

## IOLO GOCH (c. 1320 - c. 1398), poet

**Name:** Iolo Goch  
**Date of birth:** c. 1320  
**Date of death:** c. 1398  
**Parent:** Ithel Goch ap Cynwrig ab Iorwerth Ddu ap Cynwrig Ddewis Herod ap Cywryd  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** poet  
**Area of activity:** Poetry  
**Author:** Henry Lewis

a native of the Vale of Clwyd, son of Ithel Goch ap Cynwrig ap Iorwerth Ddu ap Cynwrig Ddewis Herod ap Cywryd. According to Hugh de Becele's Extent of Denbigh (1334), Ithel Goch rented a small portion of the family's ancient patrimony in the township of Llewenni where he possessed a dwelling house. He also rented from the lord small parcels of land in Llechryd and Berain. Of the works attributed to Iolo in the manuscripts the oldest which can be dated is the *awdl* to [Dafydd ap Bleddyn](#), bishop of St Asaph from 1314 to 1346, and one of the latest is the *cywydd* to [Ieuan Trevor II](#), bishop of St Asaph, composed, in all probability, in 1397. Between these two poles we can trace the following *cywyddau* written by him: panegyric upon Edward III, end of 1347; elegy upon [Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd](#) who died in 1356 (Iolo attended his funeral at Carmarthen); elegy upon [Tudur Fychan](#) of Tre'r Castell, Anglesey, who died in 1367; panegyric upon [Sir Hywel y Fwyall](#), before 1381; elegy upon [Ithel ap Robert](#), archdeacon of St Asaph, who died 1382; elegy upon Ednyfed and Gronwy, sons of [Tudur Fychan](#) (Gronwy was drowned in 1382); panegyric upon Ieuan ab Einion of Chwilog when he was sheriff of Caernarvon (1385-90); panegyric upon [Sir Roger Mortimer, earl of March \(and earl of Denbigh\)](#), who was born between 1395 and 1398; and an *awdl* calling down blessings on the court of Hywel Cyffin, dean of St Asaph from 1385 to 1397. There are three *cywyddau* which he sang to [Owain Glyndwr](#), but the last of these cannot very well have been written later than 1386. Accordingly Iolo belonged entirely to the 14th century, and was the contemporary of [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#) and [Llywelyn Goch Amheurig Hen](#), upon both of whom he wrote elegies. He also carried on a poetic controversy with [Gruffydd Gryg](#). His *awdlau* were written in the manner of the 'Gogynfeirdd,' and even his *cywyddau* bear many traces of antiquity both in respect of vocabulary and syntax. Like [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#) he had quarrelled bitterly with the Grey Friars. One of his *cywyddau*, written in the form of a dialogue between the body and the soul (an old literary device) describes a strolling poet's tour through Kerry, Newtown, Maelienydd, Elfael, Builth, the upper Taff valley, Caeo, Kidwelly, Ystrad Towy, Whitland, and Cardigan as far as Strata Florida; this tour probably took place about 1387. One of his most celebrated *cywyddau* is that addressed to the labourer, a *cywydd* containing a magnificent description of the plough. Iolo Goch's principal patron was [Ithel ap Robert](#). Most of his patrons were staunch supporters of the English Crown and his voice was never raised in rebellion.

### Author

Emeritus Professor Henry Lewis, (1899 - 1968)

### Sources

H. Lewis, Thomas Roberts, Ifor Williams (eds), *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill, 1350–1450* (Bangor 1925), ix-lxxvii

H. Lewis, Thomas Roberts, Ifor Williams (eds), *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill, 1350–1450* (Caerdydd 1937), ix-xii

Fuller but less critical edition by Charles Ashton, 1896 - and see *Catalogue of Printed Literature in the Welsh Department, Cardiff Free Libraries* (1898)

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Iolo Goch](#)

### Additional Links

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Wikidata: [Q730721](#)

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