Maecenas Cymreig a'i Deulu: Dau Bortread Hyd Llawn gan Syr Joshua Reynolds

Syr Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) oedd prif bersonoliaeth artistig cyfnod Siôr III ac un o'r unigolion pwysicaf yn hanes celfyddyd Prydain. Ef oedd Llywydd cyntaf yr Academi Frenhinol, ac ef oedd yn bennaf gyfrifol am sefydlu statws proffesiynol ac agenda artistiaid Prydain yn ystod y 18fed ganrif. Celfyddyd y Dadeni Aruchel oedd prif ysbrydoliaeth Reynolds, ac ym 1779 talwyd gwrogaeth iddo gan gyfaill a nododd, o gymysgu ei baentiadau â hufen gwaith yr hen feistri, 'nad oedd yn hawdd gwahaniaethu rhwng yr hen a'r newydd ar yr olwg gyntaf'.

Un o noddwyr mwyaf brwdfrydig Reynolds oedd y tirfeddiannwr cyfoethog o Gymru, Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn (1749-89), a oedd yn berchen ystadau yn Sir Amwythig, Sir Drefaldwyn a Meirionnydd, yn ogystal â Wynnstay yn Sir Ddinbych. Erbyn diwedd y 1760au roedd incwm Wynn tua £20,000 y flwyddyn - bu gofal mawr am yr arian ers marwolaeth ei dad, a thyfodd trwy freindaliadau ar blwm, glo, tun a chopr. Am y degawd nesaf, gwariodd Syr Watkin yn helaeth iawn ar brojectau adeiladu a gweithiau celf, nes i'w ddyledion ddechrau tyfu gan gwtogi ar y gwario yn y 1780au. Rhwng Mehefin 1768 a Chwefror 1769 bu ef a dau gyfaill ar Daith Fawreddog o amgylch Paris, Fenis, Napoli a Rhufain, lle paentiwyd llun o'r tri ohonynt gan yr arlunydd poblogaidd Pompeo Batoni (1708-87). Maes o law fe brynwyd y llun gan Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru. Roedd meistr Reynolds, sef Thomas Hudson, wedi paentio portread o dad Syr Watkin yn ystod y 1740au. Ym 1768-69, bu Syr Watkin a'i fam Frances yn eistedd droeon i Reynolds ar gyfer eu portread dwbl. Yn ddiweddarach fe brynwyd y llun gan Oriel Tate ac fe'i benthycwyd yn ddiweddar gan Amgueddfa ac Oriel Genedlaethol Caerdydd.

Ar 11 Ebrill 1769 fe briododd Syr Watkin â'r Fonesig Henrietta Somerset, merch i gyfaill ei dad a'i gynghreiriad gwleidyddol, 4ydd Dug Beaufort. Rhoddwyd llestri ymolchi â haen arian yn anrheg briodas gan ei fam i'w merch-yng-nghyfraith. Fe'u lluniwyd gan Thomas Heming ym 1768, ac fe'u prynwyd maes o law gan Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru. Bu farw Henrietta dri mis yn ddiweddarach, ar 24 Gorffennaf 1769. Eisteddodd Williams-Wynn ar gyfer Reynolds ym mis Chwefror 1769, ei ddyweddi ym mis Mawrth, a Syr Watkin eto ym mis Awst. Mae *Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn a Henrietta Somerset* yn dangos y pâr ifanc yn eu maint llawn mewn gwisg 'Vandyck' du a phinc, yn dal masgiau theatrig o flaen cefndir pensaernïol â llenni, wrth ymyl fâs anferth. Mae'n debygol i'r llun gael ei ddechrau fel portread priodasol, ond mae'n annhebygol iddo gael ei

A Welsh Maecenas and his Family: Two Full-length Portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) was the dominant artistic personality of the age of George III and one of the principal figures in British art history. As the first President of the Royal Academy, he was responsible more than any other for establishing the professional standing and agenda of British artists during the 18th century. Reynolds was inspired above all by High Renaissance art, and in 1779 a contemporary paid him the compliment of remarking that when his paintings were 'mixed with those of the best old masters' it was 'not at first easy to distinguish the new from the old'.

One of Reynolds' most enthusiastic patrons was the wealthy Welsh landowner Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn (1749-89), who owned estates in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire and Merioneth, as well as the Wynnstay property in Denbighshire. By the late 1760s Wynn's landed income, husbanded since his father's death in 1749, and swollen by royalties on coal, lead, tin and copper, amounted to around £20,000 a year. For the next decade, Sir Watkin spent massively on building projects and works of art, until growing debts curtailed his activities in the 1780s. Between June 1768 and February 1769 he and two friends made a Grand Tour of Paris, Venice, Naples and Rome, where they sat to the fashionable painter Pompeo Batoni (1708-87) for the triple portrait, subsequently purchased by the National Museum of Wales. Sir Watkin's father had been painted by Reynolds' master Thomas Hudson during the 1740s. In 1768-69, Sir Watkin and his mother Frances sat several times to Reynolds for their double portrait, later acquired by the Tate Gallery and recently on loan to the National Museum & Gallery Cardiff.

On 11 April 1769 Sir Watkin married Lady Henrietta Somerset, a daughter of his father's friend and political ally, the 4th Duke of Beaufort. The silver-gilt toilet service made by Thomas Heming in 1768, and subsequently acquired by the National Museum of Wales, was his mother's wedding gift to her daughter-in-law, who died three months later, on 24 July 1769. Williams-Wynn sat for Reynolds in February 1769, his fiancée in March, and Sir Watkin once again in August. *Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and Henrietta Somerset* depicts the young couple life-size in matching black and pink Van Dyck costume, and holding theatrical masks in a curtained architectural setting, beside a massive vase. The picture was presumably begun as a marriage portrait, although it is most unlikely to have been completed prior to Henrietta's death. The black costume of the figures suggests that it was completed as a memorial portrait. As it is not itemised in Reynolds' ledgers, it is unclear when it was completed, although this

gwblhau cyn marwolaeth Henrietta. Mae gwisgoedd duon y ddau yn awgrymu iddo gael ei gwblhau fel portread coffa. Gan nad oes sôn amdano yng nghofnodion Reynolds, nid yw'n amlwg pryd y cafodd ei gwblhau. Mae'n debygol iddo gael ei orffen cyn ail briodas Syr Watkin ym mis Rhagfyr 1771. Mae'n bosibl i Syr Watkin ei hun, neu ei fam, dalu am y portread cyn i Syr Watkin gyrraedd llawn oed ym mis Ebrill 1770.

Mae Henrietta wedi'i gosod mewn ffordd sy'n gyffredin i bortreadau menywod gan Reynolds. Mae'n deillio o arferion stiwdio ei feistr, Thomas Hudson. Mae Syr Watkin ei hun yn gyfuniad o ddau ffigur clasurol cynharach: ffigur trist o arch garreg y *Muses*, a engrafwyd ym 1747 ac sydd bellach yn y Louvre, a'r enwog *Farnese Hercules*, a oedd yn Rhufain tan 1787 ac sydd bellach yn Napoli. Yn ei *Discourses*, mae Reynolds yn canmol yr *Hercules*. Dyma, yn ei farn ef, un o'r tri math delfrydol o harddwch dynol ('cryfder cyhyrog' o'i gymharu â 'gweithgarwch' a 'tynerwch'). Dyna'n sicr oedd yn cyfateb orau i gorff byr a solet Syr Watkin. Mae'r fâs yn y cefndir yn ymddangos mewn nifer o bortreadau gan Reynolds. Cafodd ei gopïo o engrafiad o'r 17eg ganrif gan G.B. Galestruzzi yn arddull Polidoro da Caravaggio. Yn wreiddiol daw o ffris a baentiwyd yn ystod y 1520au rhwng llawr cyntaf ac ail lawr ffasâd y Palazzo Milesi yn Rhufain. Mae lleoliad uchel y ffris hwnnw yn egluro persbectif isel y fâs.

Syr Joshua Reynolds (1723-92),
Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn a Henrietta Somerset
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92),
'Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and Henrietta Somerset'

Mae'r cymeriadau yn gwisgo dillad 'Vandyck' yn arddull dechrau'r 17eg ganrif a gysylltir â'r paentiwr portreadau Anthony Van Dyck. Roedd y dillad hyn yn ffasiynol o'r 1740au ymlaen ac maent i'w gweld mewn portreadau ym Mhrydain hyd at y 1770au, fel yn *Siôr III, y Frenhines Charlotte a'u chwe phlentyn hynaf* gan Zoffany a *Bachgen Glas* Gainsborough - dau lun a gafodd eu harddangos yn yr Academi Frenhinol ym 1770. Erbyn 1776 roedd Reynolds wedi diflasu ar wisg 'Vandyck', ac meddai: *'We all remember very well how common it was a few years ago for portraits to be drawn in this fantastic dress; and this custom is not yet entirely laid aside. By this means it must be acknowledged very ordinary pictures acquired something of the air and effect of Vandyck'.* Er nad oedd du yn lliw anghyffredin i wisgoedd Vandyck y dynion, roedd yn lliw anarferol i fenywod. Byddai'n anarferol i gwpl wisgo dillad o'r un lliw â'i gilydd, ac is likely to have taken place before his second marriage in December 1771. Payment may have been made prior to Sir Watkin's coming of age in April 1770, either by himself or his mother.

Henrietta is posed in an attitude common in Reynolds' portraits of women, which derives ultimately from the studio practice of his master Thomas Hudson. Sir Watkin's attitude combines two classical prototypes: a melancholy figure from a sarcophagus of the Muses, engraved in 1747 and now in the Louvre, and the celebrated *Farnese Hercules*, in Rome until 1787 and now in Naples. In his *Discourses*, Reynolds praised the Hercules as one of three ideal types of male beauty ('muscular strength' as opposed to 'activity' and 'delicacy'). It was certainly the most in tune with Sir Watkin's short and stout build. The vase in the background is of a type which appears in a number of Reynolds' portraits, and is copied from a 17th-century engraving by G.B. Galestruzzi after Polidoro da Caravaggio. It derives ultimately from a freize painted during the 1520s between the first and second floors of the façade of the Palazzo Milesi in Rome. The high location of this prototype explains the low perspectival viewpoint of the vase.

The sitters are wearing 'Vandyck' costume in the early 17th-century cut associated with the portrait painter Anthony Van Dyck, which was fashionable from the 1740s and continued to appear in British portraits through to the 1770s, as in Zoffany's *George III, Queen Charlotte and their six eldest children* and Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*, both exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1770. By 1776 Reynolds had tired of 'Vandyck' costume, and observed: 'We all remember very well how common it was a few years ago for portraits to be drawn in this fantastick dress; and this custom is not yet entirely laid aside. By this means it must be acknowledged very ordinary pictures acquired something of the air and effect of Vandyck'. Although black was a not an uncommon colour for men's Vandyck costume, it was unusual for women, while it would be unusual for a couple to wear colour co-ordinated clothes, except for masquerade. Sir Watkin was passionately fond of the theatre, and there are a number of references to

eithrio ar gyfer masgaràd. Roedd Syr Watkin yn gwirioni ar y theatr, ac mae nifer o gyfeiriadau at ddillad masgaràd yng nghyfrifon Williams-Wynn. Mae *Charlotte Grenville a'i phlant* yn dangos ail wraig Syr Watkin. Fe'u priodwyd ym 1771. Roedd Charlotte (1754-1830) yn un o deulu Grenville o Stowe, sef un o deuluoedd llywodraethol mawr Prydain yn y 18fed ganrif. Hi oedd merch hynaf George Grenville (1712-70) a fu'n Brif Weinidog ym 1763-65. Mae'n debyg mai ei thri phlentyn hynaf sydd yn y llun: Watkin (g. 1772), Fanny (g. 1773) a Charles (g. 1775). Mae eu hoedran yn awgrymu i'r llun gael ei baentio tua 1778. Nid yw llyfrau cwsmeriaid Reynolds wedi goroesi ar gyfer y flwyddyn honno. Ym mis Ionawr 1779 bu chwaer-

masquerade costume in the Williams-Wynn accounts. *Charlotte Grenville and her children* depicts the second wife of Sir Watkin, whom he married in 1771. A Grenville of Stowe, Charlotte (1754-1830) was a member of one of the great governing families of 18th-century Britain and the eldest daughter of the George Grenville (1712-70) who had been Prime Minister in 1763-65. Here she is probably accompanied by her three eldest children: Watkin (b. 1772), Fanny (b. 1773) and Charles (b. 1775). Their apparent age suggests that this portrait was painted around 1778, a year for which Reynolds' sitters' books do not survive. In January 1779 Charlotte's sister-in-law Lady Mary Grenville and her young son also sat to

Syr Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), *Charlotte Grenville a'i phlant*
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), 'Charlotte Grenville and her children'

yng-nghyfraith Charlotte, y Fonesig Mary Grenville a'i mab ifanc hefyd yn eistedd i Reynolds. Bu llun Charlotte Grenville a'i phlant gan yr arlunydd hyd wedi marwolaeth Syr Watkin ym mis Gorffennaf 1789. Ym mis Medi y flwyddyn honno, cyhoeddodd papur newyddion: *'Sir Joshua's beautiful portraits of Lady W.W. Wynn and Lady Betty Delme and children, with some other charming heads, which for many years have been lodged in his infirmary, are now brought out to see the light; and by the help of fresh varnish and a few varying touches from his pencil, again claim our notice and heartfelt applause'*. Mae'n debyg i'r Fonesig Charlotte dderbyn ei phortread cyn 24 Chwefror 1791, gan mai dyna'r adeg y mae cofnodion Reynolds yn cydnabod iddo dderbyn taliad llawn ar gownt Syr Watkin.

Mae'r darlun hwn yn ein hatgoffa o baentiadau cynnar yr 16eg ganrif o Fenis, sef *Gorffwys wrth Ffoi gyda Sant Ioan Fedyddiwr.* Mae'r plant ar batrwm grŵp a welir ar y dde yn *Teulu Vendramin* gan Titian (Yr Oriel Genedlaethol,

Reynolds. *Charlotte Grenville and her children* remained with the artist until after Sir Watkin's death in July 1789. In September of that year, a newspaper reported: 'Sir Joshua's beautiful portraits of Lady W.W. Wynn and Lady Betty Delme and children, with some other charming heads, which for many years have been lodged in his infirmary, are now brought out to see the light; and by the help of fresh varnish and a few varying touches from his pencil, again claim our notice and heartfelt applause'. Lady Charlotte presumably took delivery of her portrait by 24 February 1791, when Reynolds' ledgers acknowledged full payment of Sir Watkin's account.

This composition recalls early 16th-century Venetian paintings of *The Rest on the Flight with St John the Baptist.* The children derive from the group at the right of Titian's *Vendramin Family* (National Gallery), which Reynolds knew well. Lady Charlotte's costume is in the Turkish fashion popularised by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her pose

Llundain) - roedd Reynolds yn gyfarwydd iawn â'r llun. Mae gwisg y Fonesig Charlotte mewn arddull Dwrcaidd, a ddaeth yn boblogaidd yn sgil y Fonesig Mary Wortley Montagu, ac mae'r ffordd y mae hi'n eistedd yn arddull y portreadau pastel o wragedd mewn gwisg Dwrcaidd a baentiodd Jean-Etienne Liotard. *Charlotte Grenville a'i phlant* yw un o bortreadau mwyaf godidog Reynolds yn y 1770au, sef degawd pan oedd ar ei anterth fel arlunydd. Mae'n arddangos ei barch mawr tuag at Titian. Bu Reynolds yn canmol portreadau Titian ym 1778 am eu *'natural unaffected air, where dignity seeming to be natural and inherent, draws spontaneous reverence, and has the appearance of an unalienable adjunct'.*

Gan y byddai Reynolds yn codi £315 am bortread dwbl hyd llawn, £157 10s am un portread hyd llawn a £52 10s am bortread o blentyn, mae'n debyg i *Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn a Henrietta Somerset* a *Charlotte Grenville a'i phlant* gostio £315 yr un. Mae'r portreadau hyn yn yr Arddull Fawreddog yn mynegi'r pethau hynny yr oedd Reynolds a'i gyfoedion yn eu hedmygu fwyaf am gelfyddyd y Dadeni Aruchel. Maent hefyd yn dangos uchelgais diwylliannol Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn a'i wragedd. Am dros ddwy ganrif, bu'r ddau bortread yn perthyn i deulu Williams-Wynn, yn hongian yng ngogledd Cymru, yn Wynnstay yn gyntaf, ac yna yn Llangedwyn. Prynwyd *Charlotte Grenville a'i phlant* gan Amgueddfeydd ac Orielau Cenedlaethol Cymru mewn arwerthiant yn Sotheby's ar 8 Mehefin 1998 am bris cynhwysol o £1,410,912, yn cynnwys cyfraniadau o £634,910 o Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri a £58,594 o'r Gronfa Casgliadau Celf Genedlaethol. Prynwyd *Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn a Henrietta Somerset* ychydig ddyddiau yn ddiweddarach drwy gytundeb preifat am bris cynhwysol o £384,887, a chyfrannwyd £173,200 ohono gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri. Yng Nghaerdydd, mae'r lluniau yn ymuno â chasgliad hynod o weithiau o gasgliad Syr Watkin Williams-Wynn, gan gynnwys paentiadau pwysig gan Batoni a Mengs, ac arian a dodrefn wedi'u cynllunio gan Robert Adam.

Mark Evans, Ceidwad Cynorthwyol (Celf Gain), Amgueddfa ac Oriel Genedlaethol Caerdydd

derives from the pastel portraits of ladies in Turkish dress by Jean-Etienne Liotard. One of Reynolds' most sumptuous portraits of the 1770s, a decade in which he was at the height of his powers, *Charlotte Grenville and her children* eloquently expresses his regard for Titian, whose portraits he praised in 1778 for their 'natural unaffected air, where dignity seeming to be natural and inherent, draws spontaneous reverence, and has the appearance of an unalienable adjunct'.

As Reynolds charged £315 for a full length double portrait, £157 10s for a single whole length portrait and £52 10s for a portrait of a child, *Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and Henrietta Somerset* and *Charlotte Grenville and her children* probably cost £315 each. These portraits in the Grand Manner express the qualities which Reynolds and his contemporaries admired most in High Renaissance art. They also demonstrate the cultural ambitions of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and his wives. For over two centuries, both portraits remained with the Williams-Wynn family and hung in north Wales, first at Wynnstay, and subsequently at Llangedwyn. *Charlotte Grenville and her children* was purchased by the National Museums & Galleries of Wales at auction at Sotheby's on 8 June 1998 for an inclusive price of £1,410,912, including contributions of £634,910 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £58,594 from the National Art Collections Fund. *Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and Henrietta Somerset* was purchased a few days later by private treaty for an inclusive price of £384,887, of which £173,200 was contributed by the Heritage Lottery Fund. At Cardiff, they join a spectacular group of works from the collection of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, including major paintings by Batoni and Mengs, and silver and furniture designed by Robert Adam.

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