

ITHEL DDU (fl. second half of 14th century), poet

Name: Ithel Ddu
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

He was most probably an Anglesey man - 'of the land of **Meilyr**,' says **Iolo Goch**, though Iolo also locates him in Llŷn, and indeed further transports him to Bardsey. Iolo styles him 'a famous poet,' but all that we have to substantiate that claim is a single *cywydd*, preserved in two copies, **Peniarth MS 77** (441) and **Peniarth MS 78** (135). It would indeed seem that Ithel was no professional bard, but rather a quasi-squire, a mighty hunter and a boon companion (according to Iolo), and like the rest of his class a patron of bards. It was by his command (says Iolo) that Iolo Goch composed the very scurrilous lampoon, printed by **Charles Ashton** in his edition of Iolo (no. xl), upon the mother of the poet Gruffydd Gryg - see further the article on **Gruffydd**. An 'elegy' by Iolo, on Ithel's supposed death on Bardsey - assassinated, so it is hinted, by Gruffydd Gryg - can hardly be regarded as historical evidence; it is pretty clearly a 'leg-pull,' in the same *genre* as the lampoon mentioned above.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

H. Lewis, Thomas Roberts, Ifor Williams (eds), *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill, 1350â€“1450* (Bangor 1925), liv-lvi, 652

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J. Davies, *Antiquâ! linguâ! Britannicâ! et linguâ! Latinâ!, dictionarium duplex* (1632)

Edward Jones, *Musical and poetical relicks of the Welsh bards*(London 1784)

'Gweirydd ap Rhys,' *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig, 1300â€“1650* (1885)

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