

Chapter 2

The Place-Names of Roman Britain

The Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain has an *Index of Roman Names* listing all the place-names recorded in the Romano-British period which are sufficiently well located to be placed on the Map. If the names of tribes, and some places in Ireland and France, are discounted, this list yields over 200 place-names. Other place-names mentioned in sources relating to Roman Britain which are not sufficiently well located to be shown on a map amount to nearly as many again—certainly another 150 items, probably more. Exact figures are not obtained easily, owing to such problems as that of textual corruption, which may produce ‘ghost’ names or make it uncertain whether slightly differing spellings in different sources refer to the same item. It seems safe to say that we know at least 350 names of rivers, islands, settlements and Roman forts in the area of England, Wales and Scotland. This must be a tiny proportion of the place-names which were in use from the first to the mid fifth century AD, but it is a sufficient number to enable some conclusions to be drawn about the types of name current in Roman Britain. The nature of these names will be analysed in some detail in this chapter, both because the subject is of interest in its own right, and because it is a necessary foundation for the study of the Germanic place-names which replaced most of the Romano-British ones. The contrast between British and Germanic nomenclature can only be fully appreciated if the nature of the British place-names is understood.

The material from Roman Britain can be used (albeit at some risk) by a person who is not a specialist in the Celtic languages because it has been the subject of expert study. Two articles in learned journals, Richmond, Crawford and Williams 1949, and Rivet and Jackson 1970, are the basic equipment. These articles incorporate linguistic comments on individual place-names by Professors I. Williams and K. Jackson, and armed with

these and with Jackson 1953 some discussion of Romano-British names may be attempted.

Some of the names discussed by these authors are unsolved. The name *Alauna*, for instance, of which four instances appear in the Ordnance Survey list, one of them being now represented by the River Alne NTB, elicits from Professor Jackson the comment ‘Meaning and etymology unknown’; and other well-recorded names, such as *Cunetione* and *Venta*, are left unsolved by the same authority. The tentative conclusions which follow in this chapter about the nature of Romano-British place-names are based on an analysis of those names for which a firm etymology is available.

First, it is interesting to note what proportion of these place-names is in the Latin language. The nature of the sources from which the information is derived might perhaps be expected to exaggerate the proportion of Latin names to vernacular ones, as only places of special concern to the Roman governing class are likely to be mentioned in documents or inscriptions. In fact, the proportion of Latin names among those recorded is small. The following are the certain or possible examples of Latin or part-Latin place-names recorded from Roman Britain—*Ad Ansam*, *Ad Pontem*, *Aquae Arnemetiae*, *Aquae Sulis*, *Caesaromago*, *Calcaria*, *Castra Exploratorum*, *Cataractoni*, *Fanococidi*, *Horrea Classis*, *Lindum Colonia*, *Pinnata Castra*, *Pons Aelius*, *Pontibus*, *Salinis* (two examples), *Spinis*, *Traiectus*, *Trimontium*, *Victoria*, *Villa Faustini*.

It may seem unreasonable to include *Trimontium* in this list while omitting *Tripontio*, especially as the Ordnance Survey list emends the latter name to **Tripontium*. Professor Jackson, using the spelling *Tripontio* which is the only one on record (in the Antonine Itinerary), comments that the ending is the British suffix *-io-*, that *tri-* is the root for ‘three’ in both Latin and British, and that as the Latin word *pont-* was borrowed into British this name, which means ‘three bridges’, is not a hybrid, but a wholly British name. (The settlement at *Tripontio*, near Caves Inn on the boundary between Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, is now becoming a physical reality as excavation proceeds in advance of gravel working and road construction.)

Since the number of Latin or part-Latin names known from Roman Britain is so small, some comments may be offered on all the examples:

Ad Ansam. Latin *ansa* means ‘handle’ (e.g. of a jug) or ‘loop of a sandal’. The place-name means ‘at the loop’, and may refer to a bend in a river. It occurs in the Antonine Itinerary, in Iter IX, which runs from *Venta Icinorum* (Caistor-by-Norwich) to London. *Ad Ansam* comes before *Camoloduno* (Colchester), and Professor Rivet locates it at Stratford St

Mary SFK, where the Roman road crosses the River Stour; but the actual settlement has not been found.

Ad Pontem, 'at the bridge', occurs in Iter VI of the Antonine Itinerary, which runs from London to Lincoln. It is next but one before Lincoln in the list of names on this route, and Professor Rivet locates it at East Stoke NTT. The one-inch map marks a Roman Fort beside the River Trent, but the Foss Way does not appear from modern maps to cross the river. The bridge may have been a causeway over marshy ground.

Aquae Arnemetiae (the form given in the Ordnance Survey list for the *Aquis Arnemeze* of the Ravenna Cosmography). This is identified with the Roman fort at Buxton DRB. It is a hybrid name, combining Latin *aquae* (which refers to the Roman thermal baths known to have existed here) with the name of a British goddess, *Arnemetia*.

Aquae Sulis, the Latin name of Bath SOM, recorded in a number of sources, including Ptolemy's Geography and the Antonine Itinerary. A parallel formation to the preceding name, 'the waters of Sulis'. *Sulis* was the name of a British goddess who was equated with Minerva.

Caesaromago, a hybrid name, apparently meaning 'the plain of Caesar', with British **magos* 'plain, field' as second element. This is recorded in several sources, including the Antonine Itinerary, and is applied to the Roman town at Moulsham, on the southern outskirts of Chelmsford ESX. A recent article, Drury 1975, sets out what is known of the Roman town from excavation, and discusses the significance of the name, preferring 'Caesar's market' to 'Caesar's plain'. Other places with this name are found on the Continent; it was the Roman name of Beauvais.

Calcaria, a Latin adjective meaning 'of limestone'. This is located at Tadcaster YOW. The Venerable Bede, writing c. AD 730, knew the Latin name, which he gave as *civitatem calcariam*. He said the English called the place *kælcacæstir*, 'chalkchester', but it is clear that this name had been replaced by the modern one, Tadcaster, by the date of the Norman Conquest.

Castra Exploratorum, 'fortress of the Scouts'. This occurs in Iter II of the Antonine Itinerary and is located north of Hadrian's Wall at Netherby CMB. It is surprising that only two of the Roman forts in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall had Latin names (cf. *Pons Aelius*). Nearly always they were known by a British name describing the adjacent countryside.

Cataractoni, now Catterick YON. This name is recorded in a number of sources, starting with Ptolemy. The form *Cataractoni* is the one in the Antonine Itinerary, and Professor Jackson analyses this as from Latin *cataracta* 'waterfall, rapids' and a British suffix *-ono-*. The earliest Old English source in which the name occurs, the Venerable Bede, gives the simple Latin form *Cataracta*. The name refers to rapids on the River Swale near Richmond, and Professor Jackson suggests that it was originally the name of the river. This is an interesting example of a Latin place-name which has survived.

Fanococidi, from Latin *fanum* 'shrine, temple' and the name of a Romano-British war-god Cocidius, to whom there are eighteen surviving dedications carved on stone. It is not known which Romano-British fort or settlement is referred to by the place-name (which occurs in the Ravenna Cosmography), but the dedications to the god are so distributed as to suggest that his shrine was within the triangle between Bewcastle, Netherby and Stanwix in Cumberland.

Horrea Classis. This form is an emendation of *Poreoclassis* in the Ravenna Cosmography, and it is not certain that the name really existed. It would be Latin for 'the Fleet storehouses'. The place in the Ravenna Cosmography was in Scotland, north of the Antonine Wall, and may be Ptolemy's *Orrea*.

Lindum Colonia, now Lincoln. The British name *Lindo* occurs in Ptolemy, in the Antonine Itinerary, and in inscriptions; it means 'pool' or 'lake', and refers to the pool of the River Witham in the city. In the Ravenna Cosmography the Latin word *Colonia* is added, referring to the status of the town as a settlement of time-expired legionaries. Although it only appears in this late source, the Latin addition must have been in colloquial use as it has survived as the second part of the modern name.

Pinnatis. This name occurs in the Ravenna Cosmography, referring to a site in Scotland, north of the Antonine Wall. It is an adjective from Latin *pinnae*, perhaps 'merlons', referring to battlements on an earthwork, though as most camps had these the significance of such a name is not clear. The full name may have been *Pinnata Castra*, as a name like this was translated into Greek by Ptolemy.

Pons Aelius. This name occurs only in the Notitia Dignitatum. It is considered to refer to Newcastle NTB. *Aelius* is the family name of the Emperor Hadrian, so 'Hadrian's bridge'.

Pontibus, 'at the bridges'. This occurs in the Antonine Itinerary, and is located near Staines MDX.

Salinis. This Latin name occurs in the Ravenna Cosmography, apparently on a road leading north-eastwards from Gloucester. It means 'at the salt-pans', and is probably to be identified with the Romano-British settlement at Droitwich WOR, now being excavated by Birmingham University in advance of building work.

Salinis. A second example of the name 'at the salt-pans'. This is identified with Nantwich CHE. Another British *Salinae* occurs in Ptolemy's Geography in the territory of the Catuvellauni, but this has not been located, and it may be a confused siting of Droitwich. Ptolemy also mentions two places with this name on the Continent.

Spinis. A Latin name meaning 'at the thorn bushes' which occurs in the Antonine Itinerary and must be located near Speen BRK. Latin *sp̄inis* could not develop by ordinary phonological processes to Old English *sp̄ene*, modern Speen, but there is no serious doubt that the English name is an adaptation of the Latin one. The Anglo-Saxons assimilated the unfamiliar *sp̄inis* to an English word *sp̄ene*, 'place where there are chips of wood'.

Traiectus. This is a Latin word meaning 'ferry'. It occurs in Iter XIV of the Antonine Itinerary between *Abone* (Sea Mills) and *Aquis Sulis* (Bath). The route represented by this part of the Itinerary is uncertain. *Traiectus* cannot be the point at which the road leaves the River Severn, and Professor Rivet considers that the text may be corrupt at this point. It is not certain that *Traiectus* is a place-name.

Trimontium. A Latin name, meaning '(the place of) the triple peaks', which occurs in Ptolemy, in the Ravenna Cosmography, and on an inscription, and is identified with the Roman fort at Newstead, near Melrose ROX. The reference is to the triple-peaked Eildon Hills, which are a notable landmark.

Victoria, 'victory'. This was in Scotland, and is mentioned in Ptolemy (transliterated as *Ouiktoria*, not translated as *Nikē*) and in the Ravenna Cosmography. Professor Rivet, in a personal communication, suggests that it is Inchtuthil, named thus for Legio XX Victrix.

Villa Faustini, 'villa of Faustinus'. This occurs in Iter V of the Antonine

Itinerary, and may have been at Stoke Ash SFK. There are eight villa-names in the non-British sections of the Itinerary, but this is the only one recorded from Roman Britain.

The number of place-names listed and discussed above is twenty-one, which is only a small proportion of the number, between 350 and 400, which we know from the long period of Roman rule in Britain. To this small group there should probably be added Aust GLO, which is not recorded in any Romano-British source, but which seems inexplicable except as the Latin cognomen *Augusta*, which would develop to *Aust* in the British language before being passed on to the English. It has been conjectured (Smith 1964, 128) that there was a crossing of the River Severn here in Roman times (if so, the wheel has now come full circle) which was known as **Traiectus Augustus* from a connection with the Legio *Augusta*, stationed at Gloucester till moved to Caerleon on the Usk in AD 75. But Professor Rivet has pointed out to me that *Augusta* was common in Gaul as a place-name, and the connection with Legio II *Augusta* is very doubtful.

Considering that the sources available to us from Roman Britain are specially concerned with Roman settlements and forts, rather than with native farms and villages, the small number of Latin, as opposed to British, place-names on record from the period may fairly be taken as indicating that even the Latin-speaking administrative classes were for the most part using British place-names rather than new Latin coinages of their own creation. It is noteworthy that even in this short list the names are to some extent repetitive. Three of them refer to bridges (*Ad Pontem*, *Pons Aelius*, *Pontibus*), two refer to spas (*Aquae Arnemetiae* and *Aquae Sulis*), three refer to the exploitation of natural resources (*Calcaria* and the two examples of *Salinae*). *Fanococidi* and *Villa Faustini* refer to buildings, probably of Roman origin, and *Caesaromago*, *Horrea Classis*, *Traiectus* and *Victoria* are examples of deliberate name-giving. The only items which look as if they were spontaneous descriptions of the setting, without obvious reference to Roman installations, are *Ad Ansam*, *Cataractoni*, *Spinis* and *Trimontium*, and it may be significant that two of these survived and are still in use in the forms Catterick and Speen. The colloquial use of Latin *colonia* which led to its survival as the second element of Lincoln is also noteworthy; but the evidence suggests that Latin was rarely used in Britain for the spontaneous coinage of place-names.

The significance of this last statement would be clearer if it were possible to make detailed comparisons between the place-names recorded from Roman Britain and those recorded from other parts of the Empire. This cannot be attempted in the present book, but some effort has

been made to provide a control for the analysis of the British material by reading the whole of the *Itinerarium Provinciarum Antonini Augusti*, popularly known as the Antonine Itinerary. This text is a collection of some 225 routes along the roads of the Roman Empire, which lists stopping-places on each route with a statement of the number of miles between each. It covers most of the Empire, from Spain to Turkey and from Britain to North Africa, and it constitutes a vast collection of place-names most of which were probably in use during the first three centuries AD. The criterion for inclusion was that a settlement was a recognized stopping-place on a Roman road.

From an unscientific analysis it seems to emerge that the proportion of Latin place-names along these routes varies greatly from one province to another. For the western Empire, the proportion of 10 per cent, which is about that of Latin or part-Latin to non-Latin names in the British section, is probably the lowest reached. Obvious Latin names are not in the majority anywhere, not even in Italy, but they do sometimes approach 50 per cent, and in several provinces they amount to about a third. To take one example, the section dealing with Sardinia mentions just over forty stopping-places, of which at least the following thirteen seem certain or likely to be Latin—*Aquis Neapolitanis* ('Neapolitan baths'), *Neapolis* is one of several Greek names in Sardinia), *Coclearia* (? 'place of snails'), *Cornos* ('horn'), *Ferraria* ('iron mines'), *Foro Traiani* ('Trajan's market'), *Gemellas* (also in Africa and Spain, perhaps referring to a town with two focal areas), *Ad Herculem* (presumably a dedication), *Ad Medias* ('central parts'), *Metalla* ('mines'), *Molaria* ('place of the mill'), *Sulcis* ('at the furrows'), *Tegula* ('tile'), *Ad Turrem* ('at the tower'). There is also an *Elefantaria*, apparently 'place of elephants', which is difficult to explain in Sardinia but might perhaps refer to an ivory market.

The Gaulish sections of the Itinerary are more relevant for comparison with Britain, but these cover a vast area in a not very orderly manner; difficulties of location make it hazardous to attempt any analysis, as it is not always clear whether one is meeting the same place several times or several examples of a particular name. It is clear, however, that some of the Latin place-names which recur on the Continent are not evidenced in Britain. These include *Fines*, *Finibus* ('boundary'), *Stabulum* ('stable'), *Tabernas* ('shops'), *Turres* ('towers'). Latin names of trees (*Fraxinum*, *Oleastrum*, *Olivam*, *Ulmus*) are fairly well evidenced elsewhere but do not seem to occur as place-names in Roman Britain.

Our knowledge of Latin place-names on the Continent is not wholly derived from sources recorded during the time of the Roman Empire. There are many names which must have been coined at a time when the

language had not yet become Vulgar Latin, because they incorporate terms which disappeared after the time of the Empire. In France these include Castres, Châtre, Chestres, from *castrum* 'camp', Conflans, Confolens, from *confluentes* 'confluence', Fréjus, Feurs from *forum* 'market', Muizon from *mutationes* 'posting station'. None of these terms has been detected in place-names in Britain. The names Entraunes, Entrammes, Antrain, Entrains and Antran, all from *inter amnes* 'between the rivers', are considered to date from the Roman period because the word *amnis* did not survive in Gaul. Many other examples could be given.

In commenting on the scarcity of Latin place-names in Britain it should, however, be emphasized that Britain is not being contrasted with other parts of the Empire where Latin names were predominant. To judge by the Antonine Itinerary the Roman administrators everywhere used a high proportion of pre-existing vernacular place-names. But Latin names are scarcer in Britain than in most parts of the western Empire, and they include fewer specimens which may be spontaneous descriptions of the site by people whose native tongue was Latin.

In contrast to the Latin names, which have to be searched for, the written sources for Roman Britain offer relatively rich material for the study of the British names in use from the first to the fifth centuries AD. As mentioned above, a fair number of names from these sources, such as *Alauna*, *Clausentum*, *Corinium*, *Corstopitum*, *Venta*, *Verolamio*, *Vinovia*, are unsolved mysteries, and some of these may belong to a layer of place-names older than the use of Celtic speech in Britain. Unfortunately, the category of obscure names includes *Londinium*, modern London. This is often explained as 'place belonging to Londinos', from a supposed personal name meaning 'the wild one' and an adjectival ending; but this etymology is rejected in an emphatic footnote in Jackson 1953 (p. 308), and we have as yet nothing to put in its place. There are, however, a good number of place-names in these Romano-British sources for which experts in the British language are prepared to give a firm etymology. The safest ground in this difficult territory is that of the Antonine Itinerary, since Professor Jackson has recently provided comments on most of the names contained in it (Jackson 1970); and a rough analysis of those British names in the Itinerary which are amenable to etymology will be attempted in order to gain some idea of the types of place-name in use in Roman Britain.

There are 111 names in the British section of the Antonine Itinerary. All are stopping-places on roads, so that although some of them originated as river-names, they were all in use as settlement-names in the Roman period. Of these 111 names, there are 32 which Professor Jackson considers obscure

(this is counting both instances of *Isca* and four instances of *Venta*). This leaves 79 names for which more or less firm etymologies are available. Twelve of these are Latin or partly Latin, and these have already been discussed, so there are 67 British names to be considered. These 67 intelligible British names can be divided into the following categories:

1. Topographical statements, a subdivision of this category being river-names which are used as settlement-names without the addition of a suffix: 34 names.
2. Names containing a word for a town or fort or other building construction: 18 names.
3. Names formed by the addition of a suffix to a personal name; there are 5 of these.
4. Names referring to an activity: 4 names.
5. Names not amenable to classification, of which there are 6.

The listing of all these 67 British place-names, in alphabetical order within the five categories, and the provision of fairly detailed notes on each one will take up a fair amount of space, and such treatment may seem out of proportion to the rest of this book. It is worth doing, however, because it is the first time this body of material has been studied in an attempt to ascertain what type of linguistic formation was felt to constitute a satisfactory place-name by the people of Roman Britain. In order to offer some conclusions about this it is necessary to have a corpus of names with reasonably firm etymologies which are firmly related to towns or forts in known topographical situations. In the article, Rivet and Jackson 1970, which is the basis of this analysis the identifications of the Romano-British place-names with towns and forts are the work of Professor Rivet, and the etymologies are the work of Professor Jackson. Correlating both parts of this work and trying to look with a fresh eye at the topography of each place is a relatively simple but time-consuming exercise, which the reader of this book cannot fairly be expected to do for himself; so it seems necessary to lay out this evidence in detail as the basis for some general conclusions about Romano-British place-names and the ways in which they differ from the Old English names by which most of them were replaced.

By far the largest category of British names in the Antonine Itinerary is that of place-names which consist of a topographical statement or a river-name. The following are considered to fall into this class:

Bremenio (the fort at High Rochester NTB). The stream here, now the Sills Burn, was probably called **Bremiā* 'roaring', and derivational suffixes were added to this to form a settlement-name.

Bremetonnaci (the fort at Ribchester LNC). The River Ribble was probably **Bremetona* 'roaring river', to which the adjectival suffix *-āco-* was added to make a settlement-name.

Brige (not precisely located, but occurring between Winchester and Old Sarum). Probably 'hills' from British **brigā*, but Professor Jackson comments that it is unusual for such a word to be used as a British place-name without the addition of a suffix. The Roman road runs over downland.

Brocavo (the fort at Brougham WML). From the British word for a badger, which became Modern Welsh *broch*; this was one of the few British words to be borrowed by the Anglo-Saxons. A suffix has been added to give a meaning 'places of badgers'. The fort was beside the River Eamont.

Calleva (the Roman town at Silchester HMP). 'Place in the woods', formed by the addition of a suffix to the British word which is the ancestor of Modern Welsh *celli* 'grove'.

Camborico (not certainly located, but between Caistor St Edmunds, near Norwich, and Cambridge). Professor Jackson suggests emendation to **Camborito*, which would mean 'crooked ford'.

Canonio (Kelvedon ESX). Professor Jackson suggests a river-name **Cānonā*, 'reedy river', to which a suffix has been added to make a settlement-name. Kelvedon is on the River Blackwater, the British name of which was Pant (now restricted to part of the river), but the Domsey Brook, which joins the Blackwater near Kelvedon, could be the 'reedy river'.

Coccio (the Roman town at Wigan LNC). Formed from a British word meaning 'red' and a derivational suffix. No suggestion has been offered about what was red at Wigan.

Conbretovio (a Roman site at Baylham House SRK, north-west of Ipswich). Professor Jackson gives the etymology 'at the confluence', as if the name were identical in meaning with *Condate*. But Baylham is not situated at a confluence in the ordinary sense of the term. The River Gipping meanders here, and there may have been several channels, and the name refers to a coming together of these; or streams which now join the Gipping well to the north of Baylham may have flowed in here in earlier times.

Condate (near Northwich CHE). This name also means 'the confluence'; it is the origin of the surviving French place-names Condé, Condat, Condes. The site of the Romano-British settlement can only be deduced from the distances given from other towns, but it was probably in the township of Witton cum Twambrook, where a number of rivers—Dane, Weaver, Peover Eye and Wade Brook—flow together. The English name Twambrook means 'between the brooks'.

Eburacum (York). The survival of this name is discussed in the final section of this chapter. The meaning is probably 'yew grove', the name being formed by the addition of the adjectival suffix *-āco-* to the British word for a yew tree. It is possible that the suffix was added to a personal name **Eburos*, in which case York would belong in the third category into which these names are here sorted. Professor Jackson considers this less likely, but only on the grounds that this latter type of place-name is rare in Britain, though very common in Gaul.

Letoceto (the Roman town at Wall STF). The circumstances in which this became incorporated in the English name Lichfield are discussed in the final section of this chapter. The British name means 'grey wood', from two words which are the ancestors of Modern Welsh *llwyd* and *coed*. The same place-name has become Litchett HMP, Lytchett DOR, and there are a number of Cornish and Welsh instances. This may have been a compound appellative, describing a particular kind of wood.

Lindo (Lincoln). Discussed with Latin names at the beginning of the chapter.

Magnis (the Roman town near the village of Kenchester HRE, west of Hereford). Professor Jackson suggests 'the rocks', from a word which is the ancestor of modern Welsh *maen* 'stone'. There was another *Magnis* in Roman Britain, mentioned in other sources than the Antonine Itinerary, possibly to be located at Carvoran NTB, on Hadrian's Wall, where the topography is more dramatic than it is at Kenchester. The name may have been transferred to the Roman town in HRE from the adjacent hill-fort, on an abrupt hill overlooking the village of Credenhill; see the discussion of *Uriconium* later in this chapter for such a relationship between an Iron Age fort and a Roman town. The difficult problems posed by the apparent survival of *Magnis* in the modern name Maund are discussed in Chapter 4.

Mamucio (the Roman fort at Manchester LNC). Formed by the addition of

suffixes to British **mammā* 'breast, breast-shaped hill'. One copy of the Antonine Itinerary has *Mancunio*, which is considered by modern scholars to be a corruption of *Mamucio*, but was at one time considered to be the correct form and so became the basis for the adjective *Mancunian*.

Mediolano (a Roman town at Whitchurch SHR). This name, which means 'central plain', is well-represented in Gaul, Milan being an example. The exact significance has not been established. Whitchurch lies in a flat region which is sufficiently raised to be a watershed between several major rivers.

Noviomago (a Roman town at Crayford KNT). This name means 'new field', from British words which are the ancestors of Modern Welsh *newydd* and *ma*. Chichester ssx was also called *Noviomago* in Romano-British times, and there are several examples in Gaul. In the Chichester instance, since no pre-Roman occupation is known, the name may have been coined in early Roman times. Newland is the equivalent English name. In the KNT example of *Noviomago* the reference may have been to land broken in from heath, like the adjacent Dartford and Bexley Heaths; at Chichester the reclamation would be from marsh.

Pennocrucio (the Roman town on Watling Street, south of Penkridge STF). Both elements of this name can mean 'hill', but when *penno-* (the ancestor of Modern Welsh *penn* 'head') occurs as a first element in a compound name of this date it is likely to mean 'chief, most important'. The second element, British **crouco-*, means 'hill, barrow, mound'. Professor Jackson gives the etymology 'chief mound' or 'hilly mound', which is inexplicable in terms of the modern topography. The crossroads by which *Pennocrucio* was situated is not on a hill. Here, Watling Street is descending a smooth, gentle slope from the high ground of Cannock Chase to the valley of the River Penk. It can only be suggested that there might have been a great tumulus called 'the chief mound' on the site of the town, of which no trace remains, or that the name was that of a large district and the mound lay elsewhere. The survival of *Pennocrucio* in the modern name Penkridge is discussed later in this chapter.

Rutunio (Professor Rivet locates this at Harcourt Mill, near Stanton upon Hine Heath SHR, on the River Roden). Formed by the addition of the *-jo-* suffix to British **Rutunā*, perhaps 'swift flowing river', which has become Roden.

Segeloci (a Roman town at Littleborough NTT). Probably 'vigorous pool'.

The site is south of Gainsborough, where a Roman road crosses the River Trent, and the name may have referred to a pool in the river where there was a strong current.

Segontio (the Roman fort and settlement at Caernarvon). Formed with the *-io-* suffix from British **Segontī*, 'vigorous river', which has become the modern river-name Saint. The same first element is found in *Segeloci*.

Sitomagi (the position in Iter IX suggests a site near Dunwich SFK; the settlement has probably gone into the sea). The name means 'wide field', with the same second element as *Noviomago*.

Verteris (the Roman fort at Brough WML). Professor Jackson derives this from a British word meaning 'summit'. Possibly the name referred originally to the high moorland east of Brough.

Uxacona (the Roman fort and settlement at Red Hill SHR, between Wroxeter and Penkridge). Formed by the addition of suffixes to a base **uxo-*, which means 'high'. Watling Street goes over the summit of an abrupt hill at this point.

The next list is of settlement-names adopted, without the addition of a suffix, from river-names. This category contains eleven items, and may be regarded as a subdivision of the large category of Romano-British place-names which consist of a topographical statement. Only names intelligible to the modern philologist are being considered here, as the point of the exercise is to form an idea of what was considered a satisfactory place-name in Romano-British times. For this reason the two instances of *Isca* are not included. It is well known that this river-name is the source of the Modern English and Scottish river-names Exe, Axe and Esk, but the difficulties of finding an etymology which accounts satisfactorily for them and for the Welsh River Usk are such that Professor Jackson concludes his discussion of *Isca* with the statement 'The question must be left open'. Similarly *Alone* (which occurs in several Romano-British names of towns and rivers and in the Welsh river-name Alun), *Isurium* and *Nido* (Neath GLA) have been omitted, because no firm etymology is available for them. The settlement-names of the British section of the Antonine Itinerary which were originally river-names, and for which an etymology is given by Professor Jackson are:

Abone (a Roman site at Sea Mills GLO). British **abonā*, Modern Welsh *afon*,

'river', whence the various Avon rivers, including the Bristol Avon, on which Sea Mills stands. If none of the examples of this name had been recorded in Roman sources, one might have suspected that the use of Avon as a river-name in many localities was due to a linguistic misunderstanding by the Anglo-Saxons; that is, they heard British-speaking people referring to 'the river', and did not realize that the word was a common noun, rather than a specific name. Since this instance is recorded from pre-English times, however, it must be accepted as a British river-name.

Conovio (the Roman fort at Caerhun CRN). The name of the River Conway. Other sources show that the Antonine Itinerary spelling is a mistake for *Can-*. The name means 'the reedy one' from **cāno-* 'reed' (Welsh *cawn*, found also in *Canonio supra*) and a suffix *-oujo-*.

Dano (the Roman fort at Doncaster YOW). The name of the River Don, from **dānu-* 'bold', probably 'rapid' in river-names. There is another River Don in DRH which is identical. The Continental names Danube and Rhone (the latter Celtic **Rodānus*) are related.

Derventione (the Roman fort and town at Malton YON). British **Deruentīū*, which Professor Jackson translates 'the river in the oak wood', whence English river-names Derwent, Darwen, Darent. Malton is on the Yorkshire Derwent.

Deva (the Roman fort and town at Chester). British **Dēyā* 'the Goddess', whence River Dee CHE, ABD, KCB.

Dubris (Dover KNT). One of the few Romano-British place-names to survive without the addition of Old English *ceaster*. The name, which occurs several times in England, means 'waters', and the plural of 'water' was probably felt to be a river-name, without implying that there was more than one stream at the place. Professor Jackson considers the British form to have been **Dubrās*. The derived Old English name *Dofras* is also plural, but this may have been because the English kept the *-as* of the British form, rather than because they knew the name was plural.

Galacum (Professor Rivet identifies this with Burrow in Lonsdale LNC, where there is a Roman fort at the junction of Leck Beck with the River Lune). Professor Jackson suggests derivation from British **galā* 'valour, vigour', with the *-āco-* adjectival suffix, to give a meaning 'vigorous stream'. *G-* may be an error for *C-*, however, in which case the name

would mean 'noisy stream'. The reference must be to Leck Beck, which starts as a mountain stream.

Galava (the Roman fort and settlement south of Ambleside WML). From the same root as suggested for the preceding, with *-ayo-* suffix, the meaning being again 'vigorous stream'. A number of streams unite near Ambleside to flow into Windermere. The name *Galava* may have referred to the River Brathay, the modern name of which is Norse.

Lemanis (Lympne KNT). The river on which Lympne stands, the East Rother, was British **Leman(n)ā*, 'the river in the elm wood'. The fort-name is either a British plural, or a nominative singular form which the Romans took for a locative plural. The Anglo-Saxons called the river *Limen*, but the town *Liminas*, echoing the Latin plural. The development is closely parallel to that of Dover, and this name also survived without the addition of *ceaster*. There are a number of rivers in Britain with names from this stem, e.g. Leam NTP, Lemon DEV, Lymn LIN and Scottish Leven. Another example is Lac Leman in Switzerland.

Leucaro (where a Roman road crosses the River Loughor GLA). British **Leucarā*, 'bright river'. The modern river-name Loughor, Welsh Llychwr, is from a by-form of the Romano-British name.

Voreda (The Roman fort and settlement at Plumpton Wall CMB). Professor Jackson suggests a river-name **Uorēdā*, 'horse-stream'. This may have been the name of a tributary of the River Petteril.

The next largest class of intelligible names in the British section of the Antonine Itinerary comprises the eighteen items which incorporate a word for a building. The term 'building' is used very loosely here, and names referring to bridges and earth ramparts are included in this category, as well as the names in *-duno* and *Duro-*. These eighteen names are:

Camboduno (possibly near Dewsbury YOE). The first element is British **cambo-* 'crooked, curved' (Welsh *cam*) and the second is British **dūnon* 'fort' (Welsh *din*). The name occurs also in the Roman province of *Raetia*.

Camoloduno (Colchester ESX). 'Fort of Camulos', the latter being a war-god. There was another *Camulodunum*, named in Ptolemy and in the Ravenna Cosmography, which is tentatively located at Slack near Huddersfield YOW. The ESX *Camulodunum* was the capital of the British king

Cunobelinus, whose sons were defeated by the Roman invasion of AD 43. The Emperor Claudius received the submission of many British tribes here, and a new Roman city was built which kept the name of the old capital. The element **dūnon* in the British name may have seemed appropriate because of the linear earthworks west of the town, possibly built to defend the approach which was not protected by Roman River and the River Colne.

Durobrivis (Rochester KNT). The second element is the plural of British **brīyā* 'bridge', presumably referring to the crossing of the River Medway. The first is **duro-*, described by Professor Jackson (1970, p. 72) as 'a common British and Gaulish place-name formant which appears to mean 'walled town, enclosed town with gateways', as distinct from 'fortress' proper, which is **dūno-*'. This word is well-represented in Romano-British place-names. It occurs in eight British names in the Antonine Itinerary, and in all but one (*Lactodoro*) it is the first element. This manner of forming a compound, by putting the main word first and the defining element second, which became normal in Welsh names during the fifth century AD, is not otherwise found among the British place-names recorded from Roman Britain. In other provinces, where **duro-* also occurs in names in the Itinerary, it is sometimes the first element (as in *Durocatalaunus*, modern Chalons-sur-Marne), but it is used as a second element much more often than in Britain. Professor Jackson comments that Gaulish *Brivodurum* is the same name as *Durobrivis* with the elements the other way round. This anomalous characteristic of British names in **duro-* is discussed later in this chapter. Another problem posed by these names is that in a number of the towns to which they refer the walls were not built until the late second century or after, though *Duroverno* (*infra*) was known by that name to Ptolemy c. AD 150, and it is probable that all the names are earlier than the Roman town defences. In an attempt to overcome this difficulty it has been suggested (Frere and Rivet 1971) that the *duro-* names were transferred to the towns from neighbouring comparatively short-lived forts of the early Roman period. The use of this term in Roman town-names is not fully understood, but as Frere and Rivet point out if the reference were to native earthworks one might have expected a name in *-dūnon*.

Durobrivis (the walled Roman town on Ermine Street, between Water Newton and Chesterton HNT). The same name as the preceding, the second element in this instance referring to the crossing of the River Nene.

Durocobrivis (a Roman town on the site of Dunstable BDF). Professor

Jackson rejects an etymology 'walled town of the joined bridges' partly on the grounds that Dunstable is not on a river. Watling Street does, however, cross two small streams north-west of the high ground on which Dunstable stands; the road is embanked here with material cut from the chalk to ease the gradient down to the lower ground (Margary 1955, 157), so from the topographical point of view 'walled town of the joined bridges' seems highly appropriate. More serious is Professor Jackson's other objection that this etymology demands **Durocombrīuās* not **Durocubrīuās*. Emendation of the form in the Itinerary would be necessary to make sense of this name.

Durocornovio (a Roman settlement near Wanborough WLT, east of Swindon). Apparently 'walled town of the Cornovii'. The territory of the tribe called *Cornovii* was in Shropshire, but a detached group could have been referred to in a place-name elsewhere. *Durocornovio* is cited in a number of reference books as a form for Cirencester GLO. Professor Rivet gives the location cited above, however, and it will simplify the complicated linguistic history of Cirencester if this form is eliminated.

Durolevo (an unlocated site between Sittingbourne and Faversham KNT). No suggestion is available about the second element.

Duroliponte (the walled Roman town at Cambridge). Professor Jackson suggests that the second element is a river-name **Ulipontī* 'wet river', perhaps meaning 'overflowing, boggy river'. This would be an excellent name for the River Cam.

Durolito (Rodwell 1975, p. 86, locates this at Chigwell ESX). The second element may be **ritu-* 'ford', with dissimilation of *r-r* to *r-l*.

Duroverno (the walled Roman town at Canterbury KNT). 'Walled town by the alder swamp', second element **yerno-* (Welsh *gwern*). The Romano-British name remained in learned use till the end of the ninth century AD.

Lactodoro (the walled Roman town at Towcester NTP). This differs from the eight preceding names in having the defining element first, as is normal in Romano-British names except for those in **duro-*. Professor Jackson suggests 'walled town of the dairymen', with British **lacto-* 'milk' (Welsh *llaeth*) as first element.

Lavatris (the Roman fort at Bowes YON). The plural of British **layatro-*

'water-trough, tub, bath'. Professor Jackson suggests that the name refers to a Roman bath-house, but this would not be a distinctive feature, as all forts had them. Perhaps there were water-troughs here before the fort was built.

Margiduno (the Roman walled town and fort at Castle Hill NTT, on the Foss Way east of Nottingham). Probably 'marly fort', referring to an earthwork made from marly soil.

Muriduno (Carmarthen). 'Sea fort', referring to the situation at the head of the estuary of the River Tywi.

Ratas, Ratis (the Roman cantonal capital at Leicester). British **rātis* 'earthen rampart, fortification'. This is not an appropriate name for the great town at Leicester, but it may have been transferred from an earlier tribal capital in an Iron Age fortification. The village of Ratby, west of Leicester, possibly has as first element the Romano-British name, and this may refer to the fort called Bury Camp, which lies in the parish of Ratby. If this is a pre-Roman site, the tribal capital and the name could have been moved from here to the site by the River Soar. This would be a parallel to the sequence of events postulated for *Uriconio*.

Sorvioduni (the Romano-British settlement at Old Sarum, the prehistoric hill-fort near Salisbury WLT). The first element is unexplained, but **dūnon* refers to the fort. The manner in which this name was adapted by the Anglo-Saxons is discussed later in the chapter.

Tripontio (the Romano-British settlement at Caves Inn near Rugby WAR). 'Three bridges'. Watling Street crosses a tributary of the River Avon.

Vindocladia (the Romano-British settlement at Badbury Rings, the prehistoric hill-fort between Blandford Forum and Wimborne Minster DOR). Professor Jackson translates this 'the town with the white ditches', and it is clearly a reference to the chalk of which the great fort is constructed.

A much smaller category of place-names in the British section of the Antonine Itinerary comprises those in which a suffix has been added to a personal name, giving a meaning 'estate belonging to x'. These names, which make use of several suffixes, are particularly well evidenced in France with Latin personal names as a base. For instance, *Albinicum* from the Latin name *Albinus* gives modern Albigny, Arbigny, Aubigné,

Aubigny, and *Maximiacum* from *Maximius* gives Maissemy, Marsagnis, Marsagny, Massagnis, Massigny, Maymac, Messemé, Messimy, Meximieu. Formations of this type based on Celtic personal names are rare in France, however, as they were in Britain, and the contrast between the two countries lies in the absence in Britain of estate-names which have a Latin personal name as base.

The five British place-names in the Itinerary which consist of a Celtic personal name and a place-name-forming suffix are:

Blestio (a Romano-British settlement at Monmouth). Possibly from *Blestus*, which is recorded as a Gaulish personal name, and the *-io-* derivational suffix.

Burrio (the Roman fort at Usk MON). From a personal name **Burros*, 'sturdy', and the *-io-* suffix.

Luguvalio (Carlisle CMB). From a personal name **Luguyalos* ('strong as the god Lugus') and *-io-*. The survival of the Romano-British name is discussed later in this chapter.

Sulloniacis (the important Romano-British settlement at Brockley Hill HRT, on Watling Street, south of Elstree). 'Estate of Sullonios', from a personal name and the *-āco-* suffix which is common in France. *Eburacum* and *Brovonacis* may be names of this type though they have been tentatively classified in other categories.

Uriconio (the Roman cantonal capital at Wroxeter SHR). Professor Jackson considers it possible that this is 'town of Virico', the latter being a recorded Gaulish name. The survival of *Uriconio* in The Wrekin and Wroxeter is discussed later. It is noteworthy that four of these five place-names are in the west of Britain, though *Sulloniacis* is in the east.

A still smaller group of names in the British section of the Itinerary consists of the four which refer to an industrial or agricultural activity. These are:

Bovio (between Chester and Whitchurch, tentatively located at Holt DEN, where Roman remains are known). Professor Jackson suggests 'cow place', from British **boy-* with *-io-* derivational suffix.

Bravonio (the important Romano-British settlement at Leintwardine HRE).

Probably 'quern place' from **brāyon-* 'quern' (Welsh *breuan*). Possibly quern stones were obtained from the hills east of the town.

Brovonacis (the Roman fort at Burwens in Kirkby Thore WML). Professor Jackson considers *Brov-* to be a mistake for *Brav-*. Possibly 'quern place', from the same root as preceding with *-āco-* suffix. But a personal name **Brāyonjos*, 'quern man', is possible, in which case the place-name belongs in the same category as *Sulloniacis*.

Gobannio (Abergavenny MON). From British **gobann-* 'blacksmith' and *-io-*. There are Roman iron-workings in the neighbourhood. The name survived as that of the River Gafenni, at the mouth of which (Welsh *aber*) the town stands.

Finally, notes may be added on six names from the British section of the Itinerary which do not fit into any of the categories recognized above. These are:

Blatobulgio (the Roman fort at Birrens, between Ecclefechan and Eaglesfield DMF). The *-io-* suffix has been added to a compound which could mean either 'flowery hollow' or 'flour sack', and Professor Jackson suggests that the latter might refer to large and well-stocked granaries. Surviving Scottish names which appear to have the same origin are Blebo FIF, Bleack in Cromer ABD, and Blelock in Auchtergaven PER (Barrow 1973, p. 59).

Delgovicia (tentatively located near Millington ERY, north-east of Pocklington). Professor Jackson suggests a place-name formed with the *-io-* suffix from a tribal name **Delgojices*, which might mean 'spear-fighters'.

Manduessedo (Mancetter WAR). This name appears to mean 'horse chariot'. The survival of the first syllable in the English name Mancetter is discussed later in this chapter.

Regno (the Roman cantonal capital at Chichester ssx, called *Noviomagus* by Ptolemy, and *Navimago Regentium* in the Ravenna Cosmography). The tribe whose capital this town became were called *Regnoi* by Ptolemy. Assuming that *Regno* is an alternative name to *Noviomagus*, this appears to be an instance of a tribe-name used as a settlement-name. Professor Jackson considers that the tribe-name was British **Reginī* 'the proud

ones, the stiff ones', which would be similar in meaning to the tribal name *Belgae*, from **belg-* 'to swell up'. He rejects the suggestion that the town-name is Latin *regnum* 'the kingdom'. It is not clear why the Ravenna Cosmography has *Regentium* where something like **Regnorum* might have been expected.

Verlucione (the Romano-British settlement at the hamlet of Sandy Lane WLT on the Roman road from Bath to Mildenhall, east of Lacock). Professor Jackson suggests derivation from **leuk-* 'light', with prepositional prefix **uer-* 'over, super-' and *-ion* suffix, giving a meaning 'very bright town'.

Vernemeto (a Romano-British settlement on the Foss Way, near Willoughby on the Wolds on the LEI/NTT border). 'Great sacred grove', a compound of **nemeto-* and **uer-*.

There is no reason why the sixty-seven British names discussed above should be other than typical of those place-names in Roman Britain which referred to the more important settlements. They provide a good deal of positive evidence for the types of place-name in use in the province. They also provide significant negative evidence, as some of the categories of place-name most typical of Anglo-Saxon England and of modern Wales are absent from the Antonine Itinerary and from other Romano-British sources.

One characteristic which emerges very clearly from a study of the intelligible British names of the Itinerary is the predominance of the type of settlement-name which consists of a topographical statement. Many of the names in this category are derived from rivers, and some of the river-names used have been made into settlement-names by the addition of a place-name-forming suffix, while others are used without any addition or modification. Uncompounded topographical terms other than river-names were generally felt to need a suffix if used as settlement-names, but there are exceptions, such as *Brige* and *Magnis*. Compound names for topographical features, such as *Letoceto*, *Mediolano*, *Noviomago*, were regularly used as settlement-names without a suffix. The use of place-name-forming suffixes with uncompounded elements and with some river-names is another notable characteristic of Romano-British place-names.

Apart from bridges and a possible water-trough (*Lavatris*), the only building-works referred to in the British names of the Itinerary are those of an outstanding nature, such as the great defensive earthworks of the pre-Roman period, and the walled sites thought to be designated by *duro-*.

There is no category of Romano-British place-names corresponding to the later English type for which the term 'habitative' has been coined (see Chapter 5). In fact, one of the most striking negative characteristics of these names is the absence of any word for an unfortified Romano-British village or farmstead. It may be that such places are not very likely to occur in our sources from Roman Britain, but it is probable that there was sometimes an accidental conjunction between a humble British habitation-site and a Roman station or fort. English place-names provide many examples of places of major importance (such as Berwick-on-Tweed) whose names indicate a much humbler beginning. This negative characteristic does not apply only to the Antonine Itinerary. A search through all the other place-names recorded from Roman Britain has failed to find any reliable evidence of a word equivalent to Welsh *tref*, Cornish *chy*, or any of the common Old English habitative terms such as *hām*, *tūn*, *worð*. It seems reasonable to conclude that if habitative place-names referring to ordinary settlements had been in use in Roman Britain a few specimens would have appeared in the records.

The evidence from Roman Britain suggests that the normal settlement-names of the province consisted of the following types:

1. A British topographical term with a place-name-forming suffix, e.g. *Calleva*.
2. An adjective with a suffix, e.g. *Coccio*.
3. A river-name with or without a suffix, e.g. *Rutunio*, *Deva*.
4. A compound name for a topographical feature, e.g. *Letoceto*.

Personal names are rare in Romano-British place-names, and this negative characteristic is strikingly in contrast with the nature of later Welsh and English place-names, and with contemporary Gaulish ones. Some of the place-names in the Ravenna Cosmography (e.g. *Branogenium*, and *Durcinate* if emended to *Curcinate*) may belong in the category, but the place-name type in which a suffix is added to a man's name to give a meaning 'estate of x' is certainly rare in our sources from Roman Britain, and no instances have been noted in which Latin personal names are used as the base for such place-names.

Another outstanding characteristic of the place-names of Roman Britain is that in a compound name the defining element normally comes first—as in *Letoceto* 'grey wood', *Mediolano* 'central plain', *Noviomago* 'new field'. Among wholly British place-names the major exception to this rule is constituted by the group of names in *Duro-*. It is noteworthy, however, that most of the compound Latin or partly Latin names known from the province—*Aquae Arnemetiae*, *Aquae Sulis*, *Castra Exploratorum*,

Fanococidi, *Horrea Classis*, *Pons Aelius*, *Villa Faustini*—have the noun first and the defining element second. This suggests that the anomalous placing of *duro-* in most British names in which it occurs may reflect a Latin manner of forming place-names. The *duro-* names which can be firmly located refer to major towns, where influence from Latin would be at its strongest.

The order of elements—descriptive word first, defined object second—which is usual in British place-names recorded from Roman Britain is an important characteristic, as it may be a way of differentiating older names from those coined (or perhaps in some cases remodelled) after the Roman period. The change from this order to the one usual in modern Celtic languages—defined object first, defining element second—is said (Jackson 1953, pp. 225–7) to have happened not later than the sixth century AD, on the grounds that the later type of compound name is as common in Brittany as it is in Wales and Cornwall, which indicates that such names must have been prominent at the time of the British emigrations to Brittany. The question of the order of elements in a compound place-name is a difficult and complicated one. Discussions in recent years at conferences of the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland (which some readers of this book may recall vividly) have brought out the difficulties and dangers of the subject without providing any clear guidelines. The Romano-British material, some of which is set out above, clearly suggests that the great majority of the compound place-names in use before and during the Roman period are likely to have been the ‘older’ type of compound, and it seems to follow that place-names which are formed in the opposite manner may be expected to date from the sixth century or later, or at least to have been re-modelled in accordance with the new fashion. Welsh and Irish scholars will probably regard this as an over-simplification of a subtle and complicated linguistic problem, but the fact remains that we can only suppose the ‘later’ type of compound to have been common in Roman Britain if we assume that the place-names used by the British population in speech differed from those written down in the Roman road-books. The present writer, while humbly aware of having failed to comprehend the subtleties of argument which Celtic experts bring to this problem, feels justified in clinging to the general probability that compound names formed in the modern Welsh manner, like Denbigh ‘fort small’ and Trefriw ‘farm hill’, were coined later than the Roman period, and that those like Malvern wor in which the adjective comes first, are probably as old as the Roman period even when they are not recorded till the eleventh century or later. This subject is discussed further in Chapter 4.

The final subject to be considered in connection with the recorded place-names of Roman Britain is that of their survival or disappearance. An important study of this (Hogg 1964) was published some years ago, but has received less attention from philologists than it merits, perhaps because it appeared in an archaeological journal. Mr Hogg has kindly agreed to the use of his study here, and to the reproduction, slightly emended, of his map (Fig. 1).

In Hogg 1964 the settlement-names of Roman Britain are shown to have undergone one of four possible processes:

1. The Roman name has fallen completely out of use.
2. Some element of the Roman name survives, combined with Welsh *Caer-* or English *-chester*, or another English or Welsh word.
3. The Roman name survives little altered, as in Penkridge *STF* and Speen *BRK*.
4. A Roman settlement-name survives as that of a district, but is either not applied to a settlement (as in Archenfield *HRE*, from *Ariconio*), or is applied to a settlement quite distinct from the Roman one (as probably in Maund *HRE*, from *Magnis*, see Chapter 4).

Mr Hogg’s study embraces all the place-names recorded from Roman Britain south of Hadrian’s Wall, which is a much larger body of material than the small selection of intelligible names from the Antonine Itinerary which are set out in the first half of this chapter.

The first category, that of the lost Romano-British names, is by far the largest. These are shown on the map by the symbols + and — according to whether their exact position is known or not. These lost names are too numerous to be listed here. If Romano-British names did survive, they were most frequently combined with Welsh *caer*, or with an English word. Names to which this happened are shown by the symbol ● on the map, and they are listed in alphabetical order below. The criterion for inclusion in this category is that a Romano-British name should have survived into the post-Roman period, so this list (and the following one) contain some names, like *Concangium* and *Anderita*, which do not survive today. Some of the sources in which the Romano-British names occur are indicated by Pt (Ptolemy), A (Antonine Itinerary), ND (Notitia Dignitatum) and R (Ravenna Cosmography).

The Romano-British settlement-names in the area south of Hadrian’s Wall which survived as part of a later place-name are:

Alauna (R): Alchester in the parish of Wendlebury OXF.

Branodunum (ND): possibly Brancaster NFK.

- Brocavo* (A): Brougham WML (see below).
Concangium (ND, R): Chester le Street DRH (*Cuncaceastre*, *Cunceceastre* c. 1050).
Corinium (Pt, R): Cirencester GLO (see below).
Corstopitum (A, R): Corbridge NTB.
Dano (A, ND): Doncaster YOW.
Durnovaria (A): Dorchester DOR (see below).
Durobrivis (A, R): Rochester KNT (see below).
Glevo (A, R): Gloucester (see below).
Gobannio (A, R): Abergavenny MON.
Isca (Pt, A, R): Exeter DEV.
Letoceto (A, R): Lichfield STF (see below).
Longovicio (ND, R): Lanchester DRH.
Luguvalio (A, R): Carlisle CMB.
Mamucio (A, R): Manchester LNC.
Manduessedo (A): Mancetter WAR.
Muriduno (Pt, A): Carmarthen.
Othona (ND): the Roman fort at Bradwell on Sea ESX, called *Ythancaestir* by Bede.
Ritupis (Pt, A, ND, R): Richborough KNT (see below).
Segontio (A, R): Caernarvon (*Caer Segeint* ninth century, *Kaer Seint yn Aruon* fourteenth century).
Sorviuduni (A): Salisbury WLT (see below).
Uriconio (Pt, A, R): Wroxeter SHR (see below).
Venta (Pt, A, ND, R): Winchester HMP.
Venta (A, R): Caerwent MON, also the Welsh kingdom of Gwent.

When a Romano-British settlement-name survives as part of an English name it might appear at first sight that the commonest treatment is the use of the first one or two syllables of the British name as the first part of the Old English compound. When we have Old English (as opposed to post 1066) forms for the English names, however, it can sometimes be seen that both elements of a compound British name were originally used. Thus Dorchester is Old English *Dornwaraceaster*, and Lichfield is Old English *Liccidfeld*, but these names have been shortened to *Dorecestre* and *Lichefelle*, *Leccefelle* by the time of the Domesday Survey. Other names, such as Brancaster, Corbridge, Lanchester, Manchester, Mancetter and Wroxeter, may have incorporated more of the Romano-British name when they were first coined, but have suffered shortening by the time they are first recorded. There are pre-Conquest spellings for Brancaster, Corbridge and Manchester, but these are from c. 960, c. 1050 and 923, by which dates shorten-

ing could have occurred. The Old English forms cited above for Dorchester and Lichfield are earlier than this. Short Romano-British names, such as *Alauna*, *Dano*, *Isca*, *Venta*, were carefully preserved in Alchester (*Alencestr* c. 1160), Doncaster, Exeter (Old English *Escancaester*), and Winchester (Old English *Wintancaester*).

In some instances, although there is little doubt that the first element of an English name is based on a Romano-British name, the phonological processes do not conform to those which can be shown to have been normal. The transformation of *Corinium* into the first part of Cirencester has never been fully explained. Sometimes these phonological irregularities are believed to be due to the substitution of an Old English word which resembles the British place-name. This explanation is the one usually put forward for Gloucester and Salisbury. Gloucester is Old English *Gleawa(n)ceaster*. The first part of the name, *Gleawa-*, cannot be derived by regular phonological processes from Romano-British *Glev-*, and it is suggested that the English substituted their own word *glēaw*, 'wise, prudent', for the unintelligible British name. Later spellings on coins show that a form *Gleow-* was current before the middle of the eleventh century, and this gave Middle English *Glow-*, from which the modern form derives. It may be that the Welsh form of the name, recorded as *Cair Gloir* c. 800, influenced Old English *Gleawanceaster* and caused *Gleoweceaster* to be substituted. The history of the name presents formidable difficulties, but no one doubts that the first element is based on the Romano-British name. The relationship of *Searobyrg*, the Old English form of Salisbury, to Romano-British *Sorviuduni* has been explained as another example of the substitution of an intelligible Old English word bearing a rough resemblance to the form of the British name. In this instance the substituted word is believed to be Old English *searu* 'trick'. The final element, *byrig*, is the normal Old English word for a hill-fort (this is discussed in Chapter 6), and Salisbury appears to be one of the very rare instances of a British name for a hill-fort surviving in, or at least determining the form of, an Old English place-name. The interchange of *-l-* and *-r-* is due to later French influence (see Chapter 1).

Further instances of this rationalizing substitution of Old English words for British names are Speen and York, discussed below. A more doubtful instance is Brougham, which has been included in the above list on the grounds that its first element may bear some relationship to the Romano-British name *Brocavo*, though orthodox opinion maintains that there is no philological connection between them. The English name appears to be from *burh* 'fort' (referring to the remains of the Roman camp (see Chapter 6) and *hām* 'village'. Both these are rare elements in Westmorland, and in

this name *burh* shows the very unusual feature of early metathesis to *bruh*, the earliest spellings being *Bruham* 1130, *Broham* 1176. It is conceivable that *burh* was in this instance a rationalizing substitution for the *Broc*- of the British name, and that a lingering knowledge of the old name caused the metathesis to *Bru*-.

Some comment is required on the derivation of the first elements of Richborough and Rochester from Romano-British *Ritupis* and *Durobrivis*. Richborough is called *Reptacæstir* in Bede's Ecclesiastical History (c. 730), *Raette* in an eleventh-century source, *Ratteburg* in 1197, *Retesbrough* in the fourteenth century. Bede's spelling shows metathesis of the *t-p* of *Ritupis* to *pt*, and this *pt* was later assimilated to *tt*. Bede refers to the place as 'the city called Rutubi Portus which the English now corruptly call Reptacæstir'; but the subsequent history of the name suggests that the colloquial-form known to Bede was **Repta*, and he added *-cæstir* because the name seemed incomplete without it to his learned perception. The names of the other three Saxon Shore forts in Kent (Dover, Lympne and Reculver) have survived without the addition of *-chester*, and it might have been expected that *Ritupis* would have been in the same category. The addition of *-borough* to Richborough in the medieval period has not been explained, but the change from *Rat*- or *Ret*- to *Rich*-, which appears to have taken place c. 1500, may have been due to a desire to avoid association with the word *rat*.

The Venerable Bede refers to Rochester as 'the city of Durobrevis which the English call Hrofæscæstræ, after one of their former chiefs whose name was Hrof'. This eighth-century etymology is rejected by Ekwall 1960, in favour of a complicated argument by which *Hrofæsc*- is held to be a version of the Romano-British *Durobrivis*. It is suggested that *Durobrivis* became **Rofri* in Old English, that this became **Hrofri* by association with Old English *hrōf* 'roof', the second *-r-* was lost by dissimilation, and *ceaster* was then added to the genitive of the name **Hrofi*. This argument uses more ingenuity than is usually required to equate an Old English name with a Romano-British one, and it is not certain to be correct. On the other hand, there is no independent record of a personal name *Hrof*, and Old English sources do sometimes adduce imaginary chieftains to account for place-names (see the discussion of Portsmouth in Chapter 3). A possibility which does not appear to have been considered is that the first element is actually the word *hrōf* 'roof', the name meaning 'Roman town of the roof' with reference to some building which was in a better-than-average state of preservation in the early Anglo-Saxon period. If this suggestion were taken seriously, Rochester would be removed from the category of Romano-British names which survived in part.

Another problem sometimes posed by the survival of Romano-British names in English ones is that the English name may refer to a settlement at some distance from the Roman one. The development of the first element of Lichfield from *Letoceto*, via Old English *Liccidfeld* does not present any really difficult phonological problems, but what has to be explained in this instance is the apparent transference of the name from Wall on Watling Street to Lichfield, two miles north. One possible explanation is that the Romano-British name survived in its original capacity as a forest-name (the meaning is 'grey wood'), and that this applied to an area of woodland stretching from Wall to Lichfield. Another possibility is that *Letoceto* was already the name of a large estate, perhaps with an as yet undiscovered pre-Roman habitation centre, when the Roman fort was built on Watling Street, and that the fort was always on the edge of the district to which the name belonged. The position of Penkridge in relation to *Pennocrucio* is a parallel phenomenon.

A similar problem arises in connection with Wroxeter. There is no doubt that the first element is Romano-British *Uriconio*; what is open to discussion is the relationship to Wroxeter of the hill-name Wrekin, also derived from the Romano-British name. Ekwall 1960 asserted that the name was transferred from the Roman cantonal capital to the hill. It seems more likely, however, that *Uriconio* was originally the name of the hill, perhaps more specifically of the hill-fort which crowns it, and that the name was transferred to the new tribal capital built by the Romans without ceasing to be the name of the hill. A similar sequence of events is postulated more tentatively for *Ratis*, discussed above.

The third of Mr Hogg's categories, that of Romano-British place-names which survived little altered into the Old English period, is a small but particularly important group comprising the following items:

Anderita (ND, R): the Roman fort at Pevensey ssx, referred to as *Andredesceaster* in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The same source calls The Weald *Andredeslea* 'wood of Andred', which suggests that *Andred* survived as a name without the addition of an English word.

Cataractoni (Pt, A, R): Catterick YON, discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Dubris (A, ND, R): Dover KNT.

Eburaco (Pt, A, R): York YOE (see below).

Lemanis (A, ND, R): Lympne KNT.

Lindum Colonia (Pt, A, R): Lincoln, discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Londinio (Pt, A, R): London.

Nido (A): Neath GLA.

Pennocrucio (A): Penkridge STF (see below).

Regulbium (ND): Reculver KNT (see below).

Spinis (A): Speen BRK (see above, and below).

Some comment is required on the manner of survival of three of these eleven names. Speen and York are examples of the process of rationalizing substitution, and Penkridge, like Lichfield, is an example of a Romano-British name which has moved two miles from the Roman settlement.

Speen cannot be derived directly from Latin *Spinis*, as that would have become **Spine*. Speen is from an Old English word **spēne* which means 'place where wood-chippings are left' or 'place where shingles are made'. There is no other place-name derived from this word, though *spōn* 'wood-chipping' is well evidenced. It does not seem likely that coincidence should have produced a unique place-name *Spene* in the vicinity of a Romano-British settlement called *Spinis*; so it is assumed that *Spene* was substituted for the Latin name because it seemed appropriate to the woodland setting of the place.

York is recorded as *Eforwicceaster* c. 893, *Eoforwic* c. 1060. This can be translated 'boar farm', from Old English *eofor* and *wīc*, and it would seem a sensible place-name in its own right; but no one doubts that it is an adaptation of *Eborōg*, which would be the form of the British place-name *Eburaco* known to Germanic mercenaries at the end of the Roman period. It is possible that Germanic mercenaries were accustomed to hearing the civilian settlement outside the military fort referred to as 'the *vicus*', and this influenced the development to *-wic*.

Penkridge is two miles north of Watling Street, on which the Romano-British settlement of *Pennocrucio* was situated. Stenton 1939 pointed to the use of the name *Penchrish* for the River Penk in a tenth-century charter, and concluded that the name was transferred from the Roman settlement to the river, and then became attached to an English settlement further down the stream, which had no connection with the Roman place. He points to the inappropriate nature of a name meaning 'hill-summit' for the modern Penkridge, but as shown above there is nothing on the relevant stretch of Watling Street which merits this description, and the place-name is not more appropriate to the Romano-British site than it is to the modern one. It is possible that there was a large pre-Roman estate here, and that the name applied to the whole area. Stenton's discussion takes no account of the fact that Penkridge (like Lichfield) was a great multiple estate in 1086, and is still one of the largest parishes in Staffordshire. The river-name seems more likely to be derived from the settlement-name

(what is technically known as a back-formation) than the other way round, or the river may have been called *Penchrish* because it flowed through a large area known by that name.

The problem of whether place-names like Penkridge and Lichfield bear a direct relationship to the Romano-British settlements whose names they preserve is a very difficult one. It has been said as part of the case against continuity that 'no place-name supplies a certain instance of a British habitation name' (Whitelock 1952, p. 18), and Stenton 1939 draws attention to the 'monotonous succession of (British) names referring to obvious features of the countryside' and to the absence among British names adopted by the English of 'unmistakable habitation names' and of 'names illustrating the possession of land by persons or tribes'. Stenton considered that the absence of these except in the far south-west of England 'is a very serious obstacle to the belief that the place-names which have survived from Roman Britain reflect the continuous life of an organized Romano-British society'. But these observations are based on the assumption that British settlement-names resembled Old English ones, and this is unsound. The analysis of names in the Antonine Itinerary has shown that British settlement-names did not normally contain habitative words, and that personal names and tribe-names occur very rarely. *Pennocrucio* and *Letoceto* are settlement-names as these were understood in Roman Britain. It is not certain that the first settlements they referred to were the stations on Watling Street; these may have used the names in somewhat the same way as some modern railway stations are named from villages several miles away. It is possible that before the Romans came to Britain there were large estates known as *Pennocrucio* and *Letoceto* whose main habitation centres might have lain anywhere in the areas of the great composite estates of Penkridge and Lichfield described in the Domesday Survey in 1086.

The distance between the modern village or town and the Roman station does not disprove the continuous use of the British name for a habitation site. But because of the nature of Romano-British settlement-names it will never be possible to prove that a survival was that of a settlement-name rather than that of the topographical feature which gave rise to it. A devil's advocate can argue that Doncaster means 'Roman ruin on the River Don' rather than 'Roman town called *Dano*', and that Wroxeter means 'Roman ruin near the Wrekin' rather than 'Roman town called *Uriconio*'. Circumstantial evidence for continuity might be accumulated by studying the historical status of estates which preserve Romano-British names, to see how many of them were as important as Penkridge and Lichfield at the time of the Domesday Survey. More is said in Chapter 8 of

the recent work aimed at demonstrating the probable continuity of some large estates from prehistoric to Anglo-Saxon times.

Some Romano-British names are represented on Fig. 1 by the symbol o to indicate that their survival is possible but doubtful. These are:

Calleva (Pt, A, R): Ekwall 1960 suggests that the first element of Silchester HMP is based on the British name.

Duroverno (Pt, A, R): the Romano-British name of Canterbury KNT was used until the end of the ninth century by learned Anglo-Saxon authors, but it is not certain that it survived in colloquial use.

Isca (A, R): the Roman fort at Caerleon MON was named from the river, now the Usk, but, although the river-name survived, there seems to be no record of its use for the Roman site after the Roman period.

Leucarum (A): the modern River Loughor GLA is not directly from the Romano-British name.

Nemetostatio (R): *Nymed* appears to have been a district-name in DEV, now surviving in various settlements called Nymet, but more work is needed on the application of this and its possible relationship to the Romano-British settlement-name. The first part of *Nemetostatio* probably means 'sacred wood' and *Nymed* may have survived as the name of a forest.

Olicana (Pt, R): the objections to equating this name with Ilkley YOW are set out in Gelling 1970.

The number of recorded Romano-British settlement-names which remained in use after the Roman period is probably between thirty-five and forty, which is not a very large proportion of the whole, but is by no means a negligible body of material. Mr Hogg pointed out in 1964 that some interest attaches to the distribution pattern of the surviving names, and although some alterations have been made to his map the general pattern which he observed is not seriously affected. Zones in which there seems to be a relatively high incidence of survival are indicated on Fig. 1 by dotted lines.

One point which emerges from the map is that among the known names of Roman Britain the survival rate is at least as good, and probably rather better, in the east than in the west. The most striking group is that which follows the south-east coast and the River Thames, and which includes the

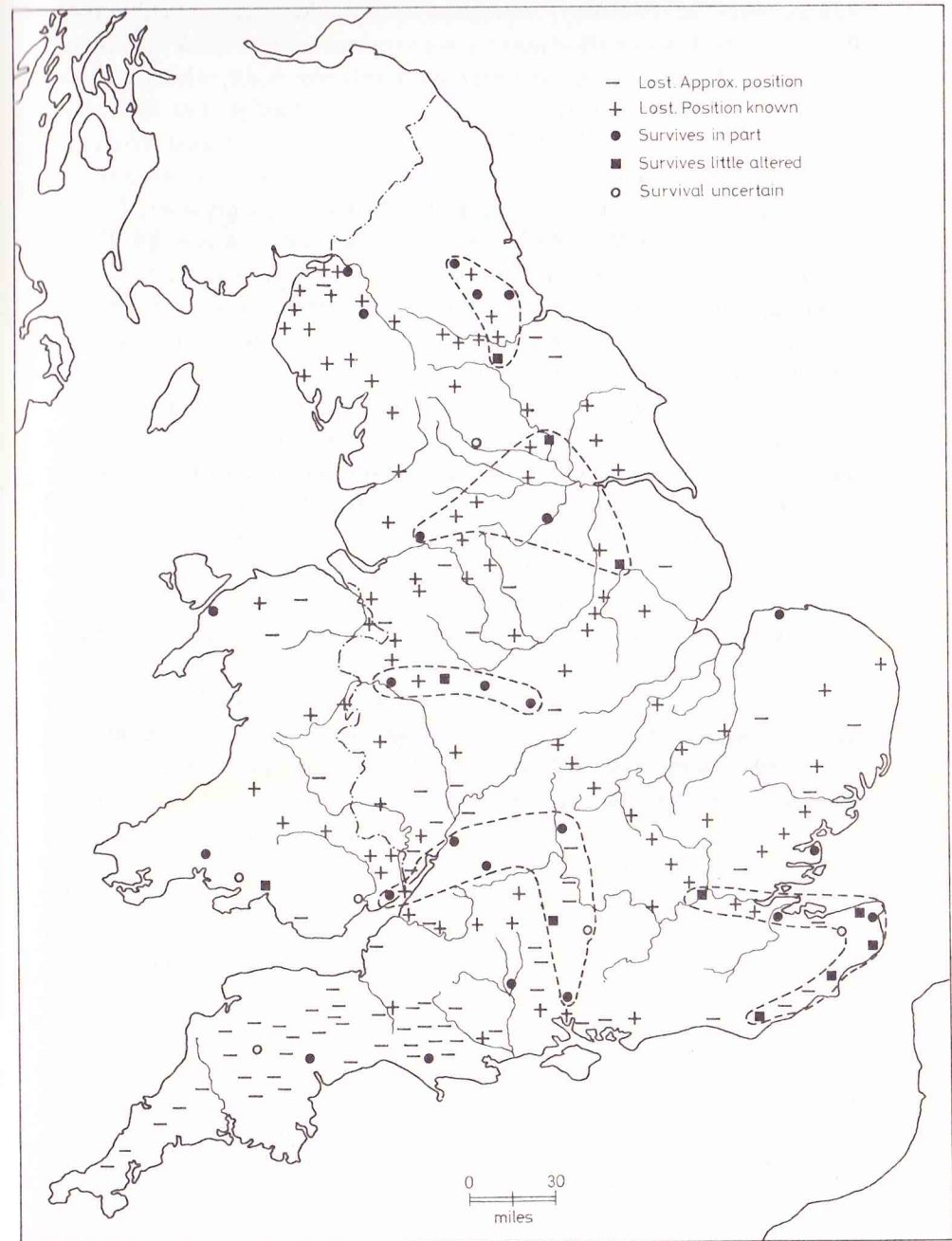


Fig. 1 The survival of Romano-British place-names in southern Britain (from Hogg 1964, slightly amended)

Roman sites at Pevensey, Lympne, Dover, Reculver, Richborough, Rochester and London (Rochester is not as certain a survival as the others). Two more clusters are the one near the north-east coast, which includes Catterick, Lanchester, Chester-le-Street and Corbridge and that along the west Midland stretch of Watling Street, which contains Wroxeter, Penkridge, Lichfield and Mancetter. Two other groups were discerned by Mr Hogg, one in the north, comprising Manchester, Doncaster, Lincoln and York, and one in the south comprising Caerwent, Gloucester, Cirencester, Alchester, Speen and Winchester; but the names in these two groupings are more diffuse than those in the other three. A number of surviving names are relatively isolated, this being a more marked characteristic in the west than in the east.

From this distribution pattern Mr Hogg drew the interesting conclusion that if loss or survival of known Romano-British names be a criterion of disruption or continuity of social organization, then the evidence for disturbance after the end of Roman rule is greater in the Celtic west than it is in the Anglo-Saxon east. He ascribed this disturbance in the west tentatively to the influx of refugees from areas threatened by Germanic invaders.

The evidence may not be strong enough to support firm historical conclusions; but the remarkably high degree of loss of known Romano-British settlement-names in the south-west peninsula, Wales, and north-west England, which was demonstrated for the first time by Mr Hogg's map, deserves note as an element in the puzzle. Other evidence for extensive re-naming of settlements in Wales after the Roman period is discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Latin Words in English Place-Names

The sequence of events which accompanied and followed the disintegration of Roman government in Britain in the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD constitutes the obscurest chapter in the history of this country. As we have seen, Roman Britain was a Celtic-speaking country with place-names which, when they are intelligible to the modern scholar, are predominantly Celtic. Two centuries later, by the time of St Augustine's mission to Kent in 597, much of the south and east of Britain was inhabited by Germanic-speaking people using predominantly Germanic place-names. The recorded events of these two centuries have been subjected to much close scrutiny, and have been held to be compatible with widely differing conclusions. Some historians have sought to demonstrate that the population remained mainly Celtic in spite of the change of language, others that only a small remnant of the Celtic population survived the Anglo-Saxon incursion, and these few survivors were reduced to the condition of serfs. On this last interpretation the dense layer of new place-names in Old English would correspond to a new agricultural and administrative geography, at any rate in the south, the east and the north-east.

The arguments for and against continuity of population and institutions during these obscure centuries will continue to be propounded. The present writer has no solutions to offer, but will endeavour in this chapter to present some linguistic evidence which has not always been taken into account, and to consider it against the background of recent archaeological discoveries. The scraps of historical evidence remain the same in spite of recurrent attempts to reshuffle the dates in the chronicles, but the archaeological evidence has changed drastically in recent years, and it is possible to see some of the place-name evidence in a new light by studying its relationship to new archaeological discoveries.