

DWNN, LEWYS (c. 1550 - c. 1616), or LEWYS ap RHYS ab OWAIN, of Betws Cedewain, Montgomeryshire, genealogist

Name: Lewys Dwnn
Date of birth: c. 1550
Date of death: c. 1616
Spouse: Alice ferch Meredydd ap Dafydd
Child: James Dwnn
Parent: Gwenllïan Dwnn
Parent: Rhys ap Owain ap Morus
Gender: Male
Occupation: genealogist
Area of activity: History and Culture; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Garfield Hopkin Hughes

He himself says (*Heraldic Visitations*, i, 26) that he was descended from David Dwnn of Kidwelly (brother of **Owain Dwnn**), 'who went to Powys after slaying the Mayor of Kidwelly,' and through his wife Angharad Lloyd became owner of Cefn y Gwestyd. One of the Cefn y Gwestyd family, namely Gwenllïan, daughter of Rhys Goch Dwnn, married Rhys ap Owain ap Morus and so became Lewys's mother. The son adopted his mother's surname. The earliest of Lewis Dwnn's poems is dated 1568 and the latest 1616 (**Peniarth MS 96** (441, 586)). His wife was Alice, daughter of Meredydd ap Dafydd, and it is possible that **James Dwnn** the poet was the eldest of his six children.

The best evidence of Lewys Dwnn's early interest in genealogy is to be found in his own introduction to his book of pedigrees where he names the old, grey-headed bards of undoubted reliability whom he knew and the earlier generation of bards such as **Gutun Owain**, **Ieuan Brechfa**, and **Hywel Swrdwal**, with whose works he was acquainted. There is evidence to show that **Hywel ap Syr Mathew**, **Wiliam Llŷn**, and **Owain Gwynedd** (fl. 1550-90), were his teachers and that **Rhys Cain** was one of his fellow-pupils. In February 1585 he obtained through the influence of friends the post of deputy to Robert Cooke, Clarenceux king-at-arms, and William Flower, Norroy king-at-arms, to work (in his own phrase) 'as debyr Herawt at Arms for the three provinces of Kymry.' Flower died in 1588 and Cooke in 1592, but, in spite of all the difficulties he has enumerated in his foreword 'To the Reader,' Dwnn continued to collect his pedigrees until 1614, devoting the same care to the later portions of his work as he did to the official portions. Some manuscripts comprising various genealogical tables of his are preserved in the Egerton collection at the British Museum and in the Peniarth collection at the National Library of Wales. In 1846, the whole was published in two volumes at Llandovery under the editorship of **S. R. Meyrick**.

He was an exceedingly prolific poet, but the marks of the decline of the poetic art are only too obvious in his works. Most of these, written in his own hand, are to be found in **Peniarth MS 96**. His songs were addressed to leading personalities in every part of Wales, but special attention should be paid to his panegyric to 'Caer Dyf' (Cardiff), 1601, his cywyddau addressed to **Dr. John Davies**, Mallwyd, and **bishop William Morgan**, 1600, and his elegies upon **Huw Arwystli**, 1583, and **Siôn Tudur**, 1602.

Author

Garfield Hopkin Hughes, (1912 - 1969)

Sources

S. R. Meyrick (ed.), *Heraldic Visitations of Wales and Part of the Marches between the years 1586 and 1613, under the authority of Clarenceux and Norroy, two kings at arms* (Llandovery 1846)

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1941, 118-9

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Lewys Dwnn](#)

Works

John Philipps Allen Lloyd Philipps, Lewys Dwnn, *Pedigrees of Caermarthenshire, Cardiganshire, and Pembrokeshire, in continuation of Lewis Dwnn, to about the years 1700-1Q(1859)*

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