

Pais Dinogad

Amongst the oldest surviving Welsh poetry is an account of battles in the Old North, a text known after the protagonists as *Y Gododdin*. In the same manuscripts are a couple of odd bits of verse which clearly do not belong, and one of these is a nursery rhyme in which a mother tells her son - the Dinogad of the title - about his father's hunting prowess.

The seventh century text, with a bit of orthographic licence, is something like:

Peis dinogat e vreith vreith.
o grwyn balaot ban wreith.
chwit chwit chwidogeith.
gochanwn gochenyn wythgeith.
pan elei dy dat ty e helya;
llath ar y ysgwyd llory eny law.
ef gelwi gwn gogyhwc.
giff gaff. dhaly dhaly dhwg dhwg.
ef lledi bysc yng corwc.
mal ban llad. llew llywywg.
pan elei dy dat ty e vynydd.
dydygai ef penn ywrch penn gwythwch pen hyd.
penn grugyar vreith o venydd.
penn pysc o rayadyr derwennydd.
or sawl yt gyrhaedei dy dat ty ae gicwein
o wythwch a llewyn a llwyuein.
nyt anghei oll ny uei oradein.

Dinogad's shift is speckled, speckled,
It was made from the pelts of martens.
'Wee! Wee!' Whistling.
We call, they call, the eight in chains.
When your father went out to hunt -
A spear on his shoulder, a club in his hand -
He called on his lively dogs,
'Giff! Gaff! Take, take! Fetch, fetch!'
He killed fish from his coracle
Like the lion killing small animals.
When your father went to the mountains
He would bring back a roebuck, a boar, a stag,
A speckled grouse from the mountain,
And a fish from the Derwennydd falls.
At whatever your father aimed his spear -
Be it a boar, a wild cat, or a fox -
None would escape but that had strong wings.

Pais Dinogad sydd fraith, fraith,
O groen y bela y mae'i waith.
`Chwí! Chwí!' Chwibanwaith.
Gwaeddwn ni, gwaeddant hwy - yr wyth gaeth.
Pan elai dy dad di i hela -
Gwaywffon ar ei ysgwydd, pastwn yn ei law -
Galwai ar gw+n tra chyflym,
`Giff! Gaff! Dal, dal! Dwg, dwg!'
Fe laddai bysgod o'i gwrwgl
Fel y llada llew fân-filod!
Pan elai dy dad di i'r mynydd
Deuai ef ag un iwrch, un twrch coed, un hydd,
Un rugiar fraith o fynydd,
A physgodyn o readr Derwennydd.
Beth bynnag a gyrhaeddai dy dad â'i bicell -
Boed yn dwrch, yn gath goed, yn lwynog -
Ni ddihangai'r un oni bai'n nerthol ei adenydd.