

'Heuel da uab kadell teuyhauc kēry oll auellef ekemry en kam arueru or kefrethyau ac adeuenuf atau uy. guyr opop kemud eny tehuyo kaet epduar en lleicyon ar deu ēfcolecyon sef achauē euēnuyt er efcleyc yon rac goffod or lleycyn dym auey en er byn er efcrtur lan ...'

'Howel the Good, son of Cadell, prince of all Wales seeing the Cymry misusing the laws, summoned to him six men from every commote in the principality, four of them Laymen, and two Clerks. The Clerks were summoned lest the Laymen should ordain any thing contrary to the holy scripture. ...'²

So reads the opening of the Preface to the Laws of Hywel in NLW MS Peniarth 29, the *Black Book of Chirk*, as presented in the collotype facsimile that Gwenogvryn Evans published of the manuscript. This Preface is an abbreviated version of the Preface to the Venedotian Code published by Aneurin Owen in the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* of 1841. However, it is the Dimetian Code, published by the same author, that includes the passage:

'... the king selected, out of that assembly, twelve of the wisest laics, and the most learned scholar who was called the master Blegywryd, to form and systemize the laws and usages, for him and his kingdom perfectly ...'³

John Morris Jones had a postal interchange with Gwenogvryn concerning this passage at the time the former was writing his articles challenging the documents on which the Gorsedd was based. Unfortunately we only have part of this interchange. Morris Jones wrote in his usual abrasive style:

'... 2. The appointing of a committee of 12 with Blegywryd as Secretary to codify the laws. This I find is in the oldest Dimetian MS, called L., wh: Aneurin Owen ascribes to the 13th or early 14th century. Now, after you have pointed the thing out, I can quite believe that the statement did not appear in the original copies of the codes; indeed it w^d. be strange, when one considers it, if that committee were itself to describe itself as being constituted of the 12 wisest men and the one most ingenious yscolheic. But the statement, as I say, appears in the oldest Dimetian MS, and there is no reason to doubt that it is a record of fact taken from some chronicle or other. Lloyd tells me that it is generally admitted to be such. 3. The description of Blegywryd as the Archdeacon of Llandaff. This it appears has no foundation for it. It appears in MS S., so the only mistake I unwittingly made, is a lie which may be traced to Llanδewibrefi & Llanwenog! ...'

¹ This article came out of a paper I read at the Oxford-Cambridge Celtic Colloquium at Jesus College, Oxford, on 11 May 2013, which has been expanded by further research.

² J. G. Evans (ed.), *Facsimile of The Chirk Codex of The Welsh Laws* (Llanbedrog, 1909), 1. (Issued to the public in 1921.) The page numbering is idiosyncratic. There are two pages numbered '1'. This is from page 1 of the four diplomatic pages. Page 1 of the photographic facsimile is unreadable. My translation.

³ A. Owen, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* (London, 1841), DC, Preface.

Saints Dewi and Gwenog are both invoked in MS. S [BL Add. 22356] several times, from which evidence it has been attributed to Ceredigion, but Llanwenog was the place from which Gwenogvryn derived his name so the comment is double edged!⁴ Morris-Jones continues:

'... It wd. have suited my purposes much better to know that Blegywryd was a layman, for the Gorseð people might say that a clergyman might be supposed to have a grudge against the gorseð as a survival of paganism. ... I had noticed the name in the Lib. Land. p. 219 "famosissimus ille vir bledciurit" (I suppose bledcuirit is your mistake) and Lloyd is of opinion that this is almost certainly the man. He is mentioned further on p 222 as a layman. It is little comfort now to see that one could have made one's case stronger ...'⁵

Gwenogvryn's response was equally abrasive, but more to the point:

'... I may tell you this that I do not believe in the "Dimetian" & "Gwentian" Codes. You refer to the Preface in the Latin Version in Vol II (the Peniarth MS). That is all that is old. If I cd. see you I cd. tell you all about the Law MSS. Aneurin Owen has so mixed late & early MSS. that I find it hard to follow him with the MSS. open before me. I fear your authority (Lloyd) will have to revise his knowledge of the subject. Dont jump at conclusions about Ble[dc]uirit. Even scribes are not infallible. It ought not to be necessary to tell you that I print what I find, & Blegywryt is too familiar a name for either Rhys or myself to blunder over. I find my copy is even verified on p 219. Bad as I am I am right there anyway. ...'⁶

There are some interesting points in this. He sees no distinction between the Dimetian and Gwentian codes. That tallies with modern ideas that both, and indeed the Latin texts of the Laws, all originate from Deheubarth.⁷ Also, in his opinion, the Latin text of Peniarth 28 (Lat. A.) has the oldest version of the Preface. Note: 'That is all that is old.' This reads:

'Brittannie leges rex Howel, qui cognominabatur Bonus, id est *Da*, regni sui, scilicet Gwynedotorum, Powyssorum, atque Dextralium, sapientium et in uno loco ante suum tribunal congregatorum uno consensu et diligenti examinatione mediocriter temperateque constituit. ...'⁸

The following points of difference between this and the Peniarth 29 version should be noted. Firstly, Hywel's title is rex, not tywysog. The latter would not have been correct in Hywel's day, as the charters of the time and his coinage show.⁹ Secondly, his territory is correctly delineated as Gwynedd, Powys, and

⁴ A. Owen, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* (London, 1841), Preface, The Manuscripts, S.

⁵ NLW Timothy Lewis Papers Box 5 1549. Letter, [MJ] to [JGE], 17 Jan 1896.

⁶ Bangor MSS. 3247 18. Letter Card, [JGE] to [MJ], [18 Jan 1896].

⁷ T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350-1064* (Oxford, 2013), 269.

⁸ H. D. Emanuel, *The Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws* (Cardiff, 1967), 109.

⁹ S. D. Keynes, *An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c.670-1066*, rev. edn. (Cambridge, 2002), Table XXXVI; P. W. P. Carlyon-Britton, 'The Saxon, Norman and Plantagenet Coinage of Wales', *The British Numismatic Journal* 2

Deheubarth instead of 'all Wales', as Hywel was never king of Morgannwg or Gwent. Thirdly it uses Britannia rather than Kymru for Wales. All three points indicate a much earlier time of composition.¹⁰ So Gwenogvryn was right in two of his comments. He further states that Lloyd was wrong and implies that Blegywryd of the Welsh Laws was not the same person as Bledcuirit filius Enniawn of the Liber Landavensis. Lloyd's opinion has some support but others have agreed with Gwenogvryn. The prologues that mention Blegywryd do indicate that he was a cleric of some sort, if not Archdeacon of Llandaff, and, as Morris Jones pointed out, Bledcuirit is stated to be a layman.¹¹

To return to Evans's version of the *Black Book of Chirk*, why did he pick this particular MS. to collotype? Aneurin Owen refers to it as 'the most ancient manuscript in the Welsh language which has passed under the Editor's observation'. He says it 'may be attributed to the early part of the twelfth century'.¹² Gwenogvryn agrees up to a point:

'... *The Black Book of Chirk*, is the oldest copy of the LAWS OF HOWEL ÐA in the Welsh language ... which seems to have been written about 1200. ...'¹³

He adds:

'... And not until the students of the *Laws of Wales* learn to concentrate their attention on the text of A (supplemented by its copy E) can we ever hope to arrive at solid results. The contents of the other Welsh manuscripts look like later variants with certain additions, editorial glosses and comments, which may help us to understand late thirteenth or fourteenth century law, but only carry us further away from the 'Law of Howel', ...'¹⁴

Later he was to modify his opinion about the date, for on the prospectus slip for the *Chirk Codex* he wrote:

'This is the oldest known form of the Welsh Laws ... written c.1200-30, ...'¹⁵

The *Black Book* is one of the Welsh manuscripts written above the top ruled line, so can be dated to before 1250.¹⁶ The first hand of the *Black Book* is very similar

(London, 1905), 31-56; and in *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, Session 1905-06* (London, 1907), 1-30.

¹⁰ For a full examination of the various Prologues see H. Pryce, 'The Prologues to the Welsh Lawbooks', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 33 (1986), 151-87.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 170, quoting [J.] G. Edwards, 'Studies in the Welsh Laws since 1928', *WHR Special Number, 1963: The Welsh Laws*, 11-16.

¹² A. Owen, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* (London, 1841), Preface, The Manuscripts: A.

¹³ Historic Manuscripts Commission, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language Vol. 1, Part 2, Peniarth* (London, 1899), 359.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

¹⁵ NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 5, loose in box. Published in Jenkins, D., 'Gwenogvryn Evans's 'Facsimile of the Chirk Codex'', *NLWJ* 22/4 (1982), 470-474, 473.

to the hand of another law book in the first half of Peniarth 30, *Llyfr Colan*, as noted by both Dafydd Jenkins and Paul Russell.¹⁷ It is probably not the same scribe as there are some differences, particularly in the treatment of 'r', 'v' and 'w', but otherwise the two hands are almost identical. Even if they are not written by the same scribe, the similarity does indicate they are contemporaneous. Peniarth 30 is written below the top line and, therefore, it is fairly safe to assume they were both written c.1250.¹⁸

So the date of the *Black Book of Chirk* has slipped somewhat, from the 'early part of the twelfth century' in 1841, to 'about 1200' in 1899, to 'c.1200-30' in 1921, to c.1250 today. Which means it isn't quite so far out in front of the others as Owen and Evans thought. In fact Daniel Huws notes that six of the law texts, 3 in Latin and 3 in Welsh, were all written at this time.¹⁹ Added to which Dafydd Jenkins has established the likely *floruit* of the eponymous compiler of the Venedotian Code, Iorwerth ap Madog, so Peniarth 29 can hardly have been written before c.1240.²⁰

The *Chirk Codex* is rather a curious compilation compared to Gwenogvryn's other productions. It has no Introduction or Palaeographical Notes, no Index and no Glossary. The first printed page allocates it the number 6(vi) in the series of Old Welsh Texts, and the title page dates it to 1909, but the preceding page states that 250 copies of the work were collotyped at the Clarendon Press in 1903. Since the volume was not issued to the public until 1921 we need to have a look at what happened (or failed to happen) here. Before I do that we need to see what the rest of the book consisted of. For that I borrowed the table, with some slight modifications, from Paul Russell's excellent article on the *Black Book*.²¹

Pages

- (i) 'Llyfyr Du or Weun / Volume vi. of the / Series of Old Welsh Texts.'
- (ii) [Logo] / 'Two hundred and fifty copies of this work were / collotyped at the Clarendon Press in 1903: ...'
- (iii) 'Facsimile of / The Chirk Codex / ... / M.DCCCC.ix.'
- (iv) blank

¹⁶ D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000), 28.

¹⁷ D. Jenkins (ed.), *Llyfr Colan: Y Gyfraith Gymreig yn ôl Hanner Cyntaf Llawysgrif Peniarth 30* (Cardiff, 1963), xxxv; P. Russell, 'Scribal (in)competence in thirteenth-century north Wales', *NLWJ* 29, 2 (1995), 129-176, 167-8.

¹⁸ D. Huws, *MWM*, 58.

¹⁹ BL Cotton Calig. A.iii., fols 149-98 ('C'), BL Cotton Vesp. E.xi ('Lat. B.'), BL Harl. 1796 ('Lat. C.'), NLW Pen. 28 ('Lat. A.'), NLW Pen. 29 (*Llyfr Du'r Waun*) ('A'), NLW Pen. 30 (*Llyfr Colan*) ('Colan'): D. Huws *MWM*, 58.

²⁰ D. Huws, *MWM*, 28n; D. Jenkins, 'Iorwerth ap Madog', *NLWJ* 8/2 (1953), 164-70; D. Jenkins, 'A family of medieval Welsh lawyers', Jenkins, D., (ed.), *Celtic Law Papers* (Bruxelles, 1973), 123-33.

²¹ Paul Russell, 'Scribal (in)competence in thirteenth-century North Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Chirk (Peniarth MS 29)', *National Library of Wales Journal* 29/2 (1995), 129-176, 131 (being a simplified version of the table in Dafydd Jenkins, 'Gwenogvryn Evans's 'Facsimile of the Chirk Codex'', *NLWJ* 22/4 (1982), 470-474, 472).

- (v) 1 diplomatic transcript of BBCh, p. 1
- (vi) 2 diplomatic transcript of BBCh, p. 2
- (vii) 43 diplomatic transcript of BBCh, p. 43
- (viii) 58 diplomatic transcript of BBCh, p. 58
- 1-56 Facsimile of BBCh, pp. 1-56
- 57 Facsimile of BBCh, p. 57 and BL Addtl. MS 14931, p. 51, ll. 25-9
- 58-83 Facsimile of BL Addtl. MS 14931, pp. 52-77
- 84 Facsimile of BL Cotton MS Caligula A.iii, fo. 158r
- 85-128 Facsimile of BBCh, pp. 61-104
- 129-35 Facsimile of BL Addtl. MS 14931, pp. 101-9

I will not go into detail here as this has been well covered by Paul Russell and Dafydd Jenkins, but, basically, Gwenogvryn has used Text A in so far as it is complete, and used Text E (BL Addtl MS 14931) to fill the gaps, as he thought E was a copy of A. He also added a single page of Text C (BL Cotton MS Caligula A iii) for comparison. A and E are closely related and they are the only two MSS. to contain the 'Privileges of Arfon', but Aled Rhys Wiliam has shown there are many variant readings.²² So A and E probably derive from the same exemplar, but E is not now accepted as a copy of A. The four pages of diplomatic transcript are in the edition because those pages of Peniarth 29 in facsimile are unreadable.

Now to the dates. Dafydd Jenkins has gone into detail on this so I will only add my discoveries. The volume number (vi) indicates that Gwenogvryn intended to issue it after the diplomatic edition of the *Black Book of Carmarthen*. Here is a list of the various volumes in the *Old Welsh Texts* series with dates on title page and actual dates of release:

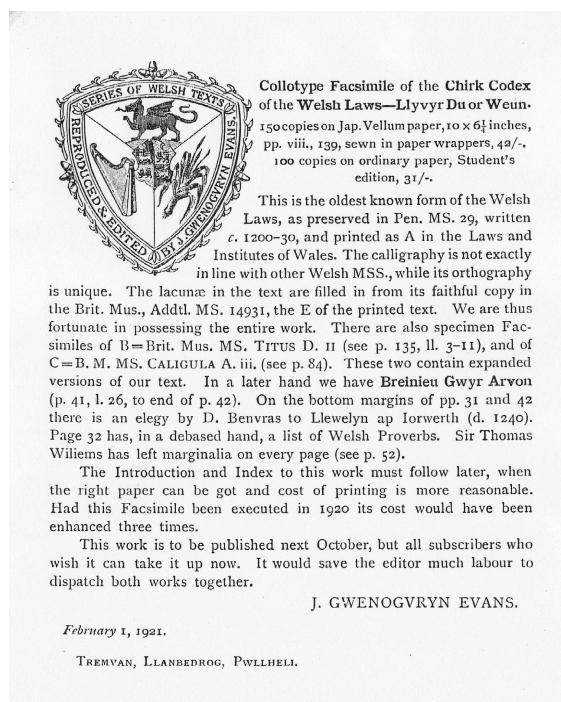
Old Welsh Texts Series	Publication date	Release date
Red Book of Hergest 1 Mabinogion	1887	1887
Red Book of Hergest 2 Bruts	1890	1890
Black Book of Carmarthen Facsimile	1888	1888
iv Book of Llan Dâv	1893	1893
v Black Book of Carmarthen diplomatic	1906	1907
small ed.	1907	1910+?
vi Chirk Codex	1909	1921
vii White Book Mabinogion	1907	1909
viii Book of Aneirin	1908	1910? II 1922
ix Book of Taliesin	1910	1916 II 1916
x ??		
xi Red Book of Hergest Poetry	1911	1921 II 1926

There is some uncertainty on the release dates of two of the volumes, but, if you look down the column of publication dates, the *Chirk Codex* is the one that is out

²² A. R. Wiliam, *Llyfr Iorwerth: a critical text of the Venedotian Code of Medieval Welsh Law* (Cardiff, 1960), xxi & 139-140.

of sequence, even before you look at the column of release dates.²³ I will return to this shortly.

Dafydd Jenkins mentioned that he noted a prospectus slip tipped into the front of the copy of the *Codex* that he was using. Here is a copy of the same slip I found in the National Library of Wales.²⁴



Observe the date on it: 'February 1, 1921'. If one didn't keep this slip with the volume it would be difficult to know what was going on, as it acts as a sort of Index. Note also the comment that: 'The lacunæ in the text are filled in from its faithful copy in the Brit. Mus.' The penultimate paragraph reads:

'The Introduction and Index to this work must follow later, when the right paper can be got and cost of printing is more reasonable.'

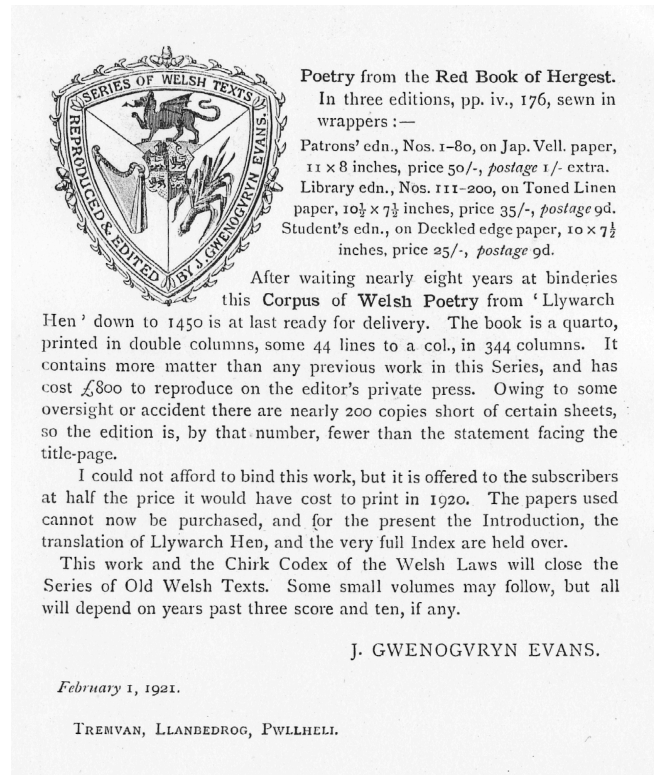
Clearly the conditions never did improve. Dafydd Jenkins was puzzled by the final paragraph:

²³ The intended content of Vol. x is uncertain. There is no definite evidence of Evans's intentions, but, on the prospectus slip for the remaining series issued at the time of the *Black Book of Carmarthen* diplomatic (1907/8) [NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 5, loose in box.] he notes that a volume covering 'The Poetry in Peniarth MS. 3, Brit. Mus. Addl. 14976 etc.' is 'in the press'. Peniarth 3 has poetry of Cynddelw, and the *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddyd ei chwaer*, and, according to his Report, Addl. 14976 contains poetry by various authors 'between 1450 and 1580'. 'In the press' is a little vague; certainly it does not mean that anything had been printed.

²⁴ NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 5, loose in box. Published in Jenkins, D., 'Gwenogvryn Evans's 'Facsimile of the Chirk Codex'', *NLWJ* 22/4 (1982), 470-474, 473.

'This work is to be published next October, but all subscribers who wish it can take it up now. It would save the editor much labour to dispatch both works together.'

He thought the second work was the missing Introduction and Index. What Dafydd Jenkins had not seen was this, issued on the same date.²⁵



It would appear from this that the *Red Book Poetry* is the other work referred to by Evans, and not the Introduction and Index to the *Black Book of Chirk*. When Evans started the series he stated there would be one volume a year.²⁶ That turned out to be far too optimistic, but clearly he had the idea to issue the *Red Book Poetry* in February and the *Chirk Codex* in October, to space them out, but then said he'd be very happy to send them out together, to save him labour (and, no doubt, to get the money back faster).

The other thing that concerned Dafydd Jenkins was the 1903 date for the printing of the collotypes. He had found a pre-publication copy of the facsimile that had been given to Timothy Lewis to help him prepare his *Glossary of Mediaeval Welsh Law*, and was then, and up to recently, in the possession of Morfydd Owen.²⁷ Dr. Owen has kindly passed it on to me. That copy has the facsimile printed exactly as the published edition in so far as pages 1-56, 65-85, and 85-135 are concerned. The group of eight title and diplomatic pages are

²⁵ NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 5, loose in box.

²⁶ Prospectus to the series. NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 5, loose in box.

²⁷ Lewis, T., *A Glossary of Mediaeval Welsh Law based upon The Black Book of Chirk* (Manchester, 1913).

missing, as are pages 57-58. Pages 59-64 are only present as photographs taken from the original glass negatives. Page 84 is blank except for the pencilled comment 'Specimen page from C'. So it would appear that the printing was done in more than one stage.

Jenkins came to the conclusion that Lewis must have been given his copy some time between the autumn of 1905 when Lewis went to Manchester and began work on the *Glossary* and 1913 when it was published, so he argued that the printing of the collotype cannot have been finished in 1903. He suggests that the date 1907 written on the fly leaf of Lewis's book may only be the date of binding. Also Jenkins noted that in Evans's HMC Report of 1899 he stated that:

'It may interest students to know that this MS. has been collotyped in facsimile by the Clarendon Press, and will be issued, in due time, in the *Series of Old Welsh Texts*. The missing parts are supplied from its transcript, MS. E.'²⁸

So Jenkins considered that the first part was probably done before 1899, and the last part after 1905. So where, on this basis, 1903 comes into it, I was at as much of a loss as Dafydd Jenkins.

Professor Strachan of Manchester University wrote to Gwenogvryn on 7 October 1906, requesting that Timothy Lewis be allowed to prepare a *Glossary* of the Laws based on Gwenogvryn's *Codex*, and he repeated the request in a letter of 14 October.²⁹ Lewis wrote to Gwenogvryn on 2 January 1907, indicating that he had at least partly completed a transcript of the text, which he felt would be easier to work from than the facsimile.³⁰ So the proof copy of the facsimile must have been sent to Lewis between 14 October 1906 and 2 January 1907, and probably nearer the former than the latter. Lewis wrote again on 2 May 1907, saying that he was unable to read all or part of pages 1, 2, and 43, which were three of the pages Gwenogvryn printed as diplomatics.³¹ Curiously Lewis did not mention any problems with page 58, the fourth page that Evans printed, which leads me to wonder what was on the missing pages 57-58 of Lewis's proof. If we assume, for the moment, that Lewis produced a continuous transcript using both A and E, then he must have had a continuous text in the proof.³² Since pages 57 to 64 make up an eight page single folded sheet, it is fair to assume that Evans had inserted a blank sheet with eight photographs to span the gap. As Lewis did not complain that 58 was unreadable I suspect that Gwenogvryn included a photograph of page 52 of E instead. The comment "the last 3 lines of page 52 are

²⁸ Historic Manuscripts Commission, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language Vol. 1, Part 2, Peniarth* (London, 1899), viin. (Noted in Jenkins, D., 'Gwenogvryn Evans's 'Facsimile of the Chirk Codex'', *NLWJ* 22/4 (1982), 470-474, 472.)

²⁹ NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 5, 1762-1763, Letters, J Strachan to JGE, 7 & 14 October 1906.

³⁰ NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 4, 841, Letter, TL to JGE, 2 Jan 1907.

³¹ NLW Timothy Lewis papers, Box 4, 843, Letter, TL to JGE, 2 May 1907.

³² T. Lewis, *A Glossary of Mediaeval Welsh Law based upon The Black Book of Chirk* (Manchester, 1913), viii.

to be placed on the top of this page" at the foot of page 59 (53 of E) would then still have made sense. But that leaves the question of what was on page 57. If Evans had included a photo of page 57 of A then Lewis would have been missing the last five lines of page 51 of E. But if he had included page 51 of E instead, then Lewis would not have had as complete a text of A as he needed for the *Glossary*. Perhaps he laid page 57 out as in the finally printed text with 57 of A and the 5 lines from E added on the base. But what then of the comment on page 59? Note that it does not start with a capital letter, so it could be the tail end of a comment written across the feet of both pages 58 and 59, with an either/or clause on 58. Something like "Either the pages will be as shown or page 58 is to be placed here and - the last 3 lines of page 52 are to be placed on the top of this page". Of course this is pure speculation, and, unless pp. 57-8 turn up, it cannot be proved, but it would certainly fit the case.³³ The comment is not in Gwenogvryn's hand, so the 8-page sheet of photographs was probably produced by the Clarendon Press, rather than Evans, as a sample for approval whilst Evans was dithering over the overlap between A and E, so the whole can be taken to be an early proof created during the printing process. Lewis probably had the proof copy bound once he had finished the transcript, which would explain the 1907 date, and that agrees with the speculation by Dafydd Jenkins. Certainly the binding and the title page are nothing like Gwenogvryn's own productions and the inscription on the fly-leaf, 'Victoria. 1907', would simply mean that the binding was done whilst Lewis was at the Victoria University of Manchester.³⁴

So the evidence shows Lewis received the proof copy in the last three months of 1906, but that does not mean that it was newly made then. It is entirely possible that Gwenogvryn did finish the printing in 1903 but, unwilling to part with a complete clean set of the collotypes, gave Lewis a set of proofs that had been hanging around from the time he was deciding how to manage the overlap of the pages between A and E. He wrote to Morris Jones in October 1905, to whom he had freely given complete page sets of other MSS.:

'... I have a Facsimile of the B. B. Chirk at Tremvan, which you can see there, if you wish to see it. ...'³⁵

This would appear to indicate the facsimile was ready a full year before he gave the proof to Lewis, and that he was unwilling to part with any sets. It would have been entirely in character for Gwenogvryn to hand over an imperfect set of proofs to Timothy Lewis whilst keeping the perfect ones for the edition. The problems that Lewis had with reading the damaged pages probably made Evans decide to print off the four diplomatic pages, which must have been done in 1907

³³ There is a considerable amount of material in the Timothy Lewis papers at the National Library that remains unresearched, and it would not surprise me if it came to light there.

³⁴ The binding may even have been paid for by the University, as Professor Strachan was anxious to have a passage from it for the Reader section of his *An Introduction to Early Welsh* (Manchester), 1909.

³⁵ Bangor MSS. 3247 64. Letter, JGE to JM], 1 Oct 1905.

or 1908 since the title page has the date 1909, and they were all part of an eight page single sheet.

We still have the remark in the 1899 Report to deal with. There is an undated letter in the Bangor Archives that reads as follows:

'... I am having a facsimile made of the Oldest Welsh law MS. — the Black Book of Chirk, and I fear I shall kill my general subscribers with so many books without padding of a popular kind. If I have grace to persevere with my translation of the Mabinogion & print that I may be able to thrust two or three facsimiles on my subscribers. ...'³⁶

The only date given is: 'Rhyd yr Ochen / Dy Sul — liw nos.' Allowing for Gwenogvryn's curious orthography that means 'Oxford, Sunday after dark.' However, there is a passage that helps to date the letter:

' I have read article III on the Orsed ... Your marshalling of facts seem [sic] to me to make your conclusions inevitable. Some points are well put, but the one that touched me most was the 10th of March one. ...'

Now Morris Jones's third article criticising the pseudo-history of the Welsh Gorsedd was published in Owen Edwards's journal *Cymru* on 10 March 1896, so I tentatively dated the letter to shortly after that, probably 15th March 1896, or 22nd, although it could be later. Evans was studying the articles whilst preparing an article on Morris Jones that would appear in the 1st July 1896 issue of *Wales*, another of Edwards's publications.³⁷ That is three years earlier than the comment in the Report. Note: 'I am having a facsimile made', so the operation must either have been in hand as he wrote, or was shortly about to commence.

A letter to Evans exists, written by W. R. M. Wynne of Peniarth, the then owner of the MS, and dated 9 February 1896. It includes the following comments:

'... I am willing to join you in giving £6 towards making MS. 29 perfect, if that amount will suffice — i.e. as you say £12 in all — I can't afford the total, as rents are falling so terribly about us. I shall be "broke" before long, & have to shut up the shutters — You are welcome to photo the M.S. — When & how do you propose to reproduce the missing text from the Brit: Museum? I don't suppose you have time to do it yourself ...'³⁸

So, on the evidence we have, we could say that the first part of the collotyping was done between 1896 and 1899. But the 'first part' might simply mean the production of photographic negatives. I went through the Clarendon Press invoices at the National Library and see if I could run the date(s) down, but there

³⁶ Bangor MSS. 3247 106, Letter, JGE to JMJ, undated [15 or 22 March 1896?].

³⁷ J. G. Evans, under the pseudonym of John Jones-Jones, 'Jottings. I. Professor John Morris Jones, M.A. (not related within the Ninth Degree)', *Wales* 3/27 (July 1896), 322-325.

³⁸ NLW Timothy Lewis Papers, Box 3, 90, Letter, W. R. M. Wynne to JGE, 9 Feb 1896.

are considerable gaps in the series and I could find nothing. I asked the Clarendon Press Archives, but they, apparently, have nothing either. Also my inquiry of the British Library has, so far, drawn a blank.

So what of Gwenogvryn's comment in the 1899 report? This was not the first or last time that Evans announced something had happened when it was about to happen. Perhaps he was expecting it to have happened by the time the Report was issued to the public, but his plans were delayed.³⁹ Collotype plates, being gelatine based, have to be used fairly immediately, so it is unlikely that they could have been kept lying around as the risk of damage would have been too high. Since the 1903 date is the only date we have for the actual printing, it must stand unless anything to the contrary emerges. Lewis's copy would therefore have been produced as a proof whilst waiting for Evans's decision on the layout of 57-64. The blank page 84 could have been rectified by passing the sheets for 81-88 through the press a second time once the printing collotype had been prepared from the negative. It could well be that Evans only decided to include a sample page from C when he discovered that he would have a blank page otherwise.

But why did he wait to release the *Codex* until 1921? Note Evans's comment in his 1896 letter to Morris Jones:

' I fear I shall kill my general subscribers with so many books without padding of a popular kind.'

Evans never did finish his translation of the *Mabinogion*, as with so many other things, so it could well be that he decided to delay issuing the *Chirk Codex* whilst he got on with books he knew he could sell: the *White Book Mabinogion* and the *Book of Taliesin* and the *Book of Aneirin*. It is possible that he had planned to issue the *Codex* in 1909 and had the electrotypes for the title and diplomatic pages prepared just before that, which neatly make up an 8 page single folded sheet, but never got round to writing an Introduction and Index to fill 8 pages to go between them.

He had given much of his time in the intervening years to his translations of the Books of Taliesin and Aneirin and had let all else be forgotten. The second and disastrous volume of the *Book of Aneirin* that contained his 'translations and amendments' was due to come out in 1922, and he knew that he had all the sheets of the *Chirk Codex* and the *Red Book Poetry* that had cost him much time and money still sitting in store. He needed to get that money back whilst he still had some credibility left. The publication of John Morris-Jones's 'Taliesin' in 1918, highly critical of Gwenogvryn's 'amendments and translations', had shaken his previously robust confidence to the core.⁴⁰ In truth I think he panicked. So he

³⁹ He did not finish the HMC *Report* until the publication of the last part (Vol. II, Part IV.: The British Museum.) in 1910. This explains the gap in producing volumes of the *Old Welsh Texts* series between 1893 and 1907. It is feasible that it slowed the production of the *Chirk Codex* as well.

⁴⁰ J. Morris-Jones, 'Taliesin', *Y Cymmrodor* 28 (1918).

issued them as they were, not risking making any comments about the contents, but just letting them stand on their own feet, with a vague promise to fill the gaps in them at some distant time in the future. But that was not to be. So far as the *Codex* was concerned, Lewis's *Glossary* of 1913 had, in any case, removed the need for a Glossary and Notes. Lewis was also, much later, in 1936, to issue his transcript of the entire *Black Book of Chirk* in the *Zeitschrift*.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that Lewis, in 1913, had given full acknowledgement of the help given by Evans in giving him an early copy of the collotype, but in 1936, after Evans had died, he fails to acknowledge him at all. Lewis, perhaps, had decided to quietly forget his association with a man now so out of favour.

In summary, Gwenogvryn's *Chirk Codex* had an extraordinarily long gestation, from its conception early in 1896, to its final delivery early in 1921. A quarter of a century not without incident. I hope I have been able to add sufficient detail to the work already done by Dafydd Jenkins to mark the more important stages in that gestation.

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⁴¹ T. Lewis, 'Copy of the Black Book of Chirk Peniarth MS. 29 National Library of Wales Aberystwyth', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), 30-96.