

## 10. Guto'r Glyn

Guto'r Glyn seems to have been born just in time to see, as a child, the results of the failure of Owain Glyndŵr's bitterly fought attempt to unify Wales. Guto commenced his career in the wake of the carnage done to some parts of the country by the conflict, and he would have seen and felt the impact of some of the punitive laws against the Welsh.<sup>97</sup> His livelihood and that of his brother poets would have depended on a facility to understand the shifting ground of land ownership, power and authority in Wales as the consequences of this revolution merged into the next political quagmire... the Wars of the Roses.

Eurig Salisbury and Barry Lewis (GG.net:AL, 'His dates')<sup>98</sup> suggest that 'Guto could have been born c.1415, and would have been just over twenty when he composed his earliest surviving poems c.1437.' Salisbury and Lewis's analysis points toward Guto dying sometime between 1485 and 1490 as an old man in his 80s (GG.net:AL, 3.4, 'Abbot Dafydd ab Ieuan').

While about 120 of his poems survive, sadly there seem to be no works referring to the area of southern Ceredigion under study here. It is tempting to expand the scope to include the area north of the river Aeron, then it would be possible to discuss *cywyddau* of praise for Rhys ap Dafydd of Uwch Aeron and Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan of Glyn Aeron. With reluctance these must be left for consideration elsewhere.

# Tribute to Dafydd Nanmor

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## References

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However, Guto does appear to have been a contemporary with a well-known resident of the area, Dafydd Nanmor. Late in his life, Guto composed two verses of praise following the deaths of Dafydd and another poet, Ieuan Deulwyn. Given the suggestion that Nanmor probably died an old man between 1485 and 1488 (see p.28 above), this tribute, in *engllyn unodl union* metre, by Guto'r Glyn must have been one of the last he wrote:

*Marw Dafydd y sydd fal saeth – i'm esgyrn*

*Am ysgol pencerddiaeth,*

*Marw dedryd Nanmor Deudraeth,*

*Marw dysg holl Gymru od aeth.*

*Marw Ifan weithian, waethwaeth – am Ddeulwyn*

*Yw meddyliau hiraeth,*

*Marw deurwym yr awduriaeth,*

*Mae'r awen oll o'u marw'n waeth.*

(G.G.net 54 - Eurig Salisbury [ed])

Dafydd's death is like an arrow to my bones  
because of the loss of one who was like a school  
of master-poetry,  
the death of Nanmor Deudraeth's judgement,  
the death of all Wales's learning if he went.  
Ifan's death now, worse still are thoughts of  
longing  
because of the loss of Deulwyn,  
the death of the creativity's two binders,  
all the muse is worse as a result of their deaths.  
(Eurig Salisbury [ed])

While there is evidence from his poetry that Guto actively engaged in debate and discussion with other poets of the time, such as Dafydd ab Edmwnd and Tudur Penllyn (ibid, n.54); Dafydd Nanmor and Ieuan Deulwyn, though well-known in the period, are not mentioned in Guto's other works (ibid, n.54). The praise given to Nanmor is from one

practitioner to another, grieving for the loss of a great talent. Learning in Wales was diminished by his passing (GG.net 54.4,8).

Given the time spent on the circuit by Dafydd and Guto, and the fact that they both spent time in Ceredigion during this period (Guto in Strata Florida and Uwch Aeron), one would like to think they had met. The poem, proximity and opportunity support a theory that Guto visited Dafydd Nanmor's place of patronage, Y Tywyn. It does seem plausible to imagine that when he was in the area, Guto would have visited a llys offering such generous bardic support. Here, the two great men could have enjoyed some of Rhys ap Maredudd's abundant wine together...

## Political Allegiances

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It could be tempting to explain the lack of evidence for familiarity between Dafydd Nanmor and Guto'r Glyn as being the result of different political allegiances. Overtly, Dafydd and Guto were followers of the Lancastrian and Yorkist causes respectively. Their main patrons and some of their poetry follows this kind of division. However, as has already been observed, in relation to the work of Lewys Glyn Cothi (p.59) and Dafydd Nanmor (p.39) these allegiances were usually far more complex than just a joining of sides. The poet travelled and mixed amongst patrons of varying and changing allegiances according to developing circumstances. Helen Fulton observes:

Despite his loyalty to a number of Yorkist patrons, Guto was, after all, a professional poet, available for commissions from either side of the political spectrum. His primary concern was not particularly York or Lancaster but rather the unity of the Welsh nation under a strong leader who could take the English throne and lead the Welsh back to power. (Fulton, 2013, 60,61)

Davies, R.R. and Morgan, G. (tr.)(2009), *Owain Glyndŵr : Prince of Wales*, Y Lolfa, Talybont.

Fulton, H. (2013) 'Guto'r Glyn and the Wars of the Roses' , in Foster Evans, D. et al (eds.) *Gwalch Cywyddau Gwyr : Ysgrifau ar Guto'r Glyn a Chymru'r Bymthegfed Ganrif - Essays on Guto'r Glyn and Fifteenth Century Wales*. CUCAC, Aberystwyth.

Griffiths, R. (2013) 'Mwy o Gymro na Iorcaid' , in Foster Evans, D. et al (eds.) *Gwalch Cywyddau Gwyr : Ysgrifau ar Guto'r Glyn a Chymru'r Bymthegfed Ganrif - Essays on Guto'r Glyn and Fifteenth Century Wales*. CUCAC, Aberystwyth.

Guto'r Glyn.net. (2013), Available at: <<http://www.gutorglyn.net>>, (accessed October 2016).

Salisbury, E. and Lewis, B. *Guto'r Glyn: A Life*, Available at :  
<<http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/biog/>>, (accessed October 2016).

Williams, J.Ll. (ca) and Williams, I. (gol.) (1939) *Gwaith Guto'r Glyn*, Caerdydd, Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru.

## Footnotes

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<sup>97</sup> For a detailed account of the impact of Owain Glyndŵr's revolt and the penal laws that followed, see Davies, R.R. and Morgan, G. (tr.)(2009), *Owain Glyndŵr: Prince of Wales*.

<sup>98</sup> See Salisbury, E. and Lewis, B., *Guto'r Glyn: A Life*, available at: <http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/biog/> (accessed October 2016).