

GWYNFARDD BRYCHEINIOG (fl. c. 1180), poet

Name: Gwynfardd Brycheiniog
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: John Ellis Caerwyn Williams

Nothing of his work now remains except two poems: 'Canu y Dewi' ('a poem to [Saint David](#)') and 'Awdl yr Arglwydd Rys' ('an *awdl* to the [lord Rhys](#)'); see *Hendregadredd MS. 197-207*. His name suggests that he was a native of Brecknock; in his 'Canu y Dewi' he refers to the 'parish of Ilanddewi where I worship' and it may be that he is referring to one of the places of that name in that county. With reference to his poem to [Saint David](#), it should be borne in mind that [Giraldus Cambrensis](#), who had been elected archdeacon of Brecknock in 1175, had insisted on his right to exercise authority over the churches in Elfael and Maelienydd, thus embarking on his career as champion of the rights of Saint Davids which was, before long, to make him the natural leader of the campaign to secure its complete independence from Canterbury; such, too, in all probability had been the desire which had moved [Rhygyfarch](#) to write his 'Buchedd Ddewi' (c. 1090, according to [Wade-Evans](#)); probably Gwynfardd Brycheiniog was similarly moved to write his poem to [Saint David](#). Certain incidents occur both in the 'Life' and in the poem, but some material is found in the latter which is not, apparently, included in the former. The *awdl* to the [lord Rhys](#) could have been written any time after 1172, the year when Henry II met [Rhys ap Gruffydd](#) and created him justiciar of South Wales and so a 'lord'. The *awdl* may have been composed in the year 1176, when the 'eisteddfod' took place at Cardigan, but there is no certainty about this; it may have been written at a later date.

Author

Professor John Ellis Caerwyn Williams, (1912 - 1999)

Sources

T. Gwynn Jones, *Llenyddiaeth y Cymry llawlyfr i efrydwyr* (1915), 21

J. Lloyd-Jones, *The Court Poets of the Welsh Princes*, 16

Rhygyfarch, *Wade-Evans, Life of St. David* (London 1923), xiv

Hendregadredd Manuscripts 197-207

E. Anwyl, *The poetry of the Gogynfeirdd from the Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales, with an introduction to the study of old Welsh poetry* (1909), 81-4

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