

DAFYDD NANMOR, a 15th century poet of note

Name: Dafydd Nanmor
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: Ifor Williams

He is named after the village of Nanmor (Nanmor Deudraeth) near Beddgelert. He sang *cywyddau* in the manner of [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#), to a married woman, Gwen o'r Ddôl, i.e. Dolfriog in the same neighbourhood, and because of these poems he was sent from the district after a verdict given by twelve jurymen. This happened, according to the bard, when [Dafydd ab Ifan ab Einion](#) was engaged in the war in France. As the fighting in France ceased in 1453, [Thomas Roberts](#) maintains that the departure of Dafydd Nanmor from North Wales must be assigned to some time before that year, and he regards the poems to Gwen o'r Ddôl as the bard's earliest compositions (*The Poetical Works of Dafydd Nanmor*, xvii-xix). The bard received patronage in South Wales, in the homes of Rhys ap Meredith of Tywyn, near the mouth of the river Teify, of his sons, and of the kindred of Rhys ap Meredith. 'Y Ty Gwyn ar Daf' (Whitland), Carmarthenshire, is said to be the place where he lies buried.

His editor suggests the years 1410 to 1480 as, approximately, those of the poet's life. He was a supporter of the house of Lancaster throughout his life, but he wrote no *cywydd* to celebrate the victory of [Henry Tudor](#) in 1485; [Roberts](#) concludes therefrom that he did not live long enough to witness the final triumph of his party. By now a considerable number of works by contemporaries of Dafydd Nanmor have been published and it is, consequently, necessary to reconsider the question of years and times, particularly as the amount of material at our disposal increases. One is inclined to suggest somewhat later dates - 1420 to 1485 or 1490.

Besides the masterly praise bestowed by him in *cywydd* and *awdl* on Rhys o'r - Tywyn, and also on his sons, Dafydd Nanmor was the faithful eulogist of [Edmund](#) and [Jasper Tudor](#); he also composed a *cywydd* and an *awdl* to [Henry Tudor](#) when the latter was but a child. For the meaning of his *awdl enghreifftiol* see [J. Morris-Jones](#), *Cerdd Dafod*, 363-4, 379-82. Dafydd Nanmor, [Dafydd ab Edmwnd](#), [Ieuan Deulwyn](#), [Deio ap Ieuan Du](#), and [Tudur Penllyn](#), all died about the same time; this causes much trouble and some difference of opinion among editors. It is difficult to think of one year in which to bury them all together. At the present time the choice lies between c. 1485 and c. 1490, it being remembered that the 'circa' is emphasized.

Dafydd Nanmor was fond of puzzles (gorchestion) or abstruse questions: he liked to weave poems in cynganedd on astronomy, astrology, and weather signs, to achieve wonders through the medium of the bardic measures; he liked to write on grammar. He quotes four lines from a Latin stanza on the feast of S. Paul and converts these into four *englynion*. The discovery of his name, written by himself in a Latin manuscript of a work by [Giraldus Cambrensis](#), now in the National Library of Wales (N.L.W. MS. 3024), is interesting; see *N.L.W. Jnl.*, ii, 11, and see the illustration; on p. 130 the words 'Gwenn or dol' appear in decorative letters. It is difficult to refrain from quoting from his 'Cyffes' (confession) (p. 78) - 'Ni thorrais un llythyrenn / O bin ag ingk heb ennw Gwen.' He imitated in Welsh one of the Latin 'crosswords' of the early ages ('Sator arepo tenet opera rotas'). There is a 'computus' also, in Pen. MS. 52, in the hand of the poet (see Pen. MS. 75 (229); *R.W.M.*, i, 403, 503, 783).

Author

Sir Ifor Williams, (1881 - 1965)

Sources

Thomas Roberts and Ifor Williams (eds.), *The Poetical Works of Dafydd Nanmor* (Cardiff 1923)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dafydd Nanmor](#)

Sound and Film

Dafydd Johnston, [Eglwys Abaty Ystrad Fflur, Cerdd o'r Oesoedd Canol gan Dafydd Nanmor](#)

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