



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Institute of Education and Humanities/
Yr Athrofa Addysg a'r Dyniaethau

**MA Dissertation Approval Form/
Ffurflen Gymeradwyo Traethawd Hir MA**

Student Name/ <i>Enw Myfyriwr</i>	Desiree Waterhouse
Degree Scheme/ <i>Cynllun Gradd</i>	M.A. Celtic Studies
Start date/ <i>Dyddiad cychwyn</i>	October 2025

I have completed Part 1 of my degree.

Yr wyf wedi/ ar fun cwblhau Rhan 1 o fy ngradd

** Dileu fel sy'n briodol*

Title of Dissertation: <i>Teitl eich Traethawd Hir</i>	
Ollamh and Pencerdd: A Historical Comparison of the Poet's Role in Ireland and Wales	
Aims and Objectives: <i>Nodau ac Amcanion</i>	
1. How was the office of the poet defined in early Ireland and Wales, its training, grades, legal status, and relationship to patrons? 2. How were the roles different between Ireland and Wales or in other parts of the U.K.?	

3. Why did the role diverge so markedly after the collapse of native aristocratic patronage (the conquest of Wales in 1282; the fall of the Gaelic order c.1601–1607)?
4. How is the poet's role constituted today—individually, in Ireland, and communally, in Wales—and what does each model reveal about the poet's relation to nation and language?

Abstract (approximately 500 words):

Crynodeb (tua 500 gair):

Medieval Ireland and Wales shared the important cultural role of the poet, a trained professional of high legal standing, bound to an aristocratic patron, whose praise conferred honor and whose satire could inflict genuine damage to a person. From this common office the two traditions diverged sharply, yet they are almost always studied apart, and comparison of the poet's role, as opposed to poetic themes or forms is largely absent. This thesis compares the two directly and what a poet was understood to be and to do in each society.

My thesis contends that the Irish role gravitated toward the individual and oracular, the poet as praise-giver, satirist and, after conquest, keeper of a lost sovereignty, issuing into the modern poet as public conscience (Yeats, Heaney) and, in Aosdána, a state-recognised individual artist. The Welsh role gravitated toward the communal and ceremonial, the craft-guild of cerdd dafod sustained through the eisteddfod and, from the 1790s, the invented ritual of the Gorsedd, in which the poet is honoured collectively as Prifardd, chaired or crowned by and for a community and its language. A shared office thus produced two contrasting afterlives, authority against community, a singular voice versus a bestowed craftsman. Conversely, the Irish file's satire (áer) could blemish or unmake a king, while the Welsh poet's authority rested less on fear and more on simply being excellent at their craft.

The study treats the poet as a cultural institution, examining status, training, patronage, and public function rather than close-reading poems for content. It draws on the bardic grammars, early law on the poet's honour-price and the force of satire, eisteddfod and Gorsedd records, and modern cultural policy, and it interrogates rather than assumes a unified "Celtic" model (Sims-Williams), while acknowledging real historical interconnection.

Chapter 1 reconstructs the shared medieval office (the fili and the bard). Chapter 2 examines its defining instruments, satire and prophecy in Ireland, craft and competition in Wales. Chapter 3 addresses the two collapses of patronage and the reinvention of the role. Chapter 4 compares the modern settlements, the

poet-as-public-voice against the ceremonial Prifardd. My conclusion will summarize the cultural bestowed power on both the poet and poem and how they have been a staple in 'Celtic' societies for the better part of the millennium.

Short Introductory Bibliography:
Llyfryddiaeth rhagarweiniol byr

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Proposed Supervisor (to be completed by Programme Director):
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