

# The Barddas of Iolo Morganwg Vol. I: A Collection of Original Documents, Illustrative of the Theology, Wisdom, and Usages of the BardoDruidic System of the Isle of Britain

J. Williams Ab Ithel

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The Barddas of Iolo Morganwg is a collection of writings, largely forged, about ancient Welsh Bardic and Druidic beliefs. Although the author of this work is cited as J. Williams Ab Ithel, he was actually the editor, who pieced it together from manuscripts written by Iolo Morganwg. Iolo Morganwg (1747-1826), itinerant poet and scholar, was a key figure in the Druid revival of the 19th century. He was personally responsible for reviving the Welsh national poetry contest, the Gorsedd. On June 21st, 1792, Midsummer evening, Iolo and a dozen other Welsh poets gathered on Primrose Hill in London and held the first Gorsedd in hundreds of years. Iolo was a Welsh patriot and held revolutionary views; he was a personal friend of Tom Paine, and George Washington subscribed to his first volume of poetry. He is said to have influenced both William Blake's poetry and Robert Grave's White Goddess. He revived the concept that the Welsh explorer Madoc discovered America. This led to an expedition to Mandan territory in the Great Plains, which found no trace of the Welsh, but was one of the inspirations for Thomas Jefferson's Lewis and Clarke expedition.

## About Author:

John Williams (bardic name: Ab Ithel) (1811–27 August 1862), was an antiquary and Anglican priest. Born in Llangynhafal, Denbighshire Wales in 1811, he graduated from Jesus College, Oxford in 1835 to become the Anglican curate of Llanfor, Merionethshire, where he married Elizabeth Lloyd Williams. In 1843 he became perpetual curate of Nercwys, Flintshire, and rector of Llanymawddwy, Merionethshire, in 1849.



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