

JOHN MORRIS-JONES AND HIS *WELSH GRAMMAR*

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When Morris-Jones's *Welsh Grammar* was published the Cymmrodorion held a banquet in the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus, and the following day, 4 July 1913, David Lloyd-George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, threw a garden party at 11 Downing Street.¹ These celebrations were noticed in the *Revue celtique* by the great French philologist Joseph Vendryes, who regretted that he had been unable to accept an invitation to attend.² The appearance of this work, which the author had been writing and indeed rewriting for many years, seemed, he said, to be an *événement national*. But did it deserve 'so complimentary' a welcome (*si flatteur*)? Yes, it did, says Vendryes, but with reservations. First of all, he is astonished that the author, while paying due homage to predecessors such as Zeuss, Strachan, and Pedersen, barely mentions Vendryes' own compatriot Joseph Loth, even when adopting Loth's ideas. Secondly, Morris-Jones's etymologies are often fanciful, for example, that *twrch* 'boar' is related to Latin *porcus* with the Indo-European **p* becoming Celtic **t* here rather than getting lost as it normally did, as in Irish *orc* 'pig'. Edward Anwyl had already described this section kindly as 'braidd yn anturiaethus' ('rather adventurous').³ Thirdly, Morris-Jones tends to ignore Irish and, even more seriously, Cornish and Breton.

Worse was to come in the next two volumes of *Revue celtique*: a review, in parts, by Loth himself that ran to 135 pages, also issued as a separate book.⁴ Loth begins with the two receptions in London, for the dates of which he is indebted to Vendryes, he says, implying that he had not been invited himself. Did the *Grammar* deserve the enthusiastic welcome it had received among the Cymry? Alas, no, for there are too many mistakes. Loth is ready (he claims) to forgive Morris-Jones for copying his ideas without acknowledgement; Morris-Jones had done the same to other Celticists — such as his *système bibliographique* — and anyway Holger Pedersen, the learned Danish savant, had already given Loth his due in his great *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* (1909–13). Nor does Loth bear any grudge, or so he tries to reassure us, about the aggressive way in which Morris-Jones had reviewed his own *La Métrique Galloise* in the *Zeitschrift für celtische*

- 1 This article is based on a lecture given at the conference "'Algebra, Myn Diawl I!": Syr John Morris-Jones a'i Ramadeg' at Bangor University in February 2014.
- 2 Review of J. Morris-Jones, *A Welsh Grammar, Historical and Comparative* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913) by J. Vendryes, 'Review', *Revue celtique*, 35 (1914), 217–24. Henceforth the *Welsh Grammar* will be cited as *WG* and Morris-Jones's name will be standardized with the hyphen he came to prefer.
- 3 *WG*, p. 125. Cf. J. Loth, *Remarques et Additions à la Grammaire Historique et Comparée de John Morris Jones* (Paris: Champion, 1919), p. 13; and review of *WG* by Edward Anwyl in *Y Beirniad*, 3 (1913), 203–8 (p. 206). A translation of Anwyl's review was published in the *Celtic Review*, 9 (1913–14), 336–44.
- 4 I cite the book version: Loth, *Remarques*.

Philologie.⁵ Instead, like Vendryes, he is dismayed by Morris-Jones's etymologies. Morris-Jones only knows the other Celtic languages from manuals and dictionaries and jumps straight from Welsh to Indo-European, which is as foolish as leaping from French to Indo-European, bypassing Latin. He suspects that Morris-Jones has compiled a list of all the Indo-European roots listed by Alois Walde in his *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* and has recklessly invented sound-changes in order to derive Welsh words from them.⁶ He has even neglected the earliest sources for Welsh.⁷

In 1919 Morris-Jones visited Paris, called on Lloyd-George who was busy with the Treaty of Versailles, and attended an academic reception in the Sorbonne. There he was introduced to Madame Curie. But, not surprisingly, there seems to be no mention of any encounter with Loth or Vendryes.⁸

In case Welsh readers were unaware of the *Grammar*'s Continental reception, Gwenogvryn Evans, embittered by an excessively cruel attack upon himself, drew their attention to it:

Sir John Morris-Jones is singular in thinking that other philologists look on him as one. ... it is no wonder that his philologizing has won for him the silent contempt of men who have been scientifically trained in the subject, and have the gift that comes from steady work, and an endless capacity for taking pains. It is not by lounging through life, with a pipe in his mouth, that a man can leave a permanent impress on any subject.⁹

Gwenogvryn alluded darkly to the unpublished opinions of deceased British philologists such as Strachan and Quiggin, and insinuated that the *Grammar* had been commissioned for a Series of Comparative Grammars but 'when finished was — well, not included in the Series.' (the suggestive ellipses are

- 5 Loth, *Remarques*, pp. 1–2 and 8, n. 1. Cf. review of J. Loth, *La Métrique Galloise* (Paris: Fontemoing, 1900) by J. Morris-Jones, 'Welsh Versification', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 4 (1903), 106–42. Kuno Meyer had asked Morris-Jones to write the review: see Stefan Zimmer, 'Briefe deutscher Keltologen an John Morris-Jones', *ZCP*, 41 (1986), 280–86 (p. 283).
- 6 Loth, *Remarques*, pp. 9–10. For the same criticism, see the review by Rudolf Thurnysen, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 33 (1913–14), *Anzeiger*, 37–38. Loth's views are partly summarized in the course of a fine assessment of Morris-Jones's work by T. Arwyn Watkins in 'Language and Linguistics', *Celtic Studies in Wales: A Survey*, ed. by Elwyn Davies (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963), pp. 143–82 (pp. 160–61). For references to other assessments see Huw Walters, *John Morris-Jones 1864–1929: Llyfryddiaeth Anodiadol* (Aberystwyth: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, 1986).
- 7 Loth, *Remarques*, p. 8. Morris-Jones partly repaired this omission in 'Taliesin', *Y Cymmrodor*, 28 (1918), 1–290, discussed in Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Dating the Poems of Aneirin and Taliesin', *ZCP*, 63 (2016), 163–234.
- 8 At least, no meeting is recorded by Allan James, *John Morris-Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp. 238–39. (Admittedly, the latter has been criticized for neglecting the international context by Richard Glyn Roberts, in his review in *Barddas*, 315 (Haf 2012), 50–51.)
- 9 J. Gwenogvryn Evans, 'Taliesin, or, The Critic Criticised', *Y Cymmrodor*, 34 (1924), 1–123 (pp. 66–67).

Gwenogvryn's).¹⁰

What can we make of this now? Morris-Jones was writing a textbook or handbook and couldn't be expected always to cite earlier scholars, for reasons of space. He probably mentioned Pedersen, Strachan, and Thurneysen because their books had all come out recently (starting in 1908), while he was finally trying to complete the *Grammar*,¹¹ and must have caused him to rethink in many places. All the same, he does seem to be churlish in not referring to foreign scholars. When he does he tends to be combative. For example, in discussing the equative (*cyn deced* 'as fair', etc.), he names Heinrich Zimmer, Ludwig Stern, and John Strachan and dismisses their ideas, apparently using the arguments of Loth, though without naming the latter, as Vendryes and Loth himself complained.¹² To me, Morris-Jones's most surprising silence is about the work of his contemporary, Max Nettlau (1865–1944). Nettlau studied Celtic in Germany with Ernst Windisch and Heinrich Zimmer, worked on Welsh in the British Museum and elsewhere in the 1880s, and was elected an Honorary Member of the Cymmrodorion in 1887, on the recommendation of John Rhys.¹³ In 1887 he published his *Beiträge zur cymrischen Grammatik* in Leipzig and then a series of related papers in *Y Cymmrodor* and elsewhere until 1892 when he inherited a fortune from his father, the Court Gardener at the Palace of Neuwaldegg, Vienna; this enabled him to give up Celtic philology, in which he could see no prospect of employment, and to devote the rest of his long life to his other interest, Anarchism, which he had pursued in parallel with Celtic while working at the British Museum — his first real friend in London, Sam Mainwaring of Marylebone, the Anarcho-Syndicalist from Neath, was also his Welsh informant.¹⁴ Nettlau

10 Ibid., p. 66. The truth was that the *Grammar* became too voluminous for Joseph Wright's series: J. Lloyd-Jones, 'The Late Sir John Morris-Jones, M.A., LL.D., D.Litt.', *Y Cymmrodor*, 40 (1929), 265–75 (p. 269).

11 See *WG*, pp. iv and vii–viii.

12 *WG*, pp. 243–45; Vendryes, review of *WG*, p. 219; Loth, *Remarques*, pp. 4 and 90. See J. Loth, 'Le Comparatif dit d'Égalité en Galloise d'Après Zimmer', *Keltische Studien*, 16', *RC*, 18 (1897), 392–400.

13 Postcard and letter from John Rhys and Isambard Owen to Nettlau, 23 April 1887 and 14 May 1887, Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, Max Nettlau Papers 1870–1944, nos. 1395 and 1393 respectively; see <<https://search.socialhistory.org>>.

14 See introduction to Max Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, ed. by Heiner M. Becker, trans. by Ida Pilat Isca (London: Freedom Press, 1996); Kenneth John, 'Anti-Parliamentary Passage: South Wales and the Internationalism of Sam Mainwaring (1841–1907)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Greenwich, 2001). In 1894 Nettlau urged Mainwaring to translate anarchist literature into Welsh, but he replied that it would be 'simply a waste of time... I suppose you care but little now about the language and I feel sure you will care still less for the people, for more abject slaves are not to be found anywhere' (Max Nettlau Papers 1870–1944, no. 782, pp. 24–25, <<https://search.socialhistory.org>>). Unlike most anarchists, Nettlau kept on good terms with a wide range of intellectuals and managed to preserve a vast personal archive undetected in the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam until his death in 1944. This includes Celtic material which has never been studied, to my knowledge, including correspondence with a dozen or more Celtic scholars. It seems that Nettlau gave up Celtic partly because of the lack of employment prospects, judging by a letter from Alf Sommerfelt in July 1926: 'I can only deplore that you were forced to withdraw from Celtic Studies. I am sorry that the same will soon happen to me — at least for some time. There is no future for a student of Celtic in our University [Oslo]' (Max Nettlau Papers 1870–1944, no. 1128, <<https://search.socialhistory.org>>).

attempted to follow developments from Old Welsh to the modern dialects, treating the language as an organic whole. In 1926 Alf Sommerfelt wrote to Nettlau: ‘Apart from minor notices, Welsh dialects have been treated scientifically by very few authors since your time. The one important publication is Fynes-Clinton, *The Welsh Vocabulary of the Bangor District*’.¹⁵ One would expect Nettlau’s work to appeal to Morris-Jones, but I can find only one mention of him in the *Grammar* and that states that his study of irregular verbs is ‘inaccurate in some details’.¹⁶ By contrast, Josef Baudiš in his *Grammar of Early Welsh* of 1924 still cites Nettlau regularly.¹⁷ One suspects that Morris-Jones was rather xenophobic towards foreign scholars, by contrast with T. H. Parry-Williams. The latter was in friendly contact with them, partly because many of them had stayed with his father in Rhyd-ddu in order to learn Welsh. Ifor Williams may have inherited some of Morris-Jones’s prejudices — he tends to be negative about Loth — but hostility towards foreign scholars is found well beyond Bangor, for example from W. J. Gruffydd and T. J. Morgan, in particular in the introduction to the latter’s *Y Treigladau a’u Cystrawen*, with its gratuitous reference to Baudiš.¹⁸ Allan James quotes a letter by Morris-Jones in May 1888, about a proposed chair of Celtic in Bangor:

Gofyna [*sic*] ydi’r Germans i gael y spoil i gyd. Beth feddylith y byd o Gymru, os nad oes neb yn y wlad feder roi trysorau’r iaith i’r byd tra mae Germans anghyfiaith yn medru. Dywed bod digon o dalent yng Nghymru ond iddo fo gael chware teg.¹⁹

One wonders whether Morris-Jones had Nettlau in particular in mind.²⁰ In January 1887 Isambard Owen, the Editor of *Y Cymmrodor*, and like Rhys a cordial supporter of Nettlau, had written to Nettlau from his home in Mayfair:

Mr Cadwaladr Davies, the Registrar of the North Wales College at Bangor, was with me on Saturday. He said that if you would like to spend a week or two in Bangor he would be most happy to receive you as a guest, and would bring you in contact with men speaking the

15 Ibid. (Admittedly, Sommerfelt confessed that he had little access to Welsh publications.)

16 *WG*, pp. 344–45.

17 J. Baudiš, *A Grammar of Early Welsh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924).

18 See W. J. Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1928), p. vii; with response by J. Loth, ‘Le Mabinogi de Math vab Mathonwy d’après W. J. Gruffydd et la Méthode en Celto-mythologie’, *RC*, 46 (1929), 272–300. See also reviews of Kenneth Jackson, *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935) and *Early Welsh Gnostic Poems* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1935), by T. J. Morgan in *Y Llenor*, 14 (1935), 253–56 (‘[y] myth fod y dyn o bell yn well na’r brodor...’ etc., plus the addendum by W. J. Gruffydd); T. J. Morgan, *Y Treigladau a’u Cystrawen* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952), pp. vii–viii (‘Fe welir fy mod heb gyfeirio llawer iawn at bethau o waith ysgolheigion tramor, megis Baudis ...’). Cf. Sims-Williams, ‘Dating the Poems of Aneirin and Taliesin’, p. 179–80.

19 James, *John Morris-Jones*, p. 61.

20 Nettlau was a Prussian, despite the trouble Whitley Stokes took to assure correspondents in November 1885 that he was an Austrian, after calling him a German in October (Max Nettlau Papers 1870–1944, no. 1397, <<https://search.socialhistory.org>>).

dialects of all parts of North Wales. He told me, to my great pleasure, that the students in Bangor had lately formed a Dialect Society to do some work in this direction. If you go to Bangor, you might put them in the right way of working.²¹

It seems that Nettlau's visit to Bangor was called off between March and July 1888,²² around the time of Morris-Jones's letter about the 'Germans anghyfaith'.

Indo-European philology

In drawing parallels from dictionaries and handbooks Morris-Jones was only doing the same as many other philologists. He had Latin and Greek from school, at Oxford he had studied Irish with Rhys and Anglo-Saxon with Napier, and we know that he knew enough Persian to translate Omar Khayyâm.²³ Various memoirs speak of his excitement at tracing Welsh words back to Lithuanian and Sanskrit, but they do not make clear how far he knew those languages. The important thing, though, is whether he used them correctly for the purpose in hand, that is, reconstructing back to Indo-European and then onwards to Celtic and Welsh. One place where he had a notable success was with the Indo-European sound reconstructed as *g^{wh} (i.e. *g*, *w*, and *h* all pronounced simultaneously). It was agreed that the Indo-European sounds **b* and *b*^h come together as **b* in Celtic, and similar **d* and *d*^h as **d*, and **g* and **g*^h as **g*. And that **g*^w also became **b* in Celtic, so that the word for 'woman' in Old Irish was *ben* (similarly Welsh *benyw*), as opposed to *gunē* in Greek, or *queen* in English (where **g*^w became **k*^w by Grimm's Law). The big question was what happened to **g*^{wh} in Celtic. This was discussed in 1894 by Hermann Osthoff, one of the 'Neogrammarian' founders of Indo-European philology (he had learnt Welsh in Rhyd-ddu).²⁴ Osthoff argued that **g*^{wh} became **g*^h then **g*, which looked neat and suited the Irish evidence. But in 1900 Holger Pedersen drew attention to two Welsh words with medial *f* that disagreed. One was Welsh *deifio* 'to singe' beside Irish *daig* 'fire' from the root **d*^heg^{wh}- and the other was Welsh *nyfio* 'to snow' beside Irish *snigid*

- 21 Ibid., no. 1393. This North-Welsh Dialect Society is mentioned in the 1888 review cited in the following note. The need for a 'Welsh Dialect Society' was often noted: Anon, 'The Folk-Lore of Wales', *Y Cymmrodor*, 4 (1881), 155–59; Watkins, 'Language and Linguistics', p. 172.
- 22 In March 1888, Owen writes: 'If I may reveal editorial secrets, the review of your Beitrage [*Y Cymmrodor*, 9 (1888), 184–89] was a joint composition of Prof. Rhys and myself. ... I will let Mr Cadwaladr Davies know the time about which he may expect you'. But in July he says 'I am sorry you were unable to go to Bangor' (Max Nettlau Papers 1870-1944, no. 1393). Owen's letters shed some light on the editorial problems at *Y Cymmrodor* mentioned by Ben Guy, 'Egerton Phillimore (1856–1937) and the Study of Welsh Historical Texts', *THSC*, 21 (2015), 36–50.
- 23 T. Hudson-Williams, 'Omar Khayyâm', *Llafar*, 5.1 (Haf 1955), 46-48; J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Y Marchogion, y Macwyaid a'r Ford Gron', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*, 9 (1976), 191–254 (pp. 223–24); John Griffith Williams, *Omar* (Denbigh: Gwasg Gee, 1981).
- 24 Angharad Price, *Ffarwél i Freiburg: Crwydriadau Cynnar T. H. Parry-Williams* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2013), p. 21.

‘snows’ from the root **snig^{wh}*-. These were discussed further by Loth in 1909, by Pedersen himself in 1909, and by Osthoff in an article published posthumously in 1910. Opinion now seemed to be moving in favour of IE **g^{wh}* between vowels becoming *g* in Irish but *b* and then *v* in British. In initial position, however, Pedersen maintained that **g^{wh}* became **g* in both languages. Here Morris-Jones, without mentioning the earlier scholars, made an original contribution. Citing words like Welsh *gwanu* (from IE **g^{wh}en-*) and *gweddi* (from IE **g^{wh}ed^h-*) he rightly argued that **g^{wh}* became **g^w* in Celtic, from which *gw-* developed in word-initial position in Welsh but *g-* in Irish. Morris-Jones was ignored for forty years, but Daniel Binchy in 1956, Kenneth Jackson in 1967, and Warren Cowgill in 1980 all sided with him, and by the 1990s only a few German linguists still followed Pedersen.²⁵

So far as medial **g^{wh}* went, Morris-Jones accepted that *deifio* and *nyf* ‘snow’ came from **d^heg^{wh}*- and **snig^{wh}*-. Really, however, *deifio* doesn’t have to be connected with Irish *daig*; instead, along with *cynnuau*, it can be connected with Irish *dóid* ‘kindles’, which does not contain **g^{wh}*, as already seen by Whitley Stokes (in 1894), Rudolf Thurneysen (in 1912), and others. This makes it possible to see the true Welsh cognate of Irish *daig* in Welsh *de* ‘burns; burning’ (as seen by J. Lloyd-Jones in 1927) and to suppose that **g^w* from **g^{wh}* was lost in word-final position in Welsh (rather as **g* was lost in *da* ‘good’ from **dag*). At first sight *nyf* ‘snow’ seems to contradict this supposition, but I argued in 1995 that this is a special case. In this word an **n* could occur before the **g^{wh}* as seen in Latin *ninguis* ‘snow’ (beside *nivis*) and Lithuanian *sniūga* ‘snows’, and the former presence of this **n* could have affected the development, leading to *f*, as it does, *mutatis mutandis*, in Welsh *tafod* beside Latin *lingua*, English *tongue*.²⁶ In 2014 I saw Morris-Jones’s autograph manuscript of the *Welsh Grammar* in Bangor and found ‘snow’ written in pencil beside the discussion of *tafod* on page 131, presumably by Morris-Jones himself(?). Evidently he had already had ‘my’ idea!

Morris-Jones rightly accepted the existence in Middle Welsh of the word *nyf* ‘snow’,²⁷ but he does not mention the verb *nyfio*, presumably accepting the universal opinion since 1894 that it was confined to dubious dictionaries like that of William Owen-Pughe. But there may have been some such verb. I have noticed ‘(*Nyfu* or *nefu*, bwrw eira) Enquire’ in D. Silvan Evans’s papers.²⁸ Silvan quotes Y Parch. Ezechiel Thomas (1818–93) for the continued existence of *nefu* ‘bwrw eira’ (‘arferir hyd yn ddiweddar ym Morgannwg (Orllewinol). The word is now extinct

25 *WG*, pp. 130–31. For full references to the publications mentioned here and below see Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘The Development of the Indo-European Voiced Labiovelars in Celtic’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 29 (1980–82), 201–29 and 690, and ‘Indo-European **g^{wh}* in Celtic, 1894–1994’, in *Hispano-Gallo-Brittonica: Essays in honour of Professor D. Ellis Evans on the occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by Joseph F. Eska, R. Geraint Gruffydd, and Nicolas Jacobs (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), pp. 196–218.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 213; *idem*, *Studies on Celtic Languages before the Year 1000* (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2007), pp. 3–4. A further example was suggested by J. Pokorný, ‘Welsh *dewaint* “Midnight, Darkness”’, *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 1 (1949–50), 133.

27 Cf. *WG*, p. 372.

28 National Library of Wales, Cwrtmawr MS 300, p. 84.

says G. Th.’). Silvan himself says ‘Tybiaf mai *nyfu* (o *nyf* = *nivis*) y dylai y gair fod’.²⁹

Despite his success with *g^{wh}, many of Morris-Jones’s other etymological theories have never been accepted. For example, he tended to invoke a movable accent as a panacea. Kenneth Jackson noted that ‘It is well known that Morris Jones made use of arbitrary accentuations in his WG., on the theory that the British accent was a free one; usually with absolutely no basis, sometimes with the comparison of Greek or Sanskrit, which, however, are by no means necessarily relevant’. Peter Schrijver agrees: ‘Morris Jones posited and employed this free stress in a completely ad hoc and idiosyncratic way’.³⁰ An example is his explanation of the vowel *a* in words and names like *pechadur* (from Latin *peccātor*) and *Madrwn* (from *Mātrōna*). Normally a long *ā* becomes *aw* or *o* in Welsh,³¹ so what has happened here? Morris-Jones put forward the doctrine that ‘In Brit[ish] *ā* was shortened when unaccented’.³² Here he overlooked that all the best examples are Latin loanwords. In other words, the shortening probably happened in Vulgar Latin before the words came into British.³³ Another place where he invoked the accent was to explain the suffix *-an* in names like *Brychan* and words like *bychan*.³⁴ The best explanation is that this *-an* was borrowed as a diminutive from Irish *-án* through contact with Irish settlers in Wales, just as today Welsh children copy English and might call a girl named Gwen ‘Gwennie’ rather than Gweno.³⁵ In Irish the suffix developed from **-ognos* to **-agnas* (the stage we can see in the ogam inscriptions in Wales and Ireland) and then via **-aghn* to *-án*. Welsh did not have these sound-changes. In Welsh **-oghn* gives us *-oen* (as in *oen* ‘lamb’) and **-aghn* gives us *-aen* (as in *maen* ‘stone’). Morris-Jones invented two rules for British, both involving the accent: (1) ‘Before a guttural *o* in many cases became *a*, apparently when unaccented in Brit[ish]’; and (2) following the accent *gh* after *a* just disappeared without creating a diphthong, hence **-ogno-* > **aghno-* > *-an*.³⁶ The first rule was also supposed to explain the difference between *troed* ‘foot’ and *traed* ‘feet’, both coming from **troget-* but with the *o* accented in the singular only.³⁷ This seemed like *ad hoc* algebra and was almost ignored by everyone since.³⁸ The kindest critic has been Eric P. Hamp (like Morris-Jones a former mathematician) who says Morris-Jones ‘surely had the germ of the correct solution, but his reconstructions were too flawed

29 NLW Cwrtmawr MS 321, p. 346. Cf. Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 306, n. 124.

30 Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953), p. 265, n. 4; Peter Schrijver, *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), p. 17. Cf. Watkins, ‘Language and Linguistics’, p. 161.

31 See table in *WG*, p. 94.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

33 Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 289 and 654.

34 *WG*, p. 165.

35 Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology, c. 400–1200* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 159–60 (with references).

36 *WG*, pp. 85 and 165.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

38 Loth, *Remarques*, p. 36; Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 445; Schrijver, *Studies*, pp. 135–41.

to enable him to demonstrate a principled solution with the correct conditions'.³⁹

Occasionally Morris-Jones's prescriptive ideas about spelling interfered with his philology. For example, attacking William Owen-Pughe, he is clearly correct to say that 'The recent spelling *yn Mangor* is ... not only a misrepresentation of the present sound, but a falsification of its history'. But is he logical in defending the convenient modern spelling *ym Mangor* 'in Bangor' (cf. Middle Welsh *yMangor*) with two *ms*, as against *fy Mangor* 'my Bangor' with one *m*, with the hypothesis that *yn* had a 'secondary accent' while *fy* did not?⁴⁰ As Arwyn Watkins says, following Jackson, 'nid anodd dangos i Morris-Jones lunio'r esboniad hwn yn unig er mwyn ceisio dangos pam y mae *fy* (y rhagenw blaen) yn ymddwyn yn orgraffyddol wahanol i'r ardd. *yn*'.⁴¹

Again, it is generally and plausibly supposed that the pronouns *fi* and *i* 'I, me' are simply weakened forms of *mi*, but Morris-Jones, perhaps because he attributed the writing of *fi* rather than *i* in *wyffi* and *ataffi* to 'error' and 'recent mis-spelling',⁴² insisted that *i* had a different origin and was cognate with Latin *ego*.⁴³ There is no other trace of such a cognate of *ego* in the Celtic languages,⁴⁴ so the theory is improbable and has never been accepted.

'Aryan', 'Pre-Aryan', and the Celtic Languages

Morris-Jones's account of 'Primitive Aryan' (i.e. Indo-European) and Celtic in the Introduction to the *Welsh Grammar* is conventional. To us, with post-Nazi hindsight, the term 'Aryan' for Indo-European is unfortunate, but for Morris-Jones it was not a racial term: 'the speakers of Aryan languages in historical times belong to many races'.⁴⁵ He says that Aryan was believed to have spread after 2000 B.C. from somewhere in Europe (i.e. rather than in Asia). That point of departure is unfashionable today, though not impossible.⁴⁶ He accepts that the Celtic languages of Britain and Gaul were close, as stated by Tacitus in his *Agricola*, and rejects the theory that Britain and Ireland shared a peculiar 'Insular Celtic' dialect distinct from 'Continental Celtic':

39 Eric P. Hamp, '*-og- in British Celtic and Notes on *bro*', *Études celtiques*, 19 (1982), 143–49 (p. 143).

40 *WG*, pp. 168 and 172–74.

41 Arwyn Watkins, 'Yr Arddodiad HG. (*h*)*i*, *in*; CC. *y* (= *yn*), *yn*', *BBCS*, 17 (1956–58), 137–58 (p. 142); cf. Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 642, n. 1.

42 *WG*, p. 280; idem, *Welsh Syntax: An Unfinished Draft* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1931), p. 82. Is *canaffi* (ibid., p. 190) therefore a slip? Peter Wynn Thomas, *Gramadeg y Gymraeg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), pp. 259–60, allows both *i* and *fi*.

43 *WG*, p. 282.

44 For recent speculation (not mentioning Morris-Jones) that there was a Continental Celtic pronoun (*ec* 'I' cognate with *ego* see Václav Blažek, 'On the Lost Personal Pronoun of the 1st Person sg. in Celtic', in *Formal and Historical Approaches to Celtic Languages*, ed. by Krzysztof Jaskula, 7 (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 2011), pp. 53–63, <http://www.kul.pl/files/30/Celtologia/Jaskula_ed._LSCL7.prepublication>.

45 *WG*, p. 2.

46 See the facetiously titled map 'The Modern "Consensus"' in J. P. Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 144.

it is as if we were to group together English and Icelandic as insular Germanic! Thurneysen now calls it a ‘geographic’ classification (Gr. 1), which is equivalent to saying that it is no classification at all.⁴⁷

This argument still rages, but Morris-Jones, although unfairly belligerent towards Thurneysen, may well be right about a basic division between Gallo-Brittonic (P-Celtic) and Irish (Q-Celtic).⁴⁸ He was certainly right to agree with the view of Rhys in his *Celtic Britain* (1882) that the ogam inscriptions of Wales are in Irish, and not in Welsh as Rhys had maintained in earlier works. Where Rhys still went wrong in 1882 was in thinking that the ogam inscriptions in Wales were written by Goidels who not yet crossed from Britain to Ireland.⁴⁹ Leaving this last point aside, Thurneysen basically agreed with Rhys that the ogams were Irish.⁵⁰

Unfortunately, Morris-Jones went out of his way to attack the great Swiss linguist as if he had said the opposite, namely, that the ogams were Welsh! Vendryes said that this was an unfortunate blunder, due to hasty reading: *une fâcheuse bévue*. Loth went further. The passage about Thurneysen was a tissue of contradictions; it made him wonder whether Morris-Jones had actually read the book he cited or whether he was unable to understand a book written in German.⁵¹ Morris-Jones had been learning German since 1887/8 and had translated Heine,⁵² so it is more likely that he was simply careless here, and perhaps too ready to pick a fight with one of the ‘Germans anghyfaith’.

Morris-Jones was interested in parallels between Welsh syntax and the syntax of non-Indo-European languages, including Basque.⁵³ In the *Welsh Grammar*, he does not mention his own controversial article ‘Pre-Aryan Syntax in Insular Celtic’ (1900). In this he claimed that the Insular Celtic languages had been influenced by a lost indigenous Hamitic language similar to ancient Egyptian. He first mentioned this theory in 1891 in the *Gwyddoniadur Cymreig* and in 1896 Kuno Meyer, perhaps hoping to dissuade him, suggested that he submit it to Ludwig Christian Stern, the editor of the *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, who was an ‘equally good

47 *WG*, p. 3. ‘Gr.’ is Rudolf Thurneysen’s *Handbuch des Altirischen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1909).

48 Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘Common Celtic, Gallo-Brittonic and Insular Celtic’, in *Gaulois et Celtique Continentale*, ed. by Pierre-Yves Lambert and Georges-Jean Pinault (Geneva: Droz, 2007), pp. 309–54; idem, *Studies on Celtic Languages before the Year 1000*, pp. 1–42; similarly Pierre-Yves Lambert, ‘La Reconstruction du Gaulois, entre Typologie et Comparaison’, in *Typologie et Comparatisme: Hommages Offerts à Alain Lemaréchal*, ed. by Injoo Choi-Jonin, Marc Duval, and Olivier Soutet (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), pp. 265–78.

49 John Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, 1st edn (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1882), pp. 212–14. Cf. Sims-Williams, *Studies on Celtic Languages before the Year 1000*, pp. 200–10.

50 Rudolf Thurneysen, *Keltoromanisches* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1884), p. 8: ‘Die Ogam-Inschriften sind daher wahrscheinlich *irisch* und nicht brittisch. — Den goidelischen Ursprung derselben giebt neuerdings auch Rhys zu, betrachtet sie aber als von einer *alteinheimischen* goidelischen Völkerschaft stammend, was wir hier auf sich beruhen lassen wollen’ (his emphasis).

51 *WG*, p. 3; review by Vendryes, p. 223; Loth, *Remarques*, p. 14, n. 1 (‘Le passage concernant Thurneysen est un tissu de contre-sens. C’est à se demander si l’auteur a lu l’ouvrage qu’il cite ou s’il est incapable de comprendre un livre écrit en allemand’).

52 James, *John Morris-Jones*, pp. 50, 59, and 161–63.

53 See, for example, *Welsh Syntax*, p. 186.

Egyptologist and Celtist'.⁵⁴ I don't know whether he did so and had it turned down, or whether he ignored Meyer's advice. Anyway, in 1899 Rhys and Brynmor-Jones offered to publish the 'Pre-Aryan Syntax' as an Appendix to *The Welsh People* (1900), and Morris-Jones's 'heresy', as it was dubbed, became quite notorious.⁵⁵

The similarities between Celtic and Hamitic — verb-initial sentences; singular verbs with plural subjects; conjugated prepositions; *yn* (Egyptian *em*) + verbal noun, complement or adjective; etc. — may well be due to coincidence, despite Morris-Jones's assertion to Kuno Meyer that 'the mathematical probability against it is enormous'.⁵⁶ Nevertheless the theory has proved influential. In a recent survey, George Broderick pays tribute to the pioneering work of Morris-Jones whose thesis 'was treated with derision, partly because it was not fully understood'.⁵⁷ Kim McCone, following David Greene's interpretation of events, says that 'Morris Jones was young at the time and his views were not well received. He never repeated them during the remainder of his distinguished scholarly career'.⁵⁸ — Here it is worth quoting Morris-Jones's comment in his *Welsh Syntax* on the construction *Gwyn ei fyd y neb y maddeuwyd ei drosedd*:

The use of the pronominal element in the relative clause to indicate the number, gender, and case of an indeclinable relative is found in the Hamitic and Semitic languages, and in Persian, where it is probably due to Semitic influence.⁵⁹

Note that Morris-Jones does *not* now suggest that Welsh was influenced by a Hamitic-style language, even though he could easily have coupled it with Persian if he had wished. His silence, both in the *Grammar* and the *Syntax*, is eloquent.

McCone continues:

- 54 John Morris-Jones, 'Cymraeg (yr Iaith)', in *Y Gwyddoniadur Cymreig*, ed. by Thomas Gee, 2nd edn, 11 vols (Denbigh, 1889–96), III, pp. 48–79 (p. 67); Zimmer, 'Briefe deutscher Keltologen an John Morris-Jones', p. 281.
- 55 John Morris-Jones, 'Pre-Aryan Syntax in Insular Celtic', in John Rhys and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900), Appendix B; H. H. Johnson 'The Heresy of Connecting Welsh and Semitic', *Celtic Review*, 1.2 (1904), 160–72; J. Morris Jones, 'Professor Johnson's Heresy Hunt', *Celtic Review*, 1.3 (1905), 276–81; M. MacLennan, 'Celt and Semite', *ibid.*, 281–84.
- 56 Letter to Meyer printed by David Greene, 'The Making of Insular Celtic', in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Celtic Studies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966), pp. 123–36 (p. 127). See Kim McCone, *The Origins and Development of the Insular Celtic Verbal Complex* (Maynooth: Department of Old Irish, National University of Ireland, 2006), pp. 17–40; Graham R. Isaac, 'Celtic and Afro-Asiatic', in *The Celtic Languages in Contact*, ed. by Hildegard L. C. Tristram (Potsdam: Potsdam University Press, 2009), pp. 25–80. On *yn* see McCone, *Origins and Development*, pp. 35–36, and Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Four Types of Welsh *yn*', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 113.3 (2015), 286–304. On singular verbs with plural subjects see McCone, *Origins and Development*, p. 25, and Sims-Williams, 'Dating the Poems of Aneirin and Taliesin', pp. 185–86, nn. 132 and 140.
- 57 George Broderick, 'Indo-European and Non-Indo-European Aspects of the Languages and Place-Names in Britain and Ireland: An Overview', in *Lochlann: Festskrifti til Jan Erik Rekdal*, ed. by Cathinka Hambro and Lars Ivar Widerøe (Oslo: Hermes, 2013), pp. 282–314 (p. 286).
- 58 McCone, *Origins and Development*, p. 19. Cf. Greene, 'The Making of Insular Celtic', p. 126.
- 59 *Welsh Syntax*, p. 92.

However, they [Morris-Jones's views] were taken up and elaborated with enthusiasm in a series of articles on the non-Indo-European substratum in Old Irish by the prominent German Celticist and Indo-Europeanist Pokorny (1927-9, 1960 etc.), who went a good deal further than Morris Jones by envisaging a whole series of pre-Celtic substrates in Ireland and presumably also Britain.⁶⁰

Pokorny was followed by a long line of scholars down to this day. Graham Isaac quotes the following verdict by Karel Jongeling in his *Comparing Welsh and Hebrew* (2000):

After the studies of Morris-Jones, Pokorny, Wagner and Gensler it seems impossible to deny the special links between Insular Celtic and Afro-Asiatic.⁶¹

Isaac himself, however, disagrees and adds that:

the ideas in question have been propagated in the popular scientific press, with the usual corollary that it is these ideas that are perceived by the interested but non-specialist public as being at the cutting edge of sound new research, when in fact they may simply be recycled ideas of a discredited theory.⁶²

These days Morris-Jones would score well for 'Impact'! Half-baked theories about Phoenician traders, Iberian blood lines, ancient Celtic inscriptions and the like, in various glamorous manifestations, will always be with us. Morris-Jones's so-called 'heresy' deserves credit, however, as a serious and pioneering contribution to what is now called linguistic typology. He stumbled upon it by luck:

I hardly thought that the chance of finding Welsh idioms in Renouf's *Egyptian Grammar* worth the seven shillings and sixpence asked for the book.⁶³

Welsh historical grammar

The subtitle of *A Welsh Grammar* is 'Historical and Comparative' so the 'Historical' aspect also deserves mention — and praise. Morris-Jones made a wonderful

60 McCone, *Origins and Development*, p. 19.

61 Karel Jongeling, *Comparing Welsh and Hebrew* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2000), p. 64. Recent sympathetic discussions include Richard Coates, 'A Toponomastic Contribution to the Linguistic Prehistory of the British Isles', *Nomina*, 35 (2012), 49–102, and Theo Vennemann, 'Concerning *Myself*', in *Lexical and Structural Etymology*, ed. by Robert Mailhammer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 121–46.

62 Isaac, 'Celtic and Afro-Asiatic', p. 26.

63 J. Morris-Jones, 'Professor Johnson's Heresy Hunt', p. 280.

collection of material, but of course he could not read everything and missed important evidence. This is bound to happen when grammars and dictionaries are produced before all available manuscripts have been copied and indexed, and it is only very recently that searchable corpora of medieval Welsh have become available.⁶⁴ Here are three examples.

(1) Morris-Jones says that the verbal noun *cymryd*, ‘the prevailing form in the spoken lang[uage]’, has been ‘re-formed as *cymeryd* . . . The translators of the bible adopted *cymmeryd*, evidently thinking that it was more correct than the traditional form’.⁶⁵ Etymologically, it does seem that *cymryd* is the older form,⁶⁶ but *cymeryd* can be found much earlier than the Bible translators, occurring in *Ystoria Dared* in a mid-fourteenth-century manuscript and in a c. 1400 copy of *Ystoria Lucidar*.⁶⁷ Possibly Morris-Jones was prejudiced against *cymeryd* as a southernism?

(2) The normal word for ‘devil’ is *diawl* [djawl], and in fact *The Welsh Dialect Survey* only records *diafol* as a variant in Tŷ-croes, Carmarthenshire. According to Morris-Jones, William Salesbury ‘invented a new sg. *diafol*, which was adopted in the Bible, and so is considered more respectable than the genuine form’.⁶⁸ Actually, *diafol* existed before Salesbury and occurs already in the late fourteenth century in a copy of *Brut y Brenhinedd* in a probably south-western manuscript.⁶⁹

(3) Morris-Jones had a particular hatred of *efe* (as opposed to *efö*),

64 Marged Haycock, ‘Medieval Welsh Texts Today and Tomorrow’, in *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Celtic Studies, Maynooth, 2011*, ed. by Liam Breatnach, Ruairí Ó hUiginn, Damian McManus, and Katherine Simms (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, 2015), pp. 95–108. See G. R. Isaac, Simon Rodway, Silva Nurmio, Kit Kapphahn, and Patrick Sims-Williams, *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg o Lawysgrifau'r 13eg Ganrif: Fersiwn 2.0* (2013), <<http://hdl.handle.net/2160/11163>>; Diana Luft, Peter Wynn Thomas, and D. Mark Smith, *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1300-1425* (2013), <<http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk>>; Richard Glyn Roberts, Sarah Rowles, and Patrick Sims-Williams, *Rhyddiaith y 15fed Ganrif: Fersiwn 1.0* (2015), <<http://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/handle/2160/26750>>; also David Willis, *Corpws Hanesyddol yr Iaith Gymraeg 1500–1850*, <<http://people.ds.cam.ac.uk/dwew2/hcwl/hafan.htm>>.

65 *WG*, pp. 372–73.

66 From **kom-brit-*. See Stefan Schumacher, *The Historical Morphology of the Welsh Verbal Noun* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 2000), pp. 70–72 and 235.

67 Cardiff, MS 1.362 (Hafod 1), 114r: ‘A Phriaf wedy *kymeryk* kyghor’; National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 15, p. 101: ‘gann *gymeryt*’.

68 *Welsh Dialect Survey*, ed. by Alan R. Thomas (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), p. 333; *WG*, p. 220.

69 NLW MS 3035 (Mostyn 116), 137r. For a suggestion that the scribe was one of a group in Ystrad Tywi and Gower see Brynley F. Roberts, ‘The Red Book of Hergest Version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*’, *Studia Celtica*, 12/13 (1977–78), 147–86 (p. 186). The dialect of the manuscript’s *Brut y Tywysogion* is south-western according to Peter Wynn Thomas, ‘Middle Welsh Dialects: Problems and Perspectives’, *BBCS*, 40 (1993), 17–50 (p. 36).

describing it as a ‘figment’, created by Salesbury and adopted by William Morgan.⁷⁰ He thought that Salesbury created *efe* out of southern Welsh *fe* which in turn was an adaptation (influenced by *ef*) of *fo* from *efō*.⁷¹ His idea that *efe* was Salesbury’s invention, though followed in subsequent scholarship,⁷² must be wrong. In fact the form *efef* already occurs in a thirteenth-century manuscript of *Brut y Brenhinedd*,⁷³ and *efe*, which surely developed from this *efef*, occurs already in the mid-fourteenth century in *Proffwydoliaeth Sibli Ddoeth* in the White Book of Rhydderch.⁷⁴

A prescriptive Grammar?

The subtitle of *A Welsh Grammar* is *Historical and Comparative*. Should it be ‘Historical, Comparative and Prescriptive’ in view of the way Morris-Jones uses historical evidence to imply what should be written nowadays? Yes and no. There is certainly a prescriptive undertone, doubts about which were expressed publicly by Edward Anwyl and privately by T. Gwynn Jones and T. H. Parry-Williams.⁷⁵ On the other hand, Morris-Jones generally does not make it clear *within the Grammar* what he really wanted people to do, and this is also true in his *Welsh Syntax*; as Vendryes asked, reviewing the latter, ‘Beth oedd Safonau Syr John Morris-Jones?’⁷⁶

A well-known example from the *Grammar* is:

dynes is a N. Walian vulgarity which has found its way into recent literature; it does not occur in the Bible or any standard work.... Other late formations are *cymhares* and *wyres*, the former used in the 17th cent.⁷⁷

We know from elsewhere that he considered *dynes* to be a ‘gair tafodieithol

70 *WG*, pp. 272 and 273 (foot of page); cf. *Welsh Syntax*, p. 83.

71 *WG*, p. 272. For *fe* and *fo* see *Welsh Dialect Survey*, ed. by Thomas, pp. 554 and 566.

72 *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, s.v. *efe*; Emrys Evans, ‘Y Rhagenw Ategol Dwbl mewn Cymraeg Canol’, *BBCS*, 18 (1958–60), 173–76 (p. 174); cf. Paul Russell, ‘The Origin of the Welsh Conjunctive Pronouns’, *BBCS*, 30 (1982–83), 30–38 (p. 34).

73 NLW, MS Llanstephan 1, p. 48: ‘kanys nyt *efef* ath ffoes ty’. See similarly the related early-fourteenth-century MS Cardiff 1.363 (Hafod 2), 36v.

74 NLW, Peniarth 5, 13r line 34: ‘ac *efe* a | a vegys yn deholedic dieithyr y teyrmas’ (‘And he will go as if banished from the kingdom’). The Red Book of Hergest has ‘Ac *ef* auegys yn deholedic o dieithyr y deyrmas’ (‘Proffwydoliaeth Sibli Ddoeth’, ed. by R. Wallis Evans, *Llên Cymru*, 14 (1981–84), 216–23 (p. 218 line 97)).

75 Brynley F. Roberts, ‘Syr Edward Anwyl (1866–1914)’, *THSC*, 1968–69, 211–64 (pp. 234–36); James, *John Morris-Jones*, p. 281; Price, *Ffarwél i Freiburg*, pp. 49–51.

76 J. Vendryes, ‘Beth oedd Safonau Syr John Morris-Jones?’, *Y Ford Gron*, 2, Rhifyn 7 (1932), 166. (This is distinct from his review in *RC*, 49 (1932), 272–75).

77 *WG*, p. 223.

di-urddas', unsuitable for poetry,⁷⁸ but should *dyn* also replace *dynes* in prose? As Anwyl says in his review, 'Felly yr oedd gynt, ond prin y gellir dywedyd hynny heddyw'.⁷⁹ Morris-Jones himself had written *dynes* in a letter to his future wife in 1892.⁸⁰ And what about *wyres*? Is that allowed? The *Welsh Grammar* is not truly prescriptive; it just makes readers uneasy about correct usage through its constant appeal to history. Further examples occur on the following pages:

p. 44: *gwyneb*: 'This vulgarism hardly occurs before the 19th cent.' — It is a vulgarism which Morris-Jones himself was happy to use in a letter in 1893 (when *gwyneb* and *wyneb* were thought to be of different etymology and therefore equally valid).⁸¹

p. 62: 'The last *ol* of *olynol* ['in succession' < *ol-yn-ol* 'track-in-track'] was mistaken about the middle of the last century for the adjectival termination *-ol* (= *-awl*), and from the supposed stem *olyn* an abstract noun *olyniaeth* was formed to render "succession" in "apostolic succession"!'.⁸²

p. 216: 'In Recent Welsh new and inelegant weak [plural] forms are sometimes found, as *cestelli*, *alarchod* for *cestyll*, *elyrch*.'

p. 247: 'In Recent W. we sometimes see *hawddach* and *hawddaf* which come from the most debased dialect; good speakers still use the standard forms *haws*, *hawsaf*'.

p. 249: 'The form *uwchaf* [for *uchaf*] sometimes met with in Late W. ... is a re-formation from *uwch*, as children say *buwchod* for *buchod* "cows", sg. *buwch*'.

p. 285: 'The frequent dropping of the rel[ative] *a* is a characteristic of much of the slipshod writing of the present day'. — However, Morris-Jones later noted examples in the fifteenth-century poets.⁸³ In

78 *Beirniadaeth John Morris-Jones*, ed. by Dafydd Glyn Jones (Bangor: Dalen Newydd, 2012), p. 287; cf. pp. 73 and 76–77.

79 Anwyl, review of *WG*, p. 207.

80 James, *John Morris-Jones*, p. 76.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 76. Cf. John Rhys, 'Notes on the Language of Old Welsh Poetry', *RC*, 6 (1883–85), 14–61 (p. 29); Nettlau, *Beiträge*, p. 64. A purely dialectal explanation of *gwyneb* was given by Holger Pedersen, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1909–13), I, pp. 38 and 321. It is as old as the sixteenth century: see Henry Lewis and Holger Pedersen, *A Concise Comparative Celtic Grammar*, 2nd edn (Heidelberg: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961), pp. 90–91.

82 The first example of the back-formation in *GPC* seems to be *olyniawdr* 'successor' in the early seventeenth century; cf. *olynwyr* in 1775 s.v. *olynwr*, *olynydd*. The *o-* in the adjective *olynawl* in NLW 3035 (Mostyn 116), 126r, in 'A megys baed coet dr6y blith llawer o g6n kyrchu dr6y blith y *olyna6l* vydinoed y'r lle y g6lelel ar6yd brenhin Nidif', is faint, and must either be an *e-* or a scribal error for *e-*.

83 Morris-Jones, *Welsh Syntax*, p. 93.

fact omission of the relative is already characteristic of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi *circa* 1346: ‘A g6edy mar6 Katuan, yd aeth Beuno y ym6elet a Chad6alla6n vab Catuan *oed* vrenhin g6edy Catuan’ (‘And after Cadfan’s death, Beuno went to visit Cadwallon son of Cadfan, *who was king after Cadfan*’).⁸⁴

pp. 293–94: ‘A dialectal form in S.W. of *bynrag* is *gynnag*, and *gynnag pwy*, *gynnag beth* are found in some lesser writings of the late period; more recently they appear in the corrupt and curiously meaningless forms *gan nad pwy*, *gan nad beth*’.⁸⁵

p. 364: ‘*daethant* is a mis-spelling of *deuthant*’.⁸⁶

p. 382: ‘In late edns. of the Bible *gédwch* [in *Gedwch i blant bychain ddyfod atafi*] has been changed by vandals to *gadêwch*’.

p. 387 ‘*cyfieithu* (a late word) has *-u* . . . the regular *cyfieithio* also occurs’.

p. 418 ‘*ar gyfair* [is] now misspelt *ar gyfer* . . . The reason for the misspelling is partly the dialectal pronunc[iation] . . . and partly perhaps the form *cyfer-* in *cyf-erbyn* etc.’.

It is easy enough for modern readers to avoid *alarchod*, *hawddach* or *uwchaf*, but few will want to avoid *olyniaeth* or *gadewch*, or to write *deuthant*, *cyfieithio* or *ar gyfair*. Indeed, it is not clear that Morris-Jones would want them to.⁸⁷

Many of the above developments are typical of the innovations that occur in natural language, in which ‘childish’ forms tend to get adopted sooner or later, as Morris-Jones’s remark about *buwchod* implies. It is a pity that his indignation about the ‘lesser writings of the late period’ prevented him from pursuing the full development of their forms, which would have been of great interest to dialecticians. For example, from the above *gynnag beth* and *gan nad beth* we probably get *gan*

84 Oxford, Jesus College, MS 119, 106r.

85 Cf. Lewis and Pedersen, *Concise Comparative Celtic Grammar*, p. 231; Morris-Jones, *Welsh Syntax*, pp. 105–9; and below.

86 Note that *daeth* and *daethant* (formed on the analogy of *aeth* and *aethant*) only become usual in the sixteenth century. Apparent earlier examples are the result of modern editorial decisions to write *y daeth*, *y daethant* rather than *yd aeth*, *yd aethant*. I have noticed only one certain Middle Welsh example of *daeth* (*pan daeth* in Peniarth MS 21, 15v) and this is by a scribe who tends to muddle the letters *a* and *o* in general (see commentary on *Liber Coronacionis Britanorum*, ed. by Patrick Sims-Williams, 2 vols (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2017), II, 108–9).

87 On *ar gyfer*, see J. Morris-Jones, *An Elementary Welsh Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), pp. v and 13.

taw beth and then the current *ta' beth* 'anyhow'.⁸⁸

We can probably distinguish such natural neologisms from what Morris-Jones calls 'sham literary forms', that is, spellings like *daf* for *da*, *esgawb* and *dyniawn* for *esgob* and *dynion*, or *gwlaw* for *glaw* which were due to 'ignorance of the older language'.⁸⁹ But all languages have 'sham literary forms', and one cannot fight them all. When writing English, Morris-Jones himself prefers the spelling *rhyme* to *rime* even though the latter is correct (from Old French *rime*) and *rhyme* is a 'sham', based on the false analogy of *rhythm* (from Greek *rhythmos*). He is more severe on comparable spellings in Welsh: 'Such spellings as the latter-day *traithawd* for the usual and correct *traethawd* are due to bungling etymological theories'.⁹⁰ In fact *traithassant* with *ai* and *traythawt* with *ay* already occur in the fourteenth century, presumably before any etymological theories were applied to their spelling.⁹¹ Morris-Jones himself notes that *traethawd* (from Latin *tractatus*) is itself a 'book-word' which should be *traethod* if a 'genuine survival'.⁹² Yet he does not advocate saying or writing *traethod* and nobody would now do so — even though *traethod* rhymed with *pechod* and *cyfnod* in 1645.⁹³

Morris-Jones's appeals to history seem selective and inconsistent. In practice he is sometimes easy going. Nowadays use of the preposition *amdan* instead of *am* is frowned upon by teachers of Gloywi Iaith, but he remarks with apparent equanimity that it already occurs in the *Mabinogion* and 'is still in use in the spoken lang[uage]'.⁹⁴ Then he notes that 'the common words *dŷn*, *hĕn*, *ōl* are seldom

88 Melville Richards, *Cystrawen y Frawddeg Gymraeg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1938), p. 121; idem, 'Nodiadau Cystrawennol', *BBCS*, 9 (1937-39), 133-44 (p. 135); *GPC*, s.v. *gan*¹, p. 1379. Back in 1888 Max Nettlau, drawing on information about the Neath Valley dialect from his Anarchist friend Sam Mainwaring, had suggested that *ta beth* might come from *cynta beth* "the first thing" in the sense of the German "das erste beste ding", for "whatsoever" (Max Nettlau, 'Observations on the Welsh Verbs', *Y Cymmrodor*, 9 (1888), 56-119 (p. 119)). Lenition is not expected after *cynta*, however. In his 1926 letter to Nettlau cited above, n. 14, Sommerfelt remarks: 'I do not know any explanation of the Gwentian form *pw y gynnac*. Modern Gwentian is, as far as I have been able to ascertain, badly known'. The *g-* must be due to assimilation.

89 *WG*, pp. 95, 178, and 214.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

91 *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, ed. by Thomas Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971), p. 110; *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. by Marged Haycock, 2nd edition (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2015), p. 253. At *WG*, p. 34, Morris-Jones says *diffeith/diffaith* [*<* Latin *defectus*] is written with *i* 'in the good periods . . . but some early examples occur of a new formation from *ffaeth* "cultivated" (from Latin *factus*, R[ed Book] P[oetry] 1047, l[in]e 2'. Really it is better to regard *diffaith* and *difffaeth* as two different words whose meanings converged. A *lle diffaith/difffaeth* would be both 'deserted' and 'uncultivated'. See Ifor Williams, *Canu Llywarch Hen*, 2nd edn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1953), p. 220, and *GPC* s.vv.

92 *WG*, p. 94.

93 Brinley Rees, *Dulliau'r Canu Rhydd Cynnar, 1500-1650* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952), pp. 31 and 223.

94 *WG*, p. 399. On *amdan* see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh Conjugated Prepositions: Chronology, Register and Dialect', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 111 (2013), 1-50 (p. 20, n. 22); Robot Trefor, 'Problemau gyda Safoni a Chywair', in *Ysgrifau ar Ieithyddiaeth a Geiriadurath Gymraeg*, ed. by Delyth Prys (Carmarthen: Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, 2014), pp. 8-20 (p. 13). E-book.

circumflexed', as if the inconsistency doesn't matter.⁹⁵ It means, though, that the spelling is less phonetic than the older language where *hen* with a long vowel contrasted with *penn* with a short vowel; if Morris-Jones and the other inventors of 'Oxford Welsh' had retained double *n*, as arguably they should have done, *hyn* 'older' would not need a circumflex to distinguish it from *hynn* 'these'. In the case of Salesbury's bogus Latinized spellings *ei*, *ein*, *eich* (for *y* [= *eius*], *yn*, *ych*) Morris-Jones gives up worrying and says that 'it is doubtful whether the correct spelling can now be restored'.⁹⁶ When he says that *y'i* and *y'u* are written with 'no authority', that 'the Late Mn. *ydyw* is an etymological spelling, and is read *ydiw*, except by a few affected persons', and that the spelling *mai* 'that' for *mae* 'owes its adoption to' a 'popular notion',⁹⁷ it is not clear what he wanted his readers to write. His *Grammar* is not truly prescriptive.

When the *Grammar* was published the established way of conjugating the preposition *gan* was already: *gennyf*, *gennyt*, *ganddo*, *ganddi*; *gennym*, *gennyh*, *gandynt*.⁹⁸ According to Morris-Jones hardly any of these are historically correct. 1sg *gennyf* and 2sg *gennyt* with *y* rather than *i* are medievalisms, 'artificial' or 'restored' spellings like *meddyg* and *tebyg* (versus *cerrig*).⁹⁹ Then in the third persons *ganddo*, *ganddi*, and *gandynt* the *dd* (instead of *th* or *t*) is 'artificial' — though actually it is an artificiality which goes back to *c.* 1400.¹⁰⁰ 2pl *gennyh*, as he says, is a Late Modern Welsh form of *gennwch*, influenced by the vowel of 1pl *gennym*.¹⁰¹ Finally, he says that 3pl *-ynt* is a Late Modern Welsh misspelling of *-unt* — actually it started in the thirteenth-century, perhaps in north-east Wales!¹⁰² Morris-Jones's analysis only leaves the modern 1pl *gennym* unscathed, and in fact the early medieval forms *genhyn* and *kenhin* with *-n* which he cites as 3pl are really older forms of the 1pl, so even 1pl *gennym* with *-m* is an innovation, replacing *gennyn*, albeit an innovation going back to *c.* 1250.¹⁰³ In modern speech *gennym* has reverted to *gennyn* under the influence of the following *ni* in *gennym ni*.

Probably it was a mistake to cloud the rich variety of medieval and modern forms with value judgements about their relative correctness. Already in the thirteenth-century manuscripts we find a great variety of forms and spellings:

95 *WG*, p. 68.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

97 *Ibid.*, pp. 278 and 348. Cf. *idem*, 'Welsh Versification', p. 119.

98 Edward Anwyl, *A Welsh Grammar for Schools*, Part I, *Accidence*, 3rd edn (London: Sonnenschein, 1901), p. 72 (adding 'For S. 3, are sometimes found gan-th-o, gen-th-i, for P. 3 gan-th-ynt'); Peter Wynn Thomas, *Gramadeg y Gymraeg*, p. 348. A compromise, allowing *-th-*, *-dd-*, and 'formerly' *t*, also *-unt* and *-ynt*, is offered by J. Morris-Jones, *An Elementary Welsh Grammar*, Part I, *Phonology and Accidence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 173.

99 *WG*, pp. 111, 112, and 197; Morris-Jones, *Welsh Syntax*, p. 45. Cf. *idem*, 'Welsh Versification', p. 119.

100 *WG*, p. 405; Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh Conjugated Prepositions', p. 34.

101 *WG*, p. 29. A thirteenth-century example of *gennyh* in Peniarth MS 14, p. 72, is probably a scribal error: Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh Conjugated Prepositions', p. 14.

102 *WG*, pp. 13 and 398 (cf. p. 112 on 'the artificial Mn. lit. *iddynt*'); Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh Conjugated Prepositions', pp. 19–20.

103 *WG*, p. 406; Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh Conjugated Prepositions', pp. 11–14.

1sg e gennyf, genhyf, gennhyf, gennyf, gennyw, genyf, kenhy, kenhyf, kennhyf, kennyf, kenyf, kenyvi, y genhyf, y gennyf, y gennyw, y kenhyf, ykenyfi, **2sg** e gennyt, genhyt, gennyt, genyt, ikenniti, kenhyt, kennyt, y genhyt, y gennyd, y gennyt, y kenhyt, y kenhyty, **3sg.m** candhahu, cantau, canthau, ecanthau, e gantha6, e gantha6, e ganthau, e ganthav, ecanthau, ganta6, gantau, gantha6, ganthau, ganthav, kandau, kanhaue, kantahu, kantau, kantha6, kanthau, kanthav, kanthaw, y ganta6, y gantha6, y ganthau, y kantha6, y kanthaw, yganhau, ykantau, ykanthau, **3sg.f** canthy, e genty, ganthei, genthi, genty, jkenty, kanthy, kenty, y genthi, y genty, y kenty, ykenty, **1pl** e genhym, e genhyn, gennhym, gennym, kenhym, kennym, y genhym, y gennym, y kenhym, y kennym, **2pl** genh6ch, gennhuch, genn6ch, gennwch, gennych [probable scribal error in Peniarth MS 14], kenh6ch, y genn6ch, y kenh6ch, y kenn6ch, **3pl** canthu, ganth6nt, gantha6nt, ganthud, ganthunt, gantunt, kanth6nt, kanthvn, kanthvnt, kennynt, y ganth6nt, y ganthun, y ganthunt, y ganthvnt, y gantunt, y kanth6nt.¹⁰⁴

Instead of trying to preserve a selection of ancient forms, Morris-Jones might have followed his instinct back in 1890: that literary Welsh was too distant from current speech and should not have tried to conserve forms in final *t* like *danynt* and *honynt* (his examples) for seven centuries.¹⁰⁵ As it was, however, he sought to establish what was ‘correct’ through the examination of early texts — an impossible task, as Ifor Williams pointed out, since knowledge of them was expanding and changing from year to year.¹⁰⁶ But if Wales was to have a standard written language like the rest of Europe, decisions could not be postponed indefinitely.

Syntax is not covered in the *Welsh Grammar*, being postponed to what became the posthumous volume, *Welsh Syntax: An Unfinished Draft* (1931). However, the *Grammar* does briefly mention the use of *yr hwn*, *yr hon*, *yr hyn* ‘the which’ in relative clauses:

In translations these, which are properly antecedents or stand in apposition to the antecedent, are often attracted into the relative sentence, producing a confused construction; see Syntax.¹⁰⁷

There he comments:

In the poets and in the more idiomatic prose writings, such as the Mabinogion and the Bardd Cwsc, *yr hwn*, *yr hon*, etc. are of rare

104 Ibid., p. 46.

105 ‘Cymraeg Rhydychen’, *Y Geninen*, 8 (1890), 214–23 (p. 216).

106 Ifor Williams, ‘Syr John Morris-Jones’, *Y Traethodydd*, 84 (1929), 142–49 (p. 148).

107 *WG*, pp. 288 and 297–98.

occurrence. The frequent use of these pronouns is due to translation, or to the influence of translated literature.¹⁰⁸

He gives examples of such ‘artificial constructions’, culminating as follows:

Even more barbarously, *yr hwn* is used as an adjectival relative: *Juda* . . . , am **yr hwn lwyth** ni ddywedodd Moses ddim. — Heb. vii. 14.¹⁰⁹

This description is historically correct, but it may be that Morris-Jones is too vehement, not making enough allowance for the requirements of different registers. These forms were already used in the Old Welsh glosses, where precision in translating Latin was needed, and there are parallels in glosses in the other Celtic languages.¹¹⁰ Their spread in works written between the Mabinogion and Ellis Wynne was partly due to the register required in these works. Here we can compare the rise and fall of *the which* in English between Late Middle English and the end of the sixteenth century. From relative clauses *the which* spread to sentences like the following:

I beseche yow that John Tollocke may be cryer of the schere, and he shall plesse yow also largely as heny oder schall, **the weche John Tollocke** ys my soster sone. [1481, Paston letters]¹¹¹

And therefore have I . . . translated this little book out of French rhyme ... **The which book** is entitled, or named the mirror or glass, of the sinful soul [1544, Queen Elizabeth, letter to Catherine Parr].¹¹²

In such English examples, to quote Mel Evans, *the which* as determiner is ‘thought to be the product of foreign linguistic influence and “the demand for structural clarity”’.¹¹³ Much the same applies to *am yr hwn lwyth*, ‘concerning the which tribe’ — and indeed to Morris-Jones’s insistence on writing the relative *a* for the sake of precision and intelligibility. Whereas Morris-Jones is vehement against the barbarity of so ‘artificial’ a construction as *am yr hwn lwyth*, Mel Evans is quite detached about *the which book* and this is typical of modern linguists. As Rhisiart Hincks has pointed out, Morris-Jones’s work sometimes resembles H. W. Fowler’s *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* of 1926, where the adjective

108 *Welsh Syntax*, p. 104. Cf. *Gweledigaethau y Bardd Cwsc gan Ellis Wynne*, ed. by John Morris-Jones (Bangor: Jarvis and Foster, 1898), p. xxxvi. On the importance of Ellis Wynne to Henry Sweet and then to Morris-Jones see James, *John Morris-Jones*, pp. 80 and 112.

109 *Welsh Syntax*, p. 103. Cf. Morris-Jones, ‘Cymraeg Rhydychen’, p. 222.

110 P.-Y. Lambert, ‘La Traduction du Pronom Relatif Latin dans les Glosses en Vieil-Irlandais’, *ÉC*, 18 (1981), 121–39 (p. 139).

111 Cited by Helena Raunolin-Brunberg, ‘Which and the which in Late Middle English: Free Variants?’, in *Placing Middle English in Context*, ed. by Irma Taavitsainen *et al.* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 209–25 (p. 213).

112 Cited by Mel Evans, *The Language of Queen Elizabeth I: A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Royal Style and Identity* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 117.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

coastal is condemned as barbarous, *Welsh rarebit* is ‘stupid & wrong’, *elevator* is a ‘cumbrous & needless Americanism’, and the form *bureaucrat* is ‘so barbarous that all attempt at self-respect in pronunciation may perhaps as well be abandoned’.¹¹⁴

So did the *Welsh Grammar* deserve that splendid banquet in the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus, followed by Lloyd-George’s garden party at 11 Downing Street? Yes, indeed. It is a shame that subsequent Chancellors of the Exchequer have been less generous to grammarians! And were the *ieithgwn anghyfaith* right to criticize the *Welsh Grammar*? Indeed, yes. It was not perfect and much remained, and still remains, to be done.

114 Rhisiart Hincks, ‘*Heb Fenthyca Cymaint a Sill ar Neb o Ieithoedd y Byd*’: *Cymysgiaith a Phuryddiaeth gyda Golwg Neilltuol ar Burdeb Geirfa yn y Gymraeg yn y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg ac ar Ddechrau’r Ugeinfed Ganrif* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Aberystwyth, 2007), p. 79.