

[<http://www.astrocelt.demon.co.uk/Bardic%20Craft/fferyllt.html>]:

...two references are located within the original copy of Lady Charlotte Guest Mabinogion. However two variants of spelling are introduced, the text from the *Red Book of Hergest* circa 1400's cites *llfrau pheryllt* - "Book of Pheryllt."

It is interesting how Pheryllt has actually become translated to fferyllt described in the Red Book of Hergest.

Edward Davis uses a text and enlightens one to 'fferyll'. Additionally this form is pointed out by the digital medieval list and used by the poet, Dafydd ap Gwylim (1350) which has been highlighted from the studies of Rachael Bronwich.

Rev. Edward Davis revealed the "Book of Pheryllt" in 1809 connecting it to astronomy and the hours of the planets indicating this process was also involved botany. Along with Pheryllt meaning also indicated to equate with Virgil. Nonetheless there is a certain amount of doubt shown specifically concerning "Pheryllt," being related to 'chymist or metallurgists. However a suggestion that it refers to 'ancient priests' is given. Interestingly Edward Davis draws one attention to a document of Dr. Thomas Williams, who noted the '*Celvddydu Pheryllt*,' which is translated as '*the arts of the pheryllt*.' The most interestingly observation that Rev. Edward Davis reveals is an alternative spelling for fferyllt when drawing on fferyll, prior to his translation of the Cad Goddeu. The latter fferyllt is confirmed within the facsimile and text of the Kat Godeu Manuscript, additionally this form is used within the selected poems translated by Dr. J Gwenogvryn Evans. Rev E Davis also undertook a similar model a hundred years earlier, along with D.W. Nash both of whom follows this theme. Nonetheless, D. W. Nash utilizes the fferyll spelling within his work on the *Romance of the History of Taliesin* where it's indicating fferyll is likely to be much older than the 13th century. This could suggest an even earlier understanding of fferyllt or fferyll. Alternatively fferyll in manuscript form exists in documentary evidence,

Although fferyllt and fferyll appears to be well established in the manuscripts of the Red Book of Hergest, and in Hanes Taliesin. One has to consider the role of Thomas ab Einion (1300-50) whom is credited with the collecting Taliesin poems together. This is inclusive of recording the story of Ceridwen, Taliesin and Elphin of which scholars suspected some corrupting of the sources could have occurred. Yet one is still unable to answer the questioning concerning definitions. Was the word fferyll in the Kat Goddua defined the same as used by John Davis in 1632, and those later? Indeed is it relevant to the way the world was understood within the thinking held in the 1300's? Rachel Bromwich suggests that some styles noted in the poetry of the Hanes Taliesin pushes the manuscript recording date to circa 9th century. While other scholars push the date further back to circa 6th century. Although transcribed in c. 1275, only six poems are attributed to Taliesin. On the other hand the Cad Goddua is not among them. It is also pointed out the complete version of Hanes Taliesin did not appear, until the 16th century through Elis Gruffyd. Irrespectively, it is interesting to note various scholars' agrees that: -

*"The bards were the custodians of historical records in which these were embodied;
that is to say the verse orally preserved"*

Lewis C, 'Historical Background of Early Welsh Verse' in Jarman A. O.H and Hughes G,

A guide to Welsh Literature, Vol. I, Cardiff 1992 2nd edition pp. 18-19

This could indicate that although the Cad Goddeu, was not in its written and recorded form, in the 1300's, it could well exist in the oral tradition prior to or before this period. One could easily suspect outside influences might be the cause for the introduction of fferyllt specifically when the Red Book was compiled between 1375-80 AD. It to contains the *brut y tywysogyon*, 'The chronicle of the Princes.' Here the word fferyll is also used under the entry for the years of 1193-6 AD. It therefore would appear that fferll – fferyllt was at least in use within the vocabulary at the time of writing the book or possibly since the late

12th century. However it cannot be presently deduced whether it holds the same definition of proceeding years.

If one takes John Davis fferyllt definition for example, did it have any effect on the community? Alternatively was fferyll held within the cognitive framework as it led to the creation of Taliesin. Whom gains a 'shining brow' when the brew was really intended to lighten the utter darkness of Ceridwen's son. The literature of the Mabinogion hints at an obscure ceremony dealing with making 'fferyllt' or fferyllt via botony. Yet it doesn't describe its ingredients but hints towards the process of alchemy, the forerunner to chemistry. But we have seen the compiler of the Ceridwen story could have contributed this in the 1300's. Although the tale is centred on Llyn Tegid, the present day location being Bala Lake the early Christian Church also knew of the lake importance along with that of the River Dee.

In Ceridwen case it was to produce a few drops of concentrated essence of "inspiration," a magical act in itself, having followed the instructions in the Book of Pheryllt, fferyllt or fferyll.

There is still the Cad Goddeu to unravel and its fferyll implication. Although Nash gives two examples of the last three lines by both Rev E Davis and Dr Owen Pughe; Only Pughe actually translate fferll to be a chemist. Yet Patrick Ford regarding this poem points out that one: -

*" sees the concept of transformation and metamorphosis
within such phases as, 'I am', 'I have been'. The same applies
to the Lebour Gabala."*

Ford P, The Poetry of Llywarch Hen, London 1974 p. 60

Another area in which fferyll also appears, is in the laws associated with the legendary Dyvnwal Moelmund, in the term of fferylltaeth.

Yet there also appears to be a material world of existence undertaken by the fferylltaeth, performed within the *saerniaeth* and *gwyddoniaeth*. They provided and brought forth life, a product of the mechanics of community survival, under the sovereign or king rulership. Whether engaged in the rural or civil arts, they all changed material forms form one state into another. Principally for the community's existence, it benefits the country its regional and its sovereign kingdom.

This then leads towards some form of conclusion of this enquiry on "Pheryllt", does it exist, this tends to indicate a suggestion it could. Yet it is held within the correct spelling of *fferyllt* and *fferyll*. First it is seen within the myth through Ceridwen translating fferyllt to produce the inspiration through the observance of its "book." Secondly this observance takes Gwion into a transmigration or reincarnation mode. To be reborn as Taliesin as he later become known. Alternatively a new child, after experiencing nine months of darkness is born into the light. In actual fact it could be suggesting to be revealing a form of creation myth that brought forth life. Alternatively it could suggest it is a reworking of a familiar story known in the 1300's, which has been adapted. If indeed these tales was created then.

"The Mysteries of Britain"

(Pheryllt support references)

- Especially do I believe the writings preserved by Iolo Morganwg (in BARDDAS) to have been handed down from an immemorial antiquity, as his editors maintained, and to enshrine the beliefs, ideas and practices of the Secret Tradition of Britain, and I feel that the unbiased reader will, after having persued the evidence relative to this, find himself in general agreement with this view. [p6, preface]

- An extraordinary mass of ponderous nonsense has been accumulated through the centuries relative to the nature and beliefs of this strange cult called Druidism, and it is only recently that modern methods of study have been applied to the examination of such fragmentary material relative to it, as is worthy of examination and has come down to us. [p36, intor]
- In his remarkably interesting book THE DRUIDS, A STUDY IN KELTIC PREHISTORY, Mr. T.D. Kendrick, of the British Museum, states that “the Saxon invasions blotted out nearly all memory of the Druids in Britain, and that [what we now do know] was gradually recovered only by the scholarship of the sixteenth century.
- Sotion of Alexandria (Diogenes Laertius, VITAE, intro.I.) alluded to Druidism as early as 200 B.C., in book 23 of his SUCCESSION OF PHILOSOPHERS [now lost].
- DE BELLO GOTHICO [Procopius, Byzantine Historian, A.D. 500-565]
- THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT CELTS [Canon MacCulloch]
- Y MAMAU [“the Mothers” lost work]
- COLUMBA vs BRIOCHAN (Druid of King Brude) at Iona, [Jamieson]; also his magical war with the druids Inverness, The White Stone, [MOB-65]
- GWALCHMAI (Bard, 1150-1190)
- CYNDELW (Panegyric on Owen Gwynedd)
- OWEN CYVEILCAWG (prince of Powys)
- LLYWARCH AB LLEWELYN (1160-1220)
- PHILIP BRYDYDD (Cerddglug Clyd Lliant, Bardic President, 1200-1250)
- COLL OF CORNWALL
- BRYNACH (prince of N. Gwyddelians of Strathclyde)
- CANAWON CYNLLAITH
- ALLWEDD BYDDIN BUDD NER (interpreter of the army of the victory god)
- LITERATURE OF THE KYMRY (Stephens)
- BRITANNIA AFTER THE ROMANS (1836) & THE NEO-DRUIDIC HERESY (1838), [Algernon Herbert].
- “The PHERYLLT, according to whose ritual she [Keridwen] proceeded, are *frequently* mentioned by the Bards of Wales, and an old chronicle, quoted by Dr. Thomas Williams, states that the PHERYLLT had a college at Oxford prior to the foundation of that university.
- These PHERYLLT appear to have been a section of the Druidic brotherhood, teachers and scientists, skilled in all that required the agency of fire, hence the name has frequently been translated “alchemists” or “metallurgists.”
- Indeed, chemistry and metallurgy are known as *Celvyddydan Pheryllt*, or “arts of the Pheryllt,” who would seem to have had as their headquarters, the City of Emrys in the district of Snowdon, famous for its magical associations, the city of the dragons of Beli, [Myvyrian Archaeology, II, p.59].
- Somewhere in the district of Snowdon lie the remains of the ancient British city of Emrys, or “the ambrosial city,” also known in Welsh tradition as the city of Dinas Affaraon, or “higher powers.” To this mysterious community [of the Pheryllt], the poems of the Welsh bards allude so frequently, as to place its actual existence beyond all question.
- [Rev. Edward] Davis believed that the PHERYLLT were priests of those mysteries in the ambrosial city of Emrys. (Mythology of the British Druids).
- POEMS, LYRICAL AND PASTORAL [1794, Edward Williams].
- “That the succession of Bards of Glamorgan could be traced back to 1300, and that Llywelyn Sion, who was bardic president in 1580 and died in 1616, had reduced this system of writing under the title of the BOOK OF BARDISM, which he compiled from old books in the collection of MSS. at Raglan Castle.” [Skene, FOUR ANCIENT BOOKS OS WALES, I., 29] MOB-87.

- “There is in my possession a manuscript synopsis by Llewelyn Sion, a Bard, written about the year 1560: its truth and accuracy are corroborated by innumerable notices and allusions in our Bardic manuscripts of every age. By these, undoubtedly authentic, writings it will appear that the Ancient British Christianity was strongly tinctured with Druidism.” [Edward Williams] MOB-87.
- “The triads and Raglan MSS., of course, only prove that the Bards of the middle ages had these notions, yet it is highly probable that what they believed on this point they derived from their ancestors,” [Sharon Turner, celebrated antiquary], MOB-87.
- “The MSS. of Llywelyn Sion were, according to the statement of Dr. Owen Pughe, last transcribed and revised by Edward Davydd of Margam, who died in 1690. It is stated that they were compiled from the books of the bards and learned teachers, lest the materials should become lost, and more particularly from the books of: MEYRIG DAVYDD, DAVYDD LLWYD MATHEW, DAVYDD BENWYN and LLYWELYN SION.” [Nash], MOB-88.
- “The original MSS. Of Edward Davydd are yet extant in the library of Llan Haran, in Glamorganshire,” [Turner, 1803], MOB-89.
- “It does not follow, that the prose documents are not what Davies and Herbert represent them to be, that they are therefore not genuine. What of the Central American Popol Vuh... the Kabbala... the Scriptures themselves... the works of the classical era? Are the evidences of *their* antiquity in manuscript any more ‘respectable?’” [Skene], MOB-89.
- “The extraordinary material contained within the Llywelyn Sion MSS., and the Barddas in particular, is material which completely shatters the contentions of the critics of the authentic character of the Druidic tradition in Wales,” [Spence, MOB, 90].
- “Of this MSS. I have a transcript; the original is in the possession of Mr. Richard Bradford of Bettws, near Bridgend, in Glamorgan, son of the late Mr. John Bradford, who, for skill in ancient British Bardism, left not his equal behind.” [Iolo Morganwg].
- Pope Gregory I. (A.D. 540-604) in his famous Bull, permitted a fusion between Keltic & Christian belief which rendered the latter easier of acceptance without destroying the former.
- The BOOKS OF BARDISM by Llywelyn Sion, were professed to have been extracted from old books, namely the books of: Einion the Priest, Taliesin the Chief of Bards, Davydd Ddu of Hiraddug, Cwitta Cyvarwydd, Jonas of Menevia, Ederyn the Golden-tongued, Sion Cent, Rhys Goch and others in the Library of Raglan, by permission of the lord William Herbert, earl of Pembroke. [MOB-100; note: it should be mentioned here that the existence of every one of the bards alluded to has been authenticated, and the works of most of them have been published in THE MYVYRIAN ARCHAEOLOGY and elsewhere, L.S.]
- CASNODYN [bard, A.D. 1290-1340].
- THE BOOK OF LLANWRST [Taliesin?]
- THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH OF ELVES, FAUNS AND FAIRIES [1691, Rev. Robert Kirk, M.A., Minister of Aberfoyle, Scotland].
- TESTIMONY OF TRADITION [Mr. David MacRitchie], also THE UNDERGROUND LIFE, 1892.
- The Druidic priestesses of whom we read, those for example on the Island of Sena, or of Anglesey, *acting as representatives of a separate caste*, were not of the character of witches, [MOB-158].
- DRUIDISM EXHUMED [Rev James Rust, minister of Slains, 1871].
- THE GIANTS OF GUILDHALL [very rare anonymous work, 1741].
- THE SENTENCES OF BARDISM [Ieuan ab Hywel Swrdwal, 1450].
- “That an arcane brotherhood, THE PHERYLLT, actually existed we have already seen, and doubtless to them that the business of initiation was trusted.” [MOB-193]
- “The reader will recollect that the Pheryllt, or priests of Pharaon, had a city or temple on Snowdon known as Dinas Emrys, which has already been described. Now, it seems to me not at all unlikely that this temple, only about a mile away from the site of Dinas Emrys, must have been under the auspices of the Pheryllt, and this leads to the supposition that they or their representatives, were flourishing in Hywel’s time— that is in the twelfth century.” [MOB-198/199].

- TRACES OF MITHRAISM [Mr. Bernard H. Springett, 1924].
- THE LIGHT OF BRITANNIA, [1894, Owen Morgan].
- THE ROYAL WINGED SON OF STONEHENGE AND AVEBURY, [same author].
- CAICHER [an old Irish Druid]. Also MOGHRUITH & CIOTHRUADH.
- GLOSSARY OF CORMAC mac CULLINAN, [compiled ca. 890].
- BOOK OF THE BEGINNINGS, [Massey].
- IRISH BARDS, [Walker].
- ANNALS OF THE FOUR MASTERS, [commentary, Dr. J. Moore].
- THE CHURCH OF St. PATRICK, [Rev. W.G. Todd].
- THE BOOK OF THE O'LEES, [1443].
- THE BOOK OF THE O'HICKEYS, [half Irish/Latin, 1303, trans. Bernard Gordon].
- “The Druid Bards who lived and sang under the Welsh princes, seem to be associated with the caste of the Pheryllt, who dwelt in the city of Emrys, in the Snowdon country, [MOB-237].
- DOCTRINES OF THE ELEMENTS.
- “...that an arcane brotherhood, the Pheryllt, actually existed, and that this was associated with Rites of the Cauldron, is clear.” [MOB-244].
- “There is no reason for regarding the material in the Sion MSS. with dubiety,” [MOB-248].
- PYTHAGOREAN COLLOQUIES, [Suidas].
- Can I do this???