

Invisible Ink: The Recovery and Analysis of a Lost Text from the Black Book of Carmarthen (NLW Peniarth MS 1)

Introduction

In a previous volume of this journal we surveyed a selection of the images and texts which can be recovered from the pages of the Black Book of Carmarthen (NLW Peniarth MS 1) when the manuscript and high-resolution images of it were subject to a series of digital analyses.¹ The present discussion focuses on one page of the manuscript, fol. 40v. Although the space was once filled with text dating to just after the compilation of the Black Book, it was obliterated at some stage in the manuscript's 'cleansing'.² In fact, it is possible that this page was erased more than once, and that the shadow of a large initial *B* which we initially believed to be the start of a second poem is instead evidence of palimpsesting.³ The particular exuberance of the erasure in the bottom quarter of the page may support this view. As it stands, faint traces of lines of text can be seen on the page in its original, digitised and facsimile forms;⁴ in fact, of these Gwenogvryn Evans's facsimile preserves the most detail.⁵ Minims and the occasional complete letter are discernible, but on the whole the page is illegible. Nevertheless, enough of the text of this page is visible for it to feel tantalizingly recoverable, and the purpose of what follows is first to show what can be recovered using modern techniques

¹ Williams, 'The Black Book of Carmarthen: Minding the Gaps', *National Library of Wales Journal* 36 (2017), 357–410. The present work will refer to images produced as a [supplementary file](#) to that article. Many thanks are due to Dr Maredudd ap Huw, manuscripts librarian at the National Library of Wales, and Scott Waby, manager of the Digitisation Unit, for their support, their time, for the allowance of access to the manuscript and for the provision of high-resolution images under both natural and ultra-violet light. For advice on working with images in the early stages of the research, thanks are also due to Dr Christine Voth. Many thanks are also due to the Lazarus Project, especially Dr Gregory Heyworth and Brian Cook, who made the trip to the National Library of Wales in September 2015 from the US and spent three days with Myriah taking multi-spectral images of a selection of the Black Book's pages. We are also grateful to Dr Bill Endres of the University of Kentucky, who in August 2014 took some images of this and other pages using RTI, and to Stanford Text Technologies for the use of resources and opportunity to share this research. Thanks are also due to Professor Dafydd Johnston, who arranged a workshop on the text fol. 40v (as had been recovered at that time) in July 2015; we are also grateful to the participants for their helpful comments; particular suggestions are noted in what follows but they are not responsible for what we have made of them.

² Williams, 'Black Book', 369–71.

³ See Williams, 'Black Book', 374 and [Figure 46](#).

⁴ For the unaltered digital image see the page in the [digital surrogate](#) and Williams, 'Black Book', [Figure 31](#).

⁵ Evans, *Facsimile of the Black Book of Carmarthen*, (Oxford, 1888) (henceforth *BBC*); see also Williams, 'Black Book', [Figure 33](#).

and then to present a discussion of the new material which has emerged.

Processes of Recovery

Several different approaches were tried to recover the text on fol. 40v:⁶

(a) *Ultraviolet light*: The first of these, and the lowest-tech method, was to place the manuscript under ultraviolet light; this produced negligible results.⁷ The ink used on this page fluoresced, but is not as reactive to ultraviolet light as some ink used in other additions to the manuscript.⁸

(b) *GNU Image Manipulation (GIMP)*: The next approach was to enhance a high-resolution digital image using photo editing software. This method proved quite successful, and allowed us to make a relatively full, though not complete, transcription of the page.⁹ Key to this approach was the creation of multiple different versions of the image using different adjustments to the intensities of red, green and blue in the image as well as to the spread of colour in the image. Different versions would provide clearer readings of certain areas of the image, and through comparison of these different versions we were able to expand and improve our transcription.¹⁰

(c) *Multi-spectral Imaging*: The results from the multi-spectral imaging collaboration with The Lazarus Project have provided the clearest readings to date.¹¹ From the Project's website: 'Main, auxiliary and transmissive lights produce a controlled spectrum of light which our specialized camera then records. The bands of light range from the short reflective bands of UV through the visible spectra and into the long wave bands of infrared. The different bands of light, particularly when combined in later processing, produces an image of the material which the naked eye cannot see'.¹² In other words, the images taken by the Lazarus Project increased the range of bands on the spectrum through which the page was recorded. Their processing of these specialized images allowed us to target difficult areas of the text and to see the results. These images have allowed

⁶ On the merits of a multi-pronged approach, see A. Prescott and L. Hughes, 'Why Do We Digitize? The Case for Slow Digitization', *Archive Journal* (2018).

⁷ Williams, 'Black Book', [Figure 23](#).

⁸ Such as that used for the marginalia on fol. 39v, see Williams, 'Black Book', 371–2.

⁹ See Williams, 'Black Book', [Figures 34–6](#).

¹⁰ For further technical details, see Williams, 'Black Book', 373, n. 69.

¹¹ Williams, 'Black Book', [Figures 37–40](#). For further information on The Lazarus Project and the work that they do, see www.lazarusprojectimaging.com.

¹² <http://www.lazarusprojectimaging.com/about-the-project/>

us to clarify particularly difficult regions of the page which remained largely impenetrable even after processing with the GIMP, and to emend parts of our earlier transcription.¹³ The effectiveness of this technique in recovering text in Welsh manuscripts has already been demonstrated on *trioedd cerdd* in NLW Peniarth 20.¹⁴

Format and layout of the text

The text of fol. 40v fills a gap left by the Black Book scribe which runs from fol. 40r over onto the verso at the end of the sixth quire in the manuscript. The Black Book scribe had a habit of leaving such gaps where he wanted either to start a poem at the top of a new page, or where he hoped he might find additional material to add to a poem he had already copied.¹⁵ In some cases these gaps were infilled by the Black Book scribe himself, while in others they were infilled by later scribes.¹⁶ The latter is the case here. The length of the gap – approximately a page and a third – and the lack of line filler at the end of the final line of the preceding poem suggest that the Black Book scribe had hoped to add further material to that poem at a later date.¹⁷ He was unsuccessful in this endeavour, and unlike on fol. 35r where a later scribe completed the job of supplementing a poem for him, the scribe of fol. 40r contributed a fragment of a different poem entirely.¹⁸ Indeed, this scribe contributed at least two different poems as it appears that he was also responsible for filling the gap on the verso. Though we might expect for the text of fol. 40v to be the continuation of what was added to fol. 40r, this appears not to be the case.

There is evidence to suggest that fol. 40v has in fact been written on more

¹³ For more on this collaboration, see Myriah Williams, ‘[Further Developments in the Black Book of Carmarthen Research](#)’.

¹⁴ See Brian Cook and Paul Russell, ‘The multispectral recovery of *trioedd cerdd* in NLW Peniarth 20’, [National Library of Wales Journal 36 \(2017\), 558–86](#), where a more detailed technical description can be found (pp. 560–2).

¹⁵ The types of gaps are discernable by decoration – or the lack thereof – of the end of the poem which precedes the gap, and by the length of the gap. The latter type is the more common; see Myriah Williams, ‘Studies in the Black Book of Carmarthen’ (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2016), pp. 19–21.

¹⁶ The only examples of later scribes infilling gaps – rather than adding texts to margins – are found on fols. 35r and 40r–v. For examples of the Black Book scribe infilling gaps himself, see fols. 23v and 26v–27r. The latter example is exceptional, as it is the only place where the scribe was able to fulfil his hope of adding further material to an existing poem. For more on this, see John Bollard, ‘The Earliest Myrddin Poems’ in *Arthur in the Celtic Languages: The Arthurian Legend in Celtic Literatures and Traditions*, pp. 35–50 at pp. 38–9.

¹⁷ *Aswynaf Nawdd Duw, Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin*, ed. A. O. H. Jarman (Cardiff, 1982), poem 23 (pp. 52–3) (henceforth *LIDC*).

¹⁸ *Dryll o Ddadl y Corff a’r Enaid, LIDC* poem 24 (p. 54).

than once, and perhaps erased more than once as well. The outer margin of the recovered text slopes steeply inward down the page, and one possibility for that slope is that it was the result of the scribe attempting to avoid writing over something already there, namely what appears to be a large initial *B*. This initial is most clearly visible in person, in the high resolution image, in Gwenogvryn Evans's facsimile, and in some of the images edited with GIMP. Curiously, it is not as obvious in the multispectral images. As the initial appears to have been written in a different shade of ink than the lines of text, it may be that the variability in visibility is a result of processing – that the processing most effective to bring out the main text is less effective on the initial because it reacted differently to portions of the visible and invisible light spectrum. The initial fluoresces under ultraviolet light, but not as brightly as the lines of text.

The large initial *B* partially overlaps with the beginnings of ll. 15–17 of the recovered text. This initial is of the type that elsewhere in the manuscript would have been used by the Black Book scribe to denote the start of a new poem or stanza of a poem, but in this instance it is not certain that it relates to any other text on the page.¹⁹ Because the recovered text partially overlaps this initial, and because the scribe may have been attempting to avoid writing over it, the initial would seem to have been added before the recovered text rather than contemporaneously with it. That the initial does not represent either the start of a new poem or stanza of the recovered text is supported by the fact that there is repetition of rhyming sounds and certain words over both sides of what would otherwise be a break in the verse.²⁰ If the initial *B* does predate the recovered text, it would have had to have been copied and erased fairly quickly after the Black Book scribe had completed his work, or even to have been copied by him. It is possible that this was a pentrial of some sort, similar to an erasure from the margins of fol. 43r. There, it seems the scribe was practising the inner decoration of two large initial *B*s found on the recto and verso of the next page.²¹ However, if this were a pentrial we might not expect to see it two-thirds of the way down the page and set in from the outer edge of the page just enough to accommodate a margin of similar width to that of fol. 39r.

It is striking that this *B* resembles both the large initial at the beginning of *Englynion y Beddau* on fol. 32r, near the start of the quire, and the plethora of capital *B*s scattered throughout that poem.²² It is perhaps also noteworthy that an addition was made to the end of that poem (fol. 35r) by another scribe of the

¹⁹ For an example of the start of a poem, see fol. 24v; for an example of the start of stanzas, see fol. 25r.

²⁰ We are grateful to Mererid Hopwood for this observation.

²¹ See Williams, 'Black Book', 361 and [Figure 13](#).

²² Fols. 32r–35r.

thirteenth century. There is a pronounced curve to the backs of the capital *B*s written by the later scribe of fol. 35r that suggests he would not have been the one to copy the straight-backed initial onto fol. 40v. Nevertheless, that there was another thirteenth-century scribe contributing to that poem in particular supports the possibility that either the Black Book scribe or another thirteenth-century scribe could have copied at least this initial *B* onto fol. 40v at an early enough date that it could have been erased before the recovered text was copied.²³ The force of the erasure of this page, especially in the bottom quarter where it has been impossible to recover anything, may itself be evidence of palimpsesting. Whatever had been in the lower part of the page was seemingly removed with more enthusiasm than was used to take out the recovered text.

One of the most immediately striking features of the additions to both fol. 40r 12–16 and fol. 40v is how crooked the lines are. Unlike the rest of the Black Book where the scribe produced very carefully set out pages by ruling his lines (often even those of marginal additions) using a sharp plummet instrument, the text of 40v was copied very unevenly. As with much of the manuscript, the ruling of pages varies throughout Quire 6, with lines per page ranging from 13 to 21. Some of the pages have double-ruled bounding lines, others single, and others still a combination of both, usually double-bounding lines on the left side of the page and single on the right. Despite this inconsistency, facing pages were often ruled in the same way, both in terms of the bounding of the writing area and the number of lines per page. This pattern breaks down somewhat towards the end of the quire (from fol. 36v on), perhaps indicating the scribe's uncertainty about how much more material he had to include or the space required to accommodate it.²⁴ Though 40v was pricked for ruled lines, heavy abrasion due to erasure and possible wear makes it difficult to determine whether or not the page was ever ruled.²⁵ Scratches, especially in the lower part of the page, indicate that someone held a knife vertically against the page and sliced horizontally from the inner to the outer edge of the page. This method of erasure of the text was also effective

²³ It is possible that yet another scribe intervened on fol. 33v–34r, but that still needs to be argued.

²⁴ For example, on fol. 39r the scribe ruled sixteen lines instead of thirteen as on the facing page, and copied in a smaller script, apparently in an effort to complete the poem he was copying without carrying on into fol. 39v. Three of the ruled lines remained unused and the scribe began a new poem on fol. 39v. This pattern may have been repeated in that opening, where fol. 39v was ruled for fourteen lines and fol. 40r, where the poem ends, may have been ruled for as many as sixteen. The Black Book scribe used only ll. 1–11, however. There is clear evidence of ruling of l. 12, used by a later scribe, probably the same as fol. 40v. Any evidence of ruling of the remaining lines filled by the later scribe on this page is ambiguous at best.

²⁵ As the final page of this quire, fol. 40v would have been exposed to wear if the quire had ever been loose, something that is indicated by wear and darkening of the first page of the quire (fol. 31r).

at obliterating any evidence of ruling that may once have been found on the page. Through examining the manuscript in person and using an RTI image to manipulate light on the page, it is possible to see a few horizontal striations that generally align with pricking in the outer margin (though not the inner) and could be evidence that the page was indeed once ruled.²⁶ But because the recoverable text does not adhere to these lines, if they do indicate ruling then the scribe of this text seems to have paid them no attention and they are unlikely to be his own work. This is supported by the fact that he did not rule lines for the text added to fol. 40r; only the first line of this text is clearly ruled, and that appears to have been the work of the Black Book scribe. As it stands, the scribe of fol. 40r–v appears to have copied on twenty lines, of which we have at least a partial transcription of the first nineteen.

That this scribe was unwilling or unable to keep to any ruling of the page is likewise supported by his uneven margins. The text begins very close to the top edge and the line extends very close to each edge of the page in the upper part but the left margin increases in width the further down the page it goes. As already discussed, this may be partially due to the scribe's attempt to avoid overwriting the large initial *B*. It may, however, also have been influenced by the lack of bounding lines on the page, as the scribe's ability to adhere to bounding lines established by the Black Book scribe is demonstrated on the recto. One final possibility is that the scribe had incorrectly gauged the amount of space that was needed for the text that he had; that he started out making the very most of the page but gradually realised that the text would easily fit in the available space. Nothing is legible at the bottom of the page, where it appears that an even more effective erasure has been carried out.

Palaeography

While the edited and specialized images of fol. 40v give the initial impression that the page is quite legible, that impression is unfortunately somewhat misleading. There is indeed much that has been recovered, as testified by our transcription below, but the process of transcribing has been laborious and painstaking, conducted in phases and relying on nearly all of the various images of the page produced over the course of our research. While there are many letterforms now visible, it is not always as easy to identify them as it might first appear. Due to the horizontal action of the erasure, ascenders and descenders have often disappeared, sometimes leading to difficulties discerning between, for example, *n* and *h* or *y* and *v*. Dots over dotted *ys* are also frequently missing, or remain but appear to be

²⁶ These are found around or below ll. 1, 5 and 8.

connected to a different letter due to the loss of some other part of the *y*. Lowercase *f* and tall-*s* (*f*) are eminently confusable. None of these difficulties are improved by the quality of the script, which is generally laboured and uneven, with some inconsistent letterforms such as *w*. Due to these issues, it has been very useful to have the sample on fol. 40r to refer to both for guidance on letterforms and for reassurance on the presence of certain features, such as superscript corrections and the possibility of abbreviations (Figure 1).

Though the hand of fol. 40r is dateable to the thirteenth century, Gwenogvryn Evans believed it to be ‘later than the manuscript, probably much later, for it has all the appearance of a base, blundering imitation...’.²⁷ Elsewhere he describes the text as ‘Wr[itten] l[ate]r in antique style’.²⁸ Though the quality of this script is far off from that of the Black Book scribe, it seems reasonable to imagine that if this scribe had been skilled enough to archaïse, he might have done a better job of it. William F. Skene had been of the view that the hand was ‘more modern’ and was the same as that which copied the additional stanzas of *Englynion y Beddau* onto fol. 35r.²⁹ Given the clear differences between these two hands, he was unsurprisingly alone in this view, with both Gwenogvryn Evans and later A. O. H. Jarman believing the scribe of the bottom of fol. 40r to have been the same as that of fol. 40v.³⁰

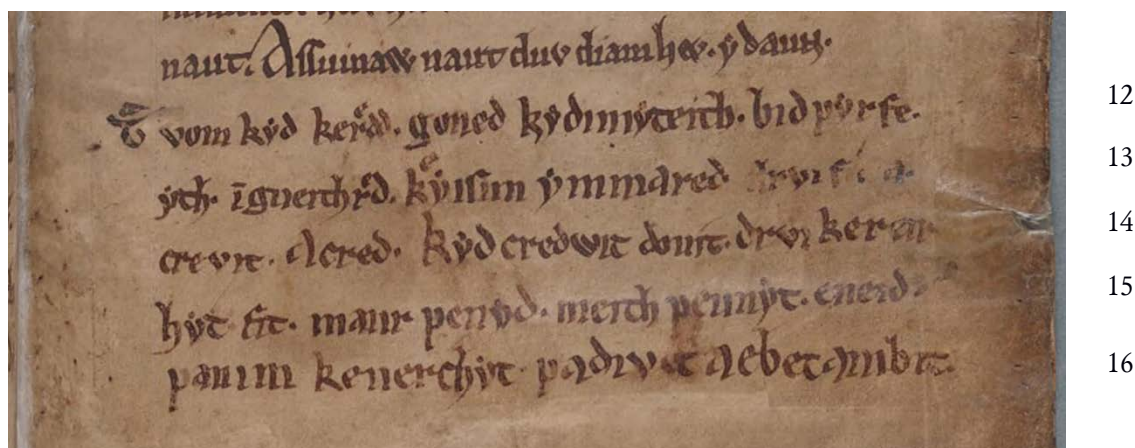


Figure 1: Fol. 40r 12–16, late-thirteenth-century addition

²⁷ *BBC*, p. xl.

²⁸ *BBC*, p. 133, n. 79.12–16.

²⁹ William F. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales Containing the Cymric Poems Attributed to the Bards of the Sixth Century*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1868), II, p. 41. It is difficult to understand how he could have reached this conclusion about two so obviously different hands, but it seems to have been drawn out of a series of errors. Skene noted that the scribe of fol. 35r wrote in an orthography that made use of *dd* for /ð/, as opposed to *t* which is usual for the Black Book. In the top line of the addition to fol. 40r the scribe wrote *ker^edd*, which Skene took at face value for *keredd*. In fact, the scribe bungled his correction of an error for *kerded*, writing the omitted *e* as if it were to be inserted between *r* and *d* rather than between and the two *ds*.

³⁰ *BBC*, p. xl; *LIDC*, p. xxvii.

As noted above, to judge from certain distinctive letter forms, notably *ks* and *ws*, a habit of miscopying and correcting over the line, and a similar unevenness of writing, it is likely that the text on fol. 40v was copied by the same scribe as added the *englynion* to fol. 40r.³¹ If the text on fol. 40r survived erasure because the scribe had adhered to the layout of the page as established by the Black Book scribe, it seems reasonable that he might have done the same on fol. 40v as well.³² However, there are two reasons that the abandonment of this layout on fol. 40v should not be taken as evidence that it was the work of a different scribe: firstly, fol. 40v presents a different text from the *englynion* of the recto, and secondly, though the scribe adhered to the physical layout of fol. 40r established by the Black Book scribe, that is a fairly superficial adherence to the structure of the manuscript. If the scribe of fol. 40r–v understood the structure of the manuscript or was concerned with being consistent with it, he would not have visually related his fragment of *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid* to the Black Book scribe's copy of *Aswynaf Nawdd Duw* in the first place. Before proceeding into a discussion of the palaeography of fol. 40v proper, it will be useful to describe the hand of this scribe as seen on fol. 40r.

As already discussed, the scribe has difficulty adhering to ruling. There is little evidence of ruling in the gap on fol. 40r, and what is there seems to have been the work of the Black Book scribe. The final line on this page is exceptionally crooked and extends beyond the outer bounding line. The scribe uses two Latinate abbreviations in this fragment, each occurring only once: *T* with superscript τ for *Tra* (l. 12) and \bar{i} for *in* (l. 13). Due to the small sample size it is difficult to say with certainty if these abbreviations were found in the scribe's exemplar or if he was employing them himself. He appears to have made an error with the first example, writing τ over top of the *v* of the next word rather than above the *T*, then erasing it and correcting the error. This error may point to the abbreviation having originated in the exemplar, though it is unclear if the exemplar was difficult to read and thus brought about the error, or if the scribe was unfamiliar with the abbreviation.

It is likewise unclear if the scribe was generally sloppy and prone to errors, or if the numerous omissions of letters from his text are attributable to an exemplar with legibility issues. Curiously the only letters that are omitted are vowels, namely *es*: one in l. 12, two in l. 13, and one in the right margin of l. 15. The consistency of this on this page leads to suspicion that some type of abbreviation or difficulty with *es* might have been present in the exemplar.

³¹ This was the view taken also by Evans (*BBC*, p. xl) and Jarman (*LIDC*, p. xxvii).

³² For further discussion, see Williams, 'Black Book', 370.

The size of letter-forms fluctuates within and across lines. For example, the first *d* in l. 12 is significantly smaller than the penultimate and last examples in the same line. Between the latter two examples, the ascender of one is outcurling and the other in-curling. The first example has a straighter ascender. The letter *k* is similarly variable, with some examples being more squat (e.g. the first *k* of l. 12) and others longer (l. 16). This letter usually has an ascender which outcurls slightly at the top and a leg which is at a fairly prominent 45° outward angle. The letter *v* is in-curling and *ys* are outcurling, dotted, and have very thin descenders. The letter *p* is frequently fairly open on top, but has a straighter stem than the *ys*, with a descender that does not generally curve to the left. Tall-*s* (*ſ*) is used, as is *f*. The letter *t* is flat-topped and the cross-stroke often angles downward toward the right (e.g. the first two examples in l. 15), making it especially susceptible to being confused with *c*. The letter *c* also frequently tips to the right (e.g. the first and second examples of l. 14). Both *b* and *h* have serifed ascenders, and the descender of *b* can be very long and in-curling (e.g. the first example of l. 15). The back of an *b*, however, is usually quite straight, whereas the back of a *b* may curve inward in anticipation of the formation of the bow (e.g. l. 12 and the first example in l. 16). The back of the *b* is less usually straight (e.g. the last example l. 16). The letter *a* is often though not always very open and quite upright, with a heavily-curved back; an *a* which is more closed with the strokes joined up is more unusual (e.g. the first example of l. 16). The letter *i* can be curved and sometimes has a foot, occasionally giving it the appearance of a 2-shaped *r* (2) when next to a rounded letter (e.g. the second example in l. 16).³³ Spacing between letters and words is inconsistent, as is sometimes the spacing between minims (e.g. the first *n* and *m* of l. 16). It can be difficult to distinguish between *u* and *n* as the minims are not always fully joined (e.g. the first example of *u* in l. 15); this can also be a problem with *m*, especially when next to an *i* (e.g. l. 12 and l. 13). There is only one example of *w* in this fragment, and it is in-curling and fairly round.

Almost all of these features are also observable on the verso of the page. The apparent lack of any ruling for the text on fol. 40v seems to have caused even greater inconsistency in the script, as may also be observed in the final line of text on fol. 40r.³⁴ The increased downward slope of this line is also exemplified and exaggerated by the lines on fol. 40v, which are so slanted as to cause (further) difficulties reading the text. The scribe confirms his struggle with *ws* on the verso.

³³ It should be noted that the 2-shaped *r* (2) form does not appear on fol. 40r and has not been identified on fol. 40v.

³⁴ For example, the *a* of *am* in the final line leans exceptionally far back and the minims of the *m* of the same word are unusually curved.

Though the one example on fol. 40r (l. 14) is somewhat more rounded than the examples found on fol. 40v, which generally come to a sharp point and have limbs which appear sometimes to in-curl on the left and sometimes to be rather straight, the overall inconsistency in the forms means that this discrepancy should not be taken as evidence of a different scribe. A slight splay in the nib in both examples may be suggestive that they were copied by the same pen around the same time, though the degree of splaying displayed is not particularly unusual or conclusive. The habit of correcting over the lines – and doing so rather sloppily – is distinctive and is found on both sides of the folio. The Black Book scribe also makes some superscript corrections, but these are less frequent than the corrections made by the scribe of fol. 40r–v, and they are more precise, with a subscript stroke marking where each letter is to be inserted.³⁵ None of the other early contributors to the Black Book made these types of corrections.³⁶

Despite the inconsistency in script, there are still certain features which are useful for identifying letter forms. It is here that comparison with fol. 40r has been especially helpful. With respect to *y*, where dots are visible, these are helpful for distinguishing between *vs* and *ps*; but we have to be careful not to be misled when a dot has been erased. Another distinction between these letters is that *vs* are in-curling – particularly those at the beginnings of lines, where this feature is exaggerated with some artistic flair – whereas the stems of *ys* are out-curling with in-curling limbs. The descender of *p*, as already noted, does not generally curve to the left – unlike the descender of a *y*. The long, in-curling descender of the second stroke of an *b* is important for distinguishing between this letter and an *n* (where the *b*'s ascender has been lost), a *b*, or an *li* (where the *i* is particularly curved). Ascenders of *b* and *h* are usually serifed, whereas an *l* is usually not.

The one feature of fol. 40r which is not certain on fol. 40v is the use of abbreviations. There are two examples of *p* on fol. 40v which appear almost to have a cross-stroke for the abbreviation *per* or *par*.³⁷ However, the line which resembles a cross-stroke is very close to the bow of the *p* in both instances and may instead be a continuation of the stroke which forms the bow across the descender. This form would be similar to that of the additional scribe on fol. 35r. In neither example would the abbreviation *per* or *par* make much sense, but the second is in fact missing a vowel, probably an *a*. It is possible that the *p* abbreviation was being used here for *pa*, though that would be non-standard. It is also possible that this is another example of whatever feature of the exemplar

³⁵ For example, see fol. 23v10.

³⁶ The other additions are found on fols. 20v, 22r, 24v and 35r.

³⁷ Found in ll. 1 and 5.

was causing the scribe of fol. 40r–v to omit vowels, and that he neglected to emend his text with a superscript *a* in this instance. One further example is what appears to be *t* or *t* with a superscript *i*.³⁸ The reading at this point in the text is too unclear to determine what this word is supposed to be, and whether this is indeed a Latinate abbreviation or an ill-placed superscript correction. Although abbreviations are used on fol. 40r, there are no examples of *p* or *t* there. It may be that the abbreviations on fol. 40r were a feature of that particular text not shared by the text of fol. 40v, or it could likewise be that, as with ascenders and descenders of letters, abbreviations were particularly susceptible to erasure and have been largely obliterated from fol. 40v.

One final difference between the script of fol. 40r and fol. 40v is the use of small capital *R*. On fol. 40v, there is a propensity for using this form in names; specifically, as the first letter of a name. Though there are two additional examples of the form which begin words that are not clearly names, the nearly consistent usage may suggest that perhaps they were. There are no names in the fragment of *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid* on fol. 40r, so the form would not necessarily be expected there. It is nonetheless an interesting feature. The Black Book scribe also makes use of *R*, but usually as a means of avoiding minim confusion.³⁹ That was not the purpose here. Curiously, it is only names that start with *r* which receive a small capital letter; capital forms of *n*, for example, are not used although they are used by the Black Book scribe elsewhere. Additionally, it is noteworthy that *reged* is the only name beginning with *r* that does not receive a small capital.

Recoverable content

Even with the application of various technologies it has proved very difficult to produce a full transcription. We provide a partial diplomatic transcription (p. 85); uncertain letters are under-dotted; where we think there is a letter, but only a shadow if it is visible, we have indicated this with a dot; note also that, where we indicate a space, it may be that a letter has been particularly firmly erased so as to leave no trace. There are two instances in l. 13 where the scribe has underdotted a letter (presumably to mark it as an error); to avoid confusion with uncertain letters these are marked by an underline. One specific problem is that we can sometimes identify a series of minims without being able to see whether they are connected at the bottom (*u*) or at the top (*n* or *m*), or not at all (*i*); in such cases

³⁸ Found in l. 4.

³⁹ As on fol. 3v where it is used in the name *Myrtin* to avoid confusion between *r* and *t*; see Russell, 'Scribal (in)consistency in thirteenth-century South Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Carmarthen', *Studia Celtica*, 43 (2009), 135–74, at pp. 145–6.

we have simply printed as many minims as are visible (as in l. 12).⁴⁰ The effect of this method of erasure is that even where most of a line of text seems recoverable it can often have a scratch running straight through it which distorts the letter-forms; for example, the scribe regularly uses a tall-*s* (*f*) but it is easily confusable with *f* and it can also look like an *i* if the top of it has been erased; likewise the partial forms of *h* and *b* cannot be easily distinguished and are confusable with other letters if the ascenders are erased.

The scribe's lack of expertise means that it is often impossible to predict letter forms from the partial forms which survive. Furthermore, it is clear that the scribe was either making errors or copying them from his exemplar; for example, *pbo* (l. 5), *vrnhin* (l. 10), *goſgo.d.. in goſgodua ...* (l. 12) (where both *goſgo.d* and *goſgod* should probably be read as *goſgord*), and the mangled *ua^bll^ae^cnaç* (l. 10), the last showing a mode of correction very similar to those on fol. 40r 12–13. None of this helps with transcription or understanding.

1 vw ðewif anñuc dyvaeuuy·fued.dw a peir advid yçueu.
2 aby.d keig gn....^a af ryw nı...plıulvid kit
3 neb. kyn vyd açhin .nanavyd guendol.. a bran clid
4 no ach mau.t hael gyyr naf nvd ryderch ...daf ny
5 wner.f ..a.f nid byv a caraf a coll mab pbo aç el
6 fin m.. guıtno ac elid mvinvavr a rvn ryuyc
7 vaur nid ryç aur amdavr firthav nev hıd lavr
8 gnavd myn.. d. hiraeth k.in kywit am vael
9 mael.nıç am ewein clud nıç am brochuael yffı
10 kyfthravç am ua^bll^ae^cnaç am kynan.ıb vrnhin
11 clydno edin teernet triaw. hin gnavd am ge
12 vgon in gnavd ym goſgo.d.. in goſgodua d.l
13 bin ..d.t kynadaı beıth et bob ılaetha .n
14 hoed am dyfnaf cochwet am guı.çoıfı coll ıw
15 ny çoll k.... laf collı treffı.. yu guı. coll ber
16 vir den.d ıf coll vren reged vçh uelgun
17 mvr ked guaget pop .olled teernet amged
18 .. ny.naud ga.. ailly. ed a.fy ggaffı
19 .. ge. ellı ... yn padryl.....
20

Figure 2: Provisional Transcription of fol. 40v

⁴⁰ For the images on which this transcription is based, see Williams, 'Black Book', [Figures 34–40](#).

It follows, therefore, that this transcription remains highly provisional, but there are enough words and phrases to allow some headway. Orthographically, while the use of *t* for /ð/, e.g. *guitno* (l. 6), *mael.nit* (l. 9), *teernet* (l. 17), etc. alongside the use of *d* for /d/, e.g. *clud* (l. 9), *clydno* (l. 11), etc., is consistent with the orthography of the Black Book there are some exceptions, e.g. *nvd ryderch* (l. 4), but it is worth noting that elsewhere in the manuscript names are where there is most orthographical variation.⁴¹ The use of *i* and *y* is relatively haphazard, but not inconsistent with what we find elsewhere in the manuscript.⁴² There are no clear changes in spelling which would suggest we are dealing with fragments from different sources though any such observations are provisional given the state of the text.

As would be expected in the Black Book, the alliterative and rhyming phrases and repeated words suggest very strongly that the erased text is verse, for example: the repetition of *coll* and *colled*, ‘loss’ (ll. 5, 14–16) and of *gnavd*, probably ‘usual’ (ll. 8, 11, 12). Some individual phrases can be identified, e.g. *amdawr* ‘it matters to me’, *nid byv a caraf* (l. 5) ‘not living is the one I love’; *amdavr firthav nev bîd lavr* (l. 7) ‘it matters to me that heaven falls down’; and occasionally a longer run looks tolerably clear, e.g. *coll vren reged vch uelgun mur ked guaget pop .olled teernet amged* (ll. 16–17) ‘the loss of Urien Rheged, above (?) Maelgwn, a provider of generosity, every loss (reading *colled*) is emptiness, princes around a gift-giving’.⁴³

Given the difficult and fragmented nature of the text we have been able to recover, it is not easy to work out where lines begin and end, and thus to identify a metrical form, and it may well be that we are dealing with several fragments in different metres. There is no obvious continuous rhyme and potential rhyming words seem to cluster which might suggest *englyn* rather than *awdl*.⁴⁴ It is tempting to see *niṯ am brochuael yffkyfthravç* (ll. 9–10) as a seven-syllable line, and

⁴¹ Russell, ‘Scribal (in)consistency’, 150, and more generally on the spelling of dental fricatives, 148–51.

⁴² Russell, ‘Scribal (in)consistency’, 157–60.

⁴³ Or ‘around the gifts of princes’; does this echo the idea of *teyrnged* ‘royal tribute’? For *mur ked*, cf. Meilyr Brydydd, ‘Marwnad Gruffudd ap Cynan’ (Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion I.3, l. 71) *Cyn myned mur ced yn dawedabç* ‘before the advocate of generosity became silent (in death)’ (translated by J. E. Caerwyn Williams, ‘Meilyr Brydydd and Gruffudd ap Cynan’, in *Gruffudd ap Cynan. A Collaborative Biography*, ed. K. L. Maund (Woodbridge, 1996), 165–86 (at p. 184)); perhaps echoed in Y Prydydd Bychan, ‘Marwnad Rhys Ieuanc’ (CBT VII.2, ll. 22–4): *Doeth i ueirt o’i uyned l(Am ysgbyt gabr, uabr gur ced, lAm ysgwyd uridoll), gollod* ‘There came to poets as a result of his going (sc. to death) (for a defender in battle, a great supporter of generosity, for a shattered and holed shield) loss’.

⁴⁴ We owe this observation to Dafydd Johnston.

the following line could be reconstructed to rhyme with it.⁴⁵ On the other hand, it may be possible to identify a rhyme in *-ed* every five syllables in *coll vren reged / vch uelgun mvr ked / guaget pop .olled / teernet amged* (ll. 16–17).⁴⁶

However, one of the striking features of the recovered text is that, even though the syntactical structure may be unclear, there is a number of names which can be identified (some more tentatively than others); the names are presented as they appear in the transcription followed by a reconstruction and discussion:

1. 3 *nanavyd*: Manavyd (?). The reading here is clear except for the first letter which could be either *m* or *n*; it is unlikely that we can see the name Manawydan here, but a form Manavyd (cf. Book of Taliesin, 34.9–10) is possible.⁴⁷
1. 3 *guendol..*: Gwenddolau. This is presumably Gwenddolau ap Ceidio who was involved in the battle of Arfderydd, as there is no other name which would fit the visible letters.⁴⁸
1. 3 *bran*: Bran. There are several possibilities but this is most likely to be Bran ap Llyr Lediaith.⁴⁹
11. 3–4 *clid/no* (over the line-break): Clydno. This is probably Clydno Eidin, the father of Cynan (for Cynon), and mentioned as a patronymic in ll. 10–11.
1. 4 *nvd Ryderch ...daf*: Nudd, Rhyderch, Mordaf. This grouping is relatively common (and incidentally helps to confirm the reading of *Mordaf*); it recalls the triad *Tri Hael Enys Prydein* and is also found in three poems of Prydydd y Moch.⁵⁰ If we read the preceding part of the line as *tri hael gwyr naf...* (taking the superscript *i* as a suspension mark for *ri*) ‘the three generous ones, lords of men, ...’, we may have a reference to the triad here. It is worth noting that, in a forthcoming work, Ben Guy has argued that the *Tri Hael* triad may not have become fixed until the early twelfth century; if so, there are implications for the date of this poem.⁵¹

⁴⁵ See below, p. 16.

⁴⁶ Note that in order to do so, *vren* has to be treated as a disyllable rather than the trisyllable it was originally.

⁴⁷ Rachel Bromwich (ed. and trans.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein. The Triads of the Island of Britain*, 4th edn (Cardiff, 2014), 432–4.

⁴⁸ Peter Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary. People in History and Legend up to about A. D. 1000* (Aberystwyth, 1993), 313–14.

⁴⁹ On the various individuals with this name, see Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 50–3.

⁵⁰ Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*. 5–7 (triad 2), 451–2, 464–6, 493–5; Prydydd y Moch: CBT V, 2.30, 11.54–5, 26.105–6. More generally, see Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 563–4, 567–8, 483 respectively.

⁵¹ We are grateful to Ben Guy for sharing his thoughts with us.

1. 5 *mab pbo*: mab Pabo. We take the preceding *coll* as the noun ‘loss’ rather than a personal name. Two sons of Pabo post Prydain are noted in the genealogies: Dunod and Sawyl Benuchel.⁵²
11. 5–6 *elfin m.. guitno*: Elffin mab Guyddno.⁵³ It is not clear whether we are to think this is Elffin map Guyddno ap Cawrdaf (associated with northern Britain) or Elffin map Guyddno Garanhir (associated with Gwynedd, Maelgwn and Taliesin). In the context of this poem, either would fit.⁵⁴
1. 6 *elid mvinvavr*: Elidir Mwynfawr. This is one of the key names in the poem as it provides a strong clue to the context, the raid on Gwynedd from the Old North which resulted in his death (see below).⁵⁵
11. 6–7 *Run Ryuychvaur*: Rhun Rhyfeddfawr. It is tempting to think that in the context of Elidir Mwynfawr this refers to Rhun ap Maelgwn Gwynedd, who led the revenge expedition back to the north.⁵⁶ But the epithet *Rhyfeddfawr* ‘of great wealth’ has been thought to be an epithet used of Rhun ab Urien Rheged, although Rowland has cast some doubt on this;⁵⁷ it may be preferable to treat this person as separate individual.
1. 7 *Ryt*: the final *t* may be a tall *s* with the top erased. If so, this may be the name Rhys but this has to remain uncertain.
11. 8–9 *vael mael.nit*: Mael Maelienydd. This is perhaps the most problematic and interesting of the names listed in this poem. Mael, after whom Maelienydd was thought to have been named, is an obscure character who seems to emerge only very late in the genealogical tradition: Bartrum gives the two earliest versions of the pedigrees traced back through Mael Maelienydd, and the first version occurs first in NLW Peniarth 131, part viii (1494×1509), by Ieuan Brechfa, and both the first and second versions occur in Pen 129 (1500×1536), copied from Gutun Owain’s Manchester University, Rylands Welsh 1 (1497).⁵⁸ He does not occur then in pedigrees before the late fifteenth century, and he may only be mentioned in them as a distant ancestor of fifteenth-century families.⁵⁹ Bartrum calculates his dates to *ca* 970, but, although he seems to be associated with Maelienydd, in the context of this

⁵² Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 472; Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 522.

⁵³ Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 237.

⁵⁴ For discussion, see below.

⁵⁵ Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 345; Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 241.

⁵⁶ Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 491–3; Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 563–5.

⁵⁷ Jenny Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry. A Study and Edition of the Englynion* (Woodbridge, 1990), 86–7; cf. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 492–3.

⁵⁸ P. C. Bartrum, ‘Pedigrees of the Welsh Tribal Patriarchs’, *NLWJ* 13 (1963), 93–146, at p. 114 and note on pp. 135–6.

⁵⁹ We are very grateful to Ben Guy for supplying us with information and references on this.

poem he should probably be thought of as a legendary character rather than as someone to whom a date can be meaningfully assigned. That said, these lines now provide the earliest reference to him.

1. 9 *ewein clud*: Ewein Clud. It is tempting to think of this character who is otherwise unattested as associated with the Old North, that is, ‘of Clyde’; we might compare Rhydderch Hael’s father *Tudwal Tudglyd*, where the epithet probably means ‘people of the Clyde’. But, given that *Ewein Clud* is grouped with other Powysian/Rhwng Gwy a Hafren figures (he is located between Mael Maélienydd and Brochfael Ysgithrog), it is possible to see *Clud* in that context as comparable with Einion Clud (d. 1177) of Elfael, brother of Cadwallon of Maélienydd. Cynddelw also mentions a Clud in his *marwnad* for Cadwallon.⁶⁰ This may well be a reference to the ‘Forest of Clud’, the former name of Radnorshire forest, and contain the Clud of Einion Clud, and perhaps of *Ewein Clud* here.⁶¹
- ll. 9–10 *brochuael yffkyfthravç*: Brochfael Ysgythrog. The spelling with an extra *s* before the *th* is presumably an error. Father *inter alios* of Cynan Garwyn, he is commemorated by various poets as one of the early, foundational kings of Powys.⁶²
1. 10 *uab^bll^ae^enaç*: uab Lleenauc. The text has been corrected substantially, and it appears that our scribe, not noted for his accuracy anyway, realised that he had perpetrated a significant error. The correction to something which can be read as *uab Lleenauc* is relatively clear, but it is likely that what he was correcting was *uallauc*, that is, Gwallauc, son of Lleenauc. In other words, he originally wrote his name, but then came back and corrected the name itself to the patronymic, when we might have expected him to have added the patronymic interlinearly. If the line in the exemplar read *am uallauc uab lleenauc* vel sim., we would have another seven-syllable line rhyming with the preceding one.
- ll. 10–11 *kynan .aḅ vrnbin clydno edin*: Kynon uab Clydno Eidin. The misspelt *vrnbin* may well be a later addition, perhaps explaining who Clydno Eidin was. Cynon was commemorated from the *Gododdin* onwards as one of the greatest warriors of the Old North.⁶³ Clydno is also mentioned his own right in ll. 3–4 above.
- ll. 11–12 *ge/vgon*. It is tempting to see some version of a name Gwgon here, but to judge from the orthography elsewhere we would expect to an ending *-aun*

⁶⁰ See CBT III, 21.179n; cf. CBT VI, 20.43 for another possible reference to the same place.

⁶¹ Again we are grateful to Ben Guy for his help with this.

⁶² Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 60.

⁶³ Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 326–7; Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 183–4.

or the like; cf. *yffkyfthravç* (ll. 9–10). We might also have expected to see a following patronymic or epithet such as Gwgon Gleddyfrudd.⁶⁴

1. 14 *dyfnaf cochwet*: Dyfnwal (?) cochwedd. It is unclear whether we have a name here at all; it is possible to read *dyfnaf* ‘deepest’. No other name seems to have the epithet *cochwedd* ‘bloodshed’.
1. 16 *vren reged*: *Vrien Reged*. We would expect a spelling like *vrien* but this is consistent with the poor quality of the copying of our scribe. The famous king of Rheged and one of the heroes of the Old North needs little annotation.⁶⁵
1. 16 *uelgun*: Maelgwn. In the context this is presumably Maelgwn Gwynedd. Note the spelling of the first syllable as *e*. Although the context is unclear, the juxtaposition of the great kings of the north and of Gwynedd is striking.⁶⁶

In terms of structure, there seem to be four runs of names: Manawyd, Gwenddolau, Bran, and Clydno (ll. 3–4); the triadic Nudd, Rhydderch, and Mordaf (l. 4); mab Pabo (?), Elfin mab Guitno, Elidir Mwynfawr, and Rhun Rhyfyg (ll. 5–6); and then a group of names where each name seems to be preceded by *am* ‘about, around’:⁶⁷ *am Vael Maelenit* (?), *am Ewein Clud*, *nyt am Brochfael Ysbythrauc*, *am [Wallauc] uab Lleinauc*, *am Kynon uab vrenhin Clydno Eidin*. The sense of this may be ‘around A, around B, not around C, around D, etc.’, but gaps in the transcription have thus far prevented us from understanding the syntax around these names.

The grouping of names is suggestive. While some of the names, e.g. Bran, Manawyd, are simply characters from legendary past, many of the figures in the poem have associations with the Old North and/or Gwynedd, e.g. Urien Rheged, Gwenddolau, Maelgwn Gwynedd, and perhaps Rhun ab Urien, Elfin mab Guitno, [Gwallauc] vab Lleinauc, Elidir Mwynfawr. But one group is particularly striking in that they are all associated with the raid on Gwynedd by an army from the North led by Elidir Mwynfawr which was fought off by Rhun ap Maelgwn and the retaliatory raid into the north. According to the narrative preserved in the NLW Peniarth 29 (Black Book of Chirk) and BL Add. 14931, in addition to

⁶⁴ For whom, see Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, p. 325.

⁶⁵ Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 508–12; Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 632–5.

⁶⁶ On Maelgwn, see Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 428–32; Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 438–42.

⁶⁷ In a few cases here, but not all, it might be possible to think that *am* is the assimilated form of *ap/ab* ‘son’ used before labials, *am Vael*, *am Brochuael*, but they are never found before names beginning with other consonants or with vowels; cf. ‘Pa gur yv y portaur’ (*BBC* 94.1–96.16 (*Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin*, ed. A. O. H. Jarman (Cardiff, 1982), pp. 66–8), ll. 13 and 23), and Cynddelw (*Cyfrs Beirdd y Tywysogion* IV, 12.17 *am Maelgŵn*).

Elidir Mwynfawr, whose death triggered the latter raid, Rhun ap Maelgwn, Clydno Eidyn, Nudd Hael, Mordaf Hael, and Rhydderch Hael are all listed as being implicated.⁶⁸ Perhaps what we may have here is a poem, or part of a poem, involving the Old North and Gwynedd and commemorating the heroes of this event. But other names from the Old North, not involved in the raid as we have the narrative, are also mentioned, e.g. Gwenddolau, etc. In addition, a group of three names stands outside that geographical framework: Mael Maelienydd, Ewein Clud, and Brochfael Ysgythrog, who are associated with Powys.⁶⁹ As noted above, little is known about Mael (and what information we have is very late) and nothing about Ewein except for his second name; neither is likely to have been familiar to any poet outside Powys. All of this suggests that that we have a fragment, or fragments, of a poem composed in Powys which links heroic figures from the area with the great exploits of the heroes of Gwynedd and the Old North. If the poet were from Gwynedd, there is no good reason to think that he would wish to write them into a poem about Gwynedd's relations with the Old North.

We have noted that it has proved difficult to pin down the metrical form. That might be because several short poems or extracts have been added to the final page of the quire. Of course, one of the primary difficulties is that we cannot read the whole text and so the structure must remain unclear. However, the subject matter suggests very strongly that it is not a continuation of the poem at the bottom of fol. 40r, *Dadl Corff a'r Enaid*. But we do know that text had been erased from our page before our poem was copied (possibly by the scribe who finished 40r) as we have traces of a capital *B* on the lower part of the page on the left, and so what was erased might have been a continuation of the preceding page. Yet if this were the case, why was the beginning of the poem on 40r not also erased? And why would one scribe erase what was presumably such an extensive amount of text that he had gone to the trouble and expense of copying in the first place? It seems, therefore, more likely that what was erased on 40v was something else, not copied by the scribe of fol. 40r–v. The poem that now occupies fol. 40v shows no large capital visible at the beginning of the first line which might suggest that we have to do with a fragment of something larger. If so, then it is possible that the scribe was following the working habits of the main scribe who was prone to gather in fragments (e.g. fol. 14r–v, also at the end of a quire, where *trioedd y meirch* were added). It tends to happen more often where he had left a gap hoping

⁶⁸ The text was edited by Morfydd E. Owen, 'Royal propaganda: Stories from the law-texts', in *The Welsh King and his Court*, ed. T. M. Charles-Edwards, M. E. Owen and P. Russell (Cardiff, 2000), 224–54: at pp. 238–45 (discussion), pp. 252–4 (text and translation); see also Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 345, 491–2 (where this text is printed), and 493–5.

⁶⁹ Assuming we accept the proposal about the identity of Ewein Clud proposed above, p. 16.

for more of a certain poem (e.g. fol. 26v), or where there was a gap because he wanted to start a new poem on a new page (e.g. fol. 23v). Indeed, that the scribe of fol. 40r–v may have also been collecting fragmented texts is supported by the fact that *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid* is itself a fragment.

While the poem does not follow on from the text on fol. 40r, the subject matter is consistent with some of the other verse in the Black Book collection. In particular, *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin* has one section about Maelgwn attacking south Wales and another on the battle of Arfderydd, both of which are comparable in terms of subject matter.⁷⁰ More generally the main compiler was interested in names of peoples and places, as in *Englynion y Beddau*, *Enwau meibion Llywarch Hen*, and the Myrddin poems.⁷¹ That said, the density of names on this page of recovered text is striking (more dense in fact than one encounters in most medieval Welsh verse), and especially when we note that they are all personal names; any place-names, like Eidyn or Rheged are part of a personal name. Again, as has been already suggested, this may point to the fact that we are dealing with fragments of verse perhaps collected by a scribe who was particularly interested in names.

The section listing the personnel involved in the raid on Gwynedd from the Old North is particularly tantalising. As noted, we have a prose narrative of this event preserved in two northern law manuscripts in the context of text on the privileges of the men of Arfon which contains a single *englyn* attributed to Taliesin;⁷² there is no textual overlap between it and our poem but it is not impossible that it is part of the same poem, since we may be dealing with fragments. Narratives relating to privileges can manifest themselves in verse as well as prose and were clearly of interest to poets as well as lawyers. This may in part be because the justification of such privileges lay deep in, and involved figures from, the legendary past. Thus just as the rights of the men of Arfon rested on their heroic deeds in the Old North, so the privileges of the men of Powys were encoded in verse by Cynddelw in 'Breiniau Gwŷr Powys' and supported by its sister-poem 'Gwelygorddau Powys'.⁷³ Arguably we may also compare the stance

⁷⁰ *LIDC*, poem 1 (pp. 1–2), ll. 1–22 and ll. 23–36 respectively. Though it is generally accepted that these two sections are part of the same poem, for the view that they are fragments of two different poems merged and transformed into a dialogue, see Myriah Williams, 'Studies in the Black Book of Carmarthen' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2016), pp. 106–111.

⁷¹ *LIDC*, poem 18 (pp. 36–44); 40 (pp. 82–3), 15–17 (pp. 25–35) respectively.

⁷² Owen, 'Royal propaganda: Stories from the law-texts', 252–3; the last half-line is translated by Owen as 'red their fords', but the orthography of the stanza would suggest that the last word is *rhydd* 'freedom', thus 'red their freedoms (i.e. their freedoms were earned by the blood of those who went on the retaliatory raid north)'.

⁷³ See Thomas Charles-Edwards and Nerys Ann Jones, '*Breintiau gwŷr Powys*: the liberties of the men

adopted by the poet of ‘Etmyg Dinbych’ in standing up for the rights and duties of the people in a period of political uncertainty.⁷⁴ It is possible that our fragments contain parts of a similar poem. There is very little to go on in terms of date as most of the characters referred to a part of the general cast-list of legendary narrative, but reference to the *tri hael* perhaps suggests a twelfth-century date.⁷⁵ However, the fact that we have a group of three figures associated with Powys might suggest another more specific context: bearing in mind the point of the men of Arfon episode, it may have been a poet reminding his ruler (or putative ruler) that the men of Powys were entitled to the same consideration. Whether it belongs to the same period, after 1160, as has been suggested for the other Powys privilege poems we cannot tell.⁷⁶

Conclusions

Of fol. 40v, Gwenogvryn Evans remarked it ‘has been read in parts only, and that not sufficiently continuously to be printed, at least for the present’.⁷⁷ More than a hundred years later, with the aid of a variety of tools and technologies, the text of fol. 40v has been read ‘sufficiently continuously’ to provide a partial text. Significantly, the text that has been recovered was hitherto unknown to scholarship. Perhaps in time and with further advancements in imaging techniques the remaining gaps may ultimately be filled, but as it stands now several things are clear: the text of the page is verse; it was copied by the same scribe as added to fol. 40r; it is not a continuation of the text added to fol. 40r; there was a preoccupation either on the part of the poet or the scribe with names. Two notable questions about the text, meanwhile, remain unanswered (and probably, for the time being, unanswerable). First, in what metre or metres was the verse composed? This question is not made easier by the second: are we

of Powys’, in *The Welsh King and his Court*, ed. Charles-Edwards *et al.*, pp. 91–123, with discussion (pp. 191–213) and text, translation and notes (pp. 216–23); the edition is based on that in *CBT II*, poem 11 (pp. 128–42). *Gwelygorddau Powys* is edited in *CBT II*, poem 10 (pp. 113–27), but no English translation is available. On these texts, see also David Stephenson, *Medieval Powys: Kingdom, Principality and Lordships* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 182–3, 190, 196–8, 205–6. Back in Gwynedd, we may also compare the prose *Gravamina* (edited and discussed by Llinos Beverley Smith, ‘The *Gravamina* of the community of Gwynedd against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 31 (1984), 158–76 (text at pp. 173–6)).

⁷⁴ Paul Russell, ‘*Aduŷyn gaer jssyd*: an early Welsh poem revisited’, *Celtica*, 29 (2017), 6–37, at pp. 16–19.

⁷⁵ If we accept the proposal made by Ben Guy above (pp. 14–15).

⁷⁶ Charles-Edwards and Jones, ‘*Breintiau gwŷr Powys*’, 203–4. It would be pushing the argument too far to suggest that some of this was composed by Cynddelw, but it would seem to emanate from a poet with similar connections.

⁷⁷ *BBC*, p. xl.

dealing here with one fragment of a single poem, or multiple fragments of different poems? Even without the answers to these questions, they lead us to another important point which must be added to the list of what is now clear: that the scribe was operating in a way which was in keeping with the compilation habits of the main Black Book scribe, both in collecting verse and in gathering fragments. When this later scribe decided to copy what we have argued are probably a series of verse fragments onto this page, he may not have done it well, but he seems to have been aware of what might be appropriate to the overall structure of the manuscript. Even if he did not seek to contribute additional material to existing poems in the manuscript, as other later scribes did, he gathered material which nevertheless had relevance to the Black Book collection. This is true both of the fragment of *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid*, which can be related to a poem from the same tradition copied by the Black Book scribe elsewhere in the manuscript, and of the fragments of fol. 40v, with their concern for the heroes of the Old North/Gwynedd and others associated with Powys.⁷⁸ We have already noted that other poems in the Black Book share a similar interest in names and in some of these figures, but it is also noteworthy that at least two, *Englynion i Deulu Madog ap Maredudd* and *Marunad Madauc fil' Maredut*, also display an interest in Powys.⁷⁹ These poems are both the work of poet Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, as is the poem that precedes the texts added to fol. 40r–v, *Aswynaf Nawdd Duw*.⁸⁰

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⁷⁸ The Black Book scribe's copy of *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid* is found on fols. 9v–14r; *LIDC*, poem 5 (pp. 7–11).

⁷⁹ *LIDC*, poem 37 (p. 77) and poem 38 (pp. 78–79).

⁸⁰ Although speculation is tantalizing, there is not enough evidence to suggest that the scribe of fol. 40r–v was adding material to the Black Book according not to content, but according to poet.