

# The Tetragrammaton



By  
The Rev. John Williams  
Ab Ithel, MB

**The Tetragrammaton**  
An Extract From  
**The Ancient Welsh**  
**Grammar**

**Which Was Compiled by Royal Command**  
**in the Thirteenth Century**

**By**  
**Edeyrn the Golden Tongued,**

**To Which Is Added**  
**Or the Rules of Welsh Poetry, Originally**

**Compiled by**  
**Davy Dd Ddu Athraw, in the Fourteenth,**  
**and Subsequently**  
**Enlarged by Stmwnt Vychan, in the**  
**Sixteenth Century:**

**St. David's Bay, 1856**

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### The Rev. John Williams Ab Ithel, MB,

**T**HE ORIGIN OR INVENTION OF LETTERS IS A SUBJECT that has frequently engaged the attention and researches of learned men, and as often defied their power to explain, with any considerable amount of probability and satisfaction. The several alphabets of the known world, indeed, exhibit that mutual similarity of form, which fully warrants them in assigning to the whole class one common source; but that source is apparently sought for in every place except where, we are persuaded, it can alone be found.

It has been very much the fashion hitherto to depreciate the literature and traditions of the Cymry; yet we can confidently assert that in them lie treasures which would amply compensate for any amount of trouble that may be taken in arriving at them. The patient and-impartial study of Welsh lore will assuredly tend to throw no inconsiderable light upon the science and mythology of all nations.



Even the sacred Tetragrammaton of the Hebrews, taken by itself, is perfectly inexplicable—we cannot see how it represents the great **I AM**, and wherefore it is invested with extraordinary terror—or why it may not be pronounced or revealed. But the origin and reason of all this are discovered to us in the Bardic traditions. There we learn that God created the world by the melodious threefold utterance of His Holy Name—and that the form or figure of that Name was /1\ , being the rays of the rising sun at the equinoxes and the solstices converging into a focus—“the eye of light.” These rays, we are informed, according to the influence which the sun has upon the earth at the different seasons which they represent, show God in His various characters as a **Creator**, a **Preserver**, and a **Destroyer**.

The Divine Name may not be uttered (*Ed. This is what the Edomites pretending to be “God’s Chosen” say! True Hebrews know, the Scriptures tell them to call on His Name.*), because no mortal man can

individually articulate the harmony of the sound; re-echoed, indeed, by the universe in concert at its primeval birth, “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” (Job xxxviii. 7.) but not to be heard again until the renovation of all things at the last day. It is kept a secret, lest by the ignorant it be abused and dishonoured; as, e.g. by the Hindoos, who have deified the rays into Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.

This form /᷀ was the A wen (awen) the Blessed A, said to contain all the other letters, because they are but modifications of it ; and all sciences, not only because they are represented by letters, but because they can be learned from an acquaintance with the several attributes of God, which are exhibited in the symbol of His Name. An instance of the development of the primary character, and of the formation of additional letters, may be found in | /᷀ \ / or IAU, one of the forms in which the Divine Name is written. |, being the equinoctial ray, represents God in the character of a Mediator and Preserver, /᷀ is the creative symbol, and \ /, being the same reversed, denotes destruction—the creation, as it were upset. The import of the word is, therefore, simply the Preserver, the Creator, the Destroyer ;—“which is, and which was, and which is to come.” (Rev. i. 4 ;)—the whole being also involved in the radical element /᷀, the A-wen.

The origin of the bardic **W**, as here given, will sufficiently account for the neutralizing effect of the letter in such words as these;—gwedd, connection, gweddw, unconnected; ul, moisture, ulw, that which is divested of moisture; mar, lively, marw dead; hum, that is here, hwnnw, that is not here, but there.

Again; the bardic  or  is a combination of **V** or /᷀ and **\ /** or **V**, and primarily denotes the same idea as “Alpha and Omega, the beginning, and the ending,” (Rev. i. 8.) which is one of the titles of our Saviour. It is remarkable that there is a natural tendency in the Cymric tongue to pronounce the separate letters **AW** like **O** at the end of words; as gwrndaw, gwrandaw; taraw, taro, &c.

According to “Cyfrinach y Beirdd,” there were only three languages of Divine origin. The first was that of Adam in Paradise, which, however, he lost on his expulsion;—this is the language of heaven. The second

language was that which Moses acquired, and which was used by the prophets for 3000 years subsequently, and is still the language of Holy Scripture. The third is the Cymraeg, which was obtained by Enos, the first man after the banishment of Adam from Eden, who praised God and goodness in a vocal song. It was carried over the Deluge by Japheth, and his posterity conveyed it to the extremity of the earth, and it is spoken at this day in its perfect kind and character by us the Cymry in the Isle of Britain, (pp. 28, 29.)

In accordance with this view of the subject our British forefathers bestowed great pains upon the cultivation of the language. And as it was considered to be peculiarly the language of song, the production of the sacred A, which was formed by the musical utterance of the Divine Name, “when the morning stars sang together,” the improvements, which have been from time to time introduced into its structure, have always more or less been of a prosodial character. We have briefly marked its progress and gradual development from the earliest period to the era of Edeyrn Davod Aur in the notes which we have incorporated with that portion of the Grammar entitled— “The origin and progress of letters.”

The grammar which formed the basis of “Dosparth Edeyrn Davod Aur,” is said to have been compiled by Geraint Vardd Glas, in the tenth century. This was preserved among the MSS. in Raglan Castle, before it was destroyed in the wars of the Commonwealth, but no copy is now to be found. This is the Book, no doubt, referred to in the following extract which occurs at p. 623 of the Iolo MSS.

“The oldest system on record of memorials and recollections, is that of Geraint Yardd Glas, upon the poetic metres ; and of all that is extant from before his time, there is nothing remaining excepting what may be discerned by the learned by means of books.

This Geraint was brother to Morgan Hen, king of Glamorgan, and he collected ancient records of poetry and bardism, and arranged them in a book of his own composition, and established them by the laws of the chair and the gorsedd, in every country and dominion in Wales; and Geraint excelled in knowledge and judgment, and every chair in Wales

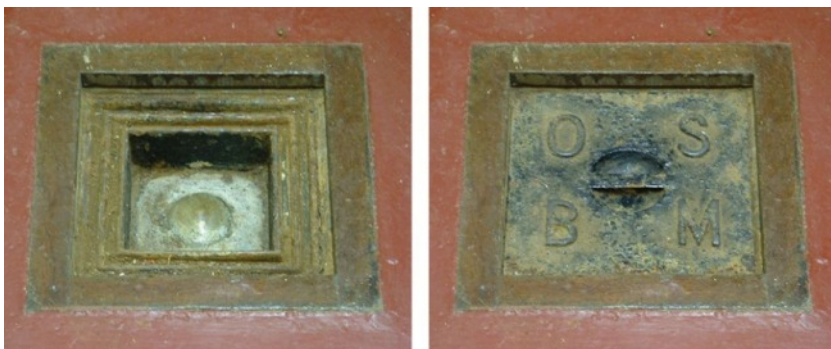
and England was given him; from which he was called the Bardd Glas of the Chair—He who understands will see, that it was from the system of Geraint Yardd Glas that the one of Brittany was taken, and also a great portion of that of Gruffydd the son of Cynan was taken, called the system of Glen Achled, and that of Aberfraw, under emendation, amplification, extension, and adornment : and therefore Lewys Morganwg, in his book upon poetry, called the system of Geraint the old original system ; and he says that the system of the Round Table is the one of Brittany, called also that of Caermarthen, as it existed under King Arthur in Caerlleon upon Usk, and so it is now held in the Chair of Tir Iarll ; but there is little worth noticing in it, except the knowledge of what formerly appertained to minstrelsy.”

What were the particular changes or additions which were introduced by Einion Offeiriad, are not known, nor may they be ascertained from Dosparth Edeyrn; for from certain extracts, which are preserved in Dr. John David Rhys’s Grammar relative to the article, we clearly learn that his views and those of Edeyrn are not altogether identical, or at least are not couched in the same language. It must be remarked, however, that the paragraph, which is there attributed to Edeyrn, does not occur in the copy which forms the text of the present volume. Einion is said to have flourished in the middle of the twelfth century.

Edeyrn compiled his grammar about a.d. 1270. It appears to have been much valued by the literati of Wales, even to a comparatively late period of our history. Thus, Sion Brwynog, addressing Elissau ab William Llwyd of Rhiwaedog, AD 1500, compliments him upon the fact that his father was conversant with the system and grammar of Edeyrn Davod Aur.

**Editor:** The sign of the broad arrow (/l) is common across on stones across Great Britain and latterly used by the Ordnance Survey, with a line across the top, marking the height at that point above the sea level reference point at Newlyn, Cornwall. See picture on next page.





**Ordnance Datum Newlyn:  
The brass bolt marker (L) sits under a cover  
(R)**



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