

CNEPPYN GWERTHRYNION, poet and grammarian of the 13th century

Name: Cneppyn Gwerthrynion
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and grammarian
Area of activity: Poetry; Scholarship and Languages
Author: David Myrddin Lloyd

in all probability, although none of his compositions seem to have survived. The earliest reference to him is by [Gwilym Ddu o Arfon](#) (a poet who sang in 1322) in an elegy to the poet Trahaearn (*The Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales*, 277b 12/13). Cneppyn is here named among a number of the leading poets of the 13th century, and it is maintained that he was of their tradition. From this reference we may gather that he hailed from Gwerthryniawn (now part of Radnorshire), and that his verse was 'correct by Latin standards' or by the rhetorical standards of his period.

In some manuscripts 'Cneppyn Gwerthryniawn' is given as one of several nicknames borne by [Sypyn Cyfeiliog](#) or Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd, but as this Dafydd sang late in the 14th century he could not have been the original Cneppyn (see *I.G.E.*, 1925 ed., clxvii *et seq.*).

In Cardiff MS. 38, a manuscript containing the 'Pum Llyfr Kerddwriaeth' (the Welsh medieval 'ars poetica') in the hand of [William Cynwal](#), and also in other 16th century copies of the same work, 'Cnypyn Gwerthryniawn' (or Gwerthryniawc) is mentioned as a grammarian, and his name precedes that of [Dafydd Ddu Athro](#). As the bardic grammar was based on Donatus, this fits in well with the statement by [Gwilym Ddu](#), and suggests that the leading poet-teachers were in possession of a written grammar in Welsh as early as the 13th century if not earlier (see [G. J. Williams](#), *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, xx-xxi).

Author

David Myrddin Lloyd, (1909 - 1981)

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