

HOPCYN, WILIAM (1700 - 1741), a poet

Name: Wiliam Hopcyn
Date of birth: 1700
Date of death: 1741
Parent: Diana Thomas (née Harry)
Parent: Hopkin Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: Griffith John Williams

From Llangynwyd in Tir Iarll, Glamorganshire, of whom hardly anything is known. **Iolo Morganwg** maintained in his old age that he was the person of that name who was buried in Llangynwyd in 1741; that view was accepted by persons living in the 19th century. It was also said that he was a tiler and a plasterer. **Iolo** claimed in his earlier years, however, that he and Hopcyn had been fellow-pupils in 'Cadair Morgannwg' (the bardic chair or circle of Glamorgan) in 1760. Of one thing only is there any certainty - that a man of the name of 'Will Hopkin' wrote a poem satirizing the bards at the 'eisteddfod' held at Cymer in 1735. According to **Iolo** he was famed as a love poet. It was **Iolo** who said that Hopcyn was the author of 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn' (usually referred to in English as 'Watching the Wheat'); while it is possible that it contains a core that is genuinely old, it is likely that **Iolo** himself was the writer of the poem in its final form. About the year 1845 **Taliesin ab Iolo** began to tell the story of the love experiences of Wil Hopcyn and **Ann Thomas**, the 'Maid of Cefn Ydfa', and to connect the 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn' song with that tradition. Afterwards **Mrs. Pendril Llewelyn**, wife of the vicar of Llangynwyd, began to collect the penillion and the traditional tribannau of Tir Iarll, and to maintain that they were the work of Wil Hopcyn and that many of them related to the Cefn Ydfa episode. In fact, we know nothing of Wil Hopcyn apart from his satire upon the poets at the Cymer 'eisteddfod,' 1735. We have not a single poem, nor, indeed, a single stanza, that may be safely assigned to him.

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

Thomas Morgan, *The Cupid: being the histories of the 'Maid of Cefn Ydfa' and the 'Maid of Sker', together with the histories of their lovers, Will Hopkin the Bard and Thomas Evans the Harper* (Cwmavon 1869), 1869

T. C. Evans, *History of Llangynwyd Parish, with Illustrations* (Llanelly 1887), 89-123

Y Llenor: cylchgrawn chwarterol dan nawdd cymdeithasau Cymraeg y colegau cenedlaethol, vi, no. 4, vii, no 1

G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg* (1948), 1948, 251-9

Further reading

Louvain Rees, *Behind The Folk Tale: The Maid Of Cefn Ydfa* (accessed July 2020)

Additional Links

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