

Review of 'The Mabinogian', A Newer Translation By Sioned Davies.

Sioned Davies offers a newer translation of The Mabinogian, translated into English from Cymraeg, the first translation being accomplished in 1838 by the famous Lady Charlotte Guest¹, an English noble who fell in love with the eleven 'Welsh' prose medieval tales after moving to Cymru.

The Mabinogian is essential to Cymraeg literature, Cymreig culture, and arguably to modern pop culture, the stories it contains have inspired countless stories, films, and other mediums of art worldwide. Though they do not share the same level of accuracy, or scholarly stamina as the Author of this translation, Professor Davies was previously the head 'Welsh' at Cardiff University² and is an expert in medieval literature.

This translation offers a river flow of comfortability in processing the information of the stories, I have struggled many times to read the Lady Charlotte Guest translation, I found it to have an intermitting effect and more of a chore than a joy, though Davies remedies this dilemma for neurodivergent brains as my own. And furthermore, as a native of Cymru, and Prydain, I feel a deeper connection to the culture of Cymru coming from Davies than I do from Lady Charlotte. The words that Davies writes are far more poetic, and in sync with the poetic history and talents of Cymru. On the very first page, Lady Charlotte writes;

"Pwyll Prince of Dyved was lord over the seven Cantrefs of Dyved; and once upon a time he was at Narberth his chief palace, and he was minded to go and hunt.." ³

Rather more eloquently, Davies writes;

"Pwyll Prince of Dyfed, was lord over the seven Cantrefs of Dyfed.* Once upon a time he was at Arberth, one of his chief courts, and it came into his head and his heart to go hunting." ⁴

Though early in the story, Davies displays a prowess for capturing the poetic artistry within middle Cymraeg poetry and storytelling, this is what I feel is missing from our first ever English translation, though not to be too harsh towards Lady Charlotte, as for someone who wasn't raised with Cymreig culture, or taught it academically, not until later on in life, she also did a marvellous job at breathing life into the stories and aiding in them to be kept alive for future generations, as English was growing as a language, and Cymraeg was not.

To conclude, this translation that Davies has offered Cymru, and the world of literature, is ground-breaking for its innate connection to the tales, and the people the tales belong to and facilitating the words to be far more accessible to all that feel drawn to its magic, lore, and superstition.

¹ "Recognising lifetime contribution and excellence - News - Cardiff University."

<<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/1388923-recognising-lifetime-contribution-and-excellence>>, [Accessed 10/03/2023].

² "Professor Sioned Davies - People - Cardiff University." <<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/people/view/116281-davies-sioned>>, [Accessed 10/03/2023].

³ "The Mabinogion translated by Lady Charlotte Guest : Guest, Charlotte, 1812-1895 : Internet Archive, p.26." <<https://archive.org/details/TheMabinogionGuest1877/page/n25/mode/2up>>, [Accessed 10/02/2023].

⁴ Davies, Sioned (tran.). *The Mabinogion*, P.3, (2007 Oxford University Press).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davies, Sioned (tran.). *The Mabinogion* (2007 Oxford University Press).

‘Recognising Lifetime Contribution and Excellence’. 2018. *Cardiff University* (Cardiff University)
<<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/1388923-recognising-lifetime-contribution-and-excellence>>
[accessed 10 March 2023]

Welsh, School of. [n.d.]. ‘Professor Sioned Davies’, *Cardiff University* (Cardiff University)
<<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/people/view/116281-davies-sioned>> [accessed 10 March 2023]

Guest, Charlotte. 1910. *The Mabinogion Translated by Lady Charlotte Guest*, *Internet Archive* (London : J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd.; New York, E. P. Dutton and Co.)
<<https://archive.org/details/TheMabinogionGuest1877/page/n25/mode/2up>> [accessed 10 March 2023]