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GWALCHMAI ap MEILYR (fl. 1130-1180),an Anglesey court poet	Free text search

Name: Gwalchmai ap Meilyr Spouse: Efa wraig Gwalchmai ap Meilyr Child: Goronwy ap Gwalchmai Child: Elidir Sais Child: Dafydd ap Gwalchmai Child: Heilir ap Gwalchmai Child: Einion ap Gwalchmai Parent: Meilyr Brydydd Gender: Male Occupation: court poet Area of activity: Poetry; Royalty and Society Author: David Myrddin Lloyd

one of the earlier Gogynfeirdd. He sang to Owain Gwynedd (died 1170) to his brothers, to Dafydd and Rhodri his sons, and also to Madog ap Maredudd of Powys (died 1160). Other extant poems of his are his ' Gorhoffedd ' (vaunting poem), his ' Dream,' and his verses to Eve, his wife. The Hendreg. MS. and the 'Red Book of Hergest' also attribute to him an ode to God which according to *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales* is the work of his son, Meilyr. In one of the poems to Owain Gwynedd there is internal evidence that Gwalchmai was the son of Meilyr, court poet to Gruffudd ap Cynan (*The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, 144b, 16-17 - 'My father sang the praises of his powerful royal father'). The two references in Gwalchmai's poems to the fact that he sang to Cadwallawn, son of Gruffudd ap Cynan, prove that he was composing poetry before the latter's death in 1132.

In one of the poems to Owain Gwynedd there are references to that prince's campaigns in South-west Wales in 1136-8, and in another there is a remarkable description of the battle of Tal Moelfre (1157). There is mention of a misunderstanding between Gwalchmai and Owain Gwynedd in one of these poems, and there is no extant elegy by him to this great prince to whom he had sung so much. In an ode to Dafydd ab Owain Gwynedd there is a reference to Dafydd's removal in 1175 to the east of the river Conway, and although the poet complains that he is not loved by Rhodri, he lived to sing his praises at a later date.

The 'Gorhoffedd' was sung during the lifetime of Owain Gwynedd. It contains references to Owain's campaigns in South Wales in 1136-8, and around Rhuddlan (1150?). This poem, which combines nature, love, and 'vaunting' themes, is one of the finest achievements of the Welsh muse in the 12th century.

Gwalchmai had several sons. Poetry composed by two (or three) of them is extant, viz. Einion and Meilyr ap Gwalchmai and, possibly, Elidir Sais. The Record of Caernarvon reveals the connection of Gwalchmai and his sons with Trewalchmai in Anglesey, and also that three of his sons were named Meilyr, Dafydd and Elidir. In his ' Dream,' Gwalchmai laments the loss of Goronwy, and in a series of elegiac *englynion* to the retinue of Owain Gwynedd (*The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, 163b) mention is made of a Goronwy, son of Gwalchmai.

Author

David Myrddin Lloyd, (1909 - 1981)

Sources

The Myvyrian archaiology of Wales (Denbigh 1870), 142b-149b

NLW Archives: NLW MS 6680B: Llawysgrif Hendregadredd, 4a-14b

The Poetry in the Red Book of Hergest (Llanbedrog 1911), 1184-6

J. Lloyd-Jones, The Court Poets of the Welsh Princes

Further Reading

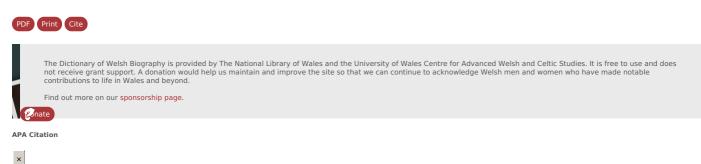
Wikipedia Article: Gwalchmai ap Meilyr

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