

TUDUR ALED (fl. 1480-1526), poet

Name: Tudur Aled
Parent: Robert ab Ithel
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: John Ellis Caerwyn Williams

Born in the parish of Llansannan, Denbighshire. There are many copies of his pedigree in the manuscripts which, however, do not always tally. It appears that his father's name was Robert and his grand-father's Ithel and that they were descendants of Llywelyn Chwith; **Huw ap Dafydd**, in his elegy on Tudur Aled, says, ' Ail lolo, o Lywelyn, Ag o du'r Chwith, gwenith gwyn ' (*G.T.A.*, II, 728). On his father's side, therefore, the poet was related to the Lloyd s of Chwibren, a branch of the **Lloyd** family of Hafod Unnos who traced their descent to Hedd Molwynog (or Ab Alunawg), chief of one of the fifteen tribes of North Wales (op. cit., I, iv, 35), and could boast that he was of gentle birth. He claimed that he was related to **Dafydd ab Edmwnd**, 'an uncle by blood' (op. cit., I, lxx, 29), and to Gwenhwyfar, daughter of Rhys ab Einion and wife of Robert Salusbury of Llanrwst (op. cit., I, iv, 38), and it may be assumed that he was a kinsman of Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Maredudd, mayor of Ruthin, if, as the poet says, he too was one of the descendants of Llywelyn Chwith (op. cit., II, cxix, II).

It is difficult to find out when he first started to write poetry, but there are definite references by him to the battle of Blackheath (1497) (see op. cit., I, iv, 5; vii, 56), while his editor thought he saw a reference to the battle of Bosworth (1485) in his *cywydd* to **Sir William Gruffudd** the Chamberlain (op. cit., I, xxxiii, 31-4, 49), from which he deduced that the poet must have started writing shortly before that as, according to the established custom of the bards, his earliest *cywyddau* would probably have been in praise of ladies (op. cit., I, xxi).

Nor is there any certainty as to where the poet was educated, although it is clear that he was steeped in Welsh traditions. Tradition has it that he was the pupil of **Dafydd ab Edmwnd**, and the poet himself confirms this in his elegy for him: ' F'ewythr o waed, f'athro oedd ' (op. cit., I, lxx, 29). We do not know how much importance to attach to these words for he also says that Ieuan ap Llywelyn ap Ieuan ap Dafydd was also his teacher (op. cit., I, lxxviii, 58). Of course, it is quite possible that he was taught by both. There is nothing improbable in the suggestion that Tudur Aled was **Dafydd ab Edmwnd**'s pupil, for the latter lived in Flintshire and had property at Pwll Gwepa, while it is quite possible that Ieuan ap Llywelyn was one of the bards present at the marriage feast in the hall of Ieuan ap Dafydd ab Ithel Fychan of Tegeingl (op. cit., I, lxxvii), when Tudur Aled had conferred on him his first degree as a bard. Be that as it may, Tudur Aled became a bard of great distinction and influence and was one of the two bards responsible for the holding of the Caerwys eisteddfod, 1524, 'to bring into order, and establish some form of control over, the poets and their craft.' It was at that eisteddfod that he was made a bard or 'chaired' teacher. In the elegy he wrote for Tudur Aled, **Lewis Mon** has a couplet: ' Dug ar i wn, fel dau grair, Diwedd gwawd, y ddwy gadair ' (op. cit., II, 734), which was taken to mean that Tudur Aled was made a master musician as well as a master poet (op. cit., I, xxxviii).

One of Tudur Aled's patrons was **Sir Rhys ap Thomas** (see op. cit., I, vii, xii, xiii, xiv; II, cxxxvii) who died in 1526. As the poet did not write an elegy upon him it is presumed that he, too, had died suddenly at Carmarthen and that he was buried in the Friars' graveyard, as is made clear in the laments written for him, in the habit of a Grey Friar - a habit assumed by him on his death-bed in the customary manner of those days (see op. cit., II, 725, 15-25, 729, 23-6, 735, 9-14). **Raff ap Robert** in his elegy to Tudur Aled says: ' Mae'n brudd llu am un bardd llwyd, O bur addysg, a briddwyd; Aeron o gorff yr un gŵr, Un i Dduw yn weddiwr; Dyna roi un da'n i raid, Syr Siôn, rhag siars i enaid; Peri alaeth i'r prelad, Fu oer a dwys farw i dad ' (op. cit., II, 744, 17-24). On the strength of these lines it has been maintained that Tudur Aled was married or, at least, had a son who was a priest (op. cit., I, xlvi), but there is no other evidence to this effect.

Author

Professor John Ellis Caerwyn Williams, (1912 - 1999)

Sources

T. Gwynn Jones, *Gwaith Tudur Aled* (1926), i and ii, 1926

J. Morris-Jones, 'Tudur Aled' in *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1908-9, 21-52

Saunders Lewis, 'Tudur Aled,' in *Efrydiau Catholig*, i, 32-46

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Tudur Aled](#)

Works

Barddoniaeth gan hen awdwyr or, Ancient Welsh poetry (Middle Hill Press 1840?)

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