

**An Address to the University of Wales,
on receiving the Honorary Degree, *Litterarum Doctor*, 15 July 1960.**

by
DAVID JONES

Edited by Gregory Baker

Editorial Note

David Jones received an honorary doctorate from the University of Wales on Friday, July 15th 1960. Jones expected to attend the ceremony to receive his degree in person, but according to a typewritten note which his friend, Harmon Grisewood, later appended to a copy of this address, now in the archive at the Burns Library of Boston College, “David found it difficult to make speeches and any public appearance filled him in advance with an intense dread. So he did not go to Wales on this occasion and wrote a short address to be read for him.”¹ Despite the fact that Jones did not travel to Bangor, the address he composed remained something of which he was rather proud. Staying at the Paddington Hotel less than a month later, he signed and sent a typescript copy of the address to Saunders Lewis, the prominent nationalist and Welsh language playwright with whom Jones professed to share what he called “a mutual involvement and understanding – a sort of *cydgyfarfyddiad*...where those three highly complex & usually dissevered ‘things’: the *res Walliae*, the Catholic religion, culture and *ars*, are intermuddled.”²

¹ Harmon Grisewood’s note is dated November 1975. David Jones Papers, MS86–1, 2/67. Series 1. Burns Library, Boston College.

² The Welsh, *cydgyfarfyddiad*, denotes a “meeting-together”, a “concurrence” or a “conjoining”. See David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (3 December 1967) MS File #22724E, folio 50–1. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. On the friendship of Saunders Lewis and David Jones, see Hannah Dentinger, “‘Cydgyfarfyddiad’ Cymreig”. *Y Traethodydd* 159 (2004) 222–34.

A typescript copy of this address may be found in the archive of Jones’ correspondence with Saunders Lewis (14

Like his correspondence with Lewis, Jones' address shows him at work attempting to rationalize for a more public audience the 'intermuddle' of history where there converged those "three highly complex and usually dissevered 'things'": Wales, Catholic Christianity and the central role of art and literature in modern British society.

In editing and annotating this address I gratefully acknowledge the Trustees of the David Jones Estate with whose permission all quotations from unpublished material herein have been made.

By the courtesy of the Registrar I desire to send a message to you all. I apologise for its lack of brevity, but I'm not much hand at concise statement.

First, I wish to say how sorry and frustrated I am in not being able to be with you this evening. I had hoped that, at last, this year, I should be able to come in person to receive the honorary degree which the University has, for some years now, wished to confer on me.³

My only claim to Welshness derives from my father (*gorffwysed mewn hedd*)⁴

August 1960) MS File #22724E, folio 21–7. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

³ Jones was one of two men to receive a *D.Litt.* from the University of Wales that summer. The other recipient was Percy Mansell Jones (1889–1968), professor emeritus of French and the first chair of Modern French Literature at the University of Manchester. From 1937 until 1951, he taught at the University College of North Wales, Bangor. "Society Notes". *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1961, Pt. 2) 1–8: 4.

⁴ "*gorffwysed mewn hedd*", Welsh for "rest in peace".

David Jones' father, James Jones, was born on July 14th 1860 in Holywell, Flintshire, a town roughly 15–20 miles from the northerly point of Offa's Dyke in Prestatyn, Wales. James Jones died on the third of October 1943. As David Jones later explained, his father moved "to London in the eighteen-eighties and by the time of my childhood in the first decade of this present century, if his Welsh was greatly eroded, he sang songs in Welsh, and the clear-vowelled Cymraeg and perfect pitch without any sign of effort filled me with wonder, certainly with pride, and a kind of awe. He also told us stories current in the north-eastern corner of the Welsh lands from which he had come. It was that sense of 'otherness' that was the heritage of he handed on to me." David Jones, "A Letter". *Poetry Wales* 8:3 (Winter 1972) 5–9: 8.

Who was born in the most eastern corner of Gwynedd, east indeed, by a few miles, of Clawdd Offa.⁵

Now the burial-place of Owain Gwynedd, ‘Owain Fawr’, is in your Cathedral Church of Bangor, and had it not been for the re-conquest and reclamation, by Owain Gwynedd, of the disputed lands between the Conwy and the Dee it seems not improbable to suppose that my father’s ancestors would long since have been outside the Welsh zone of influence and would, in course of time, have become wholly English in tradition and nomenclature: Welsh Prestatyn would have remained English Preston.⁶

It would then seem to follow that but for those far-off events, I myself, to-day *could* not be regarded as a Welsh artist of sorts by the University of Wales. For not even university

⁵ “Clawdd Offa”, Welsh for “Offa’s Dyke”. Stretching from Prestatyn in the north to Chepstow in the south, the Dyke is located roughly along the border of England and Wales. Built during the reign of Offa, king of Mercia from 757 to 796 AD, the Dyke separated the medieval kingdoms of Powys and Mercia.

⁶ Owain Gwynedd, also known as Owain ap Gruffydd (c.1080–1170), reigned as king of Gwynedd, North Wales from c.1137 until 1170 AD. Despite having been excommunicated for refusing to leave a consanguineous second marriage to his cousin, Owain was buried in the crypt of Bangor cathedral by clergy loyal to him.

The reclamation of “disputed lands” Jones describes in this passage recalls the attempts of Owain Gwynedd to defend the eastern lands between the River Conwy and the River Dee following the invasion of Henry Plantagenet in 1157. ‘Owain Fawr’, Owain the Great, defeated Henry II at the Battle of Ewloe (also known as the Battle of Coleshill) in July 1157, but the English king’s desire for Welsh land was undeterred. However, with the death of Madog ap Maredudd of Powys in 1160, Henry II lost an important Welsh collaborator. Owain Gwynedd then formed a more effective alliance of Welsh princes resistant to the English, and in 1165 Henry abandoned his attempt to conquer Gwynedd, having seen his armies defeated once again at the Battle of Crogen.

Earlier, in an October 1954 radio broadcast for the Welsh BBC, Jones had elaborated on the “long past history” of his father’s birthplace, and on the connection between his ancestors and the military exploits of Owain Gwynedd. It should be noted that according to contemporary scholarship, Jones’ dating of the Battle of Coleshill below is in error: “About eight hundred years ago, a prince of Aberffraw defeated his Welsh and English enemies at Coleshill between Flint Sands and Halkin Mountain. Holywell, where my father, James Jones, was born, is about three miles north-west of the battle-site. The birth of a son to John Jones, Plastrwr, Treffynon, in 1860 would indeed seem a matter having no apparent connection with the battle won by the great Owain Gwynedd in 1149. But however unapparent, the connection is real enough; for that victory symbolized the recovery of a tract of Britain that had been in English possession for well over three centuries. Had that twelfth-century recovery not occurred the area around Holywell would have remained within the Mercian zone of influence. In which case its inhabitants would, centuries since have become wholly English in tradition, nomenclature and feeling. Had local history taken that course, it follows that I should not now be speaking to you at the invitation of the Welsh B.B.C., as an artist of Welsh affinities. You see by what close shaves some of us are what we are, and you see how accidents of long past history can be of importance to us in the most intimate sense, and can determine integral things about us.” David Jones’ “Autobiographical Talk” was first broadcast from the Swansea station of the BBC, and then later reprinted in *Epoch and Artist* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) 25–31.

authorities can argue with the Muse of History⁷ – she determines all, until *Dydd y Farn*.⁸ Thus, by good fortune, she allows me to be accounted one half Welsh, if one half Cockney, with a dash of Italian.⁹ And, after all, London was once a Britto-Romanic *urbs*, Augusta of the Trinobantes – the New Troy of subsequent legend.¹⁰

I draw attention to those chancy twists and meanders of history and of quasi-history, because I think that none of us, whoever we are, should neglect to recall those things which have determined what we are.

Now, Aberffraw, ‘the principle seat’,¹¹ and the ‘fort of Degannwy’, *Arx Decantorum*, and the *llys* at Aber,¹² and away on the far border, strategic Dolforwyn, and little, solitary, still standing Dolbadarn at the very core, and down in Meirion, ill-fated Castell-y-Bere (the hunted Dafydd’s last H.Q.)¹³ are names which powerfully evoke the unequal and tangled warfare of the

⁷ One of the nine daughters of Zeus and the Titaness, Mnemosyne, Clio is known as the Muse of History.

⁸ *Dydd y Farn*, Welsh meaning the “Day of Judgment”.

⁹ David Jones’ mother, Alice Ann Jones née Bradshaw, was born on the 6th of September 1855 to a “Thames-side mast-and-block maker, whose wife, my grandmother, was of partly Italian descent.” Alice Ann’s parents were Ebenezer Bradshaw (1829–1891) and Ann Elizabeth Bradshaw née Mockford (1829–1907). David Jones’ mother died on the 21st of September 1937 at the age of 82. See Jones, “Autobiographical Talk”. *Epoch and Artist*, 26.

¹⁰ Jones refers to the reputed Roman origin of London, alluding to the *Annals* of Tacitus [Book 14, Chapter 33] and the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Macellinus [Book 27, Chapter 8]. He also cites what one recent scholar has called the “romantic legend” of London as the “Troy Novant”, the view that traced the founding of the city to Britto or Brutus, a direct descendant of Aeneas of Troy. Britto was patriarch of the Celtic tribe, the Trinobantes from whose name “Troy Novant” was derived by false etymology. This legend was perpetuated by Nennius in the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* and popularized more broadly in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s twelfth-century text, *Historia Regum Britanniae*. On the early development of London and its status as a “Britto-Romanic *urbs*”, see Ralph Merrifield, *London, City of Romans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹¹ Aberffraw, a village in the southwest of Anglesey, was the political centre and source of royal power in medieval Gwynedd. The *llys* or Welsh court of the Aberffraw dynasty was maintained there in the village until the 13th century.

¹² A *llys* or royal court of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (c. 1223–1282) was situated in Aber Garth Celyn, what is now known as the village of Abergwyngregyn.

¹³ Dafydd ap Gruffyd (c. 1238–1283) assumed rule over Gwynedd following the death of his brother, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, on the 11th of December 1282. Dafydd inherited a kingdom at war with England. In the winter of 1283, he moved his army from Dolwyddelan Castle into Castell y Bere further south. However, by late April Castell y Bere was ready to fall to English forces. Dafydd escaped despite surrendering the castle to Edward I of England. Not long after, Dafydd himself was captured, and on the third of October of 1283, he was executed by the order of Edward I. Dafydd ap Gruffyd was the last independent Welsh ruler of Gwynedd.

princes of Gwynedd – without which chequered struggle Wales would by now be little more than a geographical expression: think of Strathclyde or the Dumonian Peninsular.¹⁴

But the name Bangor evokes a more universal warfare, and it is indeed appropriate that the University which has for one of its mottoes *Optima Musa Veritas* or *Goreu Awen Gwirionedd*¹⁵, should have as one of its four centres the place where St. Deiniol's ascetics sought the Perennial Truth within their lime-washed, wattled *bangor* some fourteen hundred years ago in the age of Dewi Sant¹⁶ in the Celtic Second Spring, in the young-time of the Cymry.¹⁷

But whether this Ceremony was to be at Bangor or Aberystwyth or Abertawe or Caerdydd, I am equally sorry for my absence and am very sensible of the kind consideration

¹⁴ The sub-Roman kingdom of Strathclyde was situated in the borderlands of southern Scotland and northern England, a place known in Welsh as *Yr Hen Ogledd*, "the Old North." Cumbric was spoken in Strathclyde, and the kingdom maintained a distinctively Brythonic character, separate from the Gaelic-speaking Kingdom of Alba to the north. Malcolm I, King of Alba, however, annexed Strathclyde during his reign from 943–954 AD, and by the twelfth century, Strathclyde had become an appanage passed among the ruling Scottish kings of the House of Dunkeid. Cumbric became extinct, and few records of Strathclyde's native literature now survive. On the fate of Cumbric in Strathclyde, see William Gillies, "The Lion's Tongues: Languages in Scotland to 1314". *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*. Ian Brown, ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 52–62; as well as the work of Kenneth H. Jackson in "The Britons in Southern Scotland". *Antiquity* 29 (1955) 77–88 and in *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953).

Dumnonia was once ruled by the Brythonic-speaking tribe, the Dumnonii, of sub-Roman Britain. Located in southwest England in parts of what is now Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset, Dumnonia survived independently well into the 7th century AD. However, by 700 the kingdom had become "confined to present-day Cornwall." The expansion of Wessex pushed the Dumnonii from the capital at *Isca Dumnoniorum* further west, and "quickly and irreversibly, Dumnonia was reduced by more than half its former territory." The kingdom, its language and its people were marginalized, driven out to the Cornish peninsula. Wendy Davies, "The Celtic Kingdoms". *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 1, c.500–c.700*. Paul Fourache, ed. (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2005) 232–262: 256.

¹⁵ Jones quotes the motto of the University of Wales in both Latin and in Welsh: "The Best Inspiration is Truth." In 1948 Jones completed a lettering with combined both of these Latin and Welsh phrases.

¹⁶ "Dewi Sant," being the Welsh for Saint David, patron saint of Wales. David's feast falls on the first of March, the day traditionally associated with his death in 569 AD.

¹⁷ St. Deiniol is regarded as the first bishop of Bangor. He was consecrated by St. David c. 545 AD. Deiniol founded a monastery in Bangor in 525 at the site of what is now the city's cathedral and episcopal seat for the diocese of Bangor.

shown me by your Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Steel¹⁸ and his colleagues in granting me this Honorary Degree *in absentia*. And here I would thank Dr. Steel for his kindness to me in this matter.

St. Augustine said: ‘It is better to love than to know’.¹⁹ Now I speak as one to whom the linguistic heritage of Wales was not, alas, handed on, but as one who can claim a measure of love for what is now, in my case, lost, and whose work – whether drawing or writing – has not been uninfluenced, to this or that degree, by such fragments of that heritage as have become available to me, by this means or that.²⁰ And here I would thank those Welsh scholars of your University who have, from time to time, helped me.²¹

¹⁸ Anthony Bedford Steel (1900–1973), historian and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales from 1956 to 1961. Steel was primarily a scholar of medieval British history, authoring two scholarly monographs, *Richard II* (Cambridge University Press, 1941) and *The Receipt of the Exchequer, 1377–1485* (Cambridge University Press, 1954). He also translated Albert Sorel’s history of the French Revolution, *L’Europe et la révolution française*, and he completed a biography of the Victorian novelist, satirist, and sport writer, Robert Smith Surtees (1805–1864), entitled *Jorrocks’s England* (London: Methuen, 1932).

¹⁹ Echoing the first epistle to the Corinthians 13:8, Jones paraphrases Augustine’s assertion in *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* [Book 1, Chapter 19]: *Sed maius est donum caritas quam scientia: nam scientia quando est in homine, caritas est necessaria, ne inflatur*. “But love is a greater gift than knowledge; for whenever knowledge is present in a man, love is necessary lest he be puffed up.” Jones often repeated some variation of this saying when lamenting his poor command of Welsh. “Wish I bloody knew this language of ours,” he wrote to Saunders Lewis in November 1959, “but I shall never master it now. But I try & seek some consolation in Augustine’s tag that ‘it is better to love than to know.’ Though it’s poor consolation in this connection.” David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (13, 14 November 1959) MS File #22724E, folio 15–16. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

²⁰ From a young age Jones possessed a “Welsh affinity” which drove him to a concentrated study of the myth, history and literature of ancient Wales. Many times, from as early as age 16, Jones even attempted to teach himself the Welsh language but fluency eluded him. As he later explained to Saunders Lewis,

I ~~don’t~~ can’t speak or read Welsh & being inordinately stupid with regard to learning languages, find it hard to conquer – I *do* wish I had known ~~know~~ it from when I was young – it’s so awfully hard to learn any language – however much one’s desires impel one to try – when one is middle-aged, at least I find it so. The more memory seems to get so faulty as one gets older.

David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (23 December 1961) MS File #22724E, folio 37. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

On Jones’ “Welsh affinity,” see David Jones, “Some notes on the difficulties of one writer of Welsh affinity whose language is English”, in draft, reproduced in “XVII”, Letter to Vernon Watkins (11 April 1962). *David Jones, Letters to Vernon Watkins*. Ruth Pryor, ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976) 55–65. This essay was later revised and published in David Jones, *The Dying Gaul and Other Writings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978) 30–4.

²¹ Jones’ inability to fluently command Welsh remained a source of “genuine bitterness” throughout his life: “It is impossible to explain the sense of frustration,” he explained in 1974, “—genuine bitterness, grief is not too strong a word. Of course one can *feel* the way the language behaves and perceive its felicities and be read in Welsh history and the splendour of its *chwedl* and realise the unique character of its complex metric. *But* that is not to *know* the language.” David Jones, “Yr Iaith”. *Planet* (January 1974) Vol. 21, 3–5: 4.

Now, turning, with some relief, from myself to things of real consequence, I would, if I may, say this: The lure and indeed the inevitable demands of our present technological phase tend, as we all know, to distract us from the arts and from the humanities. But, to speak in a kind of a parable: it still remains true that ‘Gwener the Turner of Hearts’ (the guardian of constancy and fidelity, and so of *pietas*, among the Romans) is of more basic importance to us, as persons with hearts, than space-flights to Gwener the planet can ever be.²²

If we believe, as the Christmas Preface says: ‘that by the love of things seen we may be drawn to a love of things unseen’,²³ then the arts should not be neglected for they have that power so to draw us – that is what they are meant to do, everything to the contrary notwithstanding – and that is saying a very great deal.

Everywhere those institutions which are heirs to the medieval *studia generalia*, that is to say our present universities or *prifysgolion*, have a responsibility with regard to all ‘humane studies’ in the widest imaginable sense of that term, a term which I know had once a more limited or more precise connotation.²⁴ But I use it here in its more comprehensive sense.

And I hope that, in spite of the increasingly urgent claims of technological studies, Prifysgol Cymru may be able to further and conserve those studies which belong specifically to the mythos of Wales. Not forgetting that that mythos is intricated (very much so) with our

²² “Gwener” being Welsh for the name of the Roman goddess of love, Venus.

²³ Jones’ rough translation of an excerpt from the *Præfatio de Nativitate*, the Preface regularly used on Christmas Day in the typical edition of the Roman Catholic Mass. The original Latin reads: *Quia per incarnati Verbi mysterium, nova mentis nostræ oculis lux tuæ claritatis infulsit: ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur.* “For through the mystery of the Word made flesh, a new light of glory has illuminated the eyes of our mind, so that while we know God made visible, through him we are caught up in the love of things invisible.” On page 77 of *The Anathémata*, Jones composed an engraved lettering which included these lines.

²⁴ On the more limited connotation of the term, *studium generale*, see Olaf Pedersen’s analysis in *The First Universities: Studium Generale and the Origins of University Education in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997).

common Western deposit, the mythos of Hellas and of Rome, together with the Aramaean mythos of the Mabinog Iesu,²⁵ who gave *cynghanedd* to space itself.²⁶

People often quote those translated words:

Their Lord they shall praise
Their speech they shall keep²⁷

but they don't as often remember that the difficult, hard to learn, formidable lingo referred to and especially the deposits of which it is the subtle vehicle, should be the concern not only of persons of Welsh affinity but of the English also.

²⁵ According to the Victorian scholar, John Rhys, the word *mabinog* is a Welsh "technical term belonging to the bardic system; and it means a literary apprentice. In other words a mabinog was a young man who had not yet acquired the art of making verse, but one who had received instruction from a qualified bard." John Rhys and J. Gwenogvryn Evans, eds. *The Text of the Mabinogion: And Other Welsh Tales from the Red Book of Hergest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887) viii.

²⁶ *Cynghanedd*, literally the Welsh for 'harmony', is an ancient system of Welsh prosody, sometimes defined as "sound-chiming within a line" of verse. According to the definition given in *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, the use of *cynghanedd* "involves the serial repetition of consonants in precise relationship to the main accents in a line, together with the use of internal rhymes." It can be traced to the earliest extant Welsh poetry of the sixth century AD. On the types and development of *cynghanedd* throughout the Middle Ages, see *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*. Meic Stephens, ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998) 139–40.

²⁷ A prophecy attributed to the middle Welsh poet, Taliesin, and taken from the poem, "One of the Four Pillars of Song" and translated by Lady Charlotte Guest (1812–1895). Guest's popular translation, *The Mabinogion*, was published in full for the first time in the three-volume edition of 1849.

Matthew Arnold praised these lines in his 1867 treatise, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, insisting that they revealed the "Celtic talent for style". "If, I say we compare the Welsh memorial lines with the English, which in their *Gemeinheit* of style are truly Germanic, we shall get a clear sense of what that Celtic talent for style I have been speaking of is...

'Their Lord they shall praise,
Their speech they shall keep,
Their land they shall lose,
Except wild Wales.'

To however late an epoch that prophecy belongs, what a feeling for style, at any rate, it manifests! And the same thing may be said of the famous Welsh triads. We may put aside all the vexed questions as to their greater or less antiquity, and still what important witness they bear to the genius for literary style of the people who produced them!" Matthew Arnold, "On the Study of Celtic Literature". *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold. Volume III: Lectures and Essays in Criticism*. R. H. Super, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961) 291–395: 367.

All said and done the English have been with us for about a millennium and a half, so they can be regarded as naturalized by now. But they should, I think, if only in courtesy to what is anterior, pay respect to this vestigial tradition.

For this thing belongs to the *mores* of all Britain and affords a living, direct, unbroken series of links with Antiquity and so with the formative period and the foundational things of this land²⁸ (as does, if in another way, the Latin of the Liturgy).²⁹

So it is a *margaron* of some worth.³⁰ And we would not be counted among those innocent and attractive creatures whose trotters unwittingly tread down such pearls.³¹

As for those who do wittingly make light of this thing, or worse, are hostile to it – I should prefer not to comment on them, for I can't, very well, use barrack-language here.

²⁸ Jones often insisted that the Britons of early Wales effectively absorbed much of the culture brought by imperial Rome. The “three or four centuries of Roman occupation”, he later explained, “quite obviously brought with them the deposits of the Hellenistic-Roman world & these infiltrated the indigenous ‘Celtic’ culture”. Rome’s infiltration had been so complete that even now the Welsh still possessed, Jones told Saunders Lewis, a “Brythoneg-Rhufeinig link”, a Brythonic-Roman connection to the achievements and cultural *materia* of classical antiquity. See David Jones, Letter to Michael Richey (19–27 April 1965), David Jones Archive at the Burns Library, Boston College; as well as David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (12, [11?] October 1971) MS File #22724E, folio 73. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

²⁹ Like the *res Walliae*, Jones saw the liturgical rites of the Roman Catholic Church as a central way through which the modern world might still establish some continuity with classical antiquity. “I love Greek art better than anything,” he once told a friend, “. . .but, owing to a vast complex of causes, our *direct* connection with it comes through Rome. It’s rather like the business of religion. *Quite apart* from the truth or untruth of it, it seems to me that only by becoming a Catholic can one establish continuity with Antiquity. I’ve put this *badly*, but you’ll see what I mean. We *can’t* escape the *via Romana* – not if we are Western men.” David Jones, “Eighth Letter to Richard Shirley Smith” (13 November 1961). *Ten Letters to Two Young Artists Working in Italy*. Derek Shiel, ed. (London: Agenda Editions, 1996) 40–42: 40.

³⁰ “margaron”: a transliteration of the ancient Greek, μάργαρον, meaning, “pearl,” as in the *Anacreontea* [West] 22.14.

καὶ ταινίη δὲ μασθῶι,
καὶ μάργαρον τραχήλωι.

a band for your breasts
and a pearl upon your neck.

See *Carmina Anacreontea*. M. L. West, ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984) 18.

³¹ Jones’ use of μάργαρον further alludes to a parable from the Gospel of Matthew, 13:45–46, where Christ compares the kingdom of heaven to a merchant, “seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” [KJV]. The Gospel does not use μάργαρον, however; it employs accusative forms of the related, and more common Greek word for pearl, μαργαρίτης.

As impoverishment of the things of the Cymry (I don't mean later aberrations, or things stemming from more recent times) must, in the long run, be an impoverishment for England also. For the complex heritage of what is called, in the old tales, *ynys hon*, 'this island,' is very subtly meshed indeed.

It is not for nothing that a number of the Metaphysical Poets, the glory of early Seventeenth Century England, should have derived from the Welsh border-lands or the Celtic fringe.³²

It is not for nothing that the Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, influenced as he was by his study of *cynghanedd* and his stay in Gwynedd, should, many years after his death in 1889, be now seen to have developed an English metric of very great felicity, subtlety and strength.³³

³² Jones recalls George Herbert (1593–1633) and Henry Vaughan (1621–1695). Both were born in Powys: Herbert in the village of Trefaldwyn (Montgomery) and Vaughan in the parish of Llansantffraed (Newton St. Bridget) respectively. Jones may also have had John Donne (1572–1631) and Thomas Traherne (c.1636–1674) in mind. Traherne, though not Welsh, was born east of the border in Hereford, along the River Wye. Donne, though born in London, reputedly possessed Welsh blood on his father's side. On page 17 of the Preface to *The Anathémata*, Jones makes a similar allusion to the Metaphysical poets' use of Welsh *materia poetica* to "subserve immemorial themes".

³³ Attracted to the "instress and charm of Wales", Hopkins invented "sprung rhythm" while studying *cynghanedd* (or "consonant-chime" as he called it) at St. Bueno's College in North Wales. There in late 1875, Hopkins began composing *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, using "certain chimes suggested by the Welsh Poetry [he] had been reading (what they call *cynghanedd*)". Yet because of Welsh influence, Hopkins came to think the *Deutschland* possessed "a great many more oddnesses [that] could not but dismay an editor's eye." In Jones' view, however, Hopkins could not have experimented effectively with English prosody without exposing his work to the complex linguistic history latent in Welsh poetry. Of his work Jones wrote, "...sometimes, hundreds of years later, things that have become formulae, provide a renewal of life in some unexpected context perhaps in another language, & of this Hopkins is a most outstanding example." The renewed vigor of Hopkins' verse lay in the powerful way he commingled modern English with a more ancient, alien body of literature from the Celtic fringe. See Gerard Manley Hopkins, "26–7 November 1882 to Robert Bridges". *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins: Correspondence, Volume II, 1882–1889* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 550–53: 551; as well as Hopkins, "5–10 October 1878 to Richard Watson Dixon". *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins: Correspondence, Volume I, 1852–1881* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 315–19: 318.

For Jones' view of Hopkins, see David Jones, Letter XXIII to Aneurin Talfan Davies (27 November 1962). *Letters to A Friend*. Aneurin Talfan Davies, ed. (Swansea: Christopher Davies, Ltd., 1980) 78–91: 86; as well as David Jones, "An Unpublished Appreciation of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Kathleen Henderson Staudt, ed. *Agenda* 31:3 (Autumn 1993) 72–80.

On the influence of Welsh in Hopkins' writing, see Gweneth Lilly, "The Welsh Influence in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins". *The Modern Language Review* 38:3 (July 1943) 192–205.

Thus can the hidden things of Wales, under certain circumstances and given a perceptive response, vitalise the things of England.

This inheritance is an entailed inheritance, it is not ours to dissipate. Our business is rather to conserve it in whatever devious ways may chance to be open to us.

For some of us, for myself perhaps, this may mean fragmented, hidden, oblique, not easily traced ways: but no matter.

Or, we may feel we can conserve it only in our hearts. But, if the Scholastic maxim is true which says that ‘Doing follows Being’, we may not do so badly after all.³⁴ For what’s in the heart will come out somewhere and after some fashion.

Well, my thoughts are with you, and of course, as this occasion is one which involves a dinner-party, custom demands a: ‘*Iechyd da!*’³⁵ But, even as I write those customary, conventional, convivial, jocund words I am reminded of a line in that far from jocund poem by Owain Cyfeiliog, prince of Powys:

Dywallaw di’r corn argynvelyn

³⁴ Jones repeats the Thomist maxim, “doing follows being”, variously cited in Latin as *agere sequitur esse*, or *operari sequitur esse*, or *operatio sequitur esse*. See, for examples, *Summa Theologica* [3:34, 2 ad 1]: *esse est prius natura, quam agere*, “being is by nature prior to doing” as well as *Summa Contra Gentiles* [3:69, 230]: *agere sequitur ad esse in actu*, “doing follows on being in actuality”. Jones knew these phrases well, not just from his reading of Aquinas but from his devotion to the Scholastic revival of the early twentieth century, specifically the writings of Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson. Gilson explicated this axiom in a 1919 introduction to the philosophy of Aquinas entitled *Le Thomisme*. “If we can say, as is often repeated,” he wrote, “that a being’s acting proceeds from its act of existing (*operatio sequitur esse*), it is not merely in the sense of the action’s similarity to the being, but also and especially because the action of a being is only the unfolding in time of the primal act of existing that makes it to be. This gives us a notion of an efficient cause that is in agreement with the immediate certitudes of common sense, and confers on them the metaphysical depth they lack by nature.” Jones, in concluding his speech, speculates that the actuality of being Welsh (*esse*) – even if only in part – might foment ‘doing’ (*operatio*) on behalf of preserving the so-called “hidden things of Wales”. See Etienne Gilson, *Thomism: the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*. 6th edition. Armand A. Maurer and Laurence K. Shook, trans. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002) 420–21.

On the complex relationship of literary modernism and twentieth-century Scholasticism, see the essays of Rowan Williams, “Modernism and the Scholastic Revival” as well as “David Jones: Material Words” in *Grace and Necessity* (London: Continuum Books, 2005) 1–42, 43–91.

³⁵ The common Welsh expression for “cheers” or “salute”.

‘Pour out the horn of Cynfelyn’³⁶

For the cup we drink is never merely a vessel of joviality, but is lifted in remembrance – as are other chalices.

In conclusion: *Dewi Ddyfrwr gweddïa dros Cymru*.³⁷

David Jones

At Harrow-on-the-Hill

Dydd Gwener, Gorffennaf pymthegfed, MCMLX.³⁸

³⁶ Owain Cyfeiliog, poet and prince of Powys (c. 1130–1197), was an ally to Owain Gwynedd in the fight to drive out the invading armies of Henry Plantagenet in 1165. David Jones cites a verse from Cyfeiliog’s only surviving poem, *Hirlas Owain*, “The Drinking Horn of Owen”. A more literal English rendering of the line is: “pour out the glistening, gold-tipped horn”. *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse*. Thomas Parry, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962) 30–33.

³⁷ From the Welsh, meaning “David, the Waterman, pray for Wales.”

³⁸ From the Welsh, meaning “Friday, July 15th, 1960.”