

DAFYDD ab EDMWND (fl. 1450-1490), gentleman and bardic master

Name: Dafydd ab Edmwnd
Child: Edward ap Dafydd
Gender: Male
Occupation: gentleman and bardic master
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Land Ownership; Poetry; Royalty and Society
Author: Thomas Roberts

Born in the parish of Hanmer in English Maelor, Flintshire, of the same lineage as the **Hanmers** and descended from John Upton, constable of Caernarvon Castle, 1306-1307, son of Sir John Macklesfield, was the owner of Yr Owredd and of other lands in Hanmer but spent part of his life, at any rate, at Tre Wepra, Englefield, his mother's old home; he was buried in Hanmer church. At the Carmarthen eisteddfod held (1451?) in the presence of **Gruffudd ap Nicolas**, Dafydd ab Edmwnd won the silver chair for his systematization of Welsh prosody. As far as the bards were concerned he was the final authority on all matters of language and metre; his knowledge of the intricacies of the art was unsurpassed, his metrical skill impeccable. His system dealt only with the old, accepted forms, but he himself devised two new ones of extreme complexity - these became known as the *Cadwynfyr* ('Short chain') and *Gorchest y Beirdd* ('Bards' masterpiece'). He also added to the difficulties of other metres by decreeing that double rhymes must be used in the *Rhupunt Hir a Byr* and the *Tawddgyrch Cadwynog* (two forms of Welsh prosody which have no English equivalent) and that regular *cynghanedd* must be used in the *awdl-gywydd*. He further made the rules relating to *cynghanedd* even stricter, the object of all this being to stiffen the examination for bardic degrees and so safeguard professional poets against the pretensions of the poetasters who would so gladly have shared their privileges.

Dafydd ab Edmwnd regarded form and elegance as matters of the highest importance. In his masterly poems in the *Cywydd Deuair Hirion* form he concentrated on smoothness and simplicity of language, but in his *cywyddau gorchest* he is much too excessive in his use of *cymeriadau*; and in his *awdlau* he is content with nothing less than the most elaborate *cynghanedd* and the severest classical measures.

Most of his poems are *cywyddau* of love, and in this respect he followed tradition by writing serenades and satires addressed to 'Eiddig.' He was more appreciative of feminine beauty than was **Dafydd ap Gwilym**, for he wrote gracefully and with consummate skill *cywyddau* describing the lady's loveliness and praising her golden hair and delicately flushed cheeks. Nature he mostly ignores, although he has a few superb descriptions of the bower in some of his *cywyddau*.

Although the poet was in the flower of his age at the time of the Wars of the Roses he makes no mention of the turmoil of the time. But, for all that, his patriotism is obvious and his work shows clearly his intense love for his own country. For the rest, Dafydd ap Edmwnd's poems were, in accordance with the duties of a bard and the directions laid down in the poetic grammars, poems of praise and worship - praise of a harpist's skill, or a soldier's heroism; praise of a chieftain's generosity, and of the scholarship of priest and abbot; and laud of God the Father, God the Son, and the Virgin Mary for all their goodness. When he is not excessively technical, his works bear the imprint of a master, for his imagination and vision are splendid and his control of his technique is complete.

Author

Thomas Roberts, (1885 - 1960)

Sources

Thomas Roberts (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd a gasglwyd o ysgriflyfrau Peniarth, Llanstephan, Caerdydd, Havod, Mostyn, Coleg yr Iesu a'r Amgueddfa Brydeinig* (Bangor 1914), (Bangor Welsh MSS. Soc.)

NLW Archives: [Peniarth MS 134: Llyfr mawr Gruffudd Hiraethog](#)

NLW Archives: [Peniarth MS 158: Llyfr Robert ap Ifan o Fryn Siencyn](#)

NLW Archives: [Peniarth MS 267: Trioedd Ynys Prydain](#)

J. Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod sef celfyddyd barddoniaeth Gymraeg* (Oxford 1925), 349-52

G. J. Williams, *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid* (1934), xlii-xlvii

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dafydd ab Edmwnd](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q3399895](#)

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