

## Madoc-info

### [Following the Ark of the Covenant: The Treasure of God](https://books.google.nl/books?isbn=1555174930)

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#### Chapter 13: Madoc the Mormon Templar

[102] John Dee was the catalyst for still another arcane society based in part upon the Madoc legend. Dee, author of the Rosicrucian Manifestos and “*The Secret Book of Madog*” (a history and writings of Madoc), organized an elite group of Madoc cultists that included Christopher Llwyd, Dr. David Powel, Richard Hakluyt, Thomas Harriot (cartographer, alchemist, astrologer and scientist who had himself sailed to America at the head of an expedition for his friend Raleigh), Sir Walter Raleigh, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Fludd, and others, all of whom perpetuated the Madoc legend. They promulgated the premise, shrouded in mystery, that Madoc was someone very special and significant, someone whose story protected some secret unobtainable to the world at large.

Dee and his society passed on the mantle to another group which, some two hundred years later, established a Madoc cult which met at the Gentlemen’s Club of Spalding in London, which had long been the seat of esoteric and arcane pursuits. In the past it had hosted such members as Sir Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, and two of Joseph Smith’s ancestors, Robert Smith and Thomas French. The latter was an alchemist and a Scot, with ties to the Sinclair family of Rosslyn.

The Madoc cult included such notables as the poet Robert Southey (with ties to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where the gold plates of Joseph Smith were translated into the Book of Mormon), Edward Williams (a.k.a. Iolo Morganwg), Dr. Samuel Johnson, Dr. Owen-Pughe, Owen Jones, John Evans (who came to America in search of Welsh Indian descendants of Madoc), and John Hoppner (with ties to [103] the Egyptian mummies purchased by Joseph Smith), to name only a few. [...]

There were emerging in our research strong associations between the Madoc legend and the Book of Mormon. We are not the first to recognize these parallels. Richard Deacon, author of *Madoc and the Discovery of America*, wrote: ‘There are extravagant accounts that Madoc and his companions reached Mexico and established the Aztec Empire, and then traveled on their all-conquering way to found the Mayan civilization and the Empire of the Incas in Peru.’

[104] John Dee showed his *Secret Book of Madog* to Queen Elizabeth I. His purpose for doing so seems to have been related to her desire to establish an English colony in America. Madoc’s discovery of America in 1170 pre-dated that of Columbus by 322 years, giving England’s claim precedence over that of Spain.

Evidence of this can be found in a pamphlet entitled *A True Reporte*, written by Sir George Peckham, a member of Dee’s society, and dedicated to Sir Francis Walsingham (the Queen’s head of Secret Service), published in 1583. This pamphlet set out “to prove Queen Elizabeth’s lawful title to the New Worlde, based on not onlie upon Sir Humphrey Gilbert’s discoveries, but also those of Madoc.” It referred to David Ingram, of Barking, who had sailed with Sir John Hawkins (a cousin of Sir Walter Raleigh), as one source, and to “an ancient Welsh chronicle” as the other, which could only have been Dee’s *Secret Book of Madog*, allegedly based upon Madoc’s own written account of his explorations. Ingram confirmed the story, claiming to be the first of many travelers to hear Welsh words spoken by Indians in America.

If John Dee possessed actual writings by Madoc, the question remains how did he obtain them? Dee lived at least 400 years after Madoc. The answer lies in the person of one Willem the Minstrel, a Fleming who lived in Wales contemporary with Madoc and who was likely acquainted with him personally.

Willem has been variously described as minstrel, poet, priest and scholar, whose origins are vague and shadowy. He certainly lived in Wales for a lengthy period, probably along the Welsh borders adjoining Herefordshire, inasmuch as his friend, Walter Map, was himself a Hereford man. Willem's best known work was *Van den Vos Reinaerde* (Reynard the Fox), in which prologue he introduces himself as "Willem, die Madocke makede" (Willem, the author of Madoc).

[105 ...] Walter Map tells us that Willem went to the court of Marie of Champagne, daughter of the wife of Henry II. This places Willem in France at the time when it was a hot-bed of esoteric Templar revivalism. Thus it is no surprise to discover Willem in association with the Templar writers Audefrois le Bâtard, Gace Brûlie, and most importantly Chrétien de Troyes. M. Edouard Duvivier, of Poitiers, recognized this connection, and insists that it was not *Reinaerde* that was best known for centuries, but it was instead his lost work of *Madoc*. "It is said to have been obtained originally through Willem's knowledge of Welsh, to have been translated first into Latin, then into French, and probably not at all into Flemish. A reputed copy of a French manuscript of the work was found in Poitiers in the seventeenth century, and, having inspected this closely, I am convinced that it must have been translated not later than the end of the fourteenth century and quite possibly much earlier." [Letter, M. Edouard Duvivier to Richard Deacon, dated 20 Dec. 1965, cited in Madoc, Deacon, op.cit., p. 168]

The manuscript is written in medieval French, and the author describes himself as "Guillaume qui fait Reynaud" (Willem, author of Reynard). An autobiographical postscript in the text explains that the narrator, Willem, had been both a minstrel and a soldier, originally attached to the Flemish mercenaries fighting the Welsh, but that his fondness for the Welsh and their bards made him change sides. He lived for a time in an island called "Ely" (the name given to Lundy by the Normans, where Madoc lived and from whence he sailed on his second voyage), had traveled extensively in the Low Countries and in France, and was especially interested in stories of early discoveries of land in the west from "Seneca to Madoc."

Willem elaborates on Madoc's fame as a sailor, which he derived, writes Willem, from his grandfather being "half a Viking." He tells how Madoc went to the Court of Louis VII of France, disguised as a monk, as an envoy of his race. It is known that Owain Gwynedd sent two Welsh monks with letters to the French king, offering his support against Henry II.

Willem introduces a romantic element into his story, giving Madoc a love-interest whom Willem calls the "River Nymph," who was likened to a mermaid because she encased her legs in fish-nets! Later we were to discover, significantly, that Madoc was termed a "mer-man" (Man of the Sea). Willem claims that the "River Nymph" and the bards urged Madoc to seek out the Fountain of Youth, which at first he sought on the Isle of Ely, but later decided must lie much farther out to sea.

The remainder of the narrative by Willem was notably esoteric in nature, relating how Madoc found "*paradis ravi par le soleil, resplendissant com fruits de mer,*" how he returned to "Wair for two new ships" for a second voyage to found a new kingdom of "eternal youth, love and music, where all should share in the abundance of good things." The expedition was said to be armed with "ten painted pearls to probe the rivers" of the New World, or *paradis*.

According to Willem, in "Ely" Madoc sought the "seaman's magic stone," which would ensure a safe return to his new-found paradise – that *pierre laide*, used by the Icelanders. This is wholly

reminiscent of the “magical” luminous stones used by the brother of Jared, in the Book of Mormon, to guide the voyagers safely [106] across the sea to the Promised Land, and the Liahona, that “marvelous director” of the same book.

Willem’s narrative hints that the *paradis ravi par le soleil* might not have been Madoc’s final goal, but that this might be “six days distant from a treacherous garden in the sea,” which Willem called *La Mer Dégringolade*. This mysterious “garden” in the ocean, “which no storm could ever dissipate, and which swallowed up ships,” was quite obviously the Sargasso Sea, which stretches from the Gulf of Mexico north and east past Florida nearly as far as the Azores.

According to Willem, Madoc discovered an island, surrounded by enormous, strange fishes. He calls this island “one of the Isles of Llion.” We were reminded that John Dee had based his claims about Madoc on the *Fortunata* map, which purportedly showed the route of both Nicholas of Lynne and Madoc and indicated an island, far out in the Atlantic, called *Gwerdonnau Llion*, discovered by Madoc. Dee believed that the island was somewhere “close to the sea of weed,” and that it must therefore have been either “Bermoothes or an islande in the Bahamas.” Dee believed it was possible that this was one of the islands in the Atlantic Ocean known to disappear beneath the sea from time to time. This would equate them with the Isle of Lyon, the fabled kingdom of Lyonesse from the legend of King Arthur which one day disappeared beneath the sea. This would place Arthur’s explorers in the region of the Sargasso Sea. This was confirmed by Cnoyen’s statement that “... a certain priest who came of that race famed in legend by King Arthur and who knew of his countrymen’s voyage to a strange sea filled with weed.” There is reason to believe that Madoc may have sought refuge from a storm in the Bahamas, on his way back from America after his first voyage, probably on the island of Bimini. The Spaniards learned of the existence of Bimini from the mainland Indians who gave it this name; and it was from these Indians that the Spaniards learned that the “Fountain of Youth” which Ponce de Leon sought was none other than the Isle of Bimini. Moreover, according to Peter Martyr, they had learned of its existence from “Matec.”

The overwhelming evidence indicated that Madoc ap Owain Gwynedd was a Templar. Disguised as a monk, he attended the Court of Louis VII in France just as the Knights Templar of Hugues de Payens were returning from the Holy Land with whatever they recovered from the caverns beneath the Temple Mount. Not long after his return to Wales, Madoc constructed his “magical ship,” the *Gwennan Gorn* and sailed away under a square sail with splayed Templar cross. Madoc possessed a “marvelous director,” a magnetic compass perfected and used by the Templars, and he had a map which guided him to the “Promised Land,” a map ostensibly drawn by his Scandinavian ancestors. The Welsh manuscripts in the Cottonian Collection relate that Gruffydd ap Conan (died 1137) was, on the maternal side, descended from the Scandinavian Kings of Dublin, Ireland. Mr. Gisle Brynjulfsson, of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquities in Copenhagen, an authority on the Gwynedd ancestry, has written: “It also deserves mention that Madoc, supposed to have visited America at the close of the twelfth century, was a grandson of this same King Griffin (Gruffydd) and that he is likely to be acquainted with the Scandinavian accounts of Vinland and the other western countries, this being well known to the Scandinavians in Ireland.” [as cited in *Who Discovered America?* Zella Armstrong, Lookout Pub., Chattanooga, Tenn., 1950]

Thus we discover that Madoc was a descendant of King Olaf the White of Dublin, and in direct descent from the Kings of Norway, the Earls of Orkney, and [107] the Möre clan, ancestors of the Sinclairs. More importantly, at least to our interests, he was a descendant of the Clan Gunn, the most likely source of his map and knowledge of the New World.

**Madoc and the discovery of America, some light on an old controversy : Book review.**

MADOC AND THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA. SOME LIGHT ON AN OLD CONTROVERSY. By Richard Deacon. Frederick Muller, 1967. Pp. 269.42s.

Richard Deacon has written an interesting account in a journalistic vein of the Madoc legend and its development. He has marshalled and examined all the main contributions to its growth and circulation, sometimes adopting a critical attitude, sometimes accepting without hesitation evidence of questionable value. After reading the seventeen chapters, one cannot fail to marvel at the amount of blatant deception, wishful thinking, and human gullibility which went to the making of this legend over the course of four centuries.

The origins of the legend are pretty obscure and its Welsh beginnings are shrouded in mystery. The allusions of fifteenth-century poets hardly give us more than a vague indication of Madoc's love of the sea. Richard Deacon's attempt to probe beyond this immediate pre-Tudor phase is foiled by his obvious lack of facility in the language of the early literature. His task has been made more difficult by the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Gogynfeirdd poetry on the part of the secondary authorities upon whom he had to depend. Attempts to interpret allusions [186] in certain lines and stanzas of Gogynfeirdd poetry as corroboration of later elements of the Madoc saga have failed miserably, and this latest effort has fared no better. These lines and stanzas must be interpreted in their contexts and in their original Welsh form, or, where recourse has to be made to translation, after careful checking with the original for absolute accuracy. Without that, no valid case can be based upon them.

Even a cursory reading of the earlier chapters raises doubts about the author's competence in this field. To find Walter Davies twice on the same page called Gwalltir Mechain, and to be told that Taliesin compiled the Mabiogion (sic) hardly serve to inspire confidence. Even more disturbing is the apparent readiness of the author to accept a so-called expert view that a stone tablet alleged to have been discovered on Lundy Island, bearing the inscription:

*Mae yn ffaith genedleithol  
I Madoc o Lund fudo'n ormodol  
Ir mor gorllewinol  
Ond ni ddaeth byth yn ol*

could have been carved at least as far back as the fourteenth century and 'possibly earlier'. It is hardly probable that the word 'cenedlaethol' had been coined as early as the fourteenth century, and we know that 'ffaith' was one of William Owen Pughe's creations.

The results of the author's lack of proficiency in the Welsh language become apparent when he tries to tackle Gogynfeirdd and cywydd poetry. In dealing with a reference to a Madoc in Llywarch ap Llywelyn's Ode to the Hot Iron, he argues that the poet would not have used the expression 'blessed one' in referring to an ordinary retainer. The fact is that Llywarch did not call Madoc blessed; there is nothing in the original Welsh lines to warrant such a translation. Again, the reference made to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth as a nephew of Madoc is not evidence that Owain Gwynedd had a son called Madoc. The original poem has wyr (grandson) in both cases, and

Llewelyn was a grandson both of Owain Gwynedd and of another Madoc – the King of Powys who died in 1160. In these instances the author depended entirely upon wrong translations. Even when he does cite the original Welsh version he frequently betrays his deficient command of the language.

Though he is justifiably suspicious of the evidence attributed to Ieuan Brechfa, Deacon makes more use of it than is warranted. Spurious additions to the Bruts have been fathered upon Ieuan Brechfa, but much more is attributed to him in this work. The ode which is obviously an extension of that of Llywarch ap Llewelyn, but attributed to Ieuan Brechfa in this work, is not represented in any known manuscript which could have been written by him. The source seems to be a paper, entitled 'Brechfa: first critic of the bards', by J. Morgan Lewis in 1877. Lewis [187] seems to have depended partly upon a work, entitled 'Welsh Histories and Poets', by a writer bearing the pseudonym of 'Meiron'. The same 'Meiron' contributed an account of Madoc from Welsh historians and poets to the Monthly Magazine for December 1796. If 'Merion' was responsible for all the additions to Ieuan Brechfa quoted in this book, through J. Morgan Lewis, he cannot have been the least among the forgers and purveyors of forgeries who thrived on Madoc.

Deacon's use of Latin sources is as unreliable as his use of Welsh. In his citation of the B.M., Cotton, Vitellius Latin version of the Life of Griffith ap Cynan, he implies that the date 1477 is that of a reference to Madoc as an explorer of unknown lands, whereas in fact it is simply an approximate date of the vivit of Maredudd ap Rhys, whose poem referring to Madoc as a lover of the sea is discussed in succeeding pages. He also implies that Sir John Wynne of Gwydir in the history of his family had named Madoc among the sons of Owain Gwynedd, but this piece of information is taken not from the text of the history but from a pedigree chart in the 1827 edition, for which Sir John Wynne was in no way responsible. In Deacon's version of the genealogical tree of the house of Gwynedd, the first two sons of Owain Gwynedd are named Iorwerth and Drwyndwn, making an additional son out of Iorwerth's broken nose.

A mass of continental and American material, not otherwise easily accessible to the ordinary reader, has been brought together in the later chapters of the book. Of this material, the only manuscript I would like to see published in full is the French precis of 'Madoc', by Willem the Minstrel. This is an important piece of evidence for the early existence of the legend and calls for a close study. As far as the purely Welsh material is concerned, the book throws no new light on the controversy.

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## Stephen Grant-Davies [Pre-Columbian References to Madoc](#) - 6 feb. 2014

An initial problem is that even with the few possible pre-Columbian Welsh sources, they were not put forward until Tudor times or later, when the Madoc cult was well under way and therefore suspect of the self-potentiating fervour to believe in the legend, fostered particularly by Welsh expatriates in London and North America.

Llywarch's 'Ode to the Hot Iron' –

Llywarch Prydydd y Moch was a Welsh bard who wrote praises of Owain Gwynedd and his family and in one poem in 1169, protests that he was not the assassin who slew Madoc – but there is no evidence at all to show that this was 'our' Madoc, it being such a common name.

Willem the Minstrel – a Flemish author of the 12-13th century, who may have lived in the Welsh Marches, provides one of the most tantalisingly-definite references to Madoc. He wrote a book 'Reynard the Fox' which survives, and in it he says he is also the author of a book on Madoc - "Willem, die Madocke makede" (Willem, the author of Madoc)... "Willem who laboured to indite, Madoc in many a wakeful night".

Another Flemish author, Jacob von Maerlant, writing about 1270, refers to Willem's book and says that in his own book 'there would be no Madoc's dream, neither Reynard's nor Arthur's pranks'

Willem's book has been lost, but Deacon claimed that part of a French translation of a précis of the book was said to have been found in Poitiers in the 17th century, apparently written not later than the end of the 14th century. Deacon claims that a personal letter ( never produced as evidence) from a M. Edouard Duvi vier of Poitiers gave this information, but neither M Duvi vier nor the précis is known to the academics of Poitiers -nor to any database, apart from one quotation by an author who got his knowledge from Deacon's book!

This alleged précis stated that Madoc undertook his voyage as a penance laid on him by a bard. It gives considerable detail of Madoc and his activities and if proved to be genuine, would be a most potent support for the legend. Even the great cynic, Professor Gwyn Alf Williams, unusually for him, was taken in by Deacon's fabrications about the 'Poitiers translation'.

Unfortunately, he seems to have accepted Deacon's fables about Willem and the lost précis in Poitiers, without checking its veracity - and allowed it to impress him as the best plank in a shaky tale.

Willem says he travelled to Wales, Lundy and probably Herefordshire where he knew the writer-priest Walter Map, who was dead by 1210 and who says knew Willem.

The Poitiers copy "says" that Madoc was from a noble Welsh family ( Owain is not mentioned) whose grandfather was half a Viking. He went on a mission to the court of France disguised as a monk (Owain did send emissaries to Paris, possibly via Lundy). He went on a voyage to find the Fountain of Youth ( a persistent Celtic theme) and landed on an island called Ely ( an alternative name for Lundy after its patron saint Elen) to look for the magnetic lodestone, which he could safely use on his ship, as it was nailed together with stag horn (Gwennan Gorn, another persistent Welsh legend, as Arthur's ship 'Gwennan' was variously called 'Prydwen' and was also a stag-horned vessel which was lost in Ffrydiau Caswennan, a dangerous current off Bardsey, a story which seems to have been borrowed into the Madoc story)

Sailing out from Ely, he came to a paradise bathed in sun and a treacherous garden in the sea,

suggestive of the Atlantic's Sargasso Sea - perhaps 'the warme sea where plants do grow' of Cynric ap Gronow.

Lundy, the island in the Bristol Channel known as Ynys Wair or Ely, was identified in early Welsh literature with the Fountain of Youth.

Unfortunately, modern researches in Poitiers fail to unearth support for any of this fabrication.

Cynric ap Gronow, mid-15th C. poet, is said to have written a poem -

*Horn Gwennan, brought to the Gele,  
To be given a square mast,  
Was turned back to Afon Ganol's quay  
For Madog's famous voyage*

However, we only have this as a 1674 translation by Evan Williams and it cannot be definitely proven to be pre-Columbian. Cynric is alleged later by Sir Thomas Herbert also to have mentioned this 'a wondrous new lande of strange and delectable fruites, surrounded by a warm sea in which plantes do grow.'

Marededd ap Rhys - 1430-50, priest and bard of Ruabon, makes two references to a Madoc, a sea-farer and 'true whelp of Owain Gwynedd', but the poems were not cited until 1600. He said Madoc was 'tall of comely face, mild manners, pleasing countenance and fond of sea-roaming' which seems an impossibly detailed description of a man who lived over two centuries earlier.

Deio ap Ieuan Du, a Cardiganshire poet of a slightly earlier date than Mareddud made a similar reference to a Madoc son of Owain, but again the written version is post-Columbian.

Ieuan Brechfa, a Carmathenshire bard who flourished about 1450, is said to have written a poem including the words -

*Madoc, alive in truth, but slain in name  
A name that could be whispered on the waves, but never on the land*

However, Professor Gwyn Williams claims this is an 18th century forgery.

According to Deacon, G.D.Burtchaell, an Irish antiquarian, mentions Gaelic verses from an old Irish song which claim that Madoc was a Welsh sailor-prince and friend of Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster (1110-1171) The words say 'He was learned in the ways of the sea, creator of a ship harder than a curragh (Celtic skin boat), and who praised the beauty of the sea as he sang to the music of his harp.'

Burthchael was certainly an Irish antiquarian, but Deacon gives no reference for this claim and was never willing to disclose his sources.

Gutyn Owain - 1468-1498

Reference is made by Dr David Powell in 1584 to Gutyn's mention of second voyage 'with ten sailes'. Powell writes '1170 was the year Madoc went thither...with ten sailes, as I find noted by

Gutyn Owen' and he also says that Madoc left most of his followers in America on his first trip. Again the problem is that Gutyn's dates slightly overlap Columbus in 1493.

The Lundy stone – Richard Deacon claims in his book that in a load of granite that arrived in Barnstaple in 1865, there was a partly-defaced tablet with a carving in old-style Welsh which read 'It is an established fact, known far and wide, that Madoc ventured out into the western ocean, never to return.'

Allegedly, experts who examined it said that script could not have been later than 1300. As the language used was Welsh, it must have pre-dated 1242, when William de Marisco was taken prisoner by Henry II, ending the alliance with the Welsh against the king.

Unfortunately, this vital piece of evidence cannot be authenticated and has to be added to Deacon's fabrications. There was a short-lived Lundy Granite Company in the 1860's. Deacon claimed that he had been informed of the discovery in a letter from Mr. D. G. Evans of Bristol, but extensive enquiries failed to find this person, and a member of the Lundy Association with that name denied all knowledge of the stone. At the time, The Lundy Society contacted Deacon for more information, but he said that all his papers were in America and not available for authentication. The present author and another member of MIRA spent a considerable time and effort in trying to trace this stone, and even the major West Country newspaper put out a feature asking for information on it, without result.

Richard Deacon is dead and his papers are untraced. The Barnstaple Museum and Devon records have no knowledge of such a find. On 24 July 1967, the Bristol Evening Post published an article on the story and asked for any information about the identity of D. G. Evans or any trace of the inscribed stone. No response was forthcoming and the truth of the claim must be rejected.

A Lundy poem, said to be not later than 15th C, was alleged by Deacon to have been found by amongst papers by the 19th century owners of the island, the Heaven family. No such papers of medieval origin exist and this poem has never been seen, other than in Deacon's claims. It was said to have been in Welsh and stated that the infant Madoc was cast adrift in a coracle (a common fable in many cultures, such as the story of Moses). It went on to say that he became a skilled handler of ships, learning from exile in Ireland. It called him the sailor-magician of Bardsey ( an island off the Lleyn peninsula in North Wales) and builder of a magic ship that could not sink.

Again, Deacon's account of this is not validated by any references, apart from saying that it is cited in the Gwydir Papers, an archive from North Wales. The Gwydir Papers came from the Wynne family, descended from Owain Gwynedd's second marriage to Christina, but generally the documents relate to the 16th century and later - nothing in them is remotely to be associated with Madoc. Deacon says that the author must have lived not later than the fifteenth century, but gives no reason for this claim.

The actual part of the poem he quoted was;-

*Y twls lle caed Madwg  
Bola croen ar waith bual crwn  
Blwch byrflu (byrflew) tondew tindwn  
Nofiwr o groen anifail  
Noe serchiog foliog o fail  
Llestr rhwyth fal crwth fola croen  
Coflaid o Ledryn cyflo*



*Myn Pedr, mae yn lledryn  
Rywigoaeth wyll a dwyll dyn*

### The Freeman of Wales

Under the years 1139-48, the Icelandic Orkneyinga Saga records frequent attacks by a 'Freeman of Wales' on their settlements in the 'southern isles' including Tyree and the Isle of Man. In retaliation, they attacked Wales and the freeman ran for refuge to Lundy, which he used as a base.

This seems too early for Madoc, but it proves that Welsh sailors were making frequent voyages around the Irish Sea area at that time –and Lundy crops up once again. Professor Gwyn Williams points out that there seemed to be a medieval story of a Welsh seafarer of considerable renown, but that is a long way from linking him to Madoc and a voyage to America,

Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr – a bard in Owain's court, around 1150-1200, mentions a Madoc in rather vague terms relating to the sea, the translation of which has various forms. He call Madoc one of Owain's 'teulu', rather than a son; this could mean either a retainer or a relative. However, Cynddew's patron was Madog ap Maredudd of Powys, which allows possible confusion as to whom he was alluding.

Rev. E. F. Synott – Richard Deacon, whose veracity is now so much in question, claims that at an auction in Rye (Sussex) 'several years' before Deacon's book was published in 1966, the Rev E.F.Synott, rector of Iden in Kent, purchased some old manuscripts, mouldy and damaged. They appeared to be port records from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, partly in Latin and partly in English. They appeared to be a fragmentary list of ships which had been lost or gone missing. One fragment said ;

Aber Kerrick Guignon, non sunt, Guignon Gorm, Maduac. Pedr Sant, Riryd, Filius Oueni Gueneti an.1171

There was a cross alongside the Pedr Sant, Rhiryd's ship, suggesting it was lost, but not against Madoc's. Aber Cerrick Gwynion was another name for the Afon Ganol, meaning the 'river mouth of white stones'.

Efforts by members of MIRA to trace this alleged document have failed, though the Rev Synott was real enough, being a most colourful character. Enquiries amongst antique dealers in Rye produced no recollection of any such sale. No such mouldy books can be identified and in any case, no such port books existed in the twelfth century, the Black Book of Admiralty being a much later compendium of maritime law, not a register of ships.

### **Stephen Grant-Davies [Modern books on the legend](#) - **6 feb. 2014****

Madoc and the Discovery of America by Richard Deacon. Frederick Muller, London, 1967 ( pre-ISBN)

The late Richard Deacon (real name Donald McCormick) was a well-known writer and journalist on the Sunday Times. His book is very pro-Madoc in nature and it is now apparent that his desire to confirm the legend led him to manufacture evidence that suited his purpose. He wrote many books on controversial topics where hard fact was hard to obtain and invented what he could not

verify. He was successfully sued for libel over one such instance.

Madoc – the Legend of the Welsh Discovery of America. By Professor Gwyn A Williams, 1979 Eyre Methuen Ltd. paperback 1987, Oxford University Press ISBN 0-19285178-0

Gwyn Williams, Professor of Welsh History at the University of Wales, Cardiff, and his book is a masterly piece of academic thoroughness. He, like Thomas Stevens a century earlier, dismisses the story as a legend, showing that most of the so-called 'evidence' is flawed. However, even his acerbic pessimism is broken here and there by shafts of belief, especially in regard to Willem the Minstrel- where he was misled by Deacon.

Did Prince Madoc Discover America? by Michael Senior. 2004, Gwasg Carreg Gwallt, Llanwrst, ISBN 086381 899-4

This is a recent small paperback directed mainly at the Welsh tourist trade, but is an excellent and impartial summary of the major points of the legend, again concluding that there is no positive proof.

Madoc –an essay on the discovery of America by Madoc ap Owain Gwynedd by Thomas Stephens, Longmans, London 1983 (full text available on the Internet

at :<http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=Madoc%20AND%20collection%3Aamericana>)

Thomas Stephens was the author of the (in)famous essay for the 1858 Llangollen National Eisteddfod. The essay won the competition, but the judges refused to award the prize on the grounds that, as Stephens utterly destroyed the legend in his writing, it did not fulfill the aim of the subject, which was to confirm the legend! His essay has been used repeatedly to refute the Madoc story.

### **Stephen Grant-Davies Efforts to validate the legend - 6 feb. 2014**

One of the major factors in doubting the truth of the Madoc legend is popular reliance on a book published in 1963 by the late Richard Deacon, called *Madoc and the Discovery of America*. A well-written and persuasive account, it has now been shown to be full of deliberate fabrications, amounting to outright untruths. In fact, without cross-checking all of his claims against reputable historical records, nothing he says in his book can be accepted as being true, rather than mischievous fabrications.

Deacon, a senior journalist on the Sunday Times, is now known to have perpetrated many such lies in his other writings. A book is now in print cataloguing his misdeeds in other literary fields, such as on Jack the Ripper and books on espionage history. Thus much of what has been accepted in recent years as support for the Madoc legend, must be discarded, leaving very little remaining.

Very scanty and ambiguous evidence of Madoc or his voyages, exists in medieval documents.

Richard Deacon's alleged search of the records traced ten Madocs in the time of Owain Gwynedd, but even he admitted that none were Madoc the seaman.

Owain died on 27 November 1170, so there would have been no time for Madoc become disillusioned by subsequent fraternal violence and then to sail before the winter of the same year,

as the deep-sea sailing season was April to November (but admittedly the internecine trouble started in 1169, so he could have left before his father's death. Richard Deacon says that Owain died in December 1169, but this presumably one of his many errors).

The first authenticated claims of Madoc the Sailor's voyage appeared over four hundred years later, in Tudor times – orally by Dr John Dee to Queen Elizabeth and the Royal Council on October 3rd in 1580, then in print in 1583 by Sir George Peckham, long after Columbus claimed the Americas for Spain in 1492.

Dee was an extraordinary scholar, astrologer, mathematician and mystic of Welsh parentage and a powerful figure behind the scenes in Elizabethan times. He told the queen “The Lord Madoc, sonne to Owain Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, led a colonie and inhabited in Terra Florida or thereaboutws’ ( In those days, any part of Spanish America was called 'Florida')

A proposal to solve the problem of English Catholics by 'evacuating' them across the Atlantic was prepared by Sir George Peckham and addressed to Queen Elizabeth, his ‘True Reporte’ carried a preface dated 12 November, 1583, which stated: - 'And it is very evident that the planting there shall in time right amplie enlarge her Majesties Territories and Dominions (or I might rather say) restore to her Highnesse ancient right and interest in those Countries, into the which a noble and worthy personage, lyneally descended from the blood royall, borne in Wales, named Madock ap Owen Gwyneth, departing from the coast of England, about the yeere of our Lord God 1170 arrived and there planted himselfe, and his Colonies, and afterward appeareth in an auncient Welch Chronicle, where he then gave to certaine Llandes, Beastes, and Fowles, sundrie Welch names, as the Lland of Pengwyn, which yet to this day beareth the same.'

Dee's elder contemporary, historian Humphrey Llwyd, had translated the old Welsh Chronicles (said to be by Caradoc of Llancarfan ?) in 1559, but they were not published until 1584 by Dr David Powell as the ‘Historie of Cambria’ with his fuller account of the Madoc story. (Caradoc died in 1156, but his chronicles were continued by his monks). These well-known 'Chronicles of the Princes' (Brut y Twysogion) are a yearly calender of noteworthy events from the 7th century to 1282, with a continuation to 1332, but they contain not a single word about Madoc or voyages of discovery across the ocean. Surely such a remarkable event would have merited some notice for the years around 1170?

Powell wrote “Madoc, another of Owain Gwyneth his sonnes left the land in contention betwixt his brethren and prepared certain ships with men and munition, and sought adventures by seas, sailing west and leaving the coast of Ireland so far north that he came to a land unknowen, where he saw manie strange things. This land must needs be some part of that countrie of which the Spaniards affirm themselves to be the first finders. And after he had returned home and declared the pleasant and fruitful countries that he has seen without inhabitants and upon the contrairie part, for what barren and wild ground his brethren and nephews did murther one another, he prepared a number of ships and got with him such men and women as were desirous to live in quiteness and taking leave of his friends, tooke his journie westwards againe....”

Then followed repetitive elaborations of this basic Tudor account, all designed to counter the Spanish claim to the New World. These included Sir Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* published in 1600 and Sir Thomas Herbert's 1638 book about his travels.

Even the famous Sir Walter Raleigh got in on the act. Sir Walter, in a letter to Elizabeth from the “Island of Trinidada”, dated “20th of Maye, 1595”, stated:

“I, Sir Walter Raleigh, commander in chief by land and sea etc. etc. etc. – for the most high and Puiſiant Princess Elizabeth Queen of England, Wales, France and Irland – and of the Dominions and seas there unto belonging and all the lands, continents, islands and seas and beyond the Atlantic ocean round the great continent called America and into the South Seas – in and over All Lands and Estates heretofore had and discovered for and on behalf of the most Excellent, high and renowned Prince Owen Guyeneth or Guyneth prince and Sovereign of North Wales, next unto the Nation of the Scotch or Northern Britons, discoveries and conquests first made in the year of our Redemption and Salvation 1164 (or their about) by the great and valiant Prince Madock ap Owen Guyneth the youngest son of the said Prince Owen Guyneth, he being provided with a powerfull fleete and Men of War, and arms famous for valour by Lande and Sea takeing with him Many Noble Brittons both of Wales and of the Northern race besides Valiant Men from Irland and other adventurers for new and great discoveries, did first come into these seas in the year of Salvation aforesaid named and set down 1164 and the second time in 1170 and did Make notable discovery conquests and settlements of all the parts of the said great Continent of America and of all the Islands round that Mighty tract of Land and in all the seas .....

He obviously relied on his contemporaries for his information, though curiously gave the date as '1164 or their about' and made 1170 the year of the second voyage. Any hope of validating the Madoc story requires reputable mentions of it prior to 1493 when Columbus returned to Spain.

## [Madog: The Missing Trans-Atlantic Poem](#)

August 26, 2010

Author: [Beach Combing](#) | in : [Medieval](#) , [trackback](#)



Universal mourning in the Beachcombing household as (i) twelve hours on trains and in hospital beckons and, more importantly, (ii) the beloved Beachcombing babysitter has announced her intention to go to South Africa. Beachcombing spent several hours trying to convince the local South African consul that said babysitter was actually a terrorist threat but to no avail. So resigned to this loss and in recognition of a sad day Beachcombing thought that he would have a post on 'proto-Afrikaans', or medieval Dutch as it is more generally known.

Now among the many vanished epics of the Middle Ages few losses pain Beachcombing as much as that of the thirteenth-century Dutch poem, *Madog*. Regular readers might shake their heads at this: bar an unhealthy fascination for [Flanders cat-killing](#) Beachcombing has never shown much of an interest in the Flemish or Dutch world, medieval or otherwise. Why then this sudden obsession with the literature of the Low Countries?

Well, Madog was a twelfth-century Welsh prince who, according to Welsh myth, sailed off into the Atlantic and discovered a mysterious island there. That surely is bizarre enough to justify inclusion? His legend can be paralleled in other stories from the Celtic fringe and he seems to have been a Welsh equivalent to the Irish St Brendan.

What makes Madog even more interesting is that in the Elizabethan age the English claimed that Madog had discovered the Americas three hundred years before Columbus and that, therefore, the Americas were theirs! Beachcombing will leave the audacity of this to one side: the English using their battered and much-abused neighbours the Welsh for a land-grab claim. He will note though that legend spawned legend including the many 'I-was-out-in-the-wilderness-and-I-

met-a-Welsh-speaking-Indian' tales of American pioneers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Another post, another day). There are also some delicious attempts to prove that Amerindian languages were influenced by Welsh.

The difficulty for scholars today is that we know almost nothing about the original Madog legend bar a line of twelfth-century Welsh poetry and lines from two fifteenth-century Welsh poems. If the *Madog* poem survived it would be the Holy Grail of Madog studies. Indeed, if it were to turn up tomorrow it would be the equivalent of someone finding an *A-Z to Atlantis* tucked into a manuscript of Plato's *Republic*.

Now Beachcombing can prove that *Madog* (the poem) existed because in the prologue to his poem *Reynard*, the author, Willelm the Fleming named *Madog* as another poem he had written. But nothing else is known and Willelm himself is an utterly obscure figure. He doesn't even – history's ultimate insult – have a Wikipedia page.

Willelm, Beachcombing would suggest, had borrowed from the Welsh – as other Continental writers borrowed from Welsh or Breton Arthurian myth – and elaborated these legends in his own tongue. There was an important Flemish settlement in Pembrokeshire, Wales so there is even a credible link between Willelm's homeland and the Welsh.

End of story? Important poem lost. Beachcombing weeps and consoles himself with the thought that perhaps it wasn't the Atlantic sailing Madog, but another less important one.

But no. There is more. Kind of.

Richard Deacon in his *Madoc and the Discovery of America* (1966) made an exciting claim. A French scholar Duvivier had been in touch and had told Deacon that a *précis* of the poem survived in a French manuscript. This fourteenth-century manuscript supposedly told how Madog with his sea-nymph wife searched for the fountain of youth in the ocean. They found the fountain and then brought others there in a colony where all lived according to the precepts of love.

However, after the celebration, the problem. Richard Deacon's book has three desperately important sources that not a single other Madog scholar has ever seen. And they are described in such a way that the author could deny the source: e.g. Deacon was relying on the French scholar Duvivier (who Beachcombing has found no trace of).

Beachcombing does not really know how to put this politely. However, looking around the internet he has seen that Deacon (true name Donald McCormick, obit 1998) is sometimes said to have used unverifiable sources in his other books, mainly on intelligence matters. And...

Does any one else have reflections on the quality of Deacon's/McCormick's sources?

Drbeachcombing AT yahoo DOT com would love to know – he's been wondering about this for years and years. Beachcombing is fairly confident that this *précis* does not exist – but five Madog books to anyone who can prove Beachcombing wrong and one Madog book to anyone who can find evidence of the mysterious (non-existent?) Duvivier.

\*\*\*

1st Sep: Landulph sent in this email giving Beachcombing the information that he has sought for years. *'Unfortunately, Donald McCormick (aka 'Richard Deacon') is a notorious hoaxer, despite his distinguished background in Fleet Street and numerous best-selling books. See these two links for details:*

[http://www.casebook.org/dissertations/maybrick\\_diary/mb-mc.html](http://www.casebook.org/dissertations/maybrick_diary/mb-mc.html)

*There are other instances (such as his biography of the 17th-century 'Witchfinder General' Matthew Hopkins) of McCormick simply inventing and/or 'discovering' a source document out of whole cloth! Basically, the upshot of these revelations (most of which did not surface until after his death in 1998) is that NOTHING McCormick writes on anything can be trusted – unless, of course, it can be corroborated from a more trustworthy source. Why he would engage in this extraordinary conduct (particularly when most of his books cover such fascinating subject matter in their own rights) is perhaps the greatest mystery of all, one more fit for a psychologist than a historian.'*

Well said Landulph! Beachcombing will return to this topic in another post. He wants to note immediately though that McCormick worked for British intelligence in the war and that never did anyone any good... Thanks Landulph!

<http://www.strangehistory.net/2010/08/26/madog-the-missing-trans-atlantic-poem/>

# Hayek: A Collaborative Biography

## Part III, Fraud, Fascism and Free Market Religion

**Authors:** [Robert Leeson](#)

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### Chapter 9

[Hayek: A Collaborative Biography](#)

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## 'Deacon' McCormick and the Madoc Myth

- Howard Kimberley

### Abstract

'Deacon' McCormick's (1967) *Madoc and the Discovery of America: Some new light on an old controversy* was advertized on the dustcover as an authentic documentary of a little-known piece of history, so thoroughly researched and cross-referenced that it must become a standard work on the subject.

'Deacon' McCormick's work is very readable and, on the face of it, very plausible: he portrayed himself as a genuine scholar, writing factual history based on sound, painstaking research. Does the evidence support this 'credible scholar' impression — or was he a charlatan?<sup>1</sup>

## 9

### 'Deacon' McCormick and the Madoc Myth

*Howard Kimberley*

#### Madoc and the myths of empire

'Deacon' McCormick's (1967) *Madoc and the Discovery of America: Some new light on an old controversy* was advertized on the dustcover as an authentic documentary of a little-known piece of history, so thoroughly researched and cross-referenced that it must become a standard work on the subject.

'Deacon' McCormick's work is very readable and, on the face of it, very plausible: he portrayed himself as a genuine scholar, writing factual history based on sound, painstaking research. Does the evidence support this 'credible scholar' impression – or was he a charlatan? [1] Between 1492 and 1503, Christopher Columbus, under the sponsorship of the Crown of Castile, made four round-trip voyages between Spain and the Americas, which fuelled with the growing rivalry between the European seafaring nations. New legends of earlier colonization gradually emerged. There was an overwhelming need for the Welsh/British Tudors to establish a presence in the Americas, so as to assert their own prior claim. Only then was it authoritatively asserted that Prince Madoc, a Welshman, had 'discovered' America first. Tudor propaganda was highly



effective: within a century of the first voyage of Columbus, the voyages of Madoc had become firmly rooted in popular folklore, and had, with subsequent retellings, acquired the status of fact. In an early Welsh legend (with little provenance), Madoc (Madog), was a son of Owain Gwynedd (Owain the Great), who ruled in the 12<sup>th</sup> century over a fair part of what is now north Wales. In 1170, Madoc and his brother Riryd supposedly sailed from north Wales in two ships and [202] reached the coast of America. Liking what they found, they returned to Wales, assembled a small fleet and set out to cross the Atlantic a second time. There is, indeed, an early reference to Owain Gwynedd having a son called Madoc (Bartrum 1966, 96); [2] that he was a sailor; [3] but nothing more. [4]

David Ingram, who sailed from England in 1568 with Sir John Hawkins on his third journey to the West Indies, started the ball rolling with a report that he made to the Elizabethan spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham, claiming that Indians that he had met on his travels from the Gulf Coast of Mexico to Nova Scotia used Welsh words. His evidence may have been ill-founded; but later, it provided England with the catalyst it needed to further its ambitions of Empire.

The year after *Madoc*, 'Deacon' McCormick (1968) published *John Dee: Scientist, geographer, astrologer and secret agent to Elizabeth I*; he had presumably been working on both books simultaneously. In 1580, Dee had proposed the story of Madoc's voyage to Queen Elizabeth I of England, the grand-daughter of the first Tudor king, Henry VII. [5] Dee, a Londoner, and, like Henry VII, of Welsh descent, was an extraordinarily gifted scholar, astronomer, mathematician, and mystic, who became a powerful behind-the-scenes Elizabethan figure: he was both tutor and advisor on astrological and scientific matters to his queen.

Dee (1550s-1570s) served as an advisor to the English voyages of discovery, providing both technical assistance in navigation and ideological backing. In his 'Title Royal', a document presented to Queen Elizabeth, Dee mentioned 'The Lord Madoc, sonne of Owen Gwynedd, Prince of Northwales, [who] led a Colonie and inhabited in Terra Florida or thereabouts'. This opened the floodgates to claims by Elizabeth's courtiers that she had prior claim to the Americas over the Spanish by virtue of the Madoc voyages by over 300 years. [6]

## Lundy

According to 'Deacon' McCormick (1967, 41), in 1163, when Henry II's forces again moved against Gwynedd, the archives of Lundy Island recorded that: 'an emissarie of the Prince of Gwynet landed on Lund to seek aide against Henrie of Englande'.

'Deacon' McCormick provided a reference: 'Devonshire Records Office, Exeter, 1893', before continuing:

[p. ?]

1865 a stone tablet was found. On it, carved in old style Welsh lettering, was the legend:

*Mae un ffai-(th) gened-(Leith)-ol*  
*I Madoc o Lund fudo'n ormodol*  
*Ir mor-gor-(lle)-winol,*  
*Ond ni ddaith byth y-(nol).*

Thus on a remote island in the Bristol Channel, a long way from his native Gwynedd, Madoc the sailor was commemorated by the bald statement that, 'It is an established fact, known far and wide, that Madoc ventured far out into the Western Ocean never to return.'

As I could find no evidence whatsoever to support the above claims, I contacted the Devonshire Records Office in Exeter only to be informed that all material relating to Lundy was now in the North Devon Records Office in Barnstaple, which I then contacted. The reply was unambiguous: the evidence ‘strongly suggests that something is not right with the facts as presented by ‘Deacon’ McCormick.

I was told first that an archaeologist, Keith Gardner, had already examined ‘Deacon’ McCormick’s assertions, and had been unable to identify the source for the Lundy archives; he had also been unable to locate the alleged source of the story, one Mr G. G. Evans of Bristol. Second, ‘there is nothing that confirms the discovery of an inscribed stone of the type described by Deacon on the island’. Third, ‘Deacon’ McCormick would only provide Gardner with a ‘frustratingly vague reply in which ‘Deacon’ McCormick claimed that all his notes were over in America at the time so he could not verify any of his sources!’ (see Appendix to this Chapter). ‘Deacon’ McCormick’s response to Gardner that his notes were in America appears to have been a lame excuse for his [...] failure to provide any evidence to support his assertions.

Historian-archaeologist and Latin scholar Paul M. Remfry highlights other errors in ‘Deacon’ McCormick’s story, the most important being that there had actually been no campaign against Owain Gwynedd in 1163. [7] Although in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Lundy was a kind of semi-independent kingdom held by the Marisco family, it is extremely unlikely that they ever possessed an ‘archive’. At best, they would have had a [204] series of disparate charters. The Kingdom of England did not begin to archive its royal documents until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Even if there had been any documents relating to Lundy, they would not, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, have been written in Elizabethan English but in Latin; stone tablets in the 12<sup>th</sup> century would also have been written in Latin. From this, the only possible conclusion that can be reached is that ‘Deacon’ McCormick simply took a local landmark and created a fiction around it.

Lundy is a small island in the Severn Estuary, three and a half miles by half a mile, about ten miles off Devon, England, and twenty miles from Pembrokeshire, Wales. ‘Deacon’ McCormick (1973) added that ‘lund’ is Norse for penguin. It is not: it is Norse for puffin, a different bird altogether. I have visited Lundy: although there are no penguins there, the puffins are prolific. (There are no penguins in northern latitudes; they are birds of the southern oceans.)

## Synnott’s ‘remarkable’ discovery

‘Deacon’ McCormick (1967, 98) asserted:

The late Rector of Iden in Kent, the Reverend E. F. Synnott, made a remarkable discovery in a sale-room at Rye in Sussex several years ago. Together with a collection of old books he purchased an assortment of ancient and mould-infested manuscripts which had obviously been rescued from destruction. Many of them were torn in pieces and some charred as though they had been consigned to a bonfire before their previous owner thought better of it. The manuscripts, such as they were, appeared to be some form of port records for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, compiled partly in Latin and partly in broken English. Mr. Synnott was of the opinion that, though not every manuscript was part of a whole, some of the pieces when placed together added up to what was a list of ships lost, or unaccounted for in various ports of England and Wales. Among the entries was one which particularly interested the Iden Rector because he knew

something Madoc legend. It read: ‘ABER-KERRIK-GUIGNON Non sunt Guignon Gorn, Madauc. Pedr Sant, Riryd, filius Oweni Gueneti An. 1171’.

‘Deacon’ McCormick (1967, 98) provided contemporary proof that Madoc had a ship named Gwennan Gorn (which is given a French-corrupted spelling in the ms.) and that in 1171 this ship was missing, or her whereabouts unknown. [8]

[205] Reverend Edward Fitzgerald Synnott had, indeed, been Rector of Iden, East Sussex, and was a well-known, colourful character. [9] However, as far as the ‘contemporary proof’ is concerned, there is no record of an old book on missing ships. Furthermore, no medieval document would bear the date ‘An. 1171’ in Arabic numerals – it would have been ‘Annus MCLXI’. Nor would there have been any English, broken or otherwise, in any official document written before 1400, at the very earliest. It was extremely unlikely that there would have been a coordinated port record of both Welsh and English shipping, due to the turbulence of the relationship that existed between them at the time. There is, however, a ‘Black Book of the Admiralty’ – but this did not record missing ships at all, being a compilation of English maritime law; its starting point was the Rolls of Oleron, attributed to Eleanor of Aquitaine c.1160. The initial two laws dealt with felony and shipwreck, and it was probably compiled as a book in the reign of Edward III (from 1327 till 1377).

### **Willem the Minstrel, the fictitious M. Eduard Duvivier and a fictitious manuscript**

‘Deacon’ McCormick (1967, 164, 166) also asserted Willem the Minstrel’s work on Madoc is described as a ‘romance’. In that age the word meant a narrative, and however much their narratives were gilded in the course of retelling, their basis invariably was factual ... the Flemings were chroniclers in a sober Dutch manner; they collected, arranged and narrated legends rather than embellished them, and, this being their technique, they were as much interested in true life contemporary adventure as in legends that had been gleaned in Wales by talking to the bards and priests. A large number of Flemings returned from Wales and the border counties between 1185 and 1220, faithfully transmitting to the Continent the Arthurian legends and much other Celtic folk-lore. But the Flemish versions of many of these stories have unhappily not always been committed to paper; far too often they were simply turned into songs by itinerant minstrels to gratify the romantic yearnings of the lonely wives of the Crusaders. About 1255 a Brabantine minstrel translated Walter Map’s *Lancelot du Lac* at [...] the command of his master, Loderwijk [CH: sic!] van Velthem, and Jacob van Maerlant produced several ‘romances’ dealing with Merlin and the Holy Grail. Among these Flemings was Willem, a shadowy figure, variously described as minstrel, poet, priest and scholar. His origins are vague; it is clear that [206] he lived in Wales for a lengthy period, probably on the Welsh borders around Herefordshire, as he was known to Walter Map, himself a Herefordshire man. His best known work was undoubtedly *Van den Vos REinaerde* (Reynard the Fox), the prologue of which introduces him as Willem, die Madocke makede. (Willem, the author of Madoc).

...

In his introduction to his critical examination of *Vos Reynaerde*, Professor J.W. Muller asks: ‘To whom do we owe this masterpiece? When and where was it written?’ ... a certain Willem in the

first line of the prologue called himself a poet who had earlier written a work about one Madoc, a work which has often been mentioned by more recent authors, and seems to have been very popular at one time, but now alas is lost. There are fascinating scraps of information about him here and there. Walter Map, whose *De Nugis Curialium* was composed of legends, gossip and anecdote, referred somewhat satirically to the 'jongleur-bardh Willem, proud as eny pecok, and singe, y-wis, as eny nightingale'. This makes Willem sound more like a troubadour than a priest, and indeed in one important respect his work differs from that of other Flemings; he retained the gift of sober chronicling, but added to it a facility for employing words and phrases that brought out the colours of his narrative, interspersing fact with legends which appear to give his own interpretation of those facts.

'Deacon' McCormick (1967, 166) then cited an alleged letter (20 December 1965) from M. Edouard Duvivier, of Poitiers, who has made a study of the Troubadours, [who] helped to supply the next link in the quest for Willem by declaring that Les Romans de Guillaume le Jongleur were current in Provence and Champagne in the thirteenth century. Willem is certainly one of the many *auteurs inconnus*, who, with Audefrois le Bâtard, Chrestien de Troyes and Gace Brûlie [*sic*] enshrined the ancient legends and pastourelles in the courts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He had been forgotten for two reasons. First, because he was a foreigner, and secondly because his *Reinaerde* was almost certainly not discovered until long after he was dead. I think he probably died before 1240 and that Dutch searchers for facts about his life have been looking for them in the wrong period. Yet M. Duvivier insists that it was his lost work of Madoc which was, [207] strangely enough, for centuries the best known. 'It is said to have been obtained originally through Willem's knowledge of Welsh, to have been translated first into Latin, then into French, and probably not at all into Flemish.' A reputed copy of a French manuscript of the work was found in Poitiers in the seventeenth century, and, having inspected this closely, I am convinced that it must have been translated not later than the end of the fourteenth century and quite possibly much earlier.

Poitiers University have been unable to trace any record of the above manuscripts or, indeed, the existence of a M. Edouard Duvivier. The obvious deduction is that 'Deacon' McCormick has taken a historic figure, Willem the Minstrel, who wrote a famous poem on Reynard the Fox and also a now lost work on a Madoc, and has conjured up a (possibly imaginary) M. Edouard Duvivier and a fictitious manuscript.

## The Annals of Conwy Abbey

According to 'Deacon' McCormick (1967, 24), a genealogical table, quoting contemporary sources such as the annals of Conwy Abbey, shows Madoc marrying Annesta, a maid of honour to Chrisiant (Madoc's stepmother) by whom he had a daughter, named Gwennllian. The original lost Annals could not have been started before 1186, when the Abbey was founded. The much later abridged transcript of the Annals have recently been examined, prior to translation from the Latin, by Paul Remfry: while they do contain some references to some notable events prior to 1186, they contain no reference to Madoc. Again, another invention by 'Deacon' McCormick.

'Deacon' McCormick (1967, 39) also asserted:

The annals of Strata Florida, or Caron Uwch Cluwdd, an anney founded in 1091 in Cardiganshire, were supposed to have formed the basis of the writings of Caradoc of Llancarfan. Very few records of this abbey remain today; what there are have been fully documented by Stephen W. Williams in *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*. There is nothing there about Madoc. Te Abbey of Strata Florida would be less likely to contain information about Madoc than that of Conwy. Alas when Edward I moved Conwy abbey to Maenan, when he built a castle at Conwy, many records were destroyed. There were said to be relics of Madoc in the abbey but they no longer exist, and only the site of Conwy Abbey remains today. [208]

‘Deacon’ McCormick suggested that many of the ‘Conwy Annals’ have been destroyed; yet he had quoted them earlier. There is in fact a version of the Annals, as mentioned above, but there is no evidence, nor local tradition, of any Annals being destroyed by Edward I; nor that there were relics of Madoc in the Abbey. According to Paul Remfry, Strata Florida was always named that – never, to his knowledge, Caron Uwch Cluwdd – and it certainly was not founded in 1091, but in 1164, after the death of Caradog of Llancarfan about 1150! Yet more fabrications by ‘Deacon’ McCormick.

## Misrepresenting legitimate evidence

‘Deacon’ McCormick (1967, 23) was also guilty of poor scholarship and misrepresentation of legitimate evidence: he writes that ‘All sources name Iorwerth Drwyndwn (Edward Disfigured Nose) as the eldest son of Owain.’ This is debatable. However, in his genealogical chart on the same page, he depicts Iorwerth (Edward) and Drwyndwn (Disfigured Nose) as two separate people.

‘Deacon’ McCormick (1967, 165) stated:

But it is not irrational to examine how these legends became interwoven, as here lie some real clues to the story of Madoc as told by his contemporaries, or at least his near contemporaries ... Geoffrey of Monmouth may have been more responsible than others for creating what seemed a link with the Madoc legend. Geoffrey was Bishop of St. Asaph, which was in the kingdom of Gwynedd, and wrote his *Historia Britonum* in the latter part of the twelfth century. However, Geoffrey of Monmouth had written his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (the History of the Kings of Britain) in the 1130s. Geoffrey had been appointed Archdeacon of Llandaff in 1140 and made Bishop of St. Asaph on 21 February 1152; he died in about 1155, years before Madoc’s alleged journey. Another, totally different text, the *historia Brittinum*, had been composed in about the year 830; it is usually attributed to someone called Nennius.

## Conclusion

All the facts found so far clearly indicate that ‘Deacon’ McCormick: fabricated evidence about the island of Lundy, the manuscript and the stone; made up a story about a mysterious ledger of missing ships found [209] in an antique shop in Rye; invented a M. Eduard Duvivier and a fictitious manuscript in Poitiers; conjured up a record of Madoc’s marriage and the birth of a daughter in the annals of Conwy Abbey, when there is no reference to Madoc in the surviving

abridgement of them; asserted that the Annals have been destroyed by Edward I, and that there were relics of Madoc in the Abbey (yet there is no evidence to support either statement; indeed, Edward I was recorded as ordering the copying and preservation of Annals and Chronicles). 'Deacon' McCormick cannot distinguish a penguin from a puffin, and he shows Iorwerth Drwyndwn as two people in a genealogical table. He claims that Geoffrey of Monmouth may have been more responsible than others for creating what seemed a link with the Madoc legend in his *Historia Brittonum* when, in fact, Geoffrey had died nine years before the earliest date suggested for Madoc's first voyage, and 15 years before the suggested date of his second voyage. The final piece in this catalogue of fabrication and mistruths is that the most likely candidate for McCormick's tated source, the *Historia Brittonum*, was not written by Geoffrey at all, but had been written some 300 years before Geoffrey put quill to parchment (or, more likely, [...])

[210] to the purported Madoc connection with Lundy. Gardner evidently contacted a number of experts at that time in an attempt to discover any documentary evidence of Deacon's claims, including a librarian at Exeter Reference Library who had a particular interest in Lundy. Nobody Gardner contacted could identify the source of the 'Lundy archives' reference for 1163 given by Deacon as 'Devonshire Records, Exeter, 1893'! Gardner also conducted a search of the local newspaper, the North Devon Journal, for any report of the discovery of the inscribed stone, dated by Deacon as 1865, without locating anything relevant. He also tried to track down the source of the story mentioned as a Mr D. G. Evans of Bristol, again without success. Nor did he have any joy by contacting Richard Deacon personally; he only received a frustratingly vague reply in which Deacon claimed that all his notes were over in America at the time so he could not verify any of his sources!

There was a short-lived Lundy Granite Company operating from the island in the 1860s, but the index to the North Devon Journal includes no mention of any discovery of an inscribed stone by them. Furthermore, a detailed history of Lundy was published by local historian J. R. Chanter in 1871, just a few years after the supposed discovery. His work is very extensive and scholarly and includes a section on the Lundy Granite Company. He makes no mention whatsoever of any such discovery. Nor does Lewis R. W. Lloyd, who published another history of the island in 1925, a work that, in fact, begins with a description of inscribed stones found on the island and which clearly states that there were only two examples known about at that time, the 'Giant's Stone' discovered in 1850 and the Stone of Tigernus, a gravestone dated c450-650AD, discovered in 1905.

Recent authors on the history of Lundy have tended to repeat the assertions of Richard Deacon but have offered no supportive evidence to back up his story. Certainly, from the point of view of the collections and publications relating to Lundy housed in this office, there is nothing that confirms the discovery of an inscribed stone of the type described by Deacon on the island, and the absence of any reference to such a major discovery in Chanter's history published just 6 years after the event is supposed to have happened strongly suggest that something is not right with the facts as presented by Deacon. Nor do we have anything that corresponds to that 1163 'Lundy archive' reference quoted by Deacon.

I hope this helps.

With best wishes,

Tim Wormleighton Principal Archivist, Devon County Council. [211]



## Notes

1. This chapter does not delve into ‘Deacon’ McCormick’s personality; nor does it ask why, with such a vast store of knowledge at his fingertips, he apparently chose to lie to his readers and deliberately deceive them. (Perhaps a better question would be: ‘How-did-he-manage-to-get-away-with-it-for-so-long?’) Neither does this chapter seek to establish whether or not a Welsh prince did actually sail across the Atlantic and settle in North America over 300 years before Columbus.
2. Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru (Genealogy of the Kings and Princes of Wales): 1-8 BONEDD TWYSSOGION KYMRV [C’ 40] (Descent of the Welsh Princes) *Bellach yr ysbyswn o Vonedd Twysogion Kymry* [H 58]. (Henceforth proclaim the descent of the Welsh Princes.)  
2. PLANT YWEIN GWYNEDD [B 5] (Children of Owain Gwynedd) [l] Howel ap Owain. Ffynnod Wyddeles oedd I vam. (*Howel son of Owain. Ffynnod an Irishwoman was his mother.*) [m] Madoc ac Einon meibion Ywain vnvam oeddynt. (*Madoc and Einon, sons of Owain, one mother they had.*) (Whether the term ‘one mother they had’ implies that Madoc and Einon were full brothers or whether it implies that they were full brothers of Howel is open to interpretation.)
3. Maredudd ap Rhys, Vicar of Rhiwabon and poet (c.1420-c.1485); his poem thanking someone for a gift of a fishing net includes phrases which describe Madoc as of the lineage of Owain Gwynedd and as – Madoc the bold ... would not have land ... nor great wealth but the seas ... *A Madoc am I to my age and to this passion of the seas have I been accustomed.*
4. Following the conquest of much of Wales by Edward I of England in 1283, the 1284 Statute of Rhuddlan provided the constitutional basis for the government of the Principality. In effect, most of independent Wales became, from that time, a colony.
5. Elizabeth was reputedly conversant with the Welsh language.
6. Sir Walter Raleigh, who is more specific than most in the dating of the alleged voyages, in a letter to his queen from the ‘Island of Trinidada’ dated ‘20<sup>th</sup> of Maye, 1595’ stated: ‘I, Sir Walter Raleigh, commander in chief by land and sea etc. etc. etc. – for the most high and Puissant Princess Elizabeth Quenn of England, Wales, France and Ireland – and of the Dominions and seas there unto belonging and all the lands, continents, islands and seas and beyond the Atlantic ocean round the great continent called America and into the South Seas – in and over All Lands and Estates heretofore had and discovered for and on behalf of the most Excellent, high and renowned Prince Owen Guyeneth or Guyneth prince and Sovereign of North Wales, next unto the Nation of the Scotch or Northend Britons, discoveries and conquests first made in the year of our Redemption and Salvation 1164 (or their about) by the great and valiant Prince Madock ap Owen Guyneth the

youngest son of the said Prince Owen Guyneth, he being provided with a powerfull fleete and Men of War, and arms famous for valour by Lande ans Sea takeing with him Many Noble Brittons both of Wales and of the Northern nrace besides Valiant Men from Irland and other adventurers for new and great discoveries, did first come into these seas in the year of Salvation aforesaid named and set down 1164 and the second [212] time in 1170 and did Make notable discovery conquests and settlements of all the parts of the said great Continent of America and of all the Islands round that Mighty tract of Land and in all the seas ...’

7. In 1163, Henry II of England marched an army along the Glamorgan coast to St Davids, and then back through Rhaeadr and Radnor. This was in south and mid-Wales, over a day’s march from Gwynedd’s territory. Henry’s campaign, if it could be termed that, was against Rhys ap Gruffydd, amd there was no fighting. Henry and Owain Gwynedd had been at peace since 1158, and that only changed in the late summer of 1164. Indeed, in August 1163, Owain, together with King Malcolm of Scotland, did homage to Henry II at Woodstock.
8. According to ‘Deacon’ McCormick (1968, 98), ‘In most cases, the names of the ship and those presumably of her owner, or master, were given. The purpose of the compiling of the list itself was not clear, but seemed to be an inventory of missing ships; such ports as Rye, Winchelsea, Bristol and Milfort Haven were mentioned and the dates ranged from 1166 to 1183. It was only partially complete and often indecipherable owing to mould and burns. There was no indication as to whose property the archives known as The Black Book of Admiralty, long since lost. This seems a debatable theory, but it may well have been that from material such as this the mysterious and secret Black Book was compiled. Here at any rate was a clear association of Madoc not only with the legendary Gwennan Gorn, but also with his brother Riryd, the latter being clearly indicated as a son of Owain Gwynedd. Why it may well be asked, was not Riryd named as the discoverer of America instead of Madoc? Madoc was described as just ‘Madoc’, a mere name to the authorities of the day, but Riryd was known as Lord of Clochran and a possessor of estates in his own right, whereas Madoc was more or less a nomad without estates. Could it be that Riryd’s ship was sunk at sea? On the document there were no marks against the name of Madoc’s ship, but against that of Pedr Sant there was the sign of the cross and a small indecipherable word. The sign of the Cross may have indicated that this ship was sunk. If, of course, Riryd did reach the New World with his brother, and stayed there, it would ne Madoc, the one who returned to Wales, who would take the credit for the discovery. At least this seems contemporary proof that Madoc had a ship named Gwennan Gorn (which is given a French-corrupted spelling in the ms.) and that in 1171 this ship was missing, or her whereabouts unknown.’
9. Synnott died, aged 86, and was buried in Iden on 19 March 1946, closely followed by his wife Mary, aged 83, who was interred on 4 June 1946. Synnott died intestate, but his wife



left a simple will in which she bequeathed all her personal property to her daughter, Harriet Jean Fitzgerald Synnott, who she also appointed as sole executrix. Synnott had become parish priest of Rusper, West Sussex, in 1914; he upset his parishioners so much that he was taken before the highest ecclesiastical court at Westminster in 1919, but was found 'not guilty' of all charges. He wrote a book, *Five Years of Hell in a Village Parish*, and local historian Brian Slyfield's review of it gives a wonderful synopsis of the man; he was a tall, powerful man who in his youth in Ireland had won the Constabulary Boxing championship. His sporting achievements were matched by his rhetoric, and he was well educated and much travelled. He was [213] hard working and ran a farm alongside his parish duties. He preached self-defence, and also practiced a robust form of Christianity; apparently when two local horse dealers sold him a bad mount, he chased and caught up with them and proceeded to give them a five-minute lecture on their business methods after which 'I took off my coat and gave those two the finest drubbing they had ever had.'

[www.villagepublunches.org.uk/sussex-people-profiles/104](http://www.villagepublunches.org.uk/sussex-people-profiles/104)

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