

3. Deio ap Ieuan Du

Deio ap Ieuan Du is closely linked with Ceredigion, he seems to have originated from the same area as Dafydd ap Gwilym, Bro Cynin (Forgynin) in the parish of Llanbadarn Fawr near Aberystwyth. A.E Davies suggests that there is later manuscript evidence pointing towards the burial of Deio in the parish of Llangynfelyn a little further north (GDIDaGIH, xix), a place also linked with the legendary Taliesin (Thomas, R.J).

Enwaf y cwmwd einym

Perfedd, diomedd da ym

....

Ni chawn, myn Duw a Chynin,

Dŷ bach o'r deau heb win;

(GDIDaGIH :11,57-8,71)

Little is known about Deio Ieuan ap Du's life apart from that revealed in his poems and those of his compatriots. From the dating of the people Deio wrote about and a marwnad by Hywel Rheinallt to Deio, Dafydd Nanmor, Ieuan Deulwyn and Tudur Penllyn, it is inferred that Deio's life spanned c.1410-1480 (GDIDaGIH, xviii).

The Poems

Twenty four poems are confidently associated with Deio, six additional works may also be his (GDIDaGIH,p.2-65)). His known works are located in Ceredigion, mostly in the south of county, this probably reflects particular friendships with *uchelwyr* in the area. Deio's

poem chronicling his travels from South to North of the county mentioned in the introduction (p.12, above) probably serves as a snapshot of the ambit of his most reliable support during his lifetime.

Six of his surviving works are dedicated to members of the household at Tywyn by the northern shores of the estuary of the Teifi. Deio's amusing *awdl* on cheese satirising Madog Amhadog (16), locates him in Caerwedros.

Ei gampau'r gwyliau, wr gwiw liaws - fryd

O frodir Cawrwedraws;

Ei chwarae uwch ei eiriaws,

Ei fydd a'i gywydd oedd gaws

(GDIDaGIH 16:21-24)

1 Dychan Cheese

Nearby he gives praise and asking poems to Siancyn Lloyd of Llwyndafydd (9,10). A little further north, the houses along the Aeron valley are thanked in Gwastadgwrda (12), praised in Uwch Aeron (7,8).

Deio's work reflects an accomplished poet comfortable with most of the genres of his day; *Moliant* (2,3), *marwnad* (6,13)), *diolch* (8,15), *cymod* (1), *dychan brathog* (16,17) even a *cywydd* to a ship (5) supporting the release of Siancyn ap Maredudd being held by French pirates...

Aeth y[ng] ngharchar â'm cariad

Ŵyr i Rys Du, dros ei dad;

O Dduw! da gwyddai ddewis

Yr uchaf, breisgaf ei bris.

Ffrwynwyd fry yn ffroen dwfr ir

Ffrances, ladrones, drwyhir,

Fferi llog, ffi ar ei llam,

Ffwrnbri gweilgi, wegilgam.

(GDIDaGIH 5:11-14,17-20)

There is an interesting early reference in this poem to the legend of Madog ab Owain Gwynedd leaving Wales to sail far on the sea, where it was later suggested he discovered America¹⁴.

Fal Madog, marchog y medd,

Baun gwyn, ab Owain Gwynedd,

Y gŵr, siwrneio a gâi,

A foroedd yr arferai.

(GDIDaGIH 5:35-38)

A cywydd cymod attempts the reconciliation of Rhys with Gruffudd Fychan of Corsygedol two men distantly related through the greater Tudor family: Rhys through Dafydd ap Llywelyn of Rydodyn and the family of Corsygedol through Elen daughter of Tomas ap Llywelyn (GDIDaGIH, p128, xxvii). As Johnston (2014, p.313) observes poems of reconciliation usually place the emphasis on kinship; the key term *câr* (kinsman, relative) and very often the compound word ‘*deugar*’, rich in meaning, in this context ‘two kinsmen ... togetherness through blood’ and the idea of love and the connection lost in the dispute.

Deio uses this approach in this *cywydd*, focusing on the ties of family, links with Wales and with the specific areas of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire:

Deugar o sir G'redigiawn

A swydd Gaer y sy' ddig iawn:

Rhys, o dywys y Deau,

Gruffudd, un ddeunydd yw'r ddau.

(GDIDaGIH 1:33-36)

In addition, Deio, using a political voice, contrasts these men's membership of the greater Tudor family with the emerging cause of Jasper and Henry Tudor. He blames the dispute of Rhys and Gruffudd on the poisoning of the world by the men of England, it is these who plant trouble amongst the people of Wales (*Brytaniaid*):

Gwenwyn y byd a'u gwnâi'n bell,

A gwŷr Lloegr oll, garllaw'r Grwyn,

Ar y gwin a rôl'r gwenwyn.

A ninnau, mawr yw'n hennyn,

Ni phaid Brytaniad, a'i tyn;

Planed blin dynged ei dwyn,

Plannodd yn ein pobl wenwyn.

(GDIDaGIH 1:6-12)

What better than a third party, in this case the oft despised *Sais*, to bring the two together.

Rhys ap Rhydderch ap Rhys of Tywyn, is praised by Deio using a chain of 5 *englynion* followed by 10 more in the *toddaid* measure rhyming on ‘on’ or ‘ion’. Rhys is lauded in traditional fashion for his proud ancestral line spanning important areas of Gwynedd, Powys, Benfro and especially locally. His generosity is shown to be of note up and down the country:

Pan fo rhaid talaïd i’r tlodion - roddi,

Parod a oeddud i’r prydyddion;

R[h]oddi a wnaud aur rhuddion - a dillad,

Eryr y ddwywlad, wŷr urddolion.

(GDIDaGIH 2:37-40)

Rhys is not only a man of significance amongst his own kinsman he is sent greetings and signs of affection by King Edward III:

Ac Edwart y sydd ag ergydion - serch

I’th annerch, Rhydderch, drwy arwydd[i]on;

Arwyddion disgwyl, arwyddion - hysbys;

Y gŵr o’r ynys, gorwyr Einion.

(GDIDaGIH 2:53-56)

In a *marwnad*, most likely to Rhys ap Maredudd, Deio plays on the word *dwyn*, ‘to carry, hold, to make, to accomplish...’ using it as a kind of echo of the family home ‘Tywyn’. The home of Rhys is the place where the poet has a roof over his head, provides him with income, yet now his patron and provider is in the graveyard:

Duw oll Ef aeth a'm dillad

A thorri 'nhy a thre 'nhad;

'Y mhoeni i'm hoyw ynys,

'Y 'sbeilio, 'nhreisio, dwyn Rhys.

Ymlid 'y mhroffid a'm rhent

Yr wyf finnau i'r fynwent;

....

(GDIDaGIH 4:13-18)

2. Deio ap Ieuan Du - Marwnad to Rhys of Tywyn

The following excerpt shows the poet skillfully treading the fine line of mourning and praising Rhys while gently reminding the family that the poet will now depend on *them* for support, he hopes to be part of their future. Throughout the poem there are references to the homes of family members and other *uchelwyr* in the area; in this excerpt Morfa in Genau'r Glyn is mentioned, where his brother Siancyn held office in the local church in 1431-2 (GDIDaGIH,131).

Marw fu Rys, o'r Morfa'r aeth;

O Dduw! Hwyr ydd â hiraeth.

Hëwyd i'm dwy fronglwyd frau

Had galar hyd y gwyliau;

Mae had ei farwnad efô

Yn y genau'n egino.

Tywyn family and links with Dafydd Nanmor and others.

The poems put the families of the patrons on display; Siancyn in the poem above, is the brother of Rhys ap Maredudd ab Owain the head of the household at Tywyn. There are poems by Deio to three generations of this family: the father Rhys (*cymod and marwnad*), the uncle Siancyn (*cywydd y llong, marwnad*), son Rhydderch ap Rhys (*awdl moliant*) and grandson, Rhys ap Rhydderch ap Rhys ap Meredudd (*cywydd moliant*).

There are at least twenty poems extant that come from the patronage of the family at Tywyn these include works by Dafydd Nanmor, Lewys Glyn Cothi, and Rhys Nanmor¹⁵. It will be seen that the Tywyn family along with several others in this part of Ceredigion were a closely knit group, supporting poets making a living on this part of the bardic circuit.

In an amusing and clever *cywydd gofyn* Deio first praises Tomas Andras lord of Trefdraeth¹⁶ with emphasis on his fame for wine and roast food, then he introduces himself in the guise of the requester, Ieuan ap Siancyn Llwyd. Ieuan has access to every kind of bird to roast; heron, peahen, bittern even curlews and pheasant but he doesn't have the sound of swans on his lake and river in Llwyndafydd:

Ieuan wyf, anwydlan awdl,

Teryn Siancyn Llwyd huawdl;

Pob parodrwydd peridroost

Ond un a gaid dan y gost:

Peunod, cryhyrod Hiriell,

Adar y bwn, dioer o bell,

Cwrlwys, nis hel pob cerlyn,

Ffesawns, yn hoff eu sens ynn;

Eisiau eleirch i solas

Sy i'm plwy' iso i'm plas.

Prif afon yn sôn y sydd

A llyn dwfn yn Llwyndafydd.

(GDIDaGIH 10:13-24)

Hopefully after such an engaging request Ieuan of Llwyndafydd received his swans. According to A.E Davies (GDIDaGIH,134) Ieuan ap Siancyn's son Adam was '*blwyfwes*' (beadle) in Caerwedros in 1456-7 and sheriff in Aberteifi in 1461. Clearly a family of status enough to be able to sponsor poetry and send 'requesting' poems to fellow *uchelwyr* in the area.

It is interesting that in another *cywydd* written for Ieuan ap Siencyn Llwyd, Deio uses an eagle dressed in gold, a goshawk (*Yr eryr gwisg, oreuraid,.. Gorau gasawg gwregysaur...* GDIDaGIH 9: 1,11) as a kind of messenger and exemplar of the value and greatness of Ieuan's golden wine. He also refers to the bird lake of Siancyn Llwyd mentioned in the previous *cywydd*, perhaps underlining this patron's special interest in birds. The object of the poem seems both the praising of Ieuan and his family and the admiration of his wine.

Not every *uchelwr* was thought praiseworthy by Deio, it has been seen already (p.20, above) that Madog Amhadog from Caerwedros received scathing treatment in his *dychan* about cheese. This was to someone who hadn't paid him as he suggests in this englyn, the patron will have to 'pay for your *marwnad* yourself':

Dy blant, ni thalant, noeth eilun - drosod,

Rhoist dy drysor rhyngthyn';

Ifan deffro, tro trym[u]n,

Tal am dy farwnad dy hun.

(GDIDaGIH 21)

This was a poet quite capable of meeting out scorn if he thought the occasion merited as in the ire he vents on thieves that have stolen cows, goats and other items. What starts perhaps as an exclamation of his own loss turns by line 49 into *toddeidiau* on the rhyme ‘ych’ that continues impressively for another 27 couplets. Here is a small section that gives a hint of the skill being used:

Brwydr fechan dy gael mewn bredych - llam rhwyd.

Buan yw ‘mreuddwyd ban ymroddych:

Rhwymo dy ddwylo pan ddelych - yma

Â llinyn bwa, lle ni’n beiyh;

Castell a’th etyl, costych - heb luyrn,

Cedyrn fo’r hëyrn a arhöych.

(GDIDaGIH 17:63-68)

Not far from Caerwedros and Llwyndafydd was the *plas* in Gwastadgwrda in the valley of the Aeron; it was to Dafydd fab Thomas (GDIDaGIH 12:4,65,66) of Gwastadgwrda that Deio wrote thanking him for the gift of a peacock and for his generosity generally.

More famously in a *cywydd* of thanks for the gift of a red bull is the line ‘*Y ddraig goch ddyry cychwyn*’ (GDIDaGIH 15:55) which was adopted as a motto for Wales in 1953.¹⁷ As D.Johnston (2014, p.264) observes it is a little strange in the context of the next line of the couplet ‘*Ar ucha’r llall ar ochr llwyn;*’. This completes an image of a red dragon (bull)

assertively moving toward and above another (mounting a cow) by the side of a bush! There remains though, by association, the powerful image of the victorious red dragon from the story in *Historia Brittonum* and other traditions that Deio was happy to use to reflect the quality and power of the gift of the bull.

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Footnotes

¹⁴ See also Roberts, E.P, Gwaith Maredudd ap Rhys a'i Gyfoedion, Aberystwyth, 2003: 8,43-44 and Gwyn A. Williams (1979) *Madog: the making of a myth* (Eyre Methuen)

¹⁵ Many of these works are discussed in the chapters below.

¹⁶ *Trefdraeth* – Also known today in English as 'Newport', Pembrokeshire about 15km south of Cardigan.

¹⁷ Supplanted in 2008 by a new royal badge and motto - *Pleidiol Wyf i'm Gwlad*. See also http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history/sites/themes/society/flag_officialemblem.shtml accessed November 2016.