

Languages and Communities in the Late-Roman and Post- Imperial Western Provinces

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The Romance of Early Britain

Latin, British, and English, c. 400–600

David N. Parsons

9.1. Introduction and Background

The two centuries following the breakdown of Roman imperial authority were of central importance to the linguistic history of Britain. During this period the British Celtic which, when the Romans arrived, had been the principal vernacular language of the island, underwent a series of major modifications on its journey towards medieval and modern ‘neo-Brittonic’ languages. By 600 CE these languages, or perhaps rather ‘regional varieties’ at this stage, were also on the way to becoming confined to those western areas—Cornwall, Wales, and Cumbria—where they survived longest.¹ In their place, across the east and south of the island, came English, a language which also at this time went through an accelerated phase of development as commonalities were forged from a group of emigrant Germanic dialects. Meanwhile, the Latin which must have been spoken by some around 400 CE, and was perhaps the vernacular favoured by many at that time, is likely to have all but disappeared as a community language during these two hundred years.

Evidence for the details, and especially the chronology, of these seismic developments is far from what we would wish it to be. Contemporary written records are extremely limited in quantity and very partial in the kind of linguistic information they might possibly convey. The other tools available to the historical linguist, involving reconstructions and extrapolations of various kinds, are sufficient

I should like to thank the editors, Paul Russell, and the various colleagues who contributed to discussions at the meeting at All Souls for helpful suggestions.

¹ Also Brittany: Breton is widely believed to be the language of emigrants from southern and southwestern Britain in the post-Roman period; for a recent review, see Guy (2014). Note that I use ‘British’ or ‘British Celtic’ for the language as spoken until c. 400, and also as a general term for the language and its descendants where no chronological point is being made. The ‘Brittonic’ or ‘neo-Brittonic’ languages are the post-Roman derivatives, best represented by the surviving Welsh and Breton, together with Cornish, which survived to the eighteenth century. Cumbric, in northwestern England and southern Scotland, is barely recorded outside names: it seems to have died out around the twelfth century.

to provide a skeletal framework, but probably raise at least as many questions as they answer. It has become outmoded to dub these centuries ‘the Dark Ages’, but it is not a wholly inappropriate label in this context.

The background to the fifth and sixth centuries—if, for present purposes, we leave aside the Germanic background of Old English—is principally the linguistic inheritance from the later-Roman period.² Here also many large questions remain unresolved, but scholars are increasingly open to the possibility that Latin may have been spoken rather widely across various gradations of British society. How far it may even have supplanted British Celtic in the most Romanized areas is not clear, but the discovery over the last three decades or so of large numbers of curse tablets indicative of local, low-level Latinity (and literacy) tends to suggest rather extensive bilingualism, at the least. This is a significant shift in evidence, and opinion, from earlier generations who envisaged Latin as largely restricted to towns and to rural elites. Although a number of scholars in the later twentieth century did challenge the orthodoxy and hypothesize that Latin-speaking may have been more widespread, it is the evidence of the tablets that has largely changed the balance of the discussion.³

Not that there was ever any doubt about the enormous impact that the language had in the province. An important element in the history of both British Latin and British Celtic is the large body of Latin loanwords found in Welsh and the other Brittonic languages—a common estimate is that around 900 of them are recorded. These loanwords span a wide range of semantic categories reflecting not only areas of Roman culture, learning, and engineering, but also relating to everyday, domestic life, including some very basic vocabulary which presumably ousted Celtic cognates: Welsh *coes* (‘leg’) < Latin *coxa*, Welsh *braich* (‘arm’) < Latin *bracchium*, Welsh *barf* (‘beard’) < Latin *barba*, Welsh *pysg* (‘fish’) < Latin *pisces*, Welsh *rhwyd* (‘net’) < Latin *rete*, Welsh *fflam* (‘flame’) < Latin *flamma*, Welsh *cawl* (‘soup’) < Latin *caulis* (‘cabbage stalk’), and so on.⁴ The borrowed words develop phonologically in line with the Brittonic linguistic developments of the post-Roman period—Latin *lactis* (‘milk’) becoming Welsh *llaeth*, Latin *cultellus*

² Discussed also in Chapter 8 and Mullen (2024b).

³ For the tablets see, e.g., Tomlin (1988, 2002); Adams (2016), 398–428; Mullen (2024b). The older view that Latin had a very restricted distribution is best represented in the influential work of Kenneth Jackson (1948, 1953), and is discussed further below with reference also to some of the dissenting voices. Among the latter, Greene (1966, 1968) stands out as an early advocate of a more widespread Latinity. It should be noted, however, that over a longer span these debates have been cyclical: in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries scholars such as Pogatscher (1888) and Haverfield (1915) also favoured the extensive penetration of Latin into Roman British society.

⁴ As well as Jackson’s treatment (1953, esp. 76–94), the loanwords have been studied by Loth (1892), Lewis (1943), Haarmann (1970, 1973), and others; the critical review by Evans (1983, 963–71) remains valuable. Note that for convenience and brevity Welsh examples alone are generally cited to illustrate British usage in this chapter, but that the assumption of early borrowing is supported in a large number of cases by the attestation of the words in two or three of the recorded branches of Brittonic: thus Welsh *braich*, for instance, is matched by Breton *brec’h* and Middle Cornish *breg’h*.

(‘knife’) giving Welsh *cyllell*, for instance—and it has generally been supposed that the bulk of them were taken into British during the period of Roman occupation. In this chapter, therefore, the loanwords are treated as part of the ‘background’ to the post-Roman centuries, even though the evidence for them is first found in medieval and later texts. We shall return in the final section, however, to some further consideration of the chronology of the Latin influence on surviving later Brittonic.

That influence is not restricted to the lexicon. Several morphosyntactic features in the Brittonic languages seem likely to be innovations reflecting Latin models. One probable case is the synthetic pluperfect tense of verbs, consisting of a preterite stem with imperfect endings, as Middle Welsh *carasswn* (‘I had loved’); this is thought to be a calque on a Latin pattern, perhaps owing a greater debt to the pluperfect subjunctive *amavissem* than to indicative *amaveram*.⁵ Another likely calque is the development, across the Brittonic languages, of compound prepositions, particularly those in which an original **di* (‘from’; Old Welsh *di*, Middle Welsh *y*) is combined with another simple preposition to produce a compound, as Middle Welsh *y ar* (‘from on’) or *y am* (‘from around’).⁶ These combinations sometimes add a separative sense but sometimes appear not to alter the semantics at all. In Late Latin something very similar took place, and a number of those compounds survived amalgamated as new simple prepositions in Romance languages, e.g. French *dès* < *de ex*, *dans* < *de intus* and *devant* < *de ab ante*.⁷

Various other developments in the structure, and also the phonology, of Brittonic show similarities with those of Late Latin or early Romance, though the degree to which such parallels reflect direct influence and how far they may be simply coincidental or ‘areal’ is hard to judge. Both languages, for instance, underwent a range of vowel reductions and lost much of their earlier case systems, but whether this took place in Brittonic *because* it had happened—or was happening at the same time—in British Latin, is a moot point: many other languages have tended in the same direction. Nonetheless, such specific cases of apparent influence as those mentioned above, combined with the hundreds of loanwords and the fact that Britain was under Roman occupation for nearly four hundred years, give a reasonable context within which to consider the various suggestions of contact-induced changes. Again, further discussion of these possibilities is postponed until the final section.

⁵ The proposal of a Latin model was first set out in detail by Mac Cana (1976). For the specific suggestion of the subjunctive as a model, and a detailed review of the issues, see Russell (2011), 150–3.

⁶ The loss of the dental from the Middle Welsh form (cf. Middle Cornish *thy*, Middle Breton *di*) rendered the segment less distinctive, but it was re-marked within Welsh by the addition of still another preposition, *o* (‘from’), to give *ody*, modern *oddi*. Modern Welsh forms are thus *oddi ar* and *oddi am*. See Russell (2011), 149; also Evans (1964), 60; Falileyev (2000), 43.

⁷ The topic is discussed in some detail by Russell (2011), 147–50; see also Sommerfelt (1957) and Greene (1968), 76.

For most of this chapter we shall leave to one side the uncertain traces of linguistic influence and concentrate on surveying the limited material that might offer more tangible or direct evidence for the use of Latin in Britain in the centuries after 400. Above all, this comprises the few texts that do survive from the period, particularly the *De Excidio Britanniae* and the early post-Roman funerary inscriptions of western and northern Britain. In addition there are two further sets of loanwords which, unlike the borrowings into British, certainly belong, at least in part, to the post-Roman period. One group is thought to reflect British missionary activity in Ireland, which introduced into Irish a good number of Latin words, many of them apparently shaped by British pronunciations. Indirectly, therefore, these throw a little light on Latin usage in Britain. The other group comprises loanwords from British and Latin that were adopted by the earliest Anglo-Saxons. Some of this evidence comes specifically in the form of toponyms, and there are, finally, various aspects of onomastic evidence that can be interrogated for clues about linguistic usage in the centuries under review.

The material is treated in two sections, largely reflecting the conventional distinction between the ‘highland zone’ of the west and north, and the ‘lowland zone’ of the south and east. Although these terms are imprecise, and the boundaries between them woolly in detail, they continue to offer a convenient shorthand for discussions of this kind: the highland zone represents the less thoroughly Romanized margins of the island in which Celtic languages survived into the medieval period; the lowland zone denotes the more intensely Romanized region, which was also to bear the initial brunt of the *adventus Saxonum*.⁸

9.2. British Writers and the Highland Zone

9.2.1 Latin in the Church

Although the paucity of sources makes it so difficult to be certain about the events and circumstances of ‘sub-Roman’ Britain, it has always been clear that a degree of Latinity was still to be found. At the top end of the scale, this is evident in the most celebrated work to survive from the island at this period, Gildas’ *De Excidio Britanniae*, ‘On the Ruin of Britain’. Gildas wrote in the sixth century, perhaps its first half,⁹ and the sophistication of his Latin style—for all that it is difficult and

⁸ For a thought-provoking review of the nature and significance of the highland/lowland divide in post-Roman Britain, see Woolf (2003), 355–61; and cf. now Woolf (2020). The possibility that Gildas may have been writing in the lowland area (see n. 13 below) complicates the division for my purposes, but his evidence clearly belongs thematically on the British side of the equation and is discussed in the ‘highland’ section.

⁹ For a review of the numerous discussions of the text’s date—many of which circle around the traditional suggestion of ‘c. 540’—see George (2009), 2–4.

idiosyncratic—illustrates a remarkable level of cultural attainment at a time usually portrayed (not least by Gildas himself) as one of disaster and chaotic collapse. Laced throughout with extensive quotation from the Bible, the *De Excidio* draws also on patristic authors, especially Jerome, hagiography, and Christian history, especially Eusebius as translated by Rufinus.¹⁰ In addition, the work is marked by the phraseology and cadences of classical Latin verse, with a particularly noticeable debt to Virgil.¹¹ Overall it has been argued, and widely accepted, that the language and form of the text place it firmly in a learned, rhetorical tradition well evidenced on the Continent in the fifth century in the work of authors such as Faustus of Riez and Sidonius Apollinaris.¹² That such a work could be produced and find an audience in sixth-century Britain clearly indicates that the Latin culture of the late Empire did not simply melt away with the waning of Roman authority at the beginning of the fifth century.¹³

Gildas, of course, was a cleric,¹⁴ and it may be that the Church was quite exceptional in providing a context for such learning. Indeed, a significant strand in twentieth-century scholarship regarded the Christianity, and attendant Latinity, of post-Roman western Britain as an import from Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹⁵ Modern work, however, is firmly of the view that the Christianity of this period is more likely to represent continuity from that of the Roman province,¹⁶ and it might in consequence be suspected that high standards of Latin education may also reflect survival rather than reintroduction.

At a less exalted level than the rhetoric of Gildas, it is thought that Latin is likely to have remained an everyday spoken language in the post-Roman

¹⁰ For the Bible, see O'Loughlin (2012), esp. 29–51; Kerlouégan (1987), 100–12. The other prose sources are examined by Wright (1984), 108–11, and Kerlouégan (1987), 73–100.

¹¹ For the debt to Virgil, to classical Latin poetic phraseology more generally, and for Gildas' stylistic choices which render his prose redolent of poetry, see, e.g., Winterbottom (1978), 7–10; Wright (1984), 112–28; Lapidge (1984), 40; less enthusiastically, Kerlouégan (1987), 71–3 and 333–4.

¹² Kerlouégan (1968); Winterbottom (1974–5); George (2009), 1. Lapidge (1984, 47–8) offers a fuller list of the rhetorical writers with whom Gildas can be compared. It should be noted that Faustus of Riez was a Briton, though he rose to prominence on the Continent—it is not known where he received his own education, but his career and subsequent reputation are important for showing continuing links between Britain and Romanized Gaul during the fifth century (Charles-Edwards 2013, 199–202).

¹³ The major study emphasizing the significance of Gildas' education is Lapidge (1984); see further below. The question of where in Britain Gildas was writing is relevant here. He is 'western' or possibly 'northern' in his outlook, in that he was evidently living outside the areas of early Anglo-Saxon settlement in the east, and the locatable leaders whom he addresses live in the west. A precise location is elusive, however. Dumville (1984, 78–80) reviews suggestions without finding a conclusive answer; Sharpe (2002, 107–8) proposes somewhere in western England, in a belt between Shropshire and Dorset, as a likely—and sufficiently Romanized—context.

¹⁴ Winterbottom (1978), 118, 51 (§65, 1); George (2009), 79; Charles-Edwards (2013), 205.

¹⁵ The key work is Nash-Williams (1950), taken up by, among others, Bowen (1956, 1969).

¹⁶ Sharpe (2002), building in part on the archaeologically informed study by Thomas (1981). The debate blends into concepts of 'Celtic Christianity' as a phenomenon distinct from the late antique Christianity of Britain and mainland western Europe: Sharpe's study is a firm corrective to this idea too; see also, e.g., Hughes (1981); Davies (1992); Bradley (1999), 225–9.

Church. Evidence for this comes from Ireland. Firstly, there are the autobiographical writings of the fifth-century St Patrick, a Briton who was taken as a slave to Ireland in his teens: he apologizes in his *Confessio* for his imperfect command of a Latin which he has learned, and which—as modern analysis shows—clearly reflects the ‘vulgar’ developments of his day.¹⁷ Secondly, there are the indirect indications of the Latin loanwords in Irish.¹⁸ These are generally regarded as stemming from British missionary activity in Ireland from the fifth century onwards and the phonology of a large group of them is marked by developments that took place in Brittonic. So, for instance, Old Irish *póc* (‘kiss’), from Latin *pax*, *pāc-em* (*osculum pacis* ‘kiss of peace’), reflects the rounding of [a:] > [ɔ:] which is a regular Brittonic sound-change of perhaps the later fifth century.¹⁹ It additionally reflects, in its final consonant, the voicing or lenition of [k] > [g], which is also characteristic of Brittonic, though this change in the loanword is less evident because such lenition was not at first indicated in writing, either in early Brittonic or in Irish.²⁰ While some of these Latin words may have been adopted into British Celtic before they were transferred to Ireland,²¹ it is generally thought that many or most of them are likely to have been passed on by Brittonic-influenced Latin-speakers, and the statistics seem to support this, since Irish would appear to have borrowed many more Brittonic-coloured words of Latin origin than native British Celtic ones.²² This suggests that the immediate source of the loanwords in Ireland is principally Latin pronounced ‘after the British manner’,²³ in turn suggesting a

¹⁷ Hood (1978), 18–19, and 24, 42 (§9). Note, however, that recent detailed study by Adams (2016, 475–84) contests the view that Late Latin features in Patrick’s writings necessarily reflect his own spoken variety or living British usage: he argues that most of the non-classical elements could derive from the Bible and other Christian texts. On Patrick’s Latin, see also Lapidge (1984), 34; Greene (1968), 77–8. Suggestions that Patrick’s language may have been shaped during time in Gaul rather than in the Britain of his birth are contested by Dumville (1993), 25–8. See also n. 65 below.

¹⁸ Jackson (1953), 122–48; McManus (1983).

¹⁹ On the sound-change and its date, see Jackson (1953), 287–92; Sims-Williams (2003), 281–2. Cf. McCone (1996), 149–52, arguing for a significantly earlier date. Sims-Williams (1990), 225, elaborates on this example.

²⁰ Perhaps because the alphabet and orthographical practice were borrowed along with the words (Jackson 1953, 73), though this is open to question (Greene 1968, 81–2; Harvey 1989; cf. Sims-Williams 1991, 25–6).

²¹ Terms thought to be borrowed through the medium of British include OIr *lúirech* (‘breastplate’) and OIr *féil* (‘festival, feast-day’), which derive from ancestral Brittonic forms of Welsh *llurig* and *gwyl* respectively, and not directly from Latin *lorica* and *vigilia* (McManus 1983, 50–1, n. 80; 63, n. 131; Jackson 1953, 315 and 462–3). Jackson does acknowledge, however (1953, 124, n. 3; 315), that the extent of British influence on the pronunciation of Latin may have varied, and that ‘a more Briticizing Latin’ might possibly underlie some forms. Cf. Parsons (2011), 128–30. McManus (1983, 49, n. 67) notes a number of loanwords in Irish which derive from Latin forms either more or less ‘vulgar’ than those which furnished the equivalent British loans, potentially suggesting a range of pronunciation in British Latin, if that is correctly regarded as the source.

²² ‘Slightly over forty’ according to Chapter 8, p. 211, citing Bauer’s Vienna thesis of 2015.

²³ The oft-quoted phrase is MacNeill’s (1931, 40–1), endorsed as ‘the true situation’ by Jackson (1953, 125). Greene (1968, 81–4) added complexity by arguing that once British-Latin pronunciation was established in Irish Latin, loanwords that may have come from other directions might appear, misleadingly, to have come from Britain. He preferred to think in terms of a shared ecclesiastical culture with movement in both directions.

tradition of Latin-speaking in the British Church in, probably, the sixth century, which it is tempting to see as a linear survival of the practices of the earliest Christian institutions in the late-Roman period.

9.2.2 Latin beyond the Church

It is then a question as to whether the British Latin of Gildas, the writings of Patrick, and the loanwords in Irish should be seen as various reflections of a restricted ‘ecclesiastical’ Latin—a survival in the very particular context of the Church, an institution based upon written scripture which reached Britain through the medium of the Latin language—or whether the Latinity of the Church was echoed elsewhere in society. There is reason to favour the second interpretation. Some have proposed that the *De Excidio* itself, our principal textual source for Britain in the period, carries significant implications for secular as well as ecclesiastical Latinity. Gildas’ work takes the form of an open letter addressed to the rulers and judges of his day as well as to churchmen. One of those rulers, Maglocunus of Gwynedd (northwest Wales), is described as having formerly been the pupil of a learned teacher (a *magister elegans*), tending to indicate Latinate instruction in a secular context;²⁴ and it might be supposed that Maglocunus and his peers, and their associates across western Britain, would be able to follow the damning criticisms of their behaviour levelled at them by Gildas in his highly wrought prose.²⁵ And that prose style has been held to imply the kind of late-Roman schooling in rhetoric which aimed at preparing students for life as civil servants, administrators, and lawyers. Such an education contrasted markedly, to judge by slightly earlier Continental evidence, with that offered in a monastic setting, where elements such as the ready familiarity with Virgil would have been quite out of place.²⁶ This has led to the conclusion that Gildas’ audience

²⁴ Winterbottom (1978), 104, 35 (§36, 1); Lapidge (1984), 50; Charles-Edwards (2013), 643. It is a complicating factor that Maglocunus, later tradition’s Maelgwn, seems also to have been a monk for a period (Winterbottom 1978, 102, 33 (§34, 1); Charles-Edwards 2013, 215). Lapidge (1984, 50) argues that his training under a *magister elegans* would not have come in a monastery.

²⁵ At one point in the *De Excidio*, Latin is apparently referred to as *nostra lingua* (‘our language’) (Winterbottom 1978, 97, 26 (§23, 3)), and this is often cited as particularly telling evidence for the currency of the language in the upper echelons of sixth-century British society (e.g. Charles-Edwards 2013, 75). There are some uncertainties here, however. The passage is a famous one relating the arrival of the first three ships of the Anglo-Saxon invasions: *tribus cyulis* (‘three “keels”, ablative), are *navis longibus* ‘in our language’. Although *navis longa* is a standard Latin expression for ‘warship’, its equivalent is Welsh *llong* ‘ship’. This might either be a partial borrowing of the Latin or a native Celtic word of equivalent form (GPC s.v.; Loth 1926, 133–5; Matasović 2009, 244), but in either case—if **long* were already the word in British Celtic—then Gildas’ wording could be thought to be playing on the equivalence, in which case his meaning here would be ambiguous. Note also that it has been argued that this passage is a later interpolation into Gildas’ text (Woolf 2002; accepted by George 2009, 40–1).

²⁶ Lapidge (1984), 29; cf. O’Loughlin (2012), 122. It might be noted that the arguments relating to Gildas’ own education depend on the unstable assumption that he received his training in Britain and not on the Continent, a rider added by Lapidge himself at p. 48, n. 104. Charles-Edwards (2013,

‘was one for which Latin was a living language’, and even that the nature of the text suggests ‘that much more of the fabric of Roman civilization was still visible in sixth-century Britain than has hitherto been assumed’.²⁷

The other main indication that Latin was used beyond the Church comes from the major body of primary evidence which survives from the period, the inscribed stones of western Britain. So-called ‘Group I’ stones extend from Brittany in the south through the southwestern peninsular of England, Wales, and the Isle of Man, and then there is a scatter across southern Scotland reaching to the upper Tweed basin in the northeast.²⁸ Overall, there are nearly 250 stones in the category, spanning perhaps two centuries from the fifth to early seventh centuries. The tradition seems to be principally Christian in inspiration, although many of the individual inscriptions do not make an expression of faith explicit—importantly for the present discussion, although there are some that are clearly ecclesiastical in context, many others appear to be secular. It was for a long time believed that the mainly western distribution reflected a tradition brought in, via the Atlantic and Irish Sea, by missionaries from Gaul after the collapse of the western Empire,²⁹ but there are now strong arguments for continuity, as with the Christian faith itself. It appears that the practice of raising such memorials evolved, in part at least, directly from the late-Roman monumental tradition within Britain,³⁰ although there may also have been influences from contact with western Gaul,³¹ just as there was very clearly an important Irish dimension in many regions, and the tradition overlaps significantly with that of the Irish ogam stones.³²

214–15) enters some caveats about applying the attested evidence of schooling on the Continent in the fourth and fifth centuries directly to the fifth and sixth centuries in Britain (and later in Ireland), where, he suggests, such education ‘was also put to good use by the Church’ (p. 215). It should be noted that Kerlouégan (1987) takes a considerably less positive view of Gildas’ Latin and in particular the significance of his familiarity with secular poetry (see, for example, his conclusions 580–93, and his characterization of ‘un latin artificiel, correct et recherché’ (593)).

²⁷ Lapidge (1984), 38 and 50. Despite his reservations (see n. 26), Charles-Edwards (2013), 215, accepts that ‘[t]he probable conclusion is that there was some form of Roman administration surviving in Britain approximately about 500’.

²⁸ See *CISC*, i. There are now modern editions of the stones in Wales (*CISW*, i–iii), Cornwall (Okasha 1993), and Brittany (Davies et al. 2000); a useful survey of the Scottish material is Forsyth (2005). See also Chapter 8.

²⁹ Nash-Williams (1950). ³⁰ Handley (2001); Tedeschi (2001).

³¹ See the discussion in Parsons (2013), 42–5. Handley (2001) may have gone too far in rejecting all influence from western Gaul in favour of continuity within Britain, given (a) the geographical distribution of the Group I stones in western areas largely devoid of Roman-period epigraphy, (b) the range of epigraphical similarities with Gaul, and (c) clear archaeological evidence for contacts between the regions. On a point of detail central to Nash-Williams’s argumentation, Edwards, for instance, concludes recently: ‘The balance of probabilities remains that the *hic iacet* formula was introduced into western Britain from Gaul, its nearest neighbour’ (*CISW*, iii. 123). The difference is that she does not follow Nash-Williams in suggesting that all elements of the tradition come by that route.

³² See Chapter 8 for that tradition and the evidence for Irish language in inscriptions from western Britain.

The base language of the vast majority of these inscriptions is Latin: a few are wholly Irish, which is evidently a reflection of the elite status of that language in parts of Wales, Devon and Cornwall, and the Isle of Man; none, at this date, is in Brittonic Celtic. The texts are for the most part simple, repetitive, and formulaic. With a small number of rather more elaborate exceptions,³³ there is little here that can begin to be compared with the high style of Gildas: 'here lies X son of Y' is the typical central content, sometimes expanded with brief statements about further relationships or the status of the deceased. They are, moreover, frequently full of errors, by the standards of classical Latin, and have sometimes been held to indicate no more than the terminal decline of a language kept alive only as a traditional, half-understood medium felt suitable for funerary inscriptions. Yet a growing number of recent scholars now suggest, on the contrary, that they demonstrate a continuing and vibrant role for spoken Latin in fifth- and sixth-century Britain. This would still be in a relatively high-status context—the sponsorship of memorials carved in stone, even fairly simple ones, was probably never a concern of the average person—but, as noted, it takes us out of specifically ecclesiastical settings, and it suggests that spoken Latin may have been heard across western and northern areas of Britain, the very areas that were presumably *least* Romanized under the Empire.

Much of the evidence that leads to these conclusions appears deceptively simple at first glance. In an inscription such as DOMNICI IACIT FILIVS BRAVECCI ('Dom(i)nicus lies (here), the son of Braveccus')³⁴ it could be argued that the carver has made a couple of careless or ignorant errors in producing genitive *Dom'nici* for a correct nominative *Dominicus*,³⁵ and in misspelling the verb *iacet* 'lies') as *iacit*, which is more properly 'throws'.³⁶ Alternatively, because such 'errors' abound across the corpus, it can be suggested that these spellings imply a range of reductions in medial and final syllables that closely parallel developments in the Late Latin or early Romance of much of western Europe. Such reductions accompanied the decay of the case system in Romance languages, and led to a tension in written texts between the way a word ought to be spelt according to traditional norms, and the way it now sounded in daily speech. The argument

³³ E.g. the eighteen inscribed lines—unfortunately not all fully legible—on a sixth-century stone from Llantrisant, Anglesey (*CISW*, iii. 210–16, no. AN46). Thomas (1998, 84–6) and Howlett (2005, 42–5) discuss this stone in the context of a number of others, some of them apparently short and simple, in which they find levels of learning and sophistication that have not seemed so apparent to others.

³⁴ *CISW*, ii. 171–3, no. CD22.

³⁵ Syncope of the first *i* in Latin *Dominicus* is implied by this reading, but it is alternatively possible that DOMNICI instead represents an unrelated Celtic name: *CISW*, ii. 172; Sims-Williams (2003), 57, n. 221.

³⁶ The omission of *hic* might also speak in favour of carelessness, perhaps as a result of eyeskip in a sequence -ICI (H)IC IAC-. On the other hand, there are occasional parallels elsewhere and the usage may possibly be thought of as an abbreviation of the common formula. On *iacit*, see further n. 40 below.

pursued in detail in a number of recent studies is that the inscriptions of western Britain reveal carvers with none of the advanced classical education that shaped Gildas' writing, and only a rather hazy sense of the spelling conventions of the past, but a spoken competence in a form of Latin which had neutralized the contrasts between many declensional and verbal endings and was well on its way to becoming a British dialect of Romance.³⁷

This case is not an entirely straightforward one. It is complicated, for instance, by the fact that the name of the commemorated person often appears, as above, in what appears to be genitival form—but before this can simply be counted as evidence of confusion, it has to be recognized that contemporary Irish usage placed a genitive here regularly and correctly: 'X's [stone/memorial]' is apparently to be understood.³⁸ Moreover, a good proportion of the stones in Wales, Cornwall, and Man show Irish influence, and not a few of them bear parallel Irish-language texts in the ogam script, with the commemorated 'subject' expressed by the genitive in this way. It must, therefore, be possible that this has had an effect on the syntax of the British Latin memorials, as various scholars have argued.³⁹ Nonetheless, while we might allow for the possibility that such influence played a role, perhaps early in the tradition, in the frequent selection of a Latin genitive for the name of the deceased, it does not provide a complete solution for the many inscriptions which then make that name the subject of a finite verb, often in some form of the *hic iacet* formula; nor for those which make inaccurate use of other cases, as in the repeated nominatives of CATACVS HIC IACIT FILIVS TEGERNACVS;⁴⁰ nor is

³⁷ Detailed arguments along these lines are presented by Charles-Edwards (2013, 95–112) and Schrijver (2014, 34–48); see also Charles-Edwards (1995), 715–17; Woolf (2003), 370–3; Harvey (2018), 26–8. The more recent studies are in part responses to the analysis by Adams (2007, 616–20), who argued that the inscriptions indicated a lack of familiarity with Latin, and that although the language was evidently felt to be appropriate for epitaphs, it was copied inaccurately and largely uncomprehendingly from models. He concluded (p. 619) that '[b]y the time when these inscriptions were written Latin was all but a dead language'. Jackson's view is not easy to summarize but appears to lie to some extent between the two poles. He accepted that the inscriptions were part of the evidence which showed 'that during the fifth and sixth centuries the upper classes and the rulers of the Highland Zone had some knowledge of Latin' (1953, 119), and recognized that '[t]he peculiarities in question are all part of the development of living Vulgar Latin' (1953, 191). However, following the consensus of his day, he believed that 'the British monuments derive principally from Gaul' (1953, 190), and that their orthography reflects this origin rather than local language. He characterized the epigraphers who produced so many non-classical forms as 'lazy or ignorant' (1953, 188); he also put some of the forms down to Irish influence (see my following paragraph).

³⁸ See Chapter 8; McManus (1991), 51–2.

³⁹ Especially Jackson (1953), 622–4. See the conspectus of the views of Jackson, Ifor Williams, J. N. Adams, V. E. Nash-Williams, and R. A. S. Macalister on this genitival construction in Charles-Edwards (2013), 97–100 and 107–8, and Harvey (2018), 26–7. George Woudhuysen reminds me that the genitive is common on inscribed Roman *instrumenta*, implying 'product of', 'stamp of', 'property of', etc., and so a Latin background to the usage on the stones is not out of the question.

⁴⁰ CISW, i. 194–6, no. B21. On *iacit*, see in particular Schrijver (2014), 38–9; and Harvey (2018), 27–8; cf. Handley (2003), 188, n. 88. It is remarkable that IACIT is almost always the spelling in the British inscriptions, so that it looks less like a sporadic feature than most of those mentioned further below, and more as if it had become part of a local formulaic convention (cf. Howlett (2005, 31): 'survives in so many scores of inscriptions that one must reckon it acceptable literary usage'). Harvey

it a comfortable suggestion for inscriptions in Brittany and Scotland, which also attest genitival 'subjects', though ogam memorials are rare or unknown in those areas.⁴¹ It has been suggested that the preference for the genitive as the 'unmarked' form of the personal names may have arisen from its frequent use in patronymics.⁴² However that may be, the supporting evidence for reduction, loss, and hypercorrection in other elements of the inscriptions—NOBILI for *nobilis*, VASSO for *vassus*, MVLITVDNEM for *multitudine*, for instance⁴³—and the fact that these are exactly the kinds of development characteristic of Late Latin in much of western Europe, adds weight to the suggestion that they were erected by people for whom Latin was a contemporary spoken language.

The use of the Latin language in these fifth- to early-seventh-century inscriptions is one symptom of a continuing *Romanitas*, an attachment to the Roman past. The epigraphic habit itself is an aspect of this; Christianity itself is arguably another. A few inscriptions attribute decidedly Roman-sounding titles and social ranks to individuals: the outstanding example is the Ffestiniog, Caernarfonshire, stone which involves a *cives* who is cousin of a *magistratus*.⁴⁴ Whatever precisely these terms implied in the post-Roman society of Gwynedd, there is evidently an indication that some sense of a continuing Roman order persisted—an impression given also by Gildas' *De Excidio* and implicit, in an ecclesiastical context, a century or so earlier in Patrick's narrative of his own origins as the son of a *diaconus* and grandson of a *presbyter*.⁴⁵ One other measure of this continuing cultural attachment is found in the personal names on the monuments. Many of these are etymologically Latin, and although the choice of a personal name need not correlate with an individual's own language, the patterns in these Group I inscriptions are interesting and appear significant. Patrick Sims-Williams has set out the material for the largest group of texts, those from Wales; he calculates that over

(2018, 27) notes, interestingly, that the few British exceptions which read IACET are also consistently correct in other elements of their grammar, as if the verbal form provides a litmus test of good traditional schooling, as opposed to the more 'freewheeling' (2018, 28) usage characteristic of the British corpus more widely.

⁴¹ For this argument, see Charles-Edwards (2013), 110. It should be noted that Forsyth (2005, 122) discusses an ogam discovery from Selkirk and suggests, in connection with southern Scotland's "genitival" stones, that Irish influence 'may have been felt in Scotland more directly than previously thought' (pp. 130–1).

⁴² Charles-Edwards (2013), 111. Schrijver (2014, 42–8) argues instead that the usage may arise from a merger of nominative and vocative functions in some paradigms. This case is not straightforward, however, and involves undemonstrable analogical extensions across the system.

⁴³ These forms come respectively from *CISW*, iii. 349–51, no. F1, *CISW*, iii. 210–16, no. AN46 (the Llantrisant inscription, see above n. 33), and *CISW*, iii. 244–6, no. CN3. See further the discussions in *CISW*, and note that in the last case the corpus (rather questionably) reads MVLITVDINEM, without syncope, by assuming a ligature of I and N in which the I, as the left-hand stave of the N, is invisible; the hypercorrect final -M on the dative is certain, however. For further examples that may similarly point to Late Latin developments and confusions, see Charles-Edwards (2013), 97; Schrijver (2014), 40–1.

⁴⁴ *CISW*, iii. 385–9, no. MR8, with discussion. See also Charles-Edwards (2013), 177–8, and Harvey (2018), 28–30 (though the latter's reinterpretation does not convince).

⁴⁵ Hood (1978), 23, 41 (§1).

fifty different Latin names, such as *Iustus*, *Martius*, *Paterninus*, *Potentina*, and *Saturninus*, are found in the fifth- and sixth-century inscriptions, nearly a quarter of the name-stock, the remainder being Celtic, either British or Irish. In the later pre-Norman inscriptions from Wales, datable between the seventh and the twelfth centuries, the proportion of Latin names falls to just 6%.⁴⁶ Further, although precise dating within the early group is perilous, Sims-Williams notes that the occasional combinations of Latin name with Latin patronymic, as SEVERINI FILI SEVERI or IOVENALI FILI ETERNI HIC IACIT, are found in inscriptions that appear to belong relatively early in the sequence, in the fifth or the early part of the sixth century.⁴⁷ These observations tend neatly to suggest a narrative in which a fairly strong culture of *Romanitas* survived through the fifth and into the sixth century, but may have been on the wane by 600.⁴⁸ The history of spoken Latin in post-Roman western Britain might plausibly be set in such a context.

9.2.3 The Evidence of Place-Names

Further evidence for linguistic choices in our period in highland Britain becomes increasingly indirect. There are doubtless place-names which were coined in these centuries, but it is not easy to identify which they are in the later record. Latin-language names in the west and north of Britain are in any case rare. In Roman-period sources from Wales there are only two possible Latin coinages out of forty-four names,⁴⁹ but the west is not particularly out of line in this respect, since Latin names are scarce across Britain: the Romans were apparently happy to adopt Celtic nomenclature for the majority of places of interest to them, even the ones they seem to have built themselves.⁵⁰ One very interesting Latin name that

⁴⁶ Sims-Williams (2002), 15–19. Though the statistics have not been analysed in the same way, Latin names are also familiar on the Group I stones from other areas: e.g. *Latinus*, *Viventius*, and *Florentius* on stones from Whithorn and Kirkmadrine in southwest Scotland (Forsyth 2009, 25–6). For Cornwall, Okasha (1993, 43) calculates 20% Latin personal names, though this is across a corpus of broader date than the Group I category.

⁴⁷ Sims-Williams (2002), 16. These examples are, respectively, CISW, ii. 270–1, no. CM36, and CISW, iii. 293–5, no. CN31.

⁴⁸ Note similarly that in the fifth century St Patrick, Latin *Patricius*, had a Latin-named father and grandfather, but that of Gildas' five tyrants, in the (first half of the?) sixth century, three had Celtic names against two Latin (Sims-Williams 2002, 15).

⁴⁹ This is based on the collection in Rivet and Smith (1979). Both of the examples involve significant uncertainty. In the case of *Traiectus* ('crossing'), the location is not certainly in (or on the boundary of) modern Wales, but it may refer to a crossing of the Severn in the area of the modern motorway bridges (Rivet and Smith 1979, 177–8 and 474). In the case of *Albinumno* in the Ravenna Cosmography, Rivet and Smith's interpretation depends on an emendation to *Albiniano*, understood as an ablative/locative meaning '(at the home of) Albinianus'; this place seems to have been in Monmouthshire or Glamorgan (1979, 247).

⁵⁰ See Rivet (1980); also Parsons (2011), 122–3, on the small number of Latin place-names in Roman Britain as a whole, and on their unclear significance for the wider linguistic situation.

may possibly belong to the early post-Roman period, and derive from a social context comparable with that represented by the inscribed stones, is Powys, the name of a medieval province or kingdom. It is Latin *pagenses* ('people of the *pagus*, country-dwellers'), perhaps involving some implied contrast with those who looked to the *civitas* of the Romans.⁵¹ However, the date of this coinage, as well as its precise application and implications, remains uncertain,⁵² and the example is an isolated one: comparable names of polities and territories across post-Roman western Britain are in British or Irish Celtic,⁵³ not Latin.

To find a more marked Latin influence on place nomenclature we need to turn, once again, to the Church. Ecclesiastical terms feature heavily among the body of loanwords borrowed into British, and some of them appear as generic elements in place-names that may denote early sites. A good example is British **merthir*, a borrowing of the (ultimately Greek) complex of words represented by Latin *martyr* ('martyr'), *martyrium* ('martyr's grave'). In Brittonic place-names it may have meant '(Christian) graveyard'.⁵⁴ The pattern of the element's attestation, in Wales in particular, indicates that it was productive at a relatively early date, and it is tempting to associate its adoption with the popularity of martyr-cults which radiated around Europe in the fifth and sixth centuries.⁵⁵ Other elements that have been considered to point to a similarly early period include Welsh *diserth* < Latin *desertum* ('desert', in an extended sense 'deserted place, retreat') (*Diserth* and *Dyserth*),⁵⁶ and a putative **baseleg*, representing Latin (ultimately Greek) *basilica* ('church') (*Basaleg*).⁵⁷ Neither of these derivations seems to me as straightforward as is usually presented, however.⁵⁸ Various other terms, including the relatively common *eghlwys* (< Latin *ecclesia*), and the rare **aradur* ('oratory' < Latin *oratorium*) and *mystwyr* (< Latin *monasterium*), might be added to the inventory,

⁵¹ See Charles-Edwards (2013), 14–16, for this suggestion. See also Jackson (1953), 443–4; Sims-Williams (2014), 33–4.

⁵² The question is interestingly complicated by an apparent second instance in southeastern Wales at Dinas Powys—the origins and application of the term in this case are even more obscure (Pierce 1968, 219–20; Owen and Morgan 2007, 124–5).

⁵³ Irish in the case of the peninsular of the Llŷn in northwest Wales (cf. Leinster), and probably also the wider territory of Gwynedd (cf. Féni); see Owen and Morgan (2007), 184 and 296; Charles-Edwards (2013), 175–9.

⁵⁴ Parsons (2013) offers an extended discussion of this element and a justification for the proposed sense.

⁵⁵ Sharpe (2002) sets out the European background and discusses its relevance to Britain and Ireland; also Parsons (2013), 10–11.

⁵⁶ Williams (1945), 74; Owen and Morgan (2007), 125 and 135.

⁵⁷ Williams (1945), 7; Owen and Morgan (2007), 24; Morgan (2005), 41–2.

⁵⁸ Although *desertum* is applied to churches in Ireland (eDIL s.v. *disert*) and in some Welsh texts, there is room for doubt about the possible place-name instances, since an alternative interpretation *di-serth* ('very steep') seems to suit most of the sites (cf. Padel (1985, 85–6) for the equivalent suggestion for Dizzard in Cornwall); note also that in discussing usage of *desertum* in an eleventh-century Cambro-Latin text, Charles-Edwards (2013, 606–7), suggests that application to a church in Ireland 'may be an invention of the ninth century', which, if applicable also to Wales, would conflict with any 'Age of the Saints' implication for Welsh place-name usage. In the case of *Baseleg* doubts begin with the form: why would early *basil-* not have triggered *i*-affection to *besil-* (cf. James 2014, 26)? I hope to pursue both of these puzzles elsewhere.

though they have not specifically been associated with the early period, and in the case of *eglwys*, which remains the normal word for ‘church’ in Welsh, any narrow chronological association for the word’s use in place-names would be implausible.⁵⁹ Besides, all of this material is open to the same reservation: although it reflects the pervasive and well-documented influence of Latin on the language of the Church, it is not clear evidence for spoken Latin. While it is quite possible that *merthyr*-sites were originally named and known as *Martyres* or *Martyrium* before following the path of British phonological development, it is also possible that the names were coined after the terminology was assimilated into British.

Beyond the Church there are some uncertain suggestions of the application of Latin terms to ‘Roman features’ in the landscape. Welsh *caer* (‘fort’) is widely used of Roman towns, and may, like Old English *ceaster*, derive from Latin *castra*, though there is no settled agreement on this etymology.⁶⁰ Latin *maceria* (‘wall’) left derivatives in Welsh, Cornish, and Breton, and it is striking that two Roman villas have been discovered at sites named with the term: at Magor Farm in Illogan, Cornwall, and at Abermagwr, Ceredigion, Wales.⁶¹ These recall the tens of place-names in France, of the type Mézière(s) and Mazière(s), which are considered to denote remains of the Roman period,⁶² and suggest the possibility that the Latin-derived term was applied to such buildings when they were recognizably Roman and standing. Again, however, such examples—whilst apparently suggesting that Latin could have impacts at a local level in rather remote western regions of Britain—fall well short of indicating a role for it as a vernacular language in these areas.⁶³ Indeed, it must be conceded that there is no obvious confirmatory support in the place-name record for the stratum of spoken Latin that could be suggested by the fifth- and sixth-century inscriptions.⁶⁴ This is readily explained on the assumption that in western Britain Latin, even though it may

⁵⁹ On these terms, see Pierce (1984), 485–6, with references; Roberts (1992), 41–3. The Latin element in the ecclesiastical place-names of western and northern Britain is by no means restricted to Wales, of course. Other regions provide further instances of related terms and offer new ones, as for instance Cornish *alter* (‘altar’) in Altarnun (Padel 1985, 4; 2002, 315–16). For southern Scotland, see the survey of Latin terminology in James (2014), shading into—and sometimes difficult to separate from—the Latin element in Irish and Scottish Gaelic names. For these, and particularly Scottish Gaelic *cill* (‘church’ < Latin *cella*), see the survey in Taylor (1998).

⁶⁰ For a link with Latin *castrum*, -a, see Schrijver (1995), 447; (2022), 176. Other scholars have tentatively discussed an origin in Latin *quadra* (‘square’): Padel (1985), 50; James (2014), 10. Matasović (2009, 184) favours a non-Latin option, relating the term to a Celtic **kagyo-* (‘pen, enclosure’).

⁶¹ See Davies and Driver (2018), 146–7. The word has also been identified in names elsewhere in Britain, in Makerfield, Lancashire (Ekwall 1922, 93–4) and Moggerhanger, Bedfordshire (Coates 2005). See also Parsons (2011), 123–4.

⁶² Dauzat and Rostaing (1963), 455–6. Haubrichs (Chapter 7 of this volume) also notes this loan-word in Continental usage.

⁶³ In southwestern Wales, at least, it should be noted that Welsh *magwyr* became generalized in the sense ‘ruin’, and it is found in many minor place-names in Pembrokeshire and Cardiganshire: it must be possible, therefore, that its apparent application to a Roman site at Abermagwr is coincidental: Davies and Driver (2018), 147.

⁶⁴ Though the instability of early place-names in Wales, as identified by Hall (2012, 112–24), could have played a part in obscuring such a stratum if there were strong enough grounds to suspect that it ever existed.

have developed ‘naturally’ and in line with the Romance vernaculars of the Continent, was restricted to a small social elite and/or that it was a language of bilinguals, most or all of whom spoke British Celtic in ordinary daily life.⁶⁵

9.2.4 The Survival of British

Other considerations also require some such hypothesis. The great majority of the personal names in the inscriptions are Celtic, and they provide extensive evidence for the developing Brittonic language in the post-Roman centuries.⁶⁶ And, of course, subsequent developments need to be addressed. After the period of the Group I inscriptions, there is little to suggest that spoken Latin persisted in use anywhere in Britain, and it is clear that in the early medieval period Brittonic languages—Welsh, Cornish, and Cumbric—were the vernaculars of peasantry and elites alike, wherever they were not extinguished by incoming Germanic (or, in parts of the Cumbric north, Gaelic) speakers. The question of how and why the shift of linguistic emphasis took place among the elites, if that is the correct way to characterize what happened, is an intriguing one. Charles-Edwards and Woolf have drawn parallels with cases in neighbouring lands in which the elite took on the language of the majority population: the Franks in post-Roman Gaul, for instance, or the Normans in medieval England.⁶⁷ Woolf has also advanced some thoughts about why such a transition may have taken place in Wales: he suggested that an elite Romance culture in the highland west may have been supported by, and dependent upon, an equivalent, and more deep-rooted, Romance culture to its east, and that the Anglo-Saxon conquests in central Britain between the sixth and eighth centuries may have upset this balance and precipitated a shift in outlook towards seeking strength and support in the local, predominantly Brittonic-speaking, population.⁶⁸

One linguistic element relevant to such a development may be the adoption of **kombrogi* (Cymry, Cumbrians), meaning something like ‘fellow residents’, and **kombrogika* (Cymraeg, Cumbric), meaning something like ‘speaking the shared language of the district’. These appear to be explicitly Brittonic modes of self-identification, and it may well be that they had particular resonance in Wales during a transition from a Romanizing, Latin-favouring, elite to one that spoke

⁶⁵ Gildas himself is (tentatively) thought to have been bilingual: Lapidge (1984), 34; Sims-Williams (1984), 169–70. Certainly, his Latin plays on the British meaning of the personal names of the tyrants he attacks (Jackson 1982). Patrick’s difficulties with Latin seem also to imply that he was British-speaking (though this is contested by Thompson 1985, 40–1); see further Hanson (1968), 160–70; Adams (2016), 484. Just as with Gildas, it is not known where in Britain Patrick lived.

⁶⁶ Sims-Williams (2003) is the fundamental study.

⁶⁷ Charles-Edwards (2013), 114–15; Woolf (2003), 373 and 380; (2020), 21.

⁶⁸ Woolf (2003), 376–9. For some of his more recent thinking on the question, see Section 9.4.

Cymraeg, Welsh.⁶⁹ Beyond this, it is hard to comment directly on the period from linguistic evidence alone. What can be said is that by the ninth century in Wales, although surviving texts are principally in Latin, it now appears to be a scholarly and learned language.⁷⁰ It is sometimes glossed with vernacular equivalents, and vernacular boundary-clauses—their local minor names all in Welsh—are appended to Latin charters.⁷¹ Surviving literature that may have been in circulation by this point (though the manuscripts are all much later) looks back to a heroic age of sixth- and seventh-century warfare: the language of the poetry is Welsh, and the names of the heroes whose deeds it recounts are predominantly British Celtic.⁷² There is little hint of a continuing sense of *Romanitas*, and although medieval texts, especially genealogical writings, continue to trace roots in the Roman past, they do so from the standpoint of a Welsh Celtic present.⁷³

9.3. English and the Lowland Zone

9.3.1 The English Problem

The other side of this equation involves the other side of the island, the east and south, where Romanization went furthest and Anglo-Saxon conquests were first focused. The legacy of these conquests effectively obliterated most traces of Romano-British society and its languages, so that we are left without even the limited resources that we have examined so far: there are no further textual survivals and there are no inscriptions that continue Roman epigraphic traditions.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ For discussions of these terms, and their probable origins in the Roman or early post-Roman period, see Charles-Edwards (1995), 710–15; (2013), 1; James (2008), 188–91; Woolf (2010), 230–2. An early common origin of the terminology would be consonant with its later use for the peoples of both northern Britain (Cumbria) and Wales, and with the application of Old Irish *Combrec* to the language also of Cornwall (Russell 1995).

⁷⁰ Charles-Edwards (1995), 719–20; (2013), 114–15. This is certainly the conventional view, though it should be noted that Harvey (2015) has argued, from the nature of the Latin vocabulary coined by authors from a ‘British-Celtic’ background, that a spoken British Latin may have lasted out of sight for much longer, and perhaps even beyond the Norman Conquest.

⁷¹ For a discussion of eighth- and ninth-century glossing, in Welsh and Irish, in a manuscript of Juvenius, see McKee (2000); see also the overview in Russell (2017), 8–12. The earliest surviving Welsh charter-bounds are ninth-century marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels (Jenkins and Owen 1983, 1984); the many examples of bounds from the Book of Llandaf, a twelfth-century compilation, may include still earlier examples, although their dating is difficult (Coe 2004; Sims-Williams 2019, 47–8).

⁷² Sims-Williams (2016) offers an honestly inconclusive recent review of the dating of this early poetry. As Woolf suggests (2003, 374–5), whether or not the compositions are contemporary with the events they purport to describe, their British-Celtic background, and their geographical settings in northern Britain—outside both Wales and the heavily Romanized southeast of the island—are important for understanding perceptions among the later medieval society which valued them.

⁷³ Ward (1972); Woolf (2003), 369–70; Guy (2018).

⁷⁴ There is a possible exception in a group of five Latin memorial stones at Wareham in Dorset, which may represent British survival (though they have also been considered the work of immigrants from Brittany). They appear not, however, to belong to our period, but have been dated between the

The handful of short runic inscriptions that survive from the fifth and sixth centuries appear, in so far as they are understood, to be wholly Germanic and to throw no light on language(s) encountered in Britain.⁷⁵ For these there are only the more indirect indications of the loanwords absorbed by Old English, of the place-names that survived the conquest, and of such personal names as were encountered by the Anglo-Saxons in the early centuries, albeit that they are recorded in non-contemporary records. It might be conceded at the outset that none of this material is sufficient to give anything like a clear indication of the linguistic make-up of southern and eastern Britain when the Anglo-Saxons arrived there.

Relevant loanwords, of course, are of two kinds: those from British Celtic and those from Latin. Notoriously, only a tiny number of the former are found in Old English, around a dozen or so, several of which are known only in toponymic contexts.⁷⁶ In sharp contrast, there are hundreds of terms borrowed from Latin, mostly nouns spanning a wide range of semantic categories.⁷⁷ However, before jumping to the conclusion that most of the inhabitants of Britain encountered by the Anglo-Saxons were therefore likely to have been Latin-speakers, it must be recognized that there are significant problems in dating this evidence, none of which, of course, is recorded before the horizon of the earliest surviving manuscript sources, which for Old English do not begin much before c. 700.⁷⁸ Many loans from Latin are common to the various Germanic languages, and may have been absorbed on the Continent, before the conquest of Britain. Many others

seventh and ninth centuries, or even later. See CASSS, vii, 65, with references. A stray Irish ogam stone from Roman *Calleva*, Silchester in Hampshire, may also be mentioned—it has been dated to the late fourth or fifth century (Fulford, Handley, and Clarke 2000), though it may be rather later (Sims-Williams 2003, 54–5, n. 207). On the uncertain geography of Gildas, see above n. 13. His text certainly does not much concern itself with the lowland zone: he mentions only St Albans and the Thames, erroneously implying that the former lies beside the latter (Winterbottom 1978, 92, 19 (§10–11); Sharpe 2002, 117).

⁷⁵ Parsons (1999), 40–75. The sixteen inscriptions discussed there are markedly eastern and/or southern in distribution, and were almost all found in characteristically Germanic burial contexts, either on grave-goods or inscribed or stamped on cremation urns.

⁷⁶ For lists and reviews, see Campbell (1959), 220; Breeze (2002), 175–81; Coates (2007), 177–80; (2017), 156; Durkin (2014), 77–81. The only widely accepted instance that remains a common item in present-day English is OE *binn* ('manger, receptacle, bin'); it is not, however, clear that this is better explained as an Old English borrowing from Brittonic (cf. Welsh *ben* 'cart, wagon'), than as an earlier loan into Germanic from Celtic on the Continent: see *OED*² s.v. *bin* n.; Seebold (2002), s.v. *Benne* Sf; and cf. Durkin (2014), 77, who suggests that it was probably transmitted via Latin, perhaps on the Continent. For some of the Brittonic toponymic vocabulary in England, see Section 9.3.3.

⁷⁷ Durkin calculates at least 600 pre-Conquest loanwords (2014, 100), and lists a large selection of them (2014, 108–19). He lists nouns under semantic categories, and also details smaller groups of adjectives and verbs.

⁷⁸ The earliest substantial source of Old English to survive in near-contemporary form is the collection of glosses assembled at Canterbury at the end of the seventh century: see, e.g., Pheifer (1974, 1987); Bischoff and Lapidge (1994), 173–9. Some of the Kentish laws date from earlier in the seventh century, but they survive only in a twelfth-century manuscript and have been subject to an uncertain degree of linguistic updating: see Oliver (2002), 25–51. There are no texts that can be dated with any security to the period before 600 surviving either in contemporary manuscripts or as later copies.

were introduced to England from the very end of the sixth century onwards, in association with conversion to Christianity and the reception of Latin learning which followed in its wake across hundreds of years. The difficulty in the present context is to identify and quantify loanwords that entered English during the fifth and sixth centuries, when they might have been acquired directly from Latin-speakers on British soil.

It might be thought that since there are so few loanwords into Old English from British Celtic, then a good proportion of the recorded Latin borrowings are likely to have been adopted during this period, on the assumption that—however violent some aspects of the conquest may have been—there must have been a fair degree of social and linguistic contact between the settled population and the incomers. Yet any such assumption is open to question, and other possibilities have often been entertained. Some have argued that the Romano-British population was substantially displaced,⁷⁹ whereas others believe that while there was extensive continuity in population, the social and linguistic relationship between the ethnic groups would have been so unbalanced as to discourage any lexical transfer from the British or Latin substrate to the English superstrate.⁸⁰ No modern scholar appears to have argued in any detail that the Latin loanwords themselves constitute evidence of contact and continuity.⁸¹

9.3.2 Early Latin Loanwords in Old English

It is, on the whole, possible to identify and exclude later, learned borrowings where they are not assimilated into the patterns of Old English phonology.⁸² That leaves a large group of ‘early’ loans which appear to have passed through some or

⁷⁹ Recent proponents of large-scale displacement include Padel (2007) and Coates (2007, 2017).

⁸⁰ This is the line generally taken by various recent scholars who have argued, controversially, that a British substrate is responsible for influencing the phonology and/or structures of early English (albeit that the effects tend not to become visible until the later middle ages): see, e.g., Tristram (2007), and various contributors to Filppula, Klemola, and Paulasto (2008) and Filppula and Klemola (2009). Similarly, and even more controversially, Schrijver (2009; 2014, 71–93) suggests that English has a Celtic substrate more akin in its phonology to Irish than to Brittonic Celtic; he allows also that the immediate substrate in southeastern English might be Latin, but, if so, that it was Latin which had itself been subject to the influence of this hypothetical ‘Irish-like’ Celtic of lowland Britain. Very differently, Woolf (2007) argues that under a system of social apartheid, and without violent extermination or flight, British language and identity might have disappeared gradually over the course of several centuries without leaving much mark on the English language.

⁸¹ Schrijver—in accepting the significance of some of the place-name evidence for Anglo-Saxon contacts with Latin, discussed further below—does, however, comment that the Latin terms in place-names are unlikely to have been borrowed on the Continent, since most Anglo-Saxon settlers came from areas far beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire (Schrijver 2014, 204, n. 17 (referring back to pp. 33–4)). Such an objection runs, characteristically, counter to the mainstream consensus, reflected in the survey below, that many Latin terms in Old English are very likely have been borrowed into Germanic before the settlement period.

⁸² For the distinction between early and later groupings, see Campbell (1959), 200–19; Wollmann (1993), 2–4; Durkin (2014), 101–4.

all of the sound-changes which came to distinguish Old English from its nearest relatives during the fifth and sixth centuries.⁸³ Thus, for instance, *cealc* < *calx*, *calc-em* ('lime') shows the breaking of *æ*, fronted from earlier *a*, before *l* + consonant, while *cylen* < *culina* ('kiln') exhibits *i*-mutation of original *u*. Other examples also give evidence for developments that had taken place in Late Latin pronunciation, notably the lowering of the short high vowels *i* and *u* to (or towards) *e* and *o* respectively (e.g. OE *peru* < *pirum* ('pear'), OE *torr* < *turris* ('tower')),⁸⁴ and the intervocalic voicing of the unvoiced consonants *c*, *p* and *t* (e.g. OE *finugle* < *fenuculum* ('fennel'), OE *cæfester* < *capistrum* ('halter'), OE *rude* < *ruta* ('rue [the shrub]')).⁸⁵ On occasion a combination of developments indicates a relative chronology of the changes across the two languages: an example is OE *byden* < **butina* (Greek *βυτίνη*, 'vessel, barrel'), in which Latin voicing must have predated the borrowing of the word and the operation of Old English *i*-mutation.⁸⁶

Most of the sound-changes mentioned in the previous paragraph have generally been ascribed to the period with which we are concerned in this chapter, and it is possible that many of these sorts of word were borrowed by the earliest Anglo-Saxons from speakers of British Latin. This is, however, treacherous territory, for several reasons. Not least of these is the point made above, that loanwords from the Roman Empire could have been filtering into Germanic speech on the Continent for centuries before the Anglo-Saxon settlements. Consequently, any word which passed through the sequence of Old English sound-changes need not have been adopted on British soil, but may already have been in the language. It would be possible more confidently to ascribe borrowings to the period 400–600 in cases which appear to miss out on the earliest Old English sound-changes but take part in later ones, but potential examples of this are few and their interpretation often disputed. A possible instance is Old English *mægester* < Latin *magister* ('master'), which arguably shows *i*-mutation of an *a* that had escaped early fronting; if the term had been adopted before the general change of *a* > *æ*, subsequent *i*-mutation might be expected to have produced ***megester*.⁸⁷ Lying behind much of this material, however, there is also the unsettling possibility of analogy, which threatens to disrupt calculations. Thus Campbell interpreted OE *sealm* ('psalm' < *psalma*) as having passed through early fronting and breaking, as *cealc* above,⁸⁸ while Wollmann argued that the borrowing was unlikely to

⁸³ Durkin's list of the early borrowings (2014, 108–14) aims at comprehensiveness, and contains 261 items.

⁸⁴ Campbell (1959), §498.

⁸⁵ Campbell (1959), §530. On *cæfester*, see further below; it is an example of the voicing of *p* > *b*, which in early Old English is realized as [v], spelt <f>, intervocalically.

⁸⁶ Wollmann (1990), 388; (1993), 23; Campbell (1959), §499.

⁸⁷ Campbell (1959), §406, cautiously accepted by OED³, s.v. *master* n.¹. Pogatscher (1888, 128), on the other hand, suggested that *i* may instead have undergone the Late Latin lowering of *i* and been borrowed as *e* (cf. *peru* < *pirum* above), which would not trigger *i*-mutation.

⁸⁸ Campbell (1959), §495.

antedate conversion to Christianity at the end of the sixth century and—since the sound-changes in question belong very early in the English sequence, probably in the fifth century—concluded that *sealm* was likely to be a later, analogous form.⁸⁹

Among the various uncertainties, a central problem is the dating of the relevant sound-changes. The Old English developments including fronting, breaking, palatal diphthongization, and *i*-mutation are all imprecisely dated, though they presumably all belong to the centuries between the settlements beginning in the early fifth century and the earliest written records of the language.⁹⁰ It is harder to put comparable *termini* around the relevant changes in Latin, which was spoken continuously over such a long period, and—although often written down or inscribed—was to a large extent effectively concealed behind a deeply entrenched traditional orthography. In these circumstances the dating of the sound-changes mentioned above has been highly controversial, with estimates varying by many centuries. Modern research into the lowering of *i* and *u* tends to emphasize that there was a tendency towards lowering, such that the vowels might sometimes be written <e> and <o> respectively, from the earliest centuries CE, although the final outcome of the changes, resulting in mergers between original *i* and *ē* as *e*, and between *u* and *ō* as *o*, may not have been reached until the fifth century.⁹¹ This gives a rather unhelpfully long window within which the lowered sounds might have been borrowed and allows the possibility that such words might have been borrowed before 400. In the case of the voicing of intervocalic consonants, there are also some signs that movement towards the sound-change began very early, though there has been rather more of a consensus towards a generalization of the change in Gaul at a relatively late period, centring, indeed, around the turn of the fifth century.⁹² This could be rather more helpful for periodizing the loans

⁸⁹ Wollmann (1993), 25. There is of course also the possibility—indeed likelihood—that some Christian terminology entered Germanic language before conversion (Wollmann 1993, 3–4, with references; also 1990, 392–4). Yet, whatever the merits of particular instances, the general principle that languages can be quite adept at ‘camouflaging’ late-adopted loanwords is evident. For late borrowings of Latin into Welsh, some of which looking plausibly ancient, see Evans (1983), 965. Durkin (2014, 143–58) provides a lucid introduction to analogy and other questions of method relating to interpreting the Latin loanwords in Old English.

⁹⁰ Although Jackson thought it as late as the seventh or eighth centuries (1953, 316), *i*-mutation has often been ascribed to the first half of the sixth (Luick 1921, §201; Coates 1984; Wollmann 1990, 388; 1993, 23). The earliest direct evidence for it is probably a runic inscription on a brooch found in Norfolk, archaeologically dated to about the middle of the seventh century (Parsons 1999, 53–4).

⁹¹ See Loporcaro (2011a), 53–8; (2011b), 110–12 and 115–16; Leppänen and Alho (2018). The latter offer a broad conspectus of earlier work, citing scholarly assessments of dates for the neutralization of distinctive vowel quantity ranging from the third century BCE onwards. For discussion of the chronology in the British context, including Jackson’s (1953, 86) opinion that it was generally completed on the Continent by the third century, see Parsons (2011), 116–17, with references.

⁹² For various views on the date, see Smith (1983), 914–15 and 942; Loporcaro (2011b), 153–4. The latter draws attention to Cravens (1991), who argued that the voicing in the imperial period was widespread but allophonic—i.e. non-contrastive—but that it was later phonemicized in parts of the west. The degree of complexity in the disparate evidence suggests that some recent work which dates the voicing to the fourth or fifth century without reservation, such as de Vaan (2020), is perhaps optimistic to do so.

into English, though it is rather alarming to note suggestions that the loans have played 'a significant role... in the dating of Gallo-Romance voicing',⁹³ which in this context might suggest a circular argument.

The pioneering scholar in this field, Alois Pogatscher, was guided by a fifth-century date for the voicing of consonants (and also, in his opinion, for the vowel lowering) to ascribe practically all the relevant Old English loanwords to contacts with speakers of British Latin.⁹⁴ Many subsequent commentators, however, have chosen to be much more circumspect, even when they accept the dating. The suggestion is that continuing contacts, trade, and movement between the Anglo-Saxon settlers and Germanic speakers on the Continent can account for loans throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. This position tends to be buttressed by two arguments: that many of the loans into English have equivalents in the Germanic languages and dialects of northwest Europe, and that Latin in Britain is likely to have been restricted to a very small proportion of the population. The latter proposal is, of course, the one that is at issue in the present discussion: what we would like to know is whether the Latin loanwords into Old English are indicative of surviving spoken Latin in southern Britain, without recourse to other types of evidence. The former point has more substance here, for a good many of the loans into English do also have congeners on the Continent. Some terms might, of course, have been borrowed independently (or even in some cases, conceivably, exported from Britain to the Continent), but the general opinion has been that words found on both sides of the Channel are likely to have been first borrowed outside England.⁹⁵ Some of the (relatively few) words which evidence the Romance voicing fall into this bracket, and it is possible, for instance, to suppose that *byden* ('barrel, vessel'), which has an Old High German equivalent *butin*, may have spread via the wine-trade on the Rhine,⁹⁶ and that *biscop* ('bishop', German *bischof*, where initial *b* is from intervocalic voicing in original *episcopus*), may reflect early Germanic contacts with Christianity in Gaul.⁹⁷

In general, scholars have therefore remained wary of placing Latin loans on British soil. Sometimes this caution may go too far. In his discussion of Old English *caefester* ('halter, horses' headgear'), mentioned above, Wollmann observes that the word is not recorded in other Germanic languages, but that it is also reflected in Welsh *cebystr*.⁹⁸ He is concerned to argue that it is not possible to decide whether Latin or British is the immediate donor language to English,

⁹³ Wollmann (1993), 25 and n. 88.

⁹⁴ Pogatscher (1888). Wollmann observes (1993, 23) that Pogatscher made an exception for the word *biscop*, which he thought must be a common Germanic borrowing before 450; see below.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., Durkin (2014), 72–5 and 155–8.

⁹⁶ Wollmann (1993), 23.

⁹⁷ Green (1998, 301–5) argues that *episcopus* is likely to have been borrowed into Germanic from Gaul in the fifth century, and introduced to England in the sixth by the Franks known to have been instrumental in the early evangelization of Kent. Cf. Durkin (2014), 161, and the further literature there cited. The dual treatment of Latin *p* in this word raises many questions.

⁹⁸ Wollmann (1993), 20–1.

though the example might instead have been chosen to illustrate the possibility of the three languages meeting in southern Britain. For Wollmann, however, Jackson's broader conclusions remained wholly authoritative: the evidence from within British indicated that Latin would rarely have been encountered by the incoming Anglo-Saxons, and this orientated all discussion of the loanwords, such that the onus of proof is placed heavily on any suggestion of borrowing within Britain. When the evidence for this falls short—and it is not clear what criteria might be conclusive in its favour—the assumption has been that borrowing was more likely to have taken place on the Continent. If the pendulum is now swinging back the other way, towards the possibility of rather extensive Latin-speaking in the post-Roman south and east, it might encourage a rethink here; although, again, the nature of the late-recorded evidence makes it difficult to imagine that the evidence of the loanwords in Old English can ever be decisive in favour of a widespread British Latin in the fifth and sixth centuries.

9.3.3 The Evidence of Names

One specific area of vocabulary, however, which might suggest borrowing *in situ* is that found in place-names. As in Wales, a very small number of Latin-language names in England are recorded in Roman-period documentation. Examples such as *Calcaria* ('lime-works') for Tadcaster,⁹⁹ *Pontibus* ('(at the) bridges') for Staines,¹⁰⁰ and *Villa Faustini* ('Faustinus' villa') for, perhaps, Scole in Norfolk,¹⁰¹ left no trace in later toponymy, and may have been administrative coinages, possibly simple ad-hoc descriptions in the records. The survival of other names, however, must indicate that they attained local currency. One example is Lincoln, *Lindum Colonia*, a hybrid formation presumably to be parsed 'the *colonia* of *Lindum*', where the first element is a British word, surviving in Welsh *llyn* ('pool').¹⁰² A second instance is Speen in Berkshire, which can be identified with *Spinis* in the Antonine Itineraries, representing Latin '(at the) thorn trees'.¹⁰³ Such instances demonstrate a use of Latin names or terminology that took sufficient hold in Britain for the Anglo-Saxons to take them on. It is, however, quite possible that British mediation was involved, and such names—which are exceptionally rare—offer very doubtful evidence for the continued currency of Latin in the post-Roman period.

⁹⁹ Rivet and Smith (1979), 288–9.

¹⁰⁰ Rivet and Smith (1979), 441.

¹⁰¹ Rivet and Smith (1979), 499.

¹⁰² Rivet and Smith (1979), 393. The generic may also have survived as the first element of Colchester, but that is not certain (Carroll and Parsons 2007, 102–3).

¹⁰³ Rivet and Smith (1979), 462; Coates and Breeze (2000), 40–3; Parsons (2011), 131.

More promising in this respect is the Latin vocabulary borrowed into Old English and attached to places that were, or may have been, Roman sites encountered by the Anglo-Saxons.¹⁰⁴ OE *stræt* ('street' < (via) *strata*), applied to Roman roads, and *ceaster* ('walled town' < *castra*), applied to Roman towns, are obvious examples; another clear instance is the recurrent *wīc-hām*, involving Latin *vicus*, a compound which correlates well with small Roman roadside towns. Other Old English words of Latin origin found in southern English place-names include **funta* ('spring, well' < *fontana*), *port* ('harbour' < *portus*), *camp* ('wasteland, open land' < *campus*) and **corte* ('enclosure' < *co(ho)rs*). For all of these a case has also been made that the choice of the elements may reflect recognized Roman associations of the site: thus names in **funta* (like Havant, Hampshire, and Cheshunt, Hertfordshire) might have denoted springs or wells developed in some way, perhaps for the drawing of water, while those in *camp* (as Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire, and Warningcamp, Sussex) could denote 'open land beyond the [Roman] cultivated area'. The implication of such names could be that the vocabulary, if not the name itself, may have been passed on in an immediately local context, and that the local informants may have been Latin-speaking.

These suggestions are not, of course, certainties: some of the loanwords may have been imported from the Continent (congeners of *stræt* < *strata*, for instance, are found across the Germanic languages), while others may have been mediated to English through British (Latin *fontana*, for instance, gave both Welsh *ffynnon* and Old English **funta*). Nonetheless the restricted southern and eastern distribution of a number of the items is interesting, as is a notable contrast with the vocabulary derived from British which survived into medieval and later place-names in southern and eastern England. This, as several studies have emphasized in recent years, is dominated—beyond river-names and the names of some larger Roman towns—by a rather small group of topographical elements including (in modern Welsh form) *coed* ('wood'), *crug* ('barrow, barrow-shaped hill'), *rhos* ('moor'), *penn* ('head(land), ?hill'), which seem never to be naturalized into English usage: they do not form compound generics like *wīc-ham* and they are not qualified by English terms, such as personal names in Havant and Warningcamp.¹⁰⁵ They seem to have been adopted as names, as labels for particular topographical features, but not in general to have been assimilated into productive English-language usage. Again—and parallel to the proportions of loanwords in English more widely—one must wonder if this contrast might result from a greater degree of bilingual exchange between English and British Latin in post-Roman southern Britain than between English and British Celtic.

¹⁰⁴ This material is treated more fully in Parsons (2011), 125–8, and draws particularly on studies by Margaret Gelling (1967; 1977; 1988, 63–86). For a sceptical account, see Dietz (2011).

¹⁰⁵ Coates (2007), 181; (2017), 164; Parsons (2011), 126–7; Padel (2013), 24–34; Schrijver (2014), 33–4.

One further aspect of toponymic study might be mentioned. It might be hoped that the phonology of place-names adopted by the English, irrespective of their ultimate origins, might indicate if they had been transmitted by Latin rather than British speakers. Kenneth Jackson reviewed this material and concluded that positive signs of distinctive Late Latin sound-changes were lacking, and although one might now add some possibilities and caveats, it is not possible to claim that evidence for Latin-speaking emerges clearly from this kind of material.¹⁰⁶ However, study along these lines indicates that it is in fact difficult, across large parts of southern and eastern England, to find much that conclusively indicates the distinctive sound-changes of fifth- and sixth-century Brittonic either.¹⁰⁷ Survivals of any kind are few, and analysis of them is hampered by many factors: we are trying to compare and coordinate details across three languages all of which are otherwise unattested at the period; it appears that similar changes were taking place in the different languages at about the same time, whether coincidentally or as a result of contact (e.g. consonant voicing in British Celtic and British Latin, *i*-affection/mutation in British Celtic and Old English); moreover, while there is a suspicion that Latin was pronounced 'after the British manner', it is unknown how far this assimilation might have gone. In these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that clear, generally accepted conclusions about the linguistic situation encountered by the Anglo-Saxons are hard to come by. There are a few names, such as the River Brent in Middlesex and the settlement group Andover, Candover, and Micheldever (all of them with *-def(e)r-* spellings in the Anglo-Saxon period), which appear simplest to explain in terms of fifth- or sixth-century Brittonic sound-changes.¹⁰⁸ This would tend to confirm at least that British was still spoken in these areas in the post-Roman period, though that need not of course imply that Latin was not also current. Yet these interpretations do not amount to proofs, and have recently been challenged in pursuit of a suggestion that Latin may have wholly displaced British across a large part of southern Britain before it was, in its turn, replaced by the English of the invaders.¹⁰⁹ It must be conceded that this possibility is not out of the question.

¹⁰⁶ Jackson (1953), 256–61. This material is discussed in detail in Parsons (2011), 128–31.

¹⁰⁷ Discussed in Parsons (2011), 131–4.

¹⁰⁸ Jackson (1953), 602; Sims-Williams (1990), 239 and 252–3; Coates (1989), 23, 48, and 116; (2017), 160; Parsons (2011), 133.

¹⁰⁹ Schrijver (2014, 52–3) argues this case in connection with the names 'Brent' and 'Andover', etc. To an extent, my previous treatment conceded the ground ('the number of clear post-Roman Brittonicisms is certainly very small, and we may indeed conclude that there is none which is indisputable'; Parsons 2011, 134). However, my formulation here, that it is 'simplest to explain' them as Brittonic, stands, since the operation of Old English *i*-mutation rather than Brittonic final *i*-affection in these names, as Schrijver requires, entails the otherwise undemonstrable survival of British final syllables in place-names transmitted in England (Jackson 1953, 628–30; cf. the early date proposed for the loss of Brittonic final syllables by Sims-Williams 1990, 247–8). Schrijver's point that in 'Andover', etc., the second vowel was unstressed in Old English, and would have been represented as *e* whatever its original quality, goes back to Jackson (1953, 285), but Jackson's assertion here is questionable: the modern names all retain a marked secondary stress on the penultimate syllable. Schrijver (2014, 53–7)

The inability to be categorical about such a fundamental point in Britain's linguistic history is a reflection of the sparse and unsatisfactory nature of the evidence that survives to us.

As we have seen, in the absence of relevant fifth- or sixth-century texts from southern or eastern Britain,¹¹⁰ that evidence is indirect, principally taking the form of loanwords and place-names first attested centuries later and bringing with them many uncertainties in dating and interpretation.¹¹¹ The only other indications from later-recorded textual sources are still more indirect, involving the choice of personal names which may, but certainly need not, reflect wider language usage. According to the early annals of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle—not contemporary in their surviving form, but undoubtedly first written down earlier than the ninth-century date of the earliest compilations—the formative phases of Germanic colonization involved a range of interactions with local leaders who bore etymologically Celtic names. The text relates that in the middle of the fifth century the Anglo-Saxons were invited in, to help defend the land against hostile attacks, by the British king *Wyrtegeorn*, or *Vortigern*,¹¹² while by the late sixth century they were involved in battles against local leaders, also described as kings, called *Coinmail*, *Condidan*, and *Farinmail*, who may have been associated with the former Roman centres of Gloucester, Bath, and Cirencester.¹¹³ In the meantime, during the early sixth century according to the Chronicle narrative, the Anglo-Saxons of central southern England were led by a man whose name was *Cerdic*, which is also of Celtic etymology (and thus complicates straightforward views of ethnic conflict).¹¹⁴ The impression created by this admittedly tiny sample of names, therefore, is not of a southern British society that had been still more

goes on to make much of the name of London in this context, and I agree that my earlier treatment (Parsons 2011, 133) should probably not stand, though Bynon's suggestion (2016) that the name is best explained as a very early borrowing into Germanic, before the settlements began, offers a compelling alternative to Schrijver's interpretation.

¹¹⁰ It might be noted, however, that the Silchester inscription (see n. 74 above), although using the ogam script and apparently framed in Irish, records a Celtic name *TEBICATO[S]*, which may be British rather than Irish (Sims-Williams 2003, 54–5). This fits neatly with the observations immediately below.

¹¹¹ The use of the Old English term *wealh*, plural *wealas*, for the native inhabitants of Britain deserves notice here. This is the equivalent term to the *walh* applied on the Continent to Latin/Romance speakers (see Haubrichs, Chapter 7 of this volume) and it is clear that it was adopted in early Germanic to denote 'Romans'. No doubt the word was used in Britain because the early Anglo-Saxons recognized the inhabitants as such. Yet it is quite unclear how far that involved a judgement about language as opposed to other cultural attributes, i.e. how far Latin-speaking was a defining factor in the choice of the term. If it ever was, it certainly did not remain so: hence we find the *Corn-wealas* of Cornwall, the *Stræclæd-wealas* of Strathclyde and, of course, the generalization in the name of 'Wales'. See further, Insley (1979–80); Charles-Edwards (1995), 714; Woolf (2010), 231–2; (2020), 25.

¹¹² Jackson (1953), 273; (1982), 35–40.

¹¹³ On these names, see Jackson (1953), 464–6 and 677; Sims-Williams (1983), 33–4. Sims-Williams regards the annal as doubtful and implies that the source for the Brittonic names could originally have related to a later period.

¹¹⁴ Parsons (1997). Coates (1989–90) additionally discusses the name *Ceawlin*, which may also be Brittonic.

Romanized than the western Britons memorialized in the inscriptions, but one in which British Celtic naming traditions survived.¹¹⁵ What this might have meant for everyday vernacular language, however, is quite uncertain; and on the other side of the ledger could of course be placed the legendary Arthur, assigned by later Welsh sources to the same period: his name, Latin *Artorius*, does hint at the *Romanitas* of the inscriptions.¹¹⁶

9.4. Theories and Conclusions

Any assessment of the fate of Latin in post-Roman Britain needs to steer a course through this rather inadequate material. The most solid starting-point may well seem to be the one relegated to the background here, the immense influence of Latin on the surviving Brittonic languages, to some extent measurable in terms of the lexicon, and probably or possibly detectable also in a range of other features. Combined with the growing evidence for ordinary demotic Latinity before 400, one might simply think that Latin—the language of power and prestige—must have taken a deep hold across most of Britain, not just in the lowland zone. The fifth- and sixth-century evidence from the west might well be thought consistent with this, suggesting a continued role for Latinity, written and spoken, at different levels of sophistication within the Church (Patrick, Gildas, Irish loanwords), as also in at least the upper echelons of secular society (Gildas, inscriptions). The surviving materials do not clearly explain the presumed subsequent decline in Latin, but there are some hints of a waning of *Romanitas* during the sixth century, and one might hypothesize that an older elite was overtaken by political and social groups, or simply new generations, for whom Latin was not a vernacular language. Throughout the highland zone it might be supposed that Latin-speakers were predominantly always bilinguals, and that such a shift might therefore have been gradual rather than revolutionary.

On such a view of the west, it makes sense to assume that further south and east Latin would have been still more common, and would probably have penetrated more deeply through the strata of society. Whether it had in some regions wholly displaced British Celtic as the vernacular language of whole communities remains unknown, however. In a number of relatively northern and western parts of England the place-name evidence for the operation of fifth- and sixth-century Brittonic sound-changes is fairly secure, but that leaves large regions in the south-east in which there is no clear evidence at all. We have seen that names and

¹¹⁵ See similarly Woolf (2003), 369–70.

¹¹⁶ See Zimmer (2009) on the ultimate, possibly Continental Celtic, etymology of his name. Also Woolf (2020, 23–4) speculating, with all due caution, on a possible historical context for such a Latin-named war-leader.

loanwords offer only faint, and somewhat contradictory, pointers. If communicative contact between Anglo-Saxons and the settled population was ever sufficiently close and harmonious as to allow the transmission of any significant amount of vocabulary to the politically dominant group, then the substrate language must surely have been Latin. It is, however, far from clear that linguistic relations were ever so favourable—the tiny number of pre-English place-names (of any origin) that survived in many eastern areas tends to be against it—and many scholars have worked for generations with models of large-scale destruction and flight, of linguistic apartheid, or, at the least, of a thoroughly asymmetrical relationship in which Old English resisted practically all borrowings from the dominated population. It is hardly possible, on what we have in front of us, to discount such models. In such circumstances we probably have to admit that, unless new types of direct evidence appear, we can know almost nothing about the nature and degree of surviving Latinity in the lowland zone after c. 400.

If these are the straightforward conclusions to be drawn from my discussion, however, they are drawn from confessedly inadequate evidence. There is undoubtedly room for other arguments and hypotheses, and to bring the chapter towards a close two of these will be discussed. They represent both older and more recent views, and in some respects present almost diametrically opposed scenarios, although in fact they are to some extent built on differing inferences from a single shared observation.

The first interpretation is that of Kenneth Jackson, who dominated the field in the middle of the twentieth century. Jackson believed that ‘the great bulk of the population’ encountered by the invading Anglo-Saxons ‘spoke British and probably knew little Latin’, suggesting that the language had been so socially restricted in Roman Britain that, beyond the military, it had little currency outside the small proportion of people, administrators and traders, who lived in towns.¹¹⁷ A central element of his reasoning derived from study of the Latin loanwords in British. Although Jackson acknowledged their large number and range, he concluded that the Latin from which they derived was not a demotic one, but a ‘semi-artificial’ variant acquired in the schoolroom. He based this view on the absence from the loans of several phonological features of Late Latin which he believed to have been widespread in the spoken language elsewhere, and particularly in Gaul. He found no certain trace of these features either in the transmission of place-names to English, and felt that—while all kinds of vulgarisms may perhaps have been heard in the towns or the military—the variety of Latin that left its significant lasting effect on British was distinctly old-fashioned. In seeking a sociolinguistic explanation for this circumstance, Jackson suggested that this may involve

¹¹⁷ Jackson (1953), especially Chapter 3, ‘Britons and Romans under the Empire’; also Jackson (1948). The quotation above is from Jackson (1953), 105. Jackson’s views are summarized more fully, with responses from subsequent scholarship, by Parsons (2011), 114–21, and Mullen (2024b).

pedantically correct and outmoded Latin taught by schoolmasters to the rural upper classes, who were then the conduit to ultimately surviving British usage.

This theory, and especially the principal conclusion that the currency of Latin must have been very limited in post-Roman Britain, was very influential, but the details of the argument came under sustained attack during the 1980s, and can hardly be said to have withstood scrutiny.¹¹⁸ Although Jackson's analysis of the sounds represented by the loans in British is mostly hard to fault, two main lines of criticism have been levelled at his further deductions. One is that the reasoning sometimes depends on a chronology for Latin developments that is doubtful, or at least open to question.¹¹⁹ The other is that Jackson may have underrated the extent to which Britons assimilated and approximated Latin sounds to their own norms.¹²⁰ Between them, these reservations cast considerable doubt on the case for an archaic British Latin which lay behind the loanwords, and without the support of a clear phonologically-based argument, the route from the schoolroom into enduring Brittonic usage has failed to convince as a likely sociolinguistic context.

The second hypothesis considered here is the more recent proposal by Peter Schrijver that Latin was so widely spoken in late-Roman and early post-Roman Britain that it is likely to have supplanted British Celtic to a significant degree in lowland areas.¹²¹ He argues, somewhat as above, that the extent of Latin influence on surviving highland varieties of British is so strong that the lowlands must have been affected to a still greater degree, and he observes that since Latin replaced earlier languages in many parts of the Empire, it is not unlikely that it did so here too. More specifically, Schrijver goes further than many scholars in arguing for a direct link between comparable developments in Late Latin and in Brittonic. He identifies a number of phonological and structural changes that are similar in the two languages (including the new quantity systems (see below), the voicing of *p*, *t*, and *k*, loss of final nasals, and loss of case system) and argues that this is no coincidence, but that western British Celtic 'became Latinized' during the fifth and sixth centuries.¹²²

This position faces a challenge, however, which brings us back once more to the form of the loanwords. There are good reasons for believing that the Brittonic

¹¹⁸ The intense period of reassessment in the 1980s included Gratwick (1982); Evans (1983); Smith (1983); McManus (1984); Russell (1985).

¹¹⁹ As with the loss of contrastive vowel length in Latin: see above p. 255 and n. 91, and further below.

¹²⁰ Thus intervocalic *b* and *w* seem generally to have been preserved in British Latin, rather than merging in [β] as they tended to elsewhere (though for an apparent local exception, see Mullen 2024b). Jackson regarded this as an archaism, but it may instead have been due to the influence of British Celtic, which had both phonemes: Smith (1983), 944; McManus (1984), 157; Russell (1985), 22; Parsons (2011), 116. For a comparable example, involving the absence of Latin palatalization in British, see Koch (1988), 24; Sims-Williams (1990), 224. I hope to show elsewhere that the apparent absence of the lowering of Late Latin *i* in British loanwords (which I suggested was an unresolved problem in Parsons 2011, 116) might also be explained by an aspect of assimilation into British.

¹²¹ Schrijver (2002); (2007); (2014), 31–4 and 49–58.

¹²² Schrijver (2014), 32.

versions of the linguistic developments in question belong to the fifth and sixth centuries, while the bulk of the Latin loanwords appear to have been absorbed earlier, during the Roman period. Certainly, whatever the absolute chronology, the loanwords reflect a starting point in classical Latin phonology before going through the Brittonic sound-changes; if they had undergone the similar Late Latin changes before borrowing, they would have emerged quite differently into Brittonic. Particularly clear examples are afforded by the various changes which introduced 'new quantity systems', resulting in vowel length becoming reorganized according to phonetic environment. In both languages, for instance, etymologically short vowels lengthened in open syllables, so that British **sēnos* ('old') became, ultimately, Welsh *hēn*, while classical Latin *fīdes* became Late Latin *fīdes*. The outcome in the Latin words found in Brittonic consistently shows that the Brittonic change operated on the original Latin quantity—thus *fīdes* gave Welsh *ffydd* [fi:ð], where the retracted [i] derives from the British short vowel, and not ***ffidd* [fi:ð], which would have resulted from the clear [i] of a Latin long vowel. The conclusion to be drawn from this is evidently that the Latin words had been borrowed into British before these quantitative rearrangements affected either language.¹²³

This chronology raises various questions. For Jackson the problem lay in absolute dates: he believed that a number of the Late Latin changes, including the quantitative changes just mentioned, were general in the spoken language of the Continent by the third or fourth centuries, and thus that the loans into British proceeded from an old-fashioned or artificial Latin. As noted above, however, more recent work has relieved most of the tension here, partly by allowing later dates for some of the Latin sound-changes. For Schrijver the challenge lies rather in explaining why the loanwords seem consistently to have been borrowed *before* the sound-changes that he suggests gave western British its 'Latin "accent"'.¹²⁴

Schrijver does not duck this problem; he embraces it. The facts, he argues, indicate two distinct periods of Latin influence on British, one characterized by the borrowing of many words, and a subsequent one characterized by phonological modifications and the apparent absence of further lexical borrowing. Drawing on general models of language contact,¹²⁵ he suggests that the former phase took place while Latin was the language of prestige from which the subjugated British naturally borrowed vocabulary, but that in the later phase the sociolinguistic situation had radically changed. The transfer of elements of a sound system without further lexical borrowing, he suggests, indicates speakers of a language with low prestige switching to one with higher status and carrying across some of the

¹²³ Jackson (1953), 88 and 270–1; Sims-Williams (1990), 218–19.

¹²⁴ Schrijver (2002), 101, for the phrase; and 100–1 for his exposition of the problem.

¹²⁵ Particularly as set out by Thomason and Kaufman (1988) and Thomason (2001).

sounds of their mother tongue. On this basis he deduces that in the second phase of influence Latin had become the low-status language, and paints a colourful picture of the historical context for the reversal, imagining:

large numbers of destitute Latin-speaking refugees from the Lowland Zone entering the Highland Zone before the gradual advance of the Anglo-Saxon warrior-settlers in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹²⁶

In switching languages, Schrijver reasons, aspects of these refugees' Latin pronunciation left a deep imprint on western British Celtic: given that Welsh, Cornish, and Breton are 'packed with...Latin features', he suggests that they must have arrived in very large numbers, enough 'to swamp the population of Celtic speakers in the west'.¹²⁷ His proposal therefore seeks both to provide a chronologically nuanced explanation for Latin influence in western Britain, and to offer indirect evidence for a large Latin-speaking population in the southeast.

Schrijver's theory is an intriguing and rather appealing one. Many scholars have noted the general similarities between developments in Latin and Brittonic, and speculated on a connection between them. Given the chronological disjuncture which has been described—apparently an unavoidable deduction from internal linguistic logic—some special argument has to be presented if both the loanwords and the quantity reorganization in the two languages are to be regarded as signs of direct influence. Whether Schrijver's suggestions are necessarily the best or only way to account for the evidence might be questioned, however. In general terms, some have aired doubts about the value of historical reconstructions based on models of linguistic contact: the influence of superstrates on substrates and vice versa seems rarely to produce such clear-cut distinctions as are suggested here.¹²⁸ More specifically, the little evidence that we have for Latin from western Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries does not seem to sit entirely comfortably with Schrijver's scenario. To judge by the inscriptions, as we have seen, it was a language with high status, having apparently survived among a social elite as a vernacular marked by various of the Late Latin developments that have parallels in Brittonic. One might think that a massive influx of refugees speaking a similar variety of Latin and swamping the local population

¹²⁶ Schrijver (2014), 33.

¹²⁷ The quotations are from Schrijver (2014), 32, 33, respectively.

¹²⁸ Russell (2011, 142–3) sets out a number of reservations, and stresses some expressed by Thomason and Kaufman themselves about the uncertainties inherent in applying their models to unattested past situations (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988, 118). The primary burden of Russell's paper is to review the claims of morphosyntactic influence on Brittonic languages, and in two of the three features Schrijver lists (loss of a case system and loss of neuter gender) he finds the evidence for Latin influence less than compelling (Russell 2011, 144–7). Schrijver (2014, 3–4) himself emphasizes the limitation of his approach when applied to documented complex situations.

could have worked to shore up this elite language rather than contribute to its abandonment.¹²⁹

Woolf's most recent review of the question of British ethnogenesis, as he terms it, offers a new model that might help account for some of the awkwardness in the evidence.¹³⁰ He suggests that, as far back as the third and fourth centuries, highland regions may have been subject to local British rulers, 'kings' in the making, who functioned as clients of the established Roman authorities further east. Such an arrangement might help explain the degree of Latinization evident in surviving highland Brittonic languages without calling on disproportionate influence from Romance-speaking refugees from the southeast: it may be that, with the support of such elite rulers, Latin had a much greater effect in the west of Britain than might be deduced from the very limited archaeological and historical indications of Romanization in settlement and society.

Woolf's suggestion does not obviously supply a solution to the chronological 'mismatch' between lexical borrowing and the putative phonological influence of Latin on Brittonic. Yet perhaps this is a problem with no basis. After all, one scholar's 'more or less identical developments' is another's 'a number of vague parallels',¹³¹ and there are a number of significant differences of detail between the operation of similar-looking changes in the two languages which stand in the way of a self-evident equation.¹³² It has proved quite possible for some Celticists to propose internally motivated mechanisms for the new quantity system in Brittonic without looking to Latin influence at all.¹³³ Or perhaps there is a link, but it is partial and indirect. If, for instance, Schrijver were correct to suggest that

¹²⁹ Compare the different emphasis of Woolf's suggestion of 'a massive switch to Old Welsh by preferential Romance speakers who, as the social elite, exerted influence on subsequent development of the language in disproportion to their numbers' (Woolf 2003, 378). One further small reservation over a point of detail in Schrijver's scenario might be added here. In a separate argument he identifies—from one of the Bath curse-texts which may be in British Celtic (see Mullen 2024b)—evidence in lowland British for diphthongization characteristic of Late Latin in northern Gaul which seems thence to have been taken into northern Gaulish Celtic (Schrijver 2005a; 2014, 49–52). Schrijver (2014, 53–6) suggests that the same diphthongization, in either the Latin or Celtic of the southeast, might account for aspects of the development of the place-name London (particularly in its Brittonic form, **Lundein*, Welsh *Llundain*). It is then perhaps unfortunate for his wider theory that this diphthongization, the sole feature identified as particularly characteristic of the Latin of the British lowland zone, is apparently not among the substrate influences carried into highland British.

¹³⁰ Woolf (2020).

¹³¹ Respectively, Schrijver (2002), 95; Sims-Williams (1990), 218. Note also the latter's comment (219) 'that the connection, if any, between the Vulgar Latin and neo-Brittonic quantity systems has never been demonstrated in detail'.

¹³² Schrijver (2007, 166–7) himself notes 'details differ' on several items in his proposed list of linked developments, including the quantity systems and the operation of syncope and apocope. See also Evans (1983), 972–4.

¹³³ McCone (1996), 158–65. Cf. Rhys (2020b), 39: 'we cannot rule out the possibility that it [the Brittonic quantity system] was an independent native development'. James (2014, 1, n. 2) likewise observes that in northern Britain syncope, apocope, and consonant-voicing all seem to have operated in similar ways as they did in the Brittonic of further south and west, but that an influx of lowland Latin-speaking refugees seems an unlikely explanation for them to the north of Hadrian's Wall.

the shift of the stress-accent to the penultimate syllable in British before *c.* 400 was one aspect of Latin influence,¹³⁴ then that prosodic alteration might have conditioned subsequent changes along similar lines in the two languages: those changes may have been working themselves out in Brittonic in the sixth century essentially independently of contemporary developments in spoken Latin on the Continent.¹³⁵

I do not, however, wish to conclude in quite so speculative a vein. The meagre evidence for Latin in Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries is such that a fair degree of speculation is inevitable. It can, however, be restated that the evidence for the continued use of spoken Latin in western Britain for a century and more after the break with Rome is not negligible, and that on that basis alone we must suppose it to have had a firm hold, at least as a language of bilinguals, in the lowlands, before the Anglo-Saxons obliterated what came before. Contrary to some older views, there seems very little reason to think that spoken Latin in Britain at the start of the fifth century would have differed much from contemporary spoken Latin in Gaul, except in so far as usage in Britain may have been marked by some British phonological features. No doubt there would have been variety in the extent to which such features may have been heard, just as there will surely have been variety of different kinds in the Latin spoken across the country and across society. Unfortunately, those relatively fine details cannot be made out from the faint impressions that survive.

¹³⁴ Schrijver (2002), 93.

¹³⁵ For the prosodic background to the Latin quantity changes, see Marotta (2022), 189; cf. also Leppänen and Alho (2018), 479, comparing the parallel processes in later Germanic languages, including Middle English open syllable lengthening. For a *c.* 600 date for the new quantity system in Brittonic, see Jackson (1953), 338–44; Sims-Williams (2016), 212 (retracting an earlier date suggested in Sims-Williams 1990, 250); Rhys (2020b), 39. It might be added that chronological considerations perhaps allow at least one more of the putative similarities between the languages—the voicing of *p*, *t*, and *k*—to have had a direct effect by *c.* 400 (see above pp. 255–6 and n. 92; also Sims-Williams 1990, 223–4); there may in that case be no need of a later highland substratum theory to account for this feature.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow Hornblower, S., Spawforth, A., and Eidinow, E. (eds) (2012) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 4th edition. Oxford. Available online at <https://oxfordre.com/classics/page/3993> [last accessed 31 January 2023].

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
ACS	Holder, A. (1891–1913) <i>Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz</i> , 3 vols. Leipzig.
CCCM	(1967–) <i>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</i> . Turnhout.
CCSG	(1977–) <i>Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca</i> . Turnhout.
CCSL	(1954–) <i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> . Turnhout.
CGL	Goetz, G. (1888–1923) <i>Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum</i> I–VII, 7 vols. Leipzig.
CHisp	Gil, J. (ed.) (2018) <i>Chronica Hispana saeculi VIII et IX</i> (CCCM 65). Turnhout.
CIHM	(1997–) <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Hispaniae Mediaevalium</i> . Turnhout.
CIIC	Macalister, R. A. S. (1945, 1949) <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum</i> , 2 vols. Dublin.
CISP	Davies, W. (2002) <i>Celtic Inscribed Stones Project</i> . London. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/ .
CISW	Redknap, M. and Lewis, J. M. (2007), <i>A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales. Vol. 1. South-East Wales</i> . Cardiff. Edwards, N. (2007) <i>A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales. Vol. 2. South-West Wales</i> . Cardiff. Edwards, N. (2013) <i>A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales. Vol. 3. North Wales</i> . Cardiff.
CLA	Lowe, E. A. (ed.) (1934–71) <i>Codices Latini Antiquiores</i> , 11 vols. Oxford.
CSEL	(1864–) <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> . Vienna.
CVHR	Vives, J., Marín Martínez, T., and Martínez Díez, G. (eds) (1963) <i>Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos</i> . Barcelona/Madrid.
eDIL	<i>An Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language, based on the Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language</i> . www.dil.ie .
EV	Gil, J. (1991) ‘Epistulae’, in <i>Miscellanea Wisigothica</i> . 2nd edition. Seville, 1–49.
FV	Gil, J. (1991) ‘Formulae Wisigothicae’, in <i>Miscellanea Wisigothica</i> . 2nd edition. Seville, 70–112.
GPC	<i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru/A Dictionary of the Welsh Language</i> . https://geiriadur.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html .
HTVFE	Martín-Iglesias, J. C., Díaz, P. C., and Vallejo Girvés, M. (2020) <i>La Hispania tardoantigua y visigoda en las fuentes epistolares: antología y comentario</i> . Madrid.
ICERV	Vives, J. (1969) <i>Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda</i> . 2nd edition. Barcelona.
IGEP	Hoz, M. P. de (2014) <i>Inscripciones griegas de España y Portugal</i> . Madrid.

- JIWE Noy, D. (1993) *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe, 1. Italy (Excluding the City of Rome), Spain, and Gaul*. Cambridge.
- LV Zeumer, K. (1902) 'Liber Iudiciorum sive Lex Visigothorum', in *Leges Visigothorum*. MGH. *Leges Nationum Germanicarum* 1. Hanover, 33–456.
- MGH (1819–) *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Munich.
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*. www.oed.com.
- PG Migne, J.-P. (ed.) (1857–66) *Patrologiae graecae cursus completus*, 162 vols. Paris.
- PL Migne, J.-P. (ed.) (1844–64) *Patrologiae latinae cursus completus*, 221 vols. Paris.
- PLRE (1971–92) *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols. Cambridge.
- PN Personal name
- P.Vis. Velázquez, I. (2004) *Las pizarras visigodas (Entre el Latín y su disgregación. La lengua hablada en Hispania, siglos VI–VIII)*. Burgos.
- REW Meyer-Lübke, W. (1935) *Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg.
- RIG Lejeune, M. et al. (eds) (1985–) *Recueil des inscriptions gauloises*, 5 vols. Paris.
- SC (1942–) *Sources Chrétiennes*. Paris.
- SMuz Gil, J. (ed.) (2020) *Scriptores Muzarabici saeculi VIII–XI (CCCM 65A–B)*, 2 vols. Turnhout.
- SSRM *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*
- TLL (1900–) *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Leipzig.
- TTH (1985–) *Translated Texts for Historians*. Liverpool.

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