

**ODE IN PRAISE OF CADWALADR AP GRUFFUDD
OF BACHELLDREF**

by OWAIN AP LLYWELYN AB Y MOEL (?c.1485-1500)

from Eurys Rolant ed., *Gwaith Owain ap Llywelyn ab y Moel*
(Cardiff, University of Wales Press 1984) pp.21-22.

Translated by *Professor Prys Morgan*, University of Swansea, June 1987

1 O lovely young stag
2 With rounded ridges over your roots
3 And a family tree from seven princes,
4 Cadwaladr of the tree of the province:
5 The tree of the baron Meurig,
6 God keeps for us the tree of the Dwnns.
7 All increase be to the vines and the cuckoo,
8 Cadwaladr of the leafy battles.
9 Yewtrees of the buds of Cadwgan
10 Like the woods nearby we find.
11 O great partisan, critic of tiny ants (??).
12 Young descendant of Gruffudd, who's shrewder than you?
13 Blood of Meurig as far as the seas,
14 Blood of Heyhope Court, double blood that was.
15 Knight of Churchstoke and the yoke:
16 Your tribe will gain provinces.
17 The lordship of Caus is wide open,
18 And your courtiers have gone far and wide.

19 You are our manorhouse and long wall,
20 Our park of security, our sure property,
21 You have arranged houseownership,
22 Every hour, thorough and roast (??).
23 An arm for winehouses of Brecknock
24 Bachelldref, long the good old homestead.
25 You Briton, you baron, you songster,

26 You burley of the Marches to his great parlour.
27 With beer to his firm belly,
28 From bar to bench, giving his judgment (??).

29 A steel bar will get you covered in gold,
30 A long axe and a hand bow.
31 Driving a spear like a man with pouch
32 Into a hundred pieces with one punch;
33 Driving wood like gun stones
34 All with the bow in the hand of the cross-bow shaft(?).
35 You butterfly of the gallant young men,
36 A man with visage like the berries of France.
37 To soldiers will they compare you,
38 As Vortemir of yore was pictured,
39 With two arms at the gates of Severn
40 And your great long spear at the ancient wall.

41 Let the Dwnns' blood keep your nation
42 With the bull, to keep the three nations.
43 Men to Rhodes will run on stags (?),
44 With a spear downwards on a palfrey.
45 He shaves the men of Le Mans and the host of pigs
46 With your target and your red steel spear.
47 If there were a hope, there would be a purpose
48 To bite in the land of the ancient Britons
49 O courtier of Henry, a long gold cart,
50 And a golden spur you would get.
51 And this age would be called an age of gold,
52 The age that the cross comes to Christendom:
53 And a prince you will be chosen
54 For the step where the cross comes to land.
55 To the ploughed path, and the place where was the ox,
56 Cadwaladr, thither will you come.

Notes on Owain ap Llywelyn ab y Moel's Poem

ibid. pp 70,71.

Much of the ode is obscure to the editor, Dr. Eurys Rolant, especially lines such as line 11.

The poem is to Cadwaladr ap Gruffudd Goch ap Cadwgan ap Gruffudd Dwn ap Ffylip Dorddu.

Cadwaladr's son is Edmond of Churchstoke, whose will is 1543.

Cadwaladr's sister and grandfather's sister both married into the Myddelton family (Peniarth MS 287).

His mother was Mawd daughter of Hywel Blaenau ap Meurig.

His great grandfather was Gruffudd Dwnn. His grandfather was Cadwgan and his father was Gruffudd. These are referred to in some cases in the ode. It is known that Ffylip Dorddu lived at Heyope in Radnorshire, but probably Cadwaladr's ancestors lived there too, if the ode is correct.

Caus lordship contained at one time the parish of Churchstoke.

Line 26: 'burley' means either a lance-end or a local judge for local customary law.

Line 38: Vortemir refers to ancient British legend of the good Vortemir (son of Vortigern) whose body was placed on a monument near Dover which scared all invaders such as Saxons away from the Isle of Britain. Henry probably refers to King Henry VII.

Line 34 'baewn' at the end could refer to the wine of Bayonne or baion meaning a cross bow shaft, which we have in 'bayonet'.

(Professor Prys Morgan's interpretation is baion, the editor's (i.e. Dr. Eurys Rolant's) is Bayonne wine!)

The period of the ode is 1485-1500. The bard is member of a Montgomeryshire gentry family of bards with strong gentry connexions, the poems appear to be to families at Caus (Worthen, Salop); Leighton, Marrington, Churchstoke, probably Brompton ('Brontyn' only half a mile from Bachelldre), Penrhyn in Berriew,

Vaynor in Berriew, Leigh (Worthen, Salop), Aberbechan in Bettws Cedewen, Newtown, Llanbrynmair, Powis Castle, Llanerchrugog near Wrexham, Maenan, (near Conwy) Bangor, Penrhyn (near Llandygai), Hergest near Kington.

Professor Morgan adds that the obscurity does not seem to matter very greatly since the interesting genealogical details are all clear. It also shows how lively the culture of the Welsh speaking gentry of the area still was at the end of the 15th century, even up to families like the Grays of Powis Castle. He thinks that a lot of the obscurity comes from the bardic poems containing so many in-group jokes and references.
