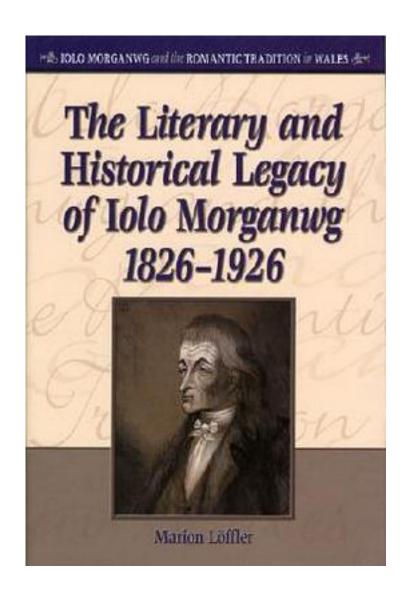
The Legacy of Iolo Morganwg, 1826-1926



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While Iolo the radical thinker and composer of Unitarian hymns was swiftly forgotten, the eisteddfod and gorsedd became major vehicles for the development of a Welsh national consciousness in the Victorian age. His 'theoretical history', which gave Welsh cultural teachings an antiquity beyond all other nations, became hotly contested when professional philologists and historians like John Morris-Jones began to apply their own scientific approach to Welsh language and history. Yet biographical writings on Iolo Morganwg show him to have acquired the status of a saint during the larger part of the nineteenth century. Anecdotes were woven around him and his family, his biographer was honoured for writing his 'vita', and reliques of 'Old Iolo' were given special attention. Even when, towards the end of the period, his forgeries became well-known, many Welsh people were more than prepared to forgive him because his 'sins' had been committed as acts of patriotism.

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