lolfa: <<https://www.ylolfa.com/products/100000000159/poster-y-mabinogion>> [Accessed 29/02/2024]

Ch. III.3. Hierarchy, economics, p. 148.

# **Diagram. Shân Morgain, 'Active/ Passive modes'**, bar chart (2017)

Ch. IV.2. Acts/ Active-Passive Analysis p. 208.

# **Diagram. Shân Morgain, 'Three Kindreds of the Mabinogi Rieni'**, (2017)

Ch. V.1. Genealogy, p. 213.

# **SCR. MS. Llyfr Coch Hergest, incipit letter P**. © Jesus College Oxford.

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Ch. V.5. Pwyll and Rhiannon, p. 238.

# **Jane Starr Weils. 2018. 'Rhiannon's Birds'**, painting. Print available Etsy, and Redbubble; design on poster, Tshirt, mouse mat, laptop bag and cover, cards.

Weils envisages sparrows which in outline are similar to my proposed skylarks, below 'Species'. Permission by Weils 25/11/2018.

Ch. VI.6. Adar Rhiannon, p. 407.

# **Venus of Willendorf**, one of the most famous Palaeolithic figurines. Small, 4.4 ins./ 11.1-centimetres tall, dating c. 30,000 BCE. Carved of oolitic limestone not local to the area, tinted with red ochre. Discovered on an archaeological site near Willendorf, Austria, 1908. Conserved Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, p. 417.

# **Map. Shân Morgain. 2015. Map of Goddess Myths.** Inanna, Isis c. 3,000 BCE. Greek deities, Isianism and Epona spread through the Roman Empire. With thanks for advice on marine navigation by John Davies.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 418.**

# **Photo. Cuneiform.** Akkadian version of Ishtar's Descent into the Underworld from the Library of Assurbanipal, currently held in the British Museum, London.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 419.**

# **Photo. Inanna Ishtar.** From an Akkadian cylinder seal depicting Inanna resting her foot on the back of a lion, c. 2334 – c. 2154 BCE, Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, p. 92. Illustration online (URL Bibliography).

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 419.**

# **Photo. Statuette of Isis suckling Horus.** Late Period, ca. 664-332 BC. Bronze and gold leaf. From Saqqara or Abusir. Now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. JE 91327. (Cropped at knees)

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 421.**

# **Hera, statue at Rotunda of Altes Museum, Berlin.** Wikimedia commons, uploaded by 'Yair Haklai' 27/07/2019.

Wikimedia: <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hera-Rotunda\\_of\\_Altes\\_Museum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hera-Rotunda_of_Altes_Museum.jpg)> [Accessed 29/02/2024]

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 422.**

# **Demeter and Kore, Hellenistic period.** British Museum (C529/ Greek and Roman 1885,0316.1). Terracotta 21cm. Excavated Myrina, Turkey. Purchased from: Charles Merlin 1885. Permission 29/02/2024.

British Museum: <[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\\_1885-0316-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1885-0316-1)> [Accessed 29/02/2024]

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 423.**

# **Photo. Perseus, Athena.** Mixing bowl (bell krater) with Perseus, Athena, and Hermes (cropped). Classical Period c. 400–385 B.C. Apulia, Italy. Ceramic, red figure, 30.5 cm. attributed to the Tarporley Painter. No. 1970.237. Gift of Robert E. Hecht, Jr. 11/03/1970. Viewable George D. and Margo Behrakis Gallery 207. © Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Boston. Permission Carolyn Cruthird, MFA Images, 29/02/2024. (URL see Illustrations list)

Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Boston:

<<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/154107>>

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 425.**

# **Epona.** Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) uploaded by ibex13, 11/08/2016, 11:58:43 'lavoir de Fontenilles'.

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 429.**

# **Photo, Mari Llwyd.** Liz Day. 3/01/2015. "It is surprisingly easy to come by a horse skull': Meet a group keeping the Welsh midwinter tradition of the Mari Llwyd alive', *Wales Online*. (URL text Bibliog.)

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 432.**

# **Four Photos, Mari Llwyd at Chepstow, 2018.** Photos by Mark Lewis. South Wales Argus. 20/01/2018. 'Horse skulls, morris dancing, and banter on the bridge - Chepstow celebrates its annual wassail and Mari Llwyd', photos by Mark Lewis. (URL text Bibliography).

Ch. VII.1. Goddess Myths, **p. 434.**

# **SCR excerpt. Pughe. 1803. Geiriadur, p. 466.**

Ch. VII.2. Pre-1900, **p. 445.**

# **Photo, Evangeline Walton Ensley pre-1950.** Lower portion cropped by me. According to Douglas A. Anderson, her executor, it first appeared, cropped, without credit, on the rear dust-wrapper of her novel *The Cross & the Sword* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956). Uploaded to wikicommons by her heir Debra L Hammond, marked 1940s. Anderson estimates 1950 or before. (This was approximately the period when Walton was drafting most of the Mabinogi novels.) Anderson provided provenance 28/02/2024.

Ch. VII.3. 20thC, p. 451.

# **Diagram. Quartered Circle mandala.** Shan Jayran (now Morgain). 1994. 'Circle of the Elements' diagram, in her *Circlework*, p. 38. Inserted sketch elements by Terry.

Ch. VII.3. 20thC, p. 461.

# **Photo 'Traveller's Rest' Surrey;** a favourite local, meditation spot for Violet Hillman who co-founded the first Iseum of the Fellowship of Isis, dedicated to Rhiannon. Photo is from an FOI webpage, see Fellowship of Isis in Bibliography.

Ch. VII.4. Temples, p. 464.

# **Sketch. Moon symbol of Triple Goddess,** popular among modern Goddess practitioners. Obscure provenance 1970s, common circulation.

Ch. VII.5. Theologies, p. 486.

# **Photo. 'Rhiannon Room',** Goddess House, Glastonbury.

Ch. VII.5. Theologies: Avalonian Rhiannon, p. 492.

# **Album cover, Damh the Bard. 26/09/2017.** 'Y Mabinogi: The First Branch', Pagan Music. (URL Illustrations list. Tracklist & detail, URLs incl. sound files, Bibliography).

Ch. VII.5. Theologies: Damh the Bard, p. 499

# **Diagram. Shân Morgain. Feb. 2015. 'Rhiannon Interlace',** prepared for presentation to MEMO, Swansea. Numbers backed brown indicate the Branch'es in which the character appears.

Ch. VIII. Structures, p. 509.

## Ch. IX.1. RHIANNON GALLERY

Listed, numbered in order of display.

#1 **Phil Forder. 2007. Large, Welsh oak wall-plaque.** Narrative panel, one of six hung above head height at the Rhosygilwen arts centre, near Cilgerranin, in a magnificent Welsh oak hall. Photo John H. Davies. p. 531.

#2 **Maria Hayes. 2015. artist in residence at Peter Stevenson's 'Prosiect Mabinogi'.**

'First Branch' session Mar. 14, 2015. Live illustration in storytelling. p. 532.

#3 **Muriel Delahaye. 2017. 'Narrative from Y Mabinogion** with the characters Blodeuwedd, [mostly] Rhiannon and Taliesin.' Pastel, 59 x 83 cm. Follow the liquid pathways which mark narrative development. p. 532

#4 **William Owen [Pughe] (attr.), 'Lady Rider at Gorsedd Arberth'** (my title), pen and wash, from Nine Sketches illustrating the First Branch (c. 1826). NLW, Aberystwyth. NLW: MSS. 1826-31. 'Mabinogion', etc. (1826-1831), 1326 pp. Formerly Mysevin 22. Scenes from the entire first Branch, evidently intended as illustrations, (1 in pencil, 8 pen & wash), pp. 45- 53. Copy supplied on application May 2016. p. 533.

#5 **Samuel Williams. 1843. Rhiannon rides at Gorsedd Arberth, illustrating Guest,** 'The tale of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved', Vol. 5, The Mabinogion'. Romance

style. Guest's perfectionism selected Williams as the foremost engraver of the times, then at the peak of his career. Also inspired Alan Lee's superb illustration for the Jones and Jones, and Guest Mabinogion versions (1982, 2001). **p. 534.**

**#6 John Cleal. 1989. Tabletop:** Rhiannon rides at Arberth (Workshop Wales, Fishguard), painted leather, Tabletop embellished with gold highlights and including Rhiannon Advent text from PKM1. Commissioned by Angela John to celebrate publication of *Lady Charlotte: A Biography of the Nineteenth Century*; 2nd abbreviated ed. *Extraordinary Life* (2007). **p. 535.**

Photo by John Davies (April 2017), enabled by kind hospitality of Angela John. Permission: Mitchell Cleal, John Cleal's son and heir (28/03/2017).

**#7 John Cleal, excerpt, tabletop, above.** Main focus area. **p. 536.**

**#8 Toin Adams. 2012. 'Rhiannon's Eyes'. Proposed 27-metre-high metalwork sculpture,** 30 metres along the horse tail to nose, envisioned to stand on an earth mound on the A465 at Dowlais where Guest lived and translated The Mabinogion. One of two finalists, Landmark Wales. **p. 536.**

Wales Online: <<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/its-a-guest-appearance-2248333>>

**#9 Rowan Matthiessen. 2016. 'The Beastly Procession'. Carnival Queen poster.** Span Arts, Narberth. The event's competition emphasised strength of character. **p. 537.**

Tenby Observer: <<http://www.tenby-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=105171&headline=Join%20the%20search%20for%20Narberth%E2%80%99s%20Mabinogion%20Carnival%20Queen%20Rhiannon!&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>> [Accessed 16/10/2021]

**#10 Rebecca Jane Stockburn. Jan. 2016. 'Rhiannon'.** Large painting touched with gold.

Permission 25/10/2016 with personal note by the artist; 'She came to my mind in this way when reading the passage in the book, a vision of white and gold, of stillness within movement, mischievous, freedom, and wildness. In some paintings she is interpreted as perfect, cold or warrior like, for me she felt 'flawed', warm and gentle. Painting for me is a meditation process and things appear progressively and subconsciously (the reflection comes as I am drawing/painting, I don't prepare or plan them with pages of sketches).

Sometimes the composition and images appear to me in dreams. I imagined her almost like a gust of wind.' Personal communication (25/10/2016). Painting generously purchased for this author by Dr. Roy Davies of Narberth when we clashed in our desire to buy it. See his Rhiannon as mother, life sized statue below. **p. 538.**

**#11 Humphrey Milford attr. 1914, 1920. Pursuit.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 23. **p. 539.**

**#12 Pughe, attr. c. 1826. Rhiannon Pwyll meeting.** NLW MSS. 1826–31 see 'Lady Rider', above. **p. 539.**

**#13 Wenzel Franziska. 2006. Rhiannon Pwyll meeting. (deviantART).** Wenzel said diffidently, 'the picture is very old and does not reflect my current technical skill level'. She did it while at school 'for fun'. Personal communication 2017. **p. 540**

**#14 Signe Fuchs 2014. Rhiannon Pwyll meeting.** Illustration from her *Mythology of the Celts: A comprehensive Survey* (Createspace, and Kindle). She says 'I meant to show the moment when Pwyll sees her first, amazed and

- enraptured, before he started to follow her'. Permission & personal communication May 2016. **p. 541.**
- #15 Reginald Machell. 1914. Wedding.** Woodcut illustrating his fellow Theosophist Kenneth Morris, (Cynedd Morus), *The Fates of the Princes of Dyfed* (Point Loma, California: Aryan Theosophical Press. **p. 542.**
- #17 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920. Rhiannon's Bag.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 31. **p. 543.**
- #18 Dr. Roy Davies (commissioner). 1994-2017. Rhiannon and Pryderi. Life-size sculpture** commissioned by Dr. Roy Davies of Narberth. In 1994 Dr. Roy Davies raised funding to buy the Narberth medical centre, to expand and improve it. Deeply touched by maternal loss he observed, he felt mothering truest inspiration for good medical practice. He also loved the Rhiannon tales. The statue was commissioned in China and the medical centre named Medyggfa Rhiannon. Twenty years after dreaming it the statue arrived. (Personal communication, 2017). See also 'Pembrokeshire Life' magazine, Article 5 in my series of 12 on the Mabinogi. **p. 544.**
- #19 Alex Robertson. Set design. 2008 for Manon Eames' play 'The Magnificent Mabinogi'.** Entire Mabinogi staging, Greek style chorus, slightly bilingual. Ch. IX.1. Gallery, p. 539 (15) **p. 545.**
- Milford, Humphrey, attr. Maids at dawn.** 1914, 1920. Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 35. **p. 546.**
- #20 Gini Wade 2015. 'The Accusation'.** Lithograph, Idiosyncratic style. A rare topic choice dramatically rendered with a bloody red focus points. Compare Milford's interpretation a century earlier in archaic Celtic style, above. Permission 3/04/2017. **p. 536.**
- #21 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920. Her penance.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 38. **p. 537.**
- #22 Owen [Pughe] attr. c. 1826. Rhiannon meets Gwri, Gates of Arberth',** One of Nine Sketches. NLW. MSS. 1826–31, see 'Lady Rider', above. **p. 538.**
- #23 Jane Starr Weils. 2018. 'Birds of Rhiannon'.** Weils intuitively saw them as sparrows. 'The birds to me felt very sparrow like. I did try to research what I could (would love to see your research!) and the rest was intuitive. One day I do hope to paint Rhiannon herself'. Personal communication 21/11/2018, and permission 25/11/2018. **p. 539.**
- #24 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920. Pryderi approaching the tower.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 90. **p. 550.**
- #25 Samuel Williams. 1845. Trapped at the tower,** illustration for Guest publication. **p. 551.**
- #26 Haz John. 2019. Golden Bowl.** Strikingly original interpretation taking us into the narrative as participants. We look downward into the Bowl and (our) hands attached to it. Permission 2019. **p. 551.**
- #27 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920. Manawydan and Mouse.** Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*, p. 103. Also Manawydan and the Scholar, p. 98; Gwydion herding pigs, p. 113. **p. 552.**
- #28 Ernest Charles Wallcousins. 1905, 1920. 'Gwydion Conquers Pryderi'.** illustrator for Carlton Illustrators. Charles Squire, *The Mythology of the British*

*Islands: An Introduction to Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance* (Blackie & Son, 1905), p. 119. Repr. as *Celtic Myth and Legend* (1920). Wikimedia Commons.  
p. 553.

**#29 Humphrey Milford, attr. 1914, 1920.** Death of Pryderi', Illustrator to Charles Squire. *Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance*. p. 553.

**#30 'Rhiannon'. 2010. Giantess parade puppet created by Nathan Sheen and dressed by Millbrook primary school, Newport,** where my family performed 'Rhiannon' (PKM1). Both giant puppet and school performance were part of Newport city's celebration of Welsh mythology organised by Andy O'Rourke, multidisciplinary, community artist. (URL pics Bibliography). Ch. IX.1. Gallery, p. 547 (22). Also Frontispiece p. i, and Ch. II.3. Performance, p. 57. p. 554.

**#31 Emily Brunner. 2016. (Tarot Empress) 'Rhiannon: Lady of the Other(world)',** for The Avalonian Oracle. A well circulated version promoting ancestral origins in a stone circle. She sits enthroned, like the other Tarot featured here as the Empress card, the archetypal [sic] Mother and Queen. Her Horse is well to the fore. Walton's influence presents the Adar over her head. Her robe is red in accord with the aberrant Avalonian tradition, see Ch. VI.5. Theologies: Avalonian Rhiannon. Permission 2021. p. 555.

**#32 Anne Marie Ferguson. 2006. (Tarot Empress) 'The Llewellyn Tarot: Empress'**. Llewellyn Publications). Permission 10/01/2017. Rhiannon is here the enthroned Great Mother, golden and green, fecund and abundant, with symbolic Horse and Adar presence. Ch. IX.1. Gallery p. 556

**#33 Angela-Michelle Hatheway (RaNuit on DeviantArt)'Reflections of Epona: Rhiannon'**. Included to represent the abstract aspect of Rhiannon divinity, such as her paradoxes; see Ch. VIII. Structures: Paradoxes. p. 557.

**#34 Hrana Janto. 1990. 'Rhiannon'** painted for Llewellyn, 1992 'Goddess Calendar'. Included in 2001, The Goddess Oracle, Amy Sophia Marashinsky (U.S. Games Systems. Repr. 2006).

Hrana Janto: <<http://www.hranajanto.com/goddessgallery/GGF-home.html>> [Accessed 16/03/2024]. Well known image. The Adar presence suggests Walton influence. The cornucopia horn (cornucopia) is not canon as Rhiannon's bag takes but does not give. (Noted Ch. VI.5.. Bag) However the golden Sun Goddess look particularly presents Rhiannon affinity to gold and abundance so artistically the image fits. p. 558.

**#35 Shan Jayran (now Morgain). 1984. 'Goddess Calendar',** A4 photocopied on Conqueror vellum, coloured parts handpainted 13 watercolours (1984).

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**MAP. Shân Morgain. 2015. Map of Goddess Myths.** Inanna, Isis c. 3,000 BCE. Greek deities, Isianism and Epona spread through the Roman Empire. With advice on sea routes: John Davies, yacht transat, naval history researcher. p. 418.

**DIAGRAM. Shan Jayran (now Morgain). 1994. 'Circle of the Elements'** mandala diagram, in her *Circlework*, p. 38. Ch. VII.3. 20thC, p. 461.

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She said "Tell my story."

For John

# *Rhagymadrodd/* Introduction

Aims & Sources. Research Questions. Overview.  
Focus. Structure. 'Trusting the Text'. Feminism. Cymraeg.  
Translations. Genesis of the study.

The aim of Mabinogi Rhiannon is to build a portrait of the personage 'Rhiannon', who originates almost exclusively in the prose literature *Pedeir Ceinc y Mabinogi* ('the Mabinogi', or 'PKM').<sup>1</sup> Other mediaeval sources for 'Rhiannon' were found to be slight, adding very little to her Mabinogi narrative, though some material is extant about associated Mabinogi characters, e.g. Teyrnon.<sup>2</sup> Mythological material on goddesses resembling 'Rhiannon' is more substantial.<sup>3</sup>

Mabinogi Rhiannon provides a rich, detailed account of 'Rhiannon' developments from pre-12thC oral origins to the present day.<sup>4</sup> 'Rhiannon', initially assumed as a protagonist of the First and Third Branches (of the Mabinogi) only, was found to operate as a 'tour guide' to almost all the Mabinogi.<sup>5</sup>

When reading this main file it may be helpful and enjoyable to keep open the separate documents using Volume II Bibliography, Index and Glossary for consults.

## *Cwestiynau Ymchwil/* Research Questions

The questions my study looks to answer are as follows.

1. Who or what is 'Rhiannon'? (the starting point).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portrait of Rhiannon' forms the key part of Ch. X *Casgliadau /* Conclusions pp. 568-601. Williams' 1930 PKM text is a composite of the texts from all three extant mediaeval manuscripts and is commonly used when making line references. Ifor Williams ed. 1930. Repr. 1951, 1994 hardback, 1996 softback. *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi, Allan o Lyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (PKM) (Cardiff: UWP).

Ch. II.4. *Llawysgrifau/* Manuscripts pp. 57-62.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. I. 6 *Rhiannon mewn Ffynonellau eraill/* Other Rhiannon Sources pp. 33-35.

<sup>3</sup> VII.1. *Mytholeg Duwies /* Goddess Mythology pp. 416-32.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. I. 7 *Rhiannon fel Gwraig o Gyfarwydd/* Rhiannon, Lady of Prose Story-telling, pp. 36-42; II *Stori'r Stori/* Story of the Story, 9 chapters pp. 43-139. Three chapters Rhiannon *hud: VI.4. March Rhiannon /* Rhiannon's Horse pp. 395-400, VI.5. *Cod Rhiannon/* Rhiannon's Bag pp. 400-406, VI.6. *Adar Rhiannon /* Birds of Rhiannon pp. 407-14; VI VII *Rhiannon Duwies /* Goddess Rhiannon, 5 chapters pp. 415-507.

<sup>5</sup> Shân Morgain. 19/02/2015. 'Rhiannon as Mabinogi Tour Guide'. Presentation for MEMO (Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Research), Swansea University. Dir. Daniel Williams. Ch. I. 5 *Testun Mabinogi Rhiannon/* Mabinogi Rhiannon text, pp. 23-33.

2. What is the story of her story, from mediaeval to modern, in different media and genres?

How do these developments affect understanding 'Rhiannon'?

3. What is 'Rhiannon's' world like, as seen principally in the Mabinogi?

How does she situate within it?

4. What kind of woman is 'Rhiannon'?

What is her character and her relationships?

5. Is it valid to regard 'Rhiannon' as a Goddess? or a Magician? If so, what kind?

What are her *hud*/ enchantment aspects like? What might be her theologies?

## Overview

The title 'Mabinogi Rhiannon' inevitably evokes Gruffydd's 1953 *Rhiannon*, but the two works are extremely different, almost diametrically opposed. WJG builds variant 'edifices' out of perceived broken myth. I unfold the text without violating character or plot ('Trusting the Text', below). I belong to the later paradigm post 1970s, seeing the Mabinogi as coherent and intricate ('Coherence Paradigm'). I liberally explore its structural analysis, finding many triplicities and interlacings, and suggesting their meanings. To reinforce distance from WJG I place 'Rhiannon' mythologies towards the end of my study, ensuring realism, politics, economics and psychology take precedence (though I too delight in Rhiannon mythology).

I deconstruct 'Rhiannon' romance to reveal her alternate as a ruthless strategist, concerned with her wealth and foodstocks, in partnership with her loyal executive Pwyll. I dismantle 'Pwyll the fool' needing lordship training, to reveal him as Rhiannon's wise and worthy consort. In exploring 'Rhiannon's Choice' I offer an alternative, feminised route to solving the 'disconnection' of *Pwyll I* (the Annwfn tale).

I emphasise the centrality of 'Rhiannon' as mother. Her maternal vulnerability deepens her characterisation as a mere 'strong woman'. I outline a structural 'Maternal Dyad', a woven *cainc* narrative of mother and son, which extends to their joint responsibility for the Desolation of Dyfed.

Rhiannon is *marchoges*, a mediaeval Welsh noblewoman, unique to a Welsh literature. Aware of how translation and English writing coopts, I use

various simple techniques to enable a *Gwead Cymreig*/ 'Welsh weave' for my work. I also assert a period of Mabinogi development for 150 years or more, pre 1860, when Welsh scholars studied the Mabinogi and published parts of it, without the later concept of broken myth. Instead the focus was ancestral history and the Mabinogi as the origin of European Romance.

I address each of 'Rhannon's' *hudiau* in turn: horse, bag and *Adar*, finding Rhiannon as Magician with spatial and temporal distortions, and a theme of synergy. Seeking comparisons led to Perseus' *kibisis*, and many other Perseus shared components. Comparing Goddesses surprisingly offered an equally rich comparison with ancient Inanna of Sumer. In 'Rhiannon's'; theologies I array Horse Goddess, Mother Goddess, Muse-Goddess, and add Sun Goddess.

I have compiled outlines of 'Rhiannon' artworks in categories with graphics to illustrate; and commented on her imaginary in fiction, film, music and performance.

Scholars who have inspired, influenced and serviced me are Pughe, Anwyl, Ifor Williams, Bromwich, Ford, Pennar, Bollard, Valente, Walton, S.Davies, J.Davies, Parker, Luft, Sullivan and Rodway. I have especially critiqued WJG, Jones & Jones, Mark Williams, Hutton, and the cult of 'Avalonian Rhiannon'.

### **Focus of the Study**

My study stresses the Mabinogi as a work of genius, complex, layered, structurally, politically, psychologically rich. To do justice to all that with any depth focus on the other prose tales as well would overload the project.<sup>6</sup> Other mediaeval Welsh, prose tales (*The Mabinogion*) and other cultures' literatures (e.g. Irish) are generally not treated in depth.

The Mabinogi is not only a revolutionary, sophisticated, and complex literature when it was compiled, its interpretations span centuries and encompass many different social categories and genres. There are therefore many and diverse perspectives to consider, as reflected in the subtitle of the study: *safbwyntiau llenyddol, gwleidyddol, thealogaidd, celfyddydol a strwythurol*/

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<sup>6</sup> It has been powerfully argued in any case that the Mabinogion tales have little connection with each other. John Kenneth Bollard, 'What Is The Mabinogi? What Is "The Mabinogion"?' (online, 2007). Argues confused identity, overlay of modern perceptions. (URL text Bibliography)

'literary, political, theological, arts, & structural perspectives'. Addressing the Mabinogi itself, my investigations are consequently wide-ranging, especially regarding material life, politics and psychology, then and since. Many new pieces of theory emerge in many different spheres. My conscious hope is that the scope of my study will service other scholars as a well-organised compendium to dip and plunder.

The 'sprawling' character of my study is especially apparent in the earlier chapters. As the work progresses the focus gradually tightens. The 'Conclusions' chapter draws the materials together; summarising the main points in four main perspectives, particularly presenting my many original insights.<sup>7</sup> I have not imposed any artificially narrow focus, as in a 'universal' model favoured by 19thC scholars (Bachofen, Frazer, Rhÿs, and their chief Mabinogi heir, William John Gruffydd). This paradigm was of course uprooted by Wittgenstein's radical U-turn (1953).<sup>8</sup> which generated 'post-modernism'.

However I do compose a tightly focused finale. A closing distillation of extreme brevity gives an intensely condensed summary of the foregoing extended conclusions in 500 words:

*'V Portread o Rhiannon gwraig o rym, o Gymru'r oesoedd canol i'r byd ehangach /*  
V Portrait of Rhiannon woman of power, from mediaeval Wales to wider worlds'.

### ***Strwythur yr Astudiaeth / Structure of the Study***

The first seven chapters are introductory, offering different avenues into the project: Ch. I.1. a succinct paraphrase of Rhiannon's narrative; I.2. a *Dramatis*

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<sup>7</sup> I *Camau paradigmatic: cysyniadau a dadansoddiad dominyddol* / I Paradigmatic stages: dominant concepts and analyses. II *Ffeministiaeth mewn cyd-destun cymdeithasol* / II Feminisms in social context

III *Hudoliaethau a duwiesyddiaethau* / III Enchantments and theologies

IV *Dadansoddiad strwythurol* / IV Structural analysis

Brief note-form summaries of these approaches are given as a Contents page: Y *CASGLIADAU* / The Conclusions, p. 567.

<sup>8</sup> Josef Johann Wittgenstein; C. K. Ogden, trans. 1922. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner; NY: Harcourt, Brace). Josef Johann Wittgenstein; G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. 1953, posthumously. *Philosophical Investigations* / originally *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (posthumously, Wiley-Blackwell).

The *Tractatus* gave just the tightly organised, overarching system of logic yearned by philosophers. A man of 8integrity, Wittgenstein retired from his Oxford professorship, because he had finally solved the core issues of logic. The same integrity brought him back in the 1940s to write *Philosophical Investigations*, rejecting the whole premise of *Tractatus* to universal, tightly focused answers. The non-linear *Investigations* pioneered what became known as post-modernism.

*Personae*; I.3. some etymology on her name; I.4. analysis of her initial appearance text (her advent), creating a mini portrait; I.5. delineation of the relevant 'Mabinogi Rhiannon' text; I.6., list of other sources with brief notes on them; I.7. Mabinogi Rhiannon as a prose text.

The second section of eight chapters addresses research question 2; the story of the story over time, and how the scholars who sustained 'Mabinogi Studies' affected Rhiannon (see below for a brief summary). This includes issues of Rhiannon and feminisms.

The third section of seven chapters responds to research question 3, outlining the world of the Mabinogi, its legendary geography, politics and economics, and Rhiannon positions within it. An important chapter III.5. 'Land, Law, Women', looks at the place of women in this society.

These three sections I-III comprise a substantial introductory infrastructure for the study.

The fourth and fifth sections respond to research question 4, moving into close focus upon Rhiannon.. Ch. IV.1. tabulates all her speeches, direct, indirect, single and joint. It includes the Adar Rhiannon occurrence. These 33 speeches are analysed into types, and some of their language considered in how it reflects Rhiannon's character. Ch. IV.2. examines Rhiannon's acts as the Acts of a playscript, sustaining Mabinogi origins in live performance. The major analysis here is agency, her active and passive modes, how these shape throughout the narrative. There is also some structural analysis on how the Acts and scenes show regular patterns in their locations.

Section V is lengthy, with fifteen chapters, each centred on a particular Mabinogi character in relation to Rhiannon. Not all have direct relations with her e.g. the queen in Annwfn, and Gwydion; but comparing them with Rhiannon is instructive on her character. Some chapters here are very brief when considering secondary characters; two on primary characters (Pwyll, Pryderi) are long.

The sixth and seventh sections approach the mythological aspects of Mabinogi Rhiannon, in response to research question 5. Section VI with six chapters considers Mabinogi enchantments, possible passages of trancework, Magicians and Rhiannon as Magician. Then three chapters address Rhiannon's three particular enchantments: her horse, her bag, and Adar Rhiannon. Section

VII with five chapters explores Goddess Rhiannon in the context of some historical Goddess myths, Western Goddess development, 19thC and 20thC Mabinogi Goddess concepts, examples of key 20thC temples, and finally, Rhiannon theologies both already developed and plausible.

Additional sections collect and comment on some of the plethora of structural patterns in Mabinogi Rhiannon narrative, and applications of its narrative in arts, fiction and other media.

### ***Egwyddorion/ Principles***

#### *Egwyddorion: Ymddiried yn y Testun/ Principle: Trusting the Text*

To anyone acquainted with Mabinogi literature, a new study of Rhiannon recalls William John Gruffydd's (WJG) *Rhiannon* (1953).<sup>9</sup> The two works could not be more different. WJG was working in a different historical period as the leading light of Celticity and Mythological Reconstruction (above). A chorus of late 20thC criticism of WJG is reviewed here, but he is also here sympathetically placed within the context of his time. He is seen as a visionary, a Welsh nationalist seeking to unearth a universal, ancestral myth to service that vision: a Celtic pantheon. It seems less well known that his 'reconstructions' developed from the initiative of his 19thC teacher John Rhŷs (1888).<sup>10</sup>

My study situates in the mature Coherence Paradigm. Unlike WJG's *Rhiannon* my Mabinogi Rhiannon is not primarily focused on Mabinogi mythology, albeit this is substantially presented. Placing the mythic perspectives very late in the study sequence helps to emphasise my priority of politics, economics, and literary psychology, which precedes.<sup>11</sup> WJG cast a long shadow which I felt needs such clearance.

But even more important than the simple focus on the Mabinogi as prose literature, is validating its skilled coherence. I call this 'trusting the text'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> William John Gruffydd. 1953. *Rhiannon: An Inquiry into the Origin of the First and Third Branches of the Mabinogi* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press). Five lectures presented October 1951.

<sup>10</sup> Ch. II.6. *Academia Gymreig/ Welsh Academia: John Rhŷs, and William John Gruffydd (WJG)*.

<sup>11</sup> Section VI: 'Rywedawt', Ch. 1–6. Section VII: *Rhiannon Duwies/ Goddess Rhiannon*, Ch. 1–5.

<sup>12</sup> Shân Morgain. May 2016. 'Trusting the text of the Mabinogi, tracing interlacings into intricacy'. Seminar handout on the Coherence Paradigm, 3pp. of organised notes supporting Christine James'

Mythological Reconstruction views Mabinogi text as in very poor shape, sadly broken remains of myths which must be radically reworked in order to be comprehensible and reveal their former 'glory'.<sup>13</sup> Inconsistencies and oddities supposedly abound. Frequently recourse must be made to the myths of another culture to remedy *lacunae* or peculiarities, or pre-set theory must be imposed to achieve clarity.

In radical contrast, following the Coherence Paradigm, my default position is that the Mabinogi composer knew what they were doing: the text generally makes sense in its own right.<sup>14</sup> Ford said 'Everything known to me that came from the quills of medieval Welsh scribes served a purpose, be it aesthetic, moral, political, or social in some other context.'<sup>15</sup> In drawing out inferences I have only twice suggested a (small) narrative change viz. that an event might be prepared in advance. This does not contradict or distort the source.<sup>16</sup>

Addressing 'inconsistencies' proposed by others it is generally found possible to see how the point can be clarified without violating the text.<sup>17</sup> For example Pendaran (PKM1) is a mature prince but Pendaran (PKM2) is *mab*/ a young boy. I have pointed to the long time gap between them, Pryderi's growing up period and early rule, so the second person might be an heir, and 'Pendaran' possibly a title not a personal name.<sup>18</sup> 'Trusting the text' like this suggests a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you think in terms of inconsistencies a) you will find them, and b) not find it easy to see solutions. Contrariwise if like me you think in terms of trusting the text, you are likely more able to perceive what apparent 'inconsistencies' might mean. Ned Sturzer, as late as 2003, finds nine significant 'inconsistencies' to deplore in the Mabinogi.<sup>19</sup> Only two are not completely

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course, 'Crefft Y Cyfarwydd' (CY-344), Swansea University, Dept. Welsh.

<sup>13</sup> WJG. 1912. 'Mabinogion', p. 41. He is quoting from William Wordsworth without saying so. Quoted excerpt Ch. II.6. Welsh Academia: William John Gruffydd (WJG).

<sup>14</sup> I use 'they' to refer to the Cyfarwydd, advisedly. Generally assumed to be a male composer, there are some grounds to argue a female one as Andrew Breeze does (see Bibliography). Myself I imagine a female-male partnership or even a family project.

<sup>15</sup> Ford, 'Prolegomena', p. 199.

<sup>16</sup> Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Wedding plot. Ch. V.6. Maids and V.9. Pendaran Dyfed.

<sup>17</sup> Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Wedding plot, n. 379 enumerated list.

<sup>18</sup> Ch. V.9. Pendaran Dyfed.

<sup>19</sup> Ned Sturzer. 2003. 'Inconsistencies and Infelicities in the Welsh Tales: Their Implications', *Studia Celtica*, 37, pp. 127–42. Ch. III.7. Political Parallels: Anglo-Norman on Lloegr towns. Ch. V.7. Teyrnion, Gwent distance, and Pwyll's reputation. Ch. III.4. Equine: Marchogion, no. of Irish horses. Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Rhiannon's Choice, on love at first sight, portraits. Ch. V.5. Pwyll: Wedding plot, n. 379 enumerated list.

explicable within the narrative. Oddly he does not list the often cited 'disconnected' *Pwyll I*, which this study supports as an integrated Preface.<sup>20</sup>

'Unfolding', or expanding Mabinogi text, is accepted and welcomed here, but not rewriting it.<sup>21</sup> When looking to a tale or myth elsewhere this is done to make interesting comparisons, sometimes to suggest a possible narrative context, but the other material is never treated as determinant or superior.

### *Egwyddorion: Ffeministiaeth* / Principle: Feminism

The Mabinogi stretches gender codes with Rhiannon as an exemplar. Gwydion takes such stretching a long way, though recent 'non-binary' perspectives are not explicit in the text.<sup>22</sup> Original 'Rhiannon' may therefore be classified as conventionally female, so it is unavoidable in my cultural context to consider feminist approaches. The issue of applying them as an (apparently) modern ideology to a mediaeval protagonist and her associates, is addressed.<sup>23</sup>

There are three Mabinogi Rhiannon characters who are anonymised as wives. Mediaeval Welsh women's named identity subordinates to fathers, with a seven year transition period into full marriage, then they subordinate to husbands; this is explained here as consequent to the bar on female land ownership. Married women today still predominantly follow the same custom in Welsh society and elsewhere, e.g. 'Mrs. Jones'.<sup>24</sup> The 'three anons' are here given courtesy titles for convenience, but also admittedly due to my feminist aversion to nameless women. They are here 'the Queen' (Arawn's wife), 'Teyrnon's Wife',

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Ch. I.5. Text: Prologue; I note Sturzer does not include the *Pwyll I* disconnect issue, my n. 146.

<sup>20</sup> *Pwyll I* resolved: Ch. I.5. *Testun Mabinogi Rhiannon* / Mabinogi Rhiannon text: *Narratif craidd ac estynedig* / Core and extended narrative. Ch. IV.2. *Ei Gweithredoedd* / Her Acts (playscript); and Ch. V.5. *Dewis Rhiannon* / Pwyll: Rhiannon's Choice.

Mac Cana adds Efnysien's violent reaction (PKM2) as inconsistent because he was present at the Branch opening so he knew about the agreement. Proinsias Mac Cana. 1977. *The Mabinogi*. (University of Wales Press), p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> I am indebted to Liz McAvoy, one of my first Supervisors, for the lovely concept of 'unfolding', personal communication (2020). A similar dedication to my 'Trusting the Text', is stated by Evangeline Walton, perhaps the most famous creator of Mabinogi fantasy; see Ch. VII.5. Rhiannon Theologies: '(1940s/ 1970s) Walton: *'agwedd' ar Modron* / Walton: an 'aspect' of Modron', pp. 498–501.

<sup>22</sup> Valente and others find gender disruption in PKM4. Roberta Louisa ('Rob') Valente. 1988. 'Gwydion and Aranrhod: Crossing the Borders of Gender in Math', BBCS, 35, pp. 1–9. Ch. V.15. *Gwydion y Gwenwyn* / Gwydion the Killer.

<sup>23</sup> Ch. II.8. *Mabinogi Rhiannon a Ffeministiaeth* / Mabinogi Rhiannon and Feminism.

<sup>24</sup> Ch. III.5. *Cyfraith, Tir a Gwragedd* / Law, Land & Women.

and 'Lady Mouse' (Llwyd's wife).<sup>25</sup> I am not the only scholar anxious to attend to the less prominent Mabinogi females, though I am probably the special champion of Lady Mouse.

It is a helpful feminist habit to avoid initials when citing scholars, so as not to obscure the presence of female scholarship. First names are therefore given whenever possible in first instance referencing and the Bibliography. In some cases an initial is used in subsequent occurrences to differentiate a common surname, e.g. 'SDavies', 'RhDavies'. For consistency this is also applied to male scholars, 'JDavies'. Some apparently non-standard usage occurs, e.g. 'Guest' designates 'Charlotte Guest'. When a couple are mentioned their surname alone has historically referred to the male as default. In Mabinogi discourse it is Charlotte Guest who is central as the first publisher and translator of the (complete) text; her husband is secondary and (creditably) supportive.<sup>26</sup>

I was trained in late 20thC feminist codes which require me to 'situate' myself, so that my reader can adjust what I say in terms of my perspectives and theirs. I am female (she); Caucasoid, middle class professional, an elder in my 70s, educated in formal academic Philosophy, often bedridden. I had a country childhood, lived until 40 (1989) as a Londoner, thereafter in Wales. I am not a modern Welsh 'speaker' (I have some reading). I am very proud to be 'adopted Welsh'.

### *Egwyddorion: Gwead Cymreig/ Principle: Welsh Weave'*

The Mabinogi was composed in *Cymraeg Canol*/ 'Middle Welsh' (MW). Translations greatly widened its reach, as have adaptations. Like many others who grew up outside Wales, first language English, my Mabinogi acquaintance was for decades with English translations, until this study. It is a key regret my Welsh language learning has not progressed beyond basics, due to living in English language dominated areas of Wales, and my health restricting available energy.

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<sup>25</sup> Ch. V.2. *Brenhines*/ Queen. Ch. V.8 *Gwraig Teyrnnon*/ Teyrnnon's Wife. Ch. V.13 *Llygoden Arglwyddes*/ Lady Mouse.

<sup>26</sup> Ch. II.5. *Dadeni Cymru*/ Welsh Renaissance: Charlotte Guest.

Nonetheless, my first supervisor Christine James gently but firmly insisted I must learn to work centrally with the Middle Welsh text: Ifor Williams' *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (PKM). What began very nervously gradually became a pleasure. I even came to glimpse a little Mabinogi wordplay.

I have introduced as much of the *Cymraeg* into my text as I could, because once prompted to the familiarisation effort, my politics directed respect for the native source. I understand how translation can coopt, and I suggest how this seems to develop an Anglocentric line from Edward Jones (1802) to Guest; then Walton, and 'Avalonian Rhiannon'.<sup>27</sup> This is part of a colonial history.

I quote PKM liberally in my main text, with John Bollard's English translation footnoted, so the Welsh source text is prioritised.<sup>28</sup> Titles and subtitles, are bilingual *Cymraeg*/ English, even though this impacts the wordcount a fair amount. Regrettably it was found too cumbersome, obstructing reader absorption, to footnote these full, bilingual titles in cross references, so these reverted to an abbreviated English format.

Priority is given to Welsh names unless quoting; e.g. '*Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*' rather than 'White Book of Rhydderch'. Key Welsh terms are frequently used in the main text, e.g. *neges*/ 'purpose, errand', with GPC translation when introduced, and listed in the *Geirfa*/ Glossary. Examples outside the Mabinogi are Welsh where possible without warping meaning. Indexing is Welsh alphabetical order (e.g. Ll follows L).

I do not claim that my Welsh priority usage is slavishly, 100% consistent; some degree of variation to me represents a fluidity characteristic of bilingual praxis. My family and friends' converse for example, is mainly English language, but woven with Welsh vocabulary – or not, as preferred. Living language usage is not tidy, as the later Wittgenstein taught us.<sup>29</sup>

This is still an English language study, but it does try to honour the Welshness of its primary sources. It also promotes the pre-eminence of the Mabinogi as a work of *Welsh* genius. One of the strong themes of Mabinogi

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<sup>27</sup> Anglocentric line from Edward Jones, to Guest, Ch. II.5. *Dadeni Cymru*/ Welsh Renaissance. Walton and 'Avalonian Rhiannon' Ch. VII.5. *Duwiesyddiaethau Rhiannon*/ Rhiannon Theologies.

<sup>28</sup> Bollard, *Landscape of the Mabinogi*. Default translation (below).

<sup>29</sup> Josef Johann Wittgenstein. 1953, posthumously. *Philosophical Investigations* / originally *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Wiley-Blackwell) (URL text Bibliography)

Rhiannon is that she is a *Welsh* mediaeval noblewoman, *marchoges*, not a 'Celtic' princess.<sup>30</sup>

### *Cyfieithu Rhagosodedig*/ Default Translation

The choice of default translation was of course difficult; I was spoilt for choice. It had to be reasonably modern and familiar, so while I found Ellis and Lloyd (1929) usefully literal, and Parker's online compilation (2003) very convenient for text searches, the chief candidates were Ford (1977), Bollard (2006), or Davies (2007). These all have maps and glossaries and overviews.<sup>31</sup>

Ford, *The Mabinogi and Other Welsh Tales* (1977) had been my constant companion for 35 years. I liked how he selected out the native tales, explained so much in his 'Introduction', and achieved a comfortable balance between archaic and modern language. He inspired the scope of my Mabinogi Rhiannon narrative by his *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab*.<sup>32</sup> But the other two works are obviously more 'up to date' as there has been lots of new research in the half century since Ford's admirable version.

Bollard's *Landscape of the Mabinogi* (2006) exclusively focuses the Mabinogi, with long, helpful sections before *and* after its translated text, summarised explanation on context, politics, language, as well as neatly placed inline notes, and a lucid translation style. It comes from the foremost architect of the Coherence Paradigm.<sup>33</sup>

Sioned Davies' *The Mabinogion* (2007) seemed the most accessible volume for readers (though Ford has since helpfully gone into Kindle, and Bollard recently posted a free PDF to Academia).<sup>34</sup> Davies' is lively and conversational,

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<sup>30</sup> Critiques of 'Celtic Mythology': John Davies. (1993). *Three Things There Are ...* (HOG). Myself (as Jayran). 2001-05. 'Duwies Cymru'. (online, now defunct, see Appendix. Myself (as Morgain). 2017. 'Mabinogi enchantment and politics', and Simon Rodway. 8/07/2017. 'The Four Branches of the Mabinogi & Celtic Mythology', presented at 'Symposiwm: Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi', Sioned Davies, dir. (School of Welsh, Cardiff). Rodway. 2018. 'The Mabinogi and the Shadow of Celtic Mythology'. *Studia Celtica*, 52, pp. 67–85.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix: Translations. For the major translations their Contents are given in the Bibliography.

<sup>32</sup> Ford, *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab* (Intro. *Welsh Tales*): its scope compared to Mabinogi Rhiannon, Ch. I.5. Text: *Cyfranc Caseg a'r Mab*.

<sup>33</sup> Bollard's 'Afterword', to his *Landscape*, pp. 110-122, is in my opinion, the best Mabinogi overview.

<sup>34</sup> Bollard. 2006. *Landscape*; online PDF 2021, Academia: <[https://www.academia.edu/27202196/Landscapes\\_of\\_The\\_Mabinogi?email\\_work\\_card=view-paper](https://www.academia.edu/27202196/Landscapes_of_The_Mabinogi?email_work_card=view-paper)> [Accessed 27/05/2023]

reflecting her oral tradition research. As the most recent version (by a year), well publicised, the easiest to obtain and cheapest (at the time), Davies seemed the logical choice. What swung the choice was I felt my study addresses the main, modern experience of *reading* the tales, not primarily their living performance; while Davies' version follows her researches on live performance.

So I opted for Bollard. He rapidly became my stalwart support. He even sent me a PDF of the entire work several years before making it generally available, which made my constant searches for references a lot faster and easier.<sup>35</sup> Thank you JKB.

### *Genesis yr astudiaeth/ Genesis of the study*

I came to this study late in life, benefiting from two major, free gifts. My first ten years of childhood was on a 1950s farming estate. Politically it was feudal, five different types of farms centred around the Lord de Rougemon's manor house. Hierarchy was absolute. At four years old I was curtsying to our amiable Lord Denis in his muddy landrover. Heating was wood fires, food was mostly our own produce. We lived closely with the Lord's horses, cows, pigs, chickens, working dogs. Animals' body needs were our clocks, and the harvest governed our year. I have found that many academic works lack this physical, 'smelly' knowledge my childhood gave me. My stepfather faced down the local Hunt alone with a rifle, cleaning it at night on one side of the fireplace, while mother and I darned socks, patched or knitted, on the other side. That childhood has helped greatly to imagine Rhiannon's world, the class structure, its violence, physicality of animals, and gender polarity.

Secondly, as Rhiannon did, I came to Pembrokeshire, Wales, to visit someone who later became my life partner. For unforgettable, golden days, he conducted me around the lanes and hills of his beautiful native land.<sup>36</sup> To John, Rhiannon and Pwyll were childhood friends, and Mabinogi places were boyhood familiar. It has ever since been a fond joke that he had 'unfair advantages' (Wales)

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<sup>35</sup> PDF kindly emailed to me 20/08/2020. It was then posted to Academia March 2021.

<sup>36</sup> John Bollard's *Mabinogi* (my default translation) is liberally illustrated with landscape photography of Mabinogi locations by Anthony Griffiths, as well as maps, and manuscript images. *The Mabinogi, Legend and Landscape of Wales* (Llandysul, Wales: Gomer Press, 2006).

which won my heart. Our Rhiannon–Pwyll parallel was evident to us both.<sup>37</sup> Very likely if he had not shown me his Welsh splendour this study would never have happened. I inherited his matriarch aunt Phyl Davies' *Mabinogion* (Everyman, 1906); she would have liked this study.<sup>38</sup> John's intently focused discussions, especially his expert knowledge of politics and economics, marine navigation, and subsistence living 'off grid', have been as important as his constant support for my physical limitations.<sup>39</sup> Together we coordinated Mabinogi study groups.<sup>40</sup> Finally in 2013 I made room in a busy professional life for advanced study: this doctoral research began April 2014.<sup>41</sup>

My first, intuitive image of the project was its multiple perspectives. I saw myself as it were, at the top of a high tower with many windows. Each gave a different view of Rhiannon and her world. The metaphorical message resembled the famous tale of blindfolded Hindu sages touching different parts of an elephant, with diverse conclusions. I would try to array my tower views, integrating them where possible, but without artificially forcing a unified system.<sup>42</sup>

Focusing only one literary protagonist I felt merrily reassured I need only examine part of the Mabinogi text. I knew Rhiannon appears in only two of its four Branches, with rare glimpses in other literature. However Rhiannon quickly

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<sup>37</sup> I wrote this tale as part of a year's series on the Mabinogi. *Shân Morgain*. Jan. –Dec. 2017. The Welsh Year of Legends. *Pembrokeshire Life*, ed. by Keith Johnson. --June 2017. 'Mabinogi love stories old and new'. Part 6, illust., pp. 38–40. The parallels are also further explored here as a 'living text', Ch. VII.5. *Duwiesyddiaethau Rhiannon/ Rhiannon Theologies*.

<sup>38</sup> Phyl Davies (1912 -2006) was a redoubtable matriarch well known in Pembroke. Her husband was the locally famed Harry Davies, the last traditional wheelwright, whose workshop was literally beneath the castle wall on the quay. He was a tough man of principle. They were held in such awe her poor undertakers bearing her coffin were sheet white, trembling for fear they might slip when carrying such a VIP. It took many years for me to win Phyl's regard but she eventually accepted me as her niece, and I was given her copy of the *Mabinogion*.

<sup>39</sup> John Davies, MA Oxford PPE (Politics, Philosophy, Economics). Open University lecturer, politics and economics.

<sup>40</sup> Our (1990s) London study groups also led by Bethan Williams, were themed on 'Celtic Myth' but were Welsh and Mabinogi centred. Several key ideas from those discussions resurface here, e.g. questioning the standard view of Pwyll's foolishness, and his Annwfn chastity as virtuous. An online forum was Celtic and Goddess themed, though in practice, 'Welsh Celtic'. <[housemorgain.co.uk](http://housemorgain.co.uk)> (Defunct.)

<sup>41</sup> I wrote of my early encounters with Prof. Christine James in 'Here Be Dragons! An experiential account of working between two linguistic worlds.' Presented at 'Dwy Iaith, Dau Ddiwylliant? Two Languages, Two Cultures?', (Sept. 2014), CAWCS, NLW, Aberystwyth. Dir: Dr. Mary-Ann Constantine.

<sup>42</sup> The tower perspectives metaphor was the basis of my proposal to Swansea, Cardiff, Bangor and Aberystwyth, Oct. 2013. On the Perspectives methodology see above.

became a 'tour guide' leading into ramifications throughout most of the Mabinogi.<sup>43</sup> Fond hopes of a restricted study area had to be abandoned.<sup>44</sup>

This study has taken me into widely varied places: meeting a very solid, Welsh cob mare called Bramble;<sup>45</sup> finding why hill sheep produce inferior parchment;<sup>46</sup> the mediaeval silk cartel politics of Byzantium,<sup>47</sup> a 19thC mysterious manuscript disappearance,<sup>48</sup> a *cornucopia* of Rhiannon artworks,<sup>49</sup> Welsh nationalist poetry,<sup>50</sup> and of course struggles with the Cymraeg.<sup>51</sup> I have had great joy from it though Rhiannon is a tough mistress.

**Shân Morgain**  
Casnewydd/ Newport  
February 2024, January 2025

End of Volume I

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<sup>43</sup> Diagram: Shân Morgain. Feb. 2015. 'Rhiannon Interlace' prepared for presentation to MEMO, Swansea,

<sup>44</sup> Shan Morgain. Feb. 19/02/2015. 'Rhiannon as Mabinogi Tour Guide'. MEMO (Centre for Mediaeval and Early Modern Research), Swansea University. Director. Prof. Daniel Power, dir. Rhiannon as a structural, organising principle of the Mabinogi. Handout PDF 'A Mabinogi Briefing' (URL text Bibliography)

<sup>45</sup> I visited Bramble 3/05/ 2014 as experiential research. Rosie Withey, 'Horses as Teachers' nr. Bristol. Photograph by John Davies, Ch. VI.4. Rhiannon's Horse, end of chapter.

<sup>46</sup> Ch. II.2. *Mabinogi Canoloesol*, Mediaeval Mabinogi. MSS. production in context.

<sup>47</sup> Ch. I.5. *Dyfodiad*, Advent: Silk. Ch. III.2. *Y Marchoges*/The Horsewoman/ Silk. Political economy.

<sup>48</sup> Ch. II.4. *Llawysgrifau*/ Manuscripts: Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch, p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> Ch. VIII.1. *Rhiannon Arlunwaith*/ Rhiannon Artworks, (selection).

<sup>50</sup> Ch. VII.6. *Adar Rhiannon*/ Birds of Rhiannon.

<sup>51</sup> There has been a history of classes, tutors, self study materials, but also ill-health limitations. I very much regret my inadequacy here but (above) have attempted to honour the source text.