

## MADOG ap GWALLTER, friar, a religious poet

**Name:** Madog ap Gwallter  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** friar, a religious poet  
**Area of activity:** Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** David Myrddin Lloyd

His dates are not known, but he probably lived during the second half of the 13th century, although a somewhat later period is not impossible. He was the author of a delightful poem to the Nativity which can be considered to be the earliest extant Christmas carol in Welsh. He also wrote an ode to God, and a series of *englynion* to Michael the Archangel. His style is simpler, and his figures more homely than was usual among the 'Gogynfeirdd' (this is particularly so in the case of the Nativity poem), and his ode to God would appear to be the work of a man of some theological training. The Franciscans are known to have reached Wales by 1237, for in that year [Llywelyn the Great](#) built them a house at Llan-faes. Madog ap Gwallter's verse reveals the freshness and the atmosphere of the early Franciscan world, and it is probable that he was himself a Franciscan. We learn from his *englynion* to Michael the Archangel that this poet was a native of a Llanfihangel. His poems are to be found in [The Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales](#)<sup>[a]</sup>, 273-5, and his odes to God and to the Nativity in *R.B.H. Poetry*, 1151-4. None of his poems appear in the [Hendregadredd MS.](#)<sup>[a]</sup>

In Cardiff MS. 2.611 (late 13th or early 14th cents.), which contains a Latin text of the 'Dares Phrygius' and [Geoffrey of Monmouth's](#) 'Historia Regum,' we find twenty-six lines of Latin leonine hexameters in which it is stated that [Geoffrey](#) had translated Welsh panegyric poems in praise of the ancient valour of the kings of Britain. The author refers to himself as 'Frater Walensis madocus edeirnianensis.' [Sir Ifor Williams](#) (*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, iv, 133-4) holds it as very probable that this poet is to be identified with the Friar Madog ap Gwallter whose Welsh poems survive, and in that case this poet hailed from Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr, which even as early as 1254 is wrongly associated with Edeirnion, though actually it is in Dinmael.

### Author

David Myrddin Lloyd, (1909 - 1981)

### Sources

In addition to sources already mentioned see

Henry Lewis, *Hen Gerddi Crefyddol* (Cardiff 1931)

*Y Tyst*, 25 December 1947

### Further Reading

Rhian M. Andrews (ed.), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd a beirdd eraill ail hanner y drydedd ganrif ar ddeg* (Caerdydd 1996)

Wikipedia Article: [Madog ap Gwallter](#)

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q3331101](#)

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