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For an archived snapshot of the story as it appeared between 2020 and 2023 on https://portspastpresent.eu/, see the Relation field below.

Dublin Core

Title

This is the Sea, Part II | Dyma'r Môr, Rhan II

Subject

Môr Iwerddon

Irish Sea

Goresgyniadau

Conquests

Personal Reflections

Creator

Meilyr Powel

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

https://perma.cc/NL8P-TV3A

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

52.06299840330404, -5.106119120113577

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

This is the Sea' by The Waterboys speaks of opportunities and forging new destinies whilst alluding to spiritual experiences. With this in mind, a recent ferry crossing to Ireland made me think how the Irish Sea has been a conduit of historical forces.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae 'This is the Sea' gan The Waterboys yn sôn am gyfleoedd ac am sicrhau ffawd newydd wrth grybwyll profiadau ysbrydol. O ystyried hyn, roedd teithio i Iwerddon ar y fferi yn ddiweddar wedi peri i mi feddwl am y ffordd y mae Môr Iwerddon wedi bod yn sianel ar gyfer grymoedd hanesyddol.

Story

The Vikings in the ninth and tenth centuries established Dyflin (Dublin) and Jórvik (York) as colonial centres and the Irish Sea became a maritime thoroughfare between the two in addition to playing a key navigation route around the islands' shores. The sea brought the Vikings into conflict with Rhodri Mawr of Gwynedd, whose father possibly hailed from the epicentre of the region, Manaw, the Isle of Man. In the 1080s and 1090s, Gruffudd ap Cynan made several journeys across the Irish Sea with forces of Welsh, Irish, and Danes to reclaim the kingdom of Gwynedd, and to ally with Rhys ap Tewdwr and secure the throne of Deheubarth at the Battle of Mynydd Carn in 1081. Rhys fled to Ireland within a few years in the face of aggression from Powys but once again returned from across the sea with an Irish fleet to reconquer his kingdom. The sea, then, formed a route to sanctuary for Welsh noblemen in times of hardship but equally provided a launchpad for reconquest and reaffirmation of royal claims.

Norman lords crossed the sea to seize lands from Irish lords, leading to Henry II's invasion in the late twelfth century and the beginning of centuries of English encroachment and interference in Ireland. No doubt the worst of these came when Oliver Cromwell invaded with his New Model Army in 1649 and along with his generals caused utmost destruction and suffering. Cromwell marched south along Ireland's east coast, capturing key harbours and forts, such as Rosslare and Wexford, to facilitate the crossing of more soldiers and supplies from across the waters. The port of Milford Haven in Wales and those in Ireland were vital logistical features of a brutal war that led to famine, plague, ethnic cleansing and deportation, and has left a momentous legacy to this day. Legend has it that when Cromwell died, the earth rejected his body and threw him into the Irish Sea, the location of which is often turbulent even on the calmest of days.

And so when standing on the ferry deck and looking out across the waters I also thought of what lies beneath. Hundreds of known and unknown shipwrecks along with the poor souls of those who perished; whether through misfortune in treacherous conditions in the Dark Ages or in wartime as recent as the twentieth century. *You're trying to make sense of something that you just don't see*, as The Waterboys sang. And it's not only history that encompasses

the Irish Sea but mythology too; did Bendigeidfran not cross the sea to Ireland with his fleet to avenge the mistreatment of his sister Branwen by Matholwch, King of the Irish? While the sea plays a key role in the Mabinogi, it does too in Irish mythology, as Manannán mac Lir, a king of the Otherworld and 'son of the sea' rides a chariot over the waters in the tale of *Imram Brain*. The sea fascinates and charms the literary imagination as much as it evokes the vexations of history.

I'll end this musing by acknowledging the forces and features of the Irish Sea, and doffing my cap to the hoary voyage between lands steeped in historical, cultural, and literary connections. The 'secrets of the sea' that poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow spoke of suggests a temporality to the journey, arousing in us a relationship with the seascape that many before us have surely felt. And returning to Fishguard from Rosslare on a fine spring evening, surprisingly fresh and awake following a few days of merriment, I watched the glorious sunset from the deck. I was glad that I'd made this sea crossing, if only to experience what many others over the centuries have experienced, and to pay homage to an age-old way of travelling. Despite the cruelties of war and the hostile intentions of invaders, the Irish Sea has played host to literary inspiration, cultural exchange, and natural wonder. Indeed, *this is the sea* and its offerings are abound.

Story (Welsh)

Yn y nawfed a'r degfed ganrif, sefydlodd y Llychlynwyr Dyflin (Dulyn) a Jórvik (Efrog) fel canolfannau trefedigol a daeth Môr Iwerddon yn dramwyfa forol rhwng y ddwy, yn ogystal â chyflawni rôl llwybr mordwyo allweddol o gwmpas glannau'r ynysoedd. Arweiniodd y môr at wrthdaro rhwng y Llychlynwyr a Rhodri Mawr o Wynedd, yr oedd ei dad o bosibl yn hanu o ganolbwynt y rhanbarth, sef Ynys Manaw. Yn ystod y 1080au a'r 1090au, aeth Gruffudd ap Cynan ar sawl taith ar draws Môr Iwerddon gyda lluoedd a oedd yn cynnwys Cymry, Gwyddelod a Daniaid i adennill tywysogaeth Gwynedd, ac i ffurfio cynghrair gyda Rhys ap Tewdwr er mwyn sicrhau gorsedd y Deheubarth ym Mrwydr Mynydd Carn ym 1081. Penderfynodd Rhys ffoi i Iwerddon cyn pen ychydig flynyddoedd yn wyneb ymosodiadau o Bowys, ond dychwelodd unwaith eto gyda fflyd o Iwerddon i adennill ei deyrnas. Yna, bu'r môr yn llwybr i loches i fonheddwyr Cymru yn ystod cyfnodau o galedi, ond yn yr un modd, bu'n gyfrwng er mwyn lansio cyrchoedd i adennill ac ailddatgan honiadau brenhinol.

Croesodd arglwyddi Normanaidd y môr i gipio tir oddi ar arglwyddi Gwyddelig, gan arwain at ymosodiad Harri II tua diwedd y ddeuddegfed ganrif a dechreuad canrifoedd lle y gwelwyd y Saeson yn ennill tir ac yn ymyrryd yn Iwerddon. Heb os, yr un gwaethaf o'r rhain oedd pan ymosododd Oliver Cromwell gyda'i Fyddin Model Newydd ym 1649, gan achosi'r dioddefaint a'r dinistr mwyaf gyda'i gadfridogion. Gorymdeithiodd Cromwell ar hyd arfordir dwyrain Iwerddon, gan gipio porthladdoedd a chaerau allweddol, megis Rosslare a Wexford, er mwyn hwyluso'r broses o groesi rhagor o filwyr a chyflenwadau ar draws y dŵr. Roedd porthladd Aberdaugleddau yng Nghymru a'r rhai hynny yn Iwerddon yn nodweddion logisteg hanfodol rhyfel creulon a arweiniodd at newyn, pla, puro ethnig ac alltudio, ac mae wedi gadael ei ôl mewn ffordd dyngedfennol hyd heddiw. Pan fu farw Cromwell, dywedir bod y ddaear wedi gwrthod ei gorff a'i daflu i Fôr Iwerddon, ac mae'r lleoliad hwn yn aml yn aflonydd ar y diwrnodau mwyaf llonydd.

Felly wrth sefyll ar fwrdd y fferi ac edrych allan dros y dŵr, meddyliais am yr hyn sydd oddi tano. Cannoedd o longddrylliadau hysbys ac anhysbys, ynghyd ag eneidiau truenus y rhai a fu farw; boed hynny trwy anffawd mewn amodau peryglus yn ystod yr Oesoedd Tywyll neu yn ystod rhyfeloedd, mor ddiweddar â'r ugeinfed ganrif. *You're trying to make sense of something that you just don't see*, fel y canodd The Waterboys. Ac nid hanes yn unig a welir ym Môr Iwerddon, ond mytholeg hefyd; croesodd Bendigeidfran y môr i Iwerddon gyda'i

fflyd i ddial am y ffordd yr oedd Matholwch, Brenin y Gwyddelod, wedi trin ei chwaer, Branwen. Mae'r môr yn cyflawni rôl allweddol yn y Mabinogi ac ym mytholeg Iwerddon hefyd, wrth i Manannán mac Lir, brenin Annwfn a 'mab y môr' groesi'r môr mewn cerbyd rhyfela yn chwedl *Imram Brain*. Mae'r môr yn rhyfeddu ac yn cyfareddu'r dychymyg llenyddol gymaint ag y mae'n deffro trallodion hanes.

Hoffwn orffen y synfyfyrion hyn trwy gydnabod grymoedd a nodweddion Môr Iwerddon, gan godi fy nghap i'r daith oesol rhwng tiroedd sy'n llawn cysylltiadau hanesyddol, diwylliannol a llenyddol. Mae 'cyfrinachau'r môr' y soniodd y bardd Henry Wadsworth Longfellow amdanynt yn awgrymu byrhoedledd y daith, gan gyffroi ynom berthynas gyda'r morlun y mae'n siŵr bod nifer cyn ein hamser ni wedi ei deimlo. A chan ddychwelyd i Abergwaun o Rosslare ar noson braf o wanwyn, gan deimlo'n syndod o ffres ac effro ar ôl ychydig ddiwrnodau o firi, gwyliais y machlud godidog o fwrdd y llong. Roeddwn yn falch fy mod wedi croesi'r môr, pe bai hynny ond i brofi'r hyn y mae nifer o bobl eraill wedi'i brofi dros y canrifoedd, ac i dalu gwrogaeth i ffordd hynafol o deithio. Er gwaethaf creulondeb rhyfel a bwriad gelyniaethus yr ymosodwyr, mae Môr Iwerddon wedi cynnal ysbrydoliaeth lenyddol, cyfnewid diwylliannol a rhyfeddod naturiol. Yn wir, *dyma'r môr* ac mae ei offrymau yn niferus.

Factoid

Related Resources

'Castell Dinefwr'. *Coflein*, CBHC / RCAHMW, accessed April 13, 2022, https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/425/.

'Harlech'. *Coflein*, CBHC / RCAHMW, accessed April 13, 2022, https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33155/.

Official Website

https://rcahmw.gov.uk/