

GRUFFYDD, ELIS (fl. c. 1490-1552), 'the soldier of Calais,' copyist, translator, and chronicler

Name: Elis Gruffydd

Gender: Male

Occupation: 'the soldier of Calais,' copyist, translator, and chronicler

Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Military; Scholarship and Languages

Author: Thomas Jones

He was born some time between 1490 and 1500 in Gronnant Uchaf, Gwespyr, in the parish of Llanasa, Flintshire, where he inherited twenty-four acres of land from his uncle Siôn ap Dafydd. Nothing is known of his early life in Wales, but in his 'Chronicle' (v. *infra*) he has much to say about himself in the service of the Wingfield family, in London and France. He was with Sir Robert Wingfield on 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold,' near Calais, in 1521, when the emperor Charles V met Henry VIII, and also in the army of the duke of Suffolk (Sir Charles Brandon) during the campaign in France between July and Christmas 1523. From the beginning of 1524 until 1529 he was keeper of Sir Robert Wingfield's palace in London; and it was there that he copied what is now Cardiff Phillipps MS. 10823, a collection of Welsh prose and verse.

On 27 January 1529 he enlisted with the garrison at Calais, and it was there and in various other places in France, with the English forces, that he spent the rest of his life. There, too, he translated from the English a large compilation of medieval recipes (*Cwrtmawr MS 1D*), which he completed c. 1548, and wrote his Chronicle of the 'history' of the world from the Creation down to his own time (*NLW MS 5276iD*, *NLW MS NLW MS 5276iiD* and *NLW MS 3054iiD*). For the most part, the Chronicle consists of translations and adaptations of English and French chronicles, but use is sometimes made of 'some of the books of Wales.' The most original and valuable section is the last, where Elis deals with his own times and with many of his personal adventures.

The date of his death is unknown, but he was alive in 1552.

Author

Professor Thomas Jones

Sources

NLW Archives: *NLW MS 5276iD (Vol 1 Part 1): Cronicl o wech oesodd. MS 1560' Rhan I*

NLW Archives: *NLW MS 5276iiD (Vol 1 Part 2): Cronicl o wech oesodd. MS 1560' Rhan II*

NLW Archives: *NLW MS 3054iD (Vol 2 Part 1): Cronicl Elis Gruffydd Rhan I*

NLW Archives: *NLW MS 3054iiD (Vol 2 Part 2): Cronicl Elis Gruffydd Rhan II*

NLW Archives: *Cwrtmawr MS 1D: Llawysgrif Elis Gruffydd*

NLW Archives: *Cardiff MS 3.4 (RMWL Cardiff MS 5): Llyfr Ellis Gruffydd*

Edward Arthur Lewis, *An Inventory of the Early Chancery Proceedings concerning Wales* (1937), 115

Reports on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language (Historical Manuscripts Commission 1898-1910), i, i, 214, ii, 96, 871

Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, x, 284, xi, 21, 85

Thomas Jones, *MĀċn Us: sgyrsiau ac ysgrifau* (Caerdydd 1949), 60

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Elis Gruffydd](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [7271473](#)

Wikidata: [Q3404550](#)

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