

VAUGHAN, ROWLAND (c.1590-1667), of Caer-gai, Merioneth, poet, translator, and Royalist

Name: Rowland Vaughan
Date of birth: c.1590
Date of death: 1667
Spouse: Jane Vaughan (née Price)
Child: Marged Vaughan
Child: Mary Prys (née Vaughan)
Child: Elsbeth Vaughan
Child: Elin Vaughan
Child: Gabriel Vaughan
Child: William Vaughan
Child: John Vaughan
Child: Arthur Vaughan
Child: Edward Vaughan
Parent: Ellen Vaughan (née Nanney)
Parent: John Vaughan
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet, translator, and Royalist
Home: Caer-gai
Area of activity: Poetry; Politics, Government and Political Movements; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Megan Ellis

The eldest son of John Vaughan and his wife Ellen, daughter of **Hugh Nanney** of Nannau, Merioneth; was born about 1590. He was a descendant (see **J. E. Griffith**, *Pedigrees*, 3) of the **Vaughan** family of Llwydiarth in Montgomeryshire, and it appears that it was his grandfather, of the same name as himself, who was the first of the family to live at Caer-gai (B.M. Harl. MS. 1973). He spent some time at Oxford, although there is no record that he graduated there. He married Jane, daughter of Edward Price, Tref Prys, Llanuwchllyn, and according to **Hugh Cadwaladr's** elegy (**NLW MS 9B**), he was survived by three sons and three daughters: JOHN, who matriculated from Hart Hall (now Hertford College), Oxford, in 1635, aged 18, married Catherine, daughter of **William Wynn** of Glyn, Merioneth, and became sheriff of Merioneth in 1669-70; EDWARD, who matriculated from All Souls College, Oxford, in 1634, aged 16, graduated B.A. there in 1637/8, and M.A. from Jesus College in 1640, and became vicar of Upchurch, Kent (1642), and Llanyrys, Denbighshire (1647), and rector of Llangar (1662). Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog (1662), and Mallwyd (1664); WILLIAM; ELLEN; ELSBETH; and MARGARET. Harleian MS. 1973, however, and later sources give the names of his sons as John, Edward, Arthur, and Gabriel, and in addition to the three daughters named above a fourth daughter, Mary, is included, who married Peter Price, Cynllwyd, fourth son of **Thomas Prys**, Plas Iolyn, Denbighshire.

In accordance with family tradition Rowland Vaughan played a prominent part in the public life of the county and, like his father, who was sheriff of Merioneth in 1613/4 and 1620/1, he was appointed sheriff in 1642/3. He was a staunch Royalist and it is said that he fought as a captain at the battle of Naseby. Englynion by **William Phylip** show that he certainly took some active part in the Civil War (**Peniarth MS 115**) and Caer-gai was burnt down by Cromwell's soldiers on their way from Montgomeryshire in 1645. Vaughan himself was imprisoned at Chester by the Cromwellians in 1650 and his estate given to a kinsman, but after the end of the Civil War and after some years of litigation he recovered his estate and rebuilt Caer-gai.

Many of his englynion and other poems contain references to his political beliefs and to his sufferings at the hand of the Cromwellian party and many of them relate to the topics of the day. He also wrote a number of carols and other poems of a religious nature and translated several hymns from English and Latin into Welsh. The Welsh versions of the hymns in the *Book of Common Prayer* are generally attributed to him (see **Thickens**, *Emynau a'u Hawduriaid* and *Llyfr Gweddî Gyffredin*, 1664). He also wrote several elegies on the death of eminent Merioneth men. Some of his poems were published in *Carolau a Dyriau Duwiol*, 1729, *Blodeu-Gerdd Cymru*, 1759, and other anthologies, and many of them are to be found in contemporary manuscripts, some of them being in his autograph (for an example of his autograph, see illustration between 142 and 143 in *N.L.W. Jnl.*, i).

Rowland Vaughan is better remembered, however, as a translator of religious works, in particular of works supporting the Established Church. The first and most important of these to be published was *Yr Ymarfer o Dduwioldeb*, a translation which appeared in 1630 of **Lewis Bayly**, *The Practice of Piety*. Several later editions of this translation appeared within the following century. This first translation was followed in 1658 by *Yr Arfer o Weddi yr Arglwydd* (John Despaigne), *Pregeth yn erbyn Schism* (Jasper Mayne), *Prifannau Sanctaidd*, together with *Ymddiffyniad Rhag Pla o Schism* (William Brough), and *Prifannau Crefydd Gristnogawl*, together with *Y Llwybraidd-Fodd Byrr* (James Ussher). His last published translated work, *Evchologia* (John Prideaux), appeared in 1660. The translations show not only the meticulous care with which he worked but also his masterly command of an extensive vocabulary and a fluid style of writing. His introductions and dedicatory letters to these works contain numerous allusions to contemporary historical events as well as his own fortunes and family.

Vaughan also translated one other important work, although his translation was never published. Among the Brogyntyn manuscripts deposited in the National Library of Wales some years ago by **lord Harlech** was found a hitherto unknown portion of Vaughan's translation of *Eikon Basilike* or *The King's Book*, together with his dedication addressed to **lord Harlech's** ancestor, **colonel Sir John Owen**; for this, see *N.L.W. Jnl.*, i, 141-4.

Rowland Vaughan died 18 September 1667 and the Caer-gai estate passed to his eldest son, John, whose great-granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth (born 1709), wife of the Rev. Henry Mainwaring, rector of Etwall, sold it, together with Tref Prys, to **Sir Watkin Williams Wynn**, about 1740.

The above article on Rowland Vaughan deals with the most notable member of this family and refers to some of his forbears and descendants. The object of the present note is to draw attention to some literary and historical references to the family, and particularly to Rowland Vaughan, in the poems of ' **Phylip family of Arduwy** '. **Rhisiart Phylip**, who was ' family bard ' at **Nannau**, near Dolgelley, for a period, wrote an elegy on the death of Annes, daughter of **Rhys Fychan**, Nannau - she was the wife of Hugh Nanney and grandmother of Rowland Vaughan, who also wrote englynion to her and to his grandfather on the occasion. When Ellen Nanney, Rowland Vaughan's mother, died in 1617, **Rhisiart Phylip** wrote an elegy in her memory. Amongst englynion by **Rhisiart Phylip** is one written in 'reply' to one by Rowland Vaughan; he also wrote two englynion when the news came that Vaughan had received judgement in his favour in respect of Caer-gai in 1637. There are also three englynion by **Rhisiart Phylip** in 'reply' to three by Vaughan in regard to a poem by the former respecting **Rhiwedog**, near Bala. **Rhisiart Phylip** composed two cywyddau gofyn ('request poems') of Caer-gai interest: one to Rowland Vaughan, requesting an exchange of greyhounds, whilst in the other the bard asks John Vaughan to give a greyhound to **Lewis Gwyn**, Dolau-gwyn, near Towyn. Six englynion praising the translator, and written by **Gruffydd Phylip**, nephew of **Rhisiart Phylip**, are printed at the beginning of *Yr Ymarfer o Dduwioldeb*, 1630. Rowland Vaughan's translation of **Lewis Bayly's** well-known work, *The Practice of Piety*. In the article on ' **Phylipiaid Arduwy** ' in *Cymm.*, xlii, is quoted the account given by **Walter Davies** (Gwalter Mechain) in the introduction to *Eos Ceiriog* (1823) of the friendship in the time of the Civil War between Rowland Vaughan and **William Phylip**, who lived at Hendre Fechan, Arduwy. When Griffith Vaughan, brother of Rowland Vaughan, died 1638, **William Phylip** wrote two elegies upon the occasion. Besides others which he wrote are two referring to the burning of Caer-gai and **Ynysmaengwyn** in 1645. Later, John Vaughan, the heir of Caer-gai (the son of Rowland Vaughan), wrote a 'cywydd yr adar,' to which **William Phylip** replied (in Cardiff MS. 64).

Author

Megan Ellis, (1906 - 2001)

Sources

Lewis Bayly, Rowland Vaughan (trnsl.), *Yr Ymarfer o Dduwioldeb, yn cyfarwyddo dyn i rodio fal y rhyngo ef fodd Duw* (Llundain 1630)

Further reading

John Gwynfor Jones, Rowland Vaughan o Gaer-gai a'i gyfieithiad o 'Eikon Basilike' (1650), *Y Traethodydd*, Vol. 156 (2001), pp.18-40

Wikipedia Article: [Rowland Vaughan \(poet\)](#)

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