THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING IN EARLY MEDIEVAL WESTERN BRITAIN

c. 300-1100



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Table of Contents

Abstract **6**
List of Tables **17**
List of Abbreviations **18**
Palaeographical Glossary **22**
Introduction **34**
Chapter One. The palaeography of British writing, *c.* 300 – 1100 ..... **60**
Introduction and research aims **60**
New Common Script from Roman Britain **60**
Early medieval manuscripts of Welsh origin **64**
Palaeographical perspectives on British writing **76**
Discussion and conclusions **85**
Chapter Two. The British writing-system *c.* 300 – 625 ..... **89**
Introduction and research aims **89**
Roman Britain, New Common Script and the graphical process **90**
New Common Script in set ductus tending to bilinearity *90*
Roman Britain, New Common Script: polymorphism and Insular 'peculiarities' *99*
Roman Britain, New Common Script in set ductus tending to quadrilinearity *102*
Roman Britain, New Common Script in cursive ductus tending to quadrilinearity *110*
Early Insular book-script. The Springmount Bog Tablets **115**
The Springmount Bog Tablets. Script and treatment *121*
The Springmount Bog Tablets. Abbreviation, punctuation and 'ordinatio' *130*
Discussion and conclusions **135**
Chapter Three. The writing-province of early medieval Glamorgan, *c.* 400–1100 ..... **140**
Introduction and research aims **140**
Part One. The graphical process in the writing-province of early medieval Glamorgan **142**
Background **142**
Geography *142*
Archaeology and history *150*
The distribution of early Christian monuments *154*
Margan **158**
Epigraphic scripts, c. 400–800. General. *158*

Epigraphic scripts, c. 800–1100 – Baglan and Eglwys Nynnid *171*

Epigraphic scripts, c. 800–1100 – the 'martyria' *201*

Epigraphic scripts, c.800-1100. Discussion and conclusions *211*

Gwrinydd **214**

Llanilltud Fawr *214*

Part Two. Ireland, Glamorgan and England. The epigraphic scripts of Llanilltud Fawr and the scribal hand of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, the *Cambridge Juvencus* **217**

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42. The Cambridge Juvencus *217*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Methodological issues *226*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Palaeographical correlations *230*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Dissimilar Forms *241*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Punctuation and Latinity *242*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The Pen Trials *245*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, Llanilltud Fawr and Llancarfan *246*

Discussion and Conclusions **249**

Chapter Four. The writing-province of early medieval Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, *c.* 400 – 1100 ..... **253**

Introduction and research aims **253**

Part One. The graphical process in the writing-province of early medieval Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, *c.* 400-1100 ..... **253**

Background **253**

Geography and history *253*

Epigraphic scripts c. 400-800 ..... *264*

Epigraphic scripts c. 800-1100 ..... *280*

Epigraphy and the Irish Sea culture-province *282*

Part Two. Deheubarth, Brycheiniog, Frankia and Ireland. The epigraphic scripts of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog and the scribal hands of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One), the *Corpus Martianus Capella.* **309**

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One). The Corpus Martianus Capella. *309*

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 125/CD27 HIROIDIL *316*

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 113/CD6 ..... *323*

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] *327*

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU *331*

Discussion and Conclusions **341**

General Conclusion **344**

Bibliography **352**

Primary Sources **352**

Manuscript, papyrus and archival sources *352*

Printed primary sources *356*

Electronic primary sources *361*

Secondary Material **364**

Printed secondary sources *364*

Unpublished theses *407*

Websites *408*

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Abstract

In the last generation numerous examples of late (mostly fourth-century) Romano-British writing have been discovered throughout Britain, sometimes by archaeologists, sometimes as chance finds. Of particular importance are the curse-tablets recovered in 1979/80 from the Sacred Spring of Sulis Minerva at Bath. The scripts used on these artefacts are all expressions - or 'treatments' - of the 'new' Roman writing-system, generally known as 'New Roman Cursive', that replaced the 'old' system throughout the Empire for most purposes from *c.*240 onwards.

In parallel, most scholars of the last generation or so now understand that the Romano-British church not only survived into the fifth and sixth centuries but played a formative role in the conversion of Ireland, not to mention a significant role in the life of the western European church as a whole. The recently-recovered Romano-British writing now allows us to reconstruct the script-system inherited by that church, developed by it in the fifth and sixth centuries, provided by it to Ireland and which formed the basis of all subsequent early medieval Insular writing, to *c.* 1100 in Wales and even thereafter in Ireland.

The first 'modern' palaeographers of the late seventeenth century, Edward Lhuyd and Humfrey Wanley, aspired to write a seamless history of British writing commencing with the scripts of Roman Britain. With the advances in scholarship described above, the first stage of that story (in both its palaeographical and wider historical dimensions) has now emerged into the daylight. This thesis will describe the origin of the Insular writing-system in the fourth century, its subsequent development in the fifth and sixth and its endurance in Wales until the end of the native writing-tradition.

Any account of the history of writing in early medieval Britain must take into account epigraphic writing and in particular the inscribed early Christian monuments of western Britain and Ireland. This writing compensates us for the paucity of early medieval manuscripts surviving from Wales, Cornwall and Scotland. Continental palaeography and in particular the historical scholarship of Italian and French palaeographers, provides the approach and

terminology that enable epigraphic inscriptions to be included alongside book-scripts in the history of Roman writing as it developed in the hands of early medieval Insular scribes, a body of evidence relatively neglected by traditional English-speaking palaeography.

An understanding of how early medieval writers saw the status and function of their texts and how they responded in the selection and use of the different writing-technologies available to them enables us to understand and explain the individual scribal treatments that they applied to their inherited 'New Common Script'. Detailed analysis of these individual scripts, at the fundamental level of the *ductus* and the scribal treatment applied to it, permits meaningful comparisons to be made between different artefacts of writing. Where such comparisons point to correlations between the hand of a manuscript and the script of an inscription, the opportunity arises to identify and localise early medieval writing-traditions. In this context, this thesis will advance palaeographical arguments to connect the major monasteries of Glamorgan and Dyfed with CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, the 'Cambridge Juvencus' and CCCC, MS 153, the 'Corpus Martianus Capella', respectively.

This thesis will further argue that distinctive writing-traditions arose and survived for considerable time in early medieval south Wales on a highly localised basis in two very different writing-provinces, namely: (a) a western writing-province consisting of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, a region where Irish influence was dominant throughout the period; and (b) an eastern writing province comprising roughly the modern Glamorgan and Gwent, where cultural continuity with the highly-Romanised Severn-Cotswolds region resulted in the survival of increasingly archaic Romano-British writing traditions and where external influence, when it came, was late and Anglo-Scandinavian in character.

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Turning to the present, this thesis would not exist at all were it not for the patience, kindness and erudition of my supervisors, Professors Julia Smith and Thomas Charles-Edwards, as well as that of the much-missed Professor Richard Sharpe. I have also benefitted from the generous support of Dr Roger Tomlin, Professor Carlo Tedeschi, Professor Patrick Sims-Williams, Dr Helen McKee and Dr Mark Stansbury. I could not have undertaken my research in any form had not Dr Alex Lumbers permitted me to migrate to Jesus College where my work found a natural, supportive home, including the Peter Pan-like enthusiasm of my College supervisor, Professor David d'Avray. Dr Helen Gittos for her part turned the humdrum administrative exercises of transfer and confirmation of D. Phil. status into sessions of motivational barnstorming for which many of the following pages are much the better.

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List of Figures

Figure 1. Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709). 38

Figure 2. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 572, Part I, D. 66

Figure 3. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 540B..... 67

Figure 4. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 671. 67

Figure 5. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. C. 219 (Part Four) 68

Figure 6. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 199..... 68

Figure 7. Cambridge, University Library, Add. MS 4534..... 69

Figure 8. Columbia, University of Missouri, Elmer Ellis Library, *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, no. 2..... 69

Figure 9. Dublin, Trinity College, MS 50..... 70

Figure 10. Leiden, Rijksuniversiteitsbibliothek, Cod. VLQ. 2, fol. 6 70

Figure 11. Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1, ‘Chad 1’. 71

Figure 12. The Lichfield Gospels. ‘Chad 2’. 71

Figure 13. The Lichfield Gospels. ‘Chad 3’. 72

Figure 14. The Lichfield Gospels. ‘Chad 4’. 72

Figure 15. The Lichfield Gospels. ‘Chad 5’. 72

Figure 16. The Lichfield Gospels. ‘Chad 6’. 73

Figure 17. The Lichfield Gospels. ‘Chad 7’. 73

Figure 18. London, British Library, Cotton MS Faustina C. I (part two). Fols. 66-93. 74

Figure 19. London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1230. 74

Figure 20. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47. The Oxford Ovid. 75

Figure 21. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452..... 75

Figure 22. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97. 79

Figure 23. P. Ital. II 55 (‘P. Butini’). Ravennese chancery-script, AD 540-543. 83

Figure 24. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 19-36. The *Liber Commonei*. Fol. 19r. 88

Figure 25. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95. 91

Figure 26. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 96. 91

Figure 27. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95. Detail. 92

Figure 28. Archaic book scripts, s.iii^{1} – s.vi^{in}. 93

Figure 29. Early Insular book-script as the product of cursivity. 95

Figure 30. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95. Detail. 96

Figure 31. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 8907 96

Figure 32. West Deeping, Lincs. Uterine phylactery. 98

Figure 33. Allomorphs in Early Insular book-script. 101

Figure 34. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94. 103

Figure 35. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94. Calligraphic treatment of fourth-century New Common Script. 105

Figure 36. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94. Squareness. 106

Figure 37. Early scribal entry-strokes. 107

Figure 38. Late Antique legal scripts. 109

Figure 39. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97. 111

Figure 40. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97r. 112

Figure 41. Ligatures and the morphology of the Insular script-system. 114

Figure 42. Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, S.A. 1914:2. The Springmount Bog Tablets. 116

Figure 43. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Fol. 3v. 118

Figure 44. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 13246. The Bobbio Missal. 120

Figure 45. The Springmount Bog Tablets. ‘Clarity’ and cursivity. 122

Figure 46. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Fol. 3r. Hand I. 123

Figure 47. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Serifs, inflections. 124

Figure 48. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Word-spacing. 124

Figure 49. The Hamble *tabella* of *Muconius*. 126

Figure 50. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D. 23 Sup. The Bobbio Orosius. 127

Figure 51. The Springmount Bog Tablets. 'Harmony' of treatment. 128

Figure 52. The earliest British abbreviation-system. 131

Figure 53. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Punctuation. 132

Figure 54. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 1'. Punctuation. 133

Figure 55. The Springmount Bog Tablets. *Diminuendo*. 134

Figure 56. Montserrat, Abadia S. Maria de Montserrat, P. Monts. Roca inv. 128-178. 136

Figure 57. Glamorgan. Topography and relief. 142

Figure 58. Glamorgan. The coastal littoral. 145

Figure 59. Glamorgan. Roman settlement. 147

Figure 60. Glamorgan. Distribution of early Christian monuments after the *RCAHMW*. 155

Figure 61. Glamorgan. Distribution of 'Group III-IV' early Christian monuments after the *ECMW*. 156

Figure 62. Glamorgan. *Cantrefi* and *cymydau*. 157

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700. 159

Figure 64. Hen Gastell and the Neath estuary. 172

Figure 65. Baglan, Glam. 172

Figure 66. Excavations at Eglwys Nynnid 2000-1. 176

Figure 67. Port Talbot, Glam. Cwrt-Isaf Farm. Cross-carved cylindrical pillar. 259/G89 TOME. 177

Figure 68. Aberafan, Glam. The Croft. Cross-carved slab. 260/G1 GELUGUIN. 180

Figure 69. Baglan, Glam. St Catherine's Church. Cross-carved slab. 191/G4 BRANCU. 182

Figure 70. 191/G4 BRANCU and CUL, MS. Ff. 4. 42. 183

Figure 71. Port Talbot, Glam. Cwrt Uchaf. Cross-carved slab. 261/G95 184

Figure 72. Margam, Glam. Disc-headed slab-cross. 231/G78 ENNIAUN. 187

Figure 73. Anglo-Scandinavian panelled fretwork in Glamorgan. 189

Figure 74. Margam, Glam. The *'tramonto'* of typified epigraphic book-script. The letterform of R 191

Figure 75. Margam, Glam. The ‘*tramonto’* of typified epigraphic book-script. The letterform of E. 192

Figure 76. Margam, Glam. Disc-headed pillar-cross. 233/G81 GRUTNE. 193

Figure 77. 233/G81 GRUTNE and CCCC, MS 153, ‘Hand A’. 195

Figure 78. Eglwys Nynnid, Glam. Cwrt-y-Defaid. Panelled cross-slabs. 236/G84 ILQUICI and 237/G85 ILCI. 196

Figure 79. Margan, Glam. Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in the south..... 202

Figure 80. Merthyr Mawr, Glam. Early Christian monuments..... 204

Figure 81. Merthyr Mawr House, Glam. St Roque’s Chapel. Slab-cross. 239/G98 SCILOC. 205

Figure 82. Merthyr Mawr House, Glam. St Roque’s Chapel. Slab-cross. 240/G99 NERTAT. 207

Figure 83. Ogmore Castle, Glam. Slab-cross. 255/G117 ARTHMAIL. 209

Figure 84. Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. ‘Double’ church of St Illtud..... 214

Figure 85. Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. Western Church, the Galilee chapel. Early Christian monuments. 215

Figure 86. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42. Fol. 6r. 221

Figure 87. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42. Membrane. 222

Figure 88. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42, fol. 36r. Cryptogram. 224

Figure 89. Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. Church of St Illtud. Cross-shaft. 223/G65 IUTHAHEL REX..... 226

Figure 90. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42. Scribal archaisms. 228

Figure 91. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of C..... 232

Figure 92. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of D. 233

Figure 93. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of L. 235

Figure 94. London, British Library, Cotton MS Augustus ii. 20. 236

Figure 95. Late Antique treatment of the letterform of L 238

Figure 96. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterforms of M and N. 239

Figure 97. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of P. 239

Figure 98. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of Q. 239

Figure 99. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of R. 240

Figure 100. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of S. 241

Figure 101. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The epigraphic form of A. 241

Figure 102. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The epigraphic letterform of E. 242

Figure 103. Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ff. 4. 42, fol. 1v. The pen-trials. 245

Figure 104. The early medieval kingdoms and *cantrefi* of west and south Wales. 254

Figure 105. The Roman roads of south-west Wales. 256

Figure 106. The kingdom of Brycheiniog. 261

Figure 107. Pant-y-Polion, Maes Llanwrthwl, Cynwyl Gaeo, Carms. Incomplete Roman-letter inscribed stone. Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS. 265

Figure 108. Bridell, Pembs. Ogam-inscribed pyramidal stone. 300/P5 NETTASAGRI. 271

Figure 109. Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. Class 1 Pictish symbol stone. The ‘Craw Stane’. 274

Figure 110. Undley, Suffolk. Gold bracteate pendant. 275

Figure 111. Assimilation of ‘Irish’ and Roman epigraphic traditions. 277

Figure 112. Cilgerran, Pembs. Church of St Llawddog. Latin and ogam-inscribed stone. Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI. 281

Figure 113. Fourth-century New Common Script in sixth-century epigraphic form. 282

Figure 114. Tullylease, Co. Cork. Inscribed grave-slab. ‘Tullylease 1’, BERECHTUINE. . 284

Figure 115. Tullylease and Lismore. Early Irish epigraphic scripts. 285

Figure 116. Maughold and Port-y-Vullen, Isle of Man. Crosses nos. 169 and 69. 287

Figure 117. Llanllŷr, Llanfihangel Ystrad, Ceredigion. Latin inscribed cross-carved pillar. 124/CD20 MADOMNUACO. 288

Figure 118. Manuscript *litterae notabiliores* in epigraphic usage. 288

Figure 119. Llanddewibrefi, Ceredigion. Church of St David. Latin inscribed cross-carved pillar. 120/CD13 CENLISINI. 289

Figure 120. Tregaron, Ceredigion. Church of St Caron. Latin inscribed stone. 133/CD33 ENEVIRI. 291

Figure 121. Irish and Deheubarth epigraphic book-scripts: morphological correlations. 294

Figure 122. Llanwnnws, Ceredigion. Church of St Gwnnws. Cross-carved stone with inscription.125/CD27 HIROIDIL. 295

Figure 123. Monasterboice, Co. Louth. High Cross of Muiredach; Llanwnnws, Ceredigion. Church of St Gwnnws. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL. 296

Figure 124. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and ‘Chad 5’, the hand of *Sulgen scholasticus.* 297

Figure 125. Ninth-century Deheubarth book-script. Continental influences. 299

Figure 126. Penally, Pembs. Church of Sts Nicholas and Teilo. Fragmentary cross-slab with inscription. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG]. 300

Figure 127. Landyfaelog Fach, Brycheiniog. Church of St Maelog. Inscribed cross-slab. 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU 303

Figure 128. Caroline letterforms in the epigraphic Later British book-script of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog. 304

Figure 129. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452. Fol. 84v. 306

Figure 130. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 199. Fol. 16v. 306

Figure 131. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452. Oscillation. 307

Figure 132. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One). Scribes A-E. 313

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153. 316

Figure 134. Llanddewi Aber-Arth, Ceredigion. Church of St David. Inscribed cross-shaft fragments. 113/CD6. 324

Figure 135. 113/CD6 and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153. 325

Figure 136. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153. 327

Figure 137. 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153. 331

Figure 138. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 167, fol. 24r. 335

*****

List of Tables

Table 1. Romano-British New Common Script. 60

Table 2. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Abbreviation-system. 130

Table 3. CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42. Scribes and stints. 219

Table 4. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One). Scribal stints and codicology. 312

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List of Abbreviations

AC	*Archaeologia Cambrensis* (Cardiff, 1846-).
BBCS	*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* (Cardiff, 1923-1993).
BÉC	*Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* (Paris, 1839-).
BL	London, British Library.
BnF	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
Bodl	Oxford, Bodleian Library.
CASSS	'The Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/index.php (5 Sept. 2022).
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College.
Chronicle	The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS A, ed. J. M. Bately, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 3: MS A* (Cambridge, 1986); tr. D. Whitelock, S. Tucker and D. C. Douglas, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London, 1961)
CIB	P. Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology c.400-1200,* Publications of the Philological Society, 37 (Oxford and Boston, 2003).
CL	C. Tedeschi, *Congeries Lapidum* (Pisa, 2005).

CLA	E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, 11 vols. and Supplement (Oxford, 1934–1971).
CMCS	*Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* (nos. 1-25) subsequently *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* (nos. 26-).
***Corpus*, I**	M. Redknap and J. M. Lewis, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Volume I - South-East Wales and the English Border* (Cardiff, 2007).
***Corpus*, II**	N. Edwards, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Volume II – South-West Wales* (Cardiff, 2007).
***Corpus*, III**	N. Edwards, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Volume III – North Wales* (Cardiff, 2013).
CUL	Cambridge, University Library.
ECMW	V. E. Nash-Williams, *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff, 1950).
EIS	W. M. Lindsay, *Early Irish Minuscule Script* (Oxford, 1910).
MWG	Ben Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction and Textual Study,* Studies in Celtic History, 42 (Woodbridge, 2020).
EWS	W. M. Lindsay, *Early Welsh Script* (Oxford, 1912).

GPC	'Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru', https://www.geiriadur.ac.uk/ (16 Sept. 2022).
LHEB	K. H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953).
LL	*Liber Landavensis. The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv*, ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans and J. Rhys (Oxford, 1893).
NL	W. M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae* (Cambridge, 1915).
NLWJ	*National Library of Wales Journal* (Aberystwyth, 1939-).
RCAHMW	*Royal Commission on Ancient Historical Monuments in Wales. An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan. Volume 1 Part 1. Pre-Norman.* (Cardiff, 1976).
***RIB* ii**	*The Roman Inscriptions of Britain II, Instrumentum Domesticum, Fascicules 1-7*, ed. S. S. Frere, M. Roxan and R. S. O. Tomlin (Oxford, 1991).
Supplement	D. Bains, *A Supplement to Notae Latinae* (Cambridge, 1936).
Tab. Sulis	R. S. O. Tomlin, *Tabellae Sulis: Roman Inscribed Tablets of Tin and Lead from the Sacred Spring at Bath*, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, No. 16, Fasc. 1 (Oxford, 1988).
TCD	Dublin, Trinity College.

VSBG	*Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae,* ed. A. W. Wade-Evans, History and Law Series, 9 (Cardiff, 1944).
WAB	T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons* (Oxford, 2013).

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Palaeographical Glossary

Term	Meaning
Alignment	Means the alignment of a line of written text.
Allomorph	Means a different *ductus* of the same letterform (for example the form of **ð** taken from archaic *graffiti* into pre-uncial book-script is an 'allomorph' of the form of **d** derived from New Common Script).[1]
Ascender	Means the stroke of a letterform which ascends above the line of legibility, for example that part of the vertical stroke in a **b** or **d** that is not possessed by an **a** or an **o**.
Aspect	Contrasting with the underlying *ductus*, means the superficial *facies* or appearance of a hand or script, for example, 'pointed', 'square', 'flat-topped' (and so on).
Base-script	The Italians' '*scrittura di base*' or the Germans' '*Schulschrift*'. Means the basic hand of instruction, typically the hand learned by novices in learning their letters before moving on to study with the *grammaticus*.[2]
Bilinear	Means a letterform (or script) confined between two parallel lines, the bottom being the line of writing. Ascenders and descenders do not ascend above nor descend below these two lines, for example capitals. Traditionally referred to as 'majuscule'.

[1] For the important morphological contribution of ancient *graffiti* to New Common Script see R. Marichal, M. Nédoncelle, B. Botte, L. De Bruyne, André Grabar, Christine Mohrmann and C. Vogel, 'La date des graffiti de la Triclia de Saint-Sébastien et leur place dans l'histoire de l'écriture latine', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, tome 36, fascicule 3-4 (1962), p. 141, n. 6.

[2] For the three-stage traditional early medieval curriculum, see Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 179, table 4.1 and H.-I. Marrou's standard discussion, in English translation, in Henri Irénée Marrou, *A history of education in antiquity*, tr. George Lamb (London, 1956), p. 265.

Term	Meaning
Biting	Means the collision or overlap of the strokes of separate *ductus* where letters are inadequately spaced. In this thesis I will draw no distinction between 'biting' and so-called 'false connections' (whereby the strokes of one *ductus* touch those of the following *ductus*). Biting is to be distinguished from formal ligatures, monographs (such as the various forms of '&') and the continuation or connecting strokes (or part-strokes) of *ductus* executed in a current manner.
Book-script or *'libraria'*	Means those scripts used in the writing of books, whether on papyrus or membrane, rolls or codices. They are typically scripts in which the letterforms are written separately and the *ductus* is 'set'[3]. Cencetti described '*scrittura libraria*' as being clear, easily read and elegant.[4]
Broken-backed	Means the tendency to separate strokes into two parts, mostly to facilitate ligatures forward from the medial break or part-stroke. The most common form is that form of **e** written as two small c-graphs, one above the other.[5]
Canonisation	Means the process whereby over time a particular repertoire of letterforms written in a particular manner crystallises into a script of prescribed form, for example uncial. Jean Mallon demanded that 'canonical' scripts should be evidenced by 'a plentiful collection of manuscripts closely similar in terms of their fundamental

[3] N. Denholm-Young, *Handwriting in England and Wales* (Cardiff, 1954), p. 6.
[4] Giorgio Cencetti, *Paleografia latina* (Milan, 2014), p. 26.
[5] The form survived in, for example, the Corbie 'eN-type' book-script until the end of the eighth century; see, for example Paris, BnF, MS lat. 13028, Isidore's *Etymologiae*, *s.*viii[2]; *CLA*, v, 647, https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/1025, (5 Apr. 2023).

Term	Meaning
	characteristics' and Cencetti differentiates their static existence from the ever-mutable state of New Common Script.[6]
Capitals or *capitalis*	Means capitals, generally in this thesis in epigraphic form.
Chancery-script or *'cancelleresca'*	Means those scripts that were generally used for the writing of official documents by both secular and ecclesiastical chanceries and writing-offices (in contrast with book-script or *libraria*). Cencetti describes 'chancery-script' as written to convey solemnity, distinctiveness and authenticity.[7]
Codicology	The study of the physical archaeology of a codex, the materials from which it is made, the manner of its construction and preparation to receive writing.
Common script	Following Cencetti's usage, the '*scrittura usuale*' or the common repertoire of letterforms shared by the literate persons of a time and place, subject to the graphical tendencies brought to bear upon it pursuant to each individual scribal 'treatment'. Cencetti's analogy is that the 'Common Script' represents a 'language' whereas each individual scribal hand represents the actual 'speech' as spoken by each person who speaks that language.[8]
Current	Following Brown's usage, the cursive tendency subject to extreme speed and economy of execution, a manner of writing which links

[6] Jean Mallon, *Paléographie romaine* (Madrid, 1952), p. 103; Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 25.
[7] Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 26.
[8] In other words, Ferdinand de Saussure's *langue-parole* dichotomy, which posited 'language' as a heterogeneous set of potentialities which only enter into existence in each homogeneous instance of sense and sound represented by 'speech'; Ferdinand De Saussure, Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye and Albert Riedlinger, *Cours De Linguistique Générale* (Paris, 1916), §2, p. 170 *et ff.* Thomas Charles-Edwards makes the same point in relation to the 'scripts' of the early Christian inscriptions of western Britain equating to epigraphic 'speech', pointing out the multitude of different treatments of New Common Script on stone; *WAB*, p. 119.

Term	Meaning
	letterforms and parts of letterforms and makes full use of ligatures and abbreviations. The letterform **u** written without a pen-lift has been seen as a particular mark of such treatment.[9]
Cursive, cursivity, the cursive tendency	Means the graphical consequences of a writer seeking to write quickly, typically the use of ligatures, the reduction of the number of pen- or stylus-lifts used to compose the *ductus* and the general impulse to maximise the time spent by the writing instrument in contact with the medium of writing.[10] Scipione Maffei's original 1731 description of this tendency was simply 'writing quickly'.[11]
Decorum	Following Parkes's usage, '…a consensus of opinion about what was admissible in a book copied for use in the library of a House or for export, as opposed to what a scribe might be permitted to do in a draft or in a book destined solely for his own use.'[12]
Descender	Means the stroke of a letterform which descends from the line of writing below the line of legibility, for example that part of the vertical stroke of a **p** or **q** that is not possessed by an **a** or an **o**.
Display or display-script	Means a script (invariably a book-script) intended to impress, a grand, lavish script (for example the calligraphically-treated scripts used for the great Insular gospel books).

[9] T. Julian Brown, *A Palaeographer's View – Selected Writings of Julian Brown,* ed. Janet Bately, Michelle Brown and Jane Roberts (London, 1993), p. 213.
[10] '…*cursive.*..is where the fundamental preoccupation is with the speed of the execution…'; Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 22. 'Although it is derived from the Latin *currere*, "to run", the exact origins of the word "cursive" are not known. The verb was first associated with writing as early as the first century, when Martial (*c.* 40-104) described a reed pen as able to run unobstructed over the surface of well-polished papyrus…'; Gregory Joseph Guderian, 'The Palaeography of Later Roman Cursive' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1990), p. 2.
[11] Scipione Maffei, *Verona Illustrata. Parte prima contiente l'istoria della città e insieme dell'antica Venezia dall'origine fino alla venuta in Italia di Carlo Magno* (Verona, 1732), I, p. 634.
[12] M. B. Parkes, 'The Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow', in idem, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers, Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London, 1991), p. 104 & n. 46.

Term	Meaning
***Documentaria* or documentary script**	Means the same as chancery-script, documentary- and chancery-scripts (including *'epistolaris'* or correspondence-script) being distinguished from book-scripts by their utilitarian, non-literary function and aspect.[13]
***Ductus* or Duct**	Following Mallon's usage, 'the successive sequence in which the scribe has executed the strokes…and the direction in which he has made each of them'.[14] The angle or hold of the pen is not part of the *'ductus'*: it is a technological and calligraphic variable and hence part of the *'tratteggio'* or calligraphic 'treatment' which does not affect the fundamental mechanics of the underlying *'ductus'*.
Epigraphy or epigraphic scripts, epigraphic writing	Means writing on hard media such as metal, pottery, brick, tile or stone. St Samson, for example, is described as carving a cross on a standing stone in Cornwall with an 'iron instrument', '*quodam ferro'*.[15]
Hand	Following Parkes's usage, 'what [the scribe] actually puts down on the page'.[16]

[13] The seminal collection and commentary is Jan-Olof Tjäder's forty years' work on the Ravennese papyri, *Die Nichtliterarischen Lateinischen Papyri Italiens Aus Der Zeit 445-700* (3 vols., Lund, Stockholm,1954-1982).
[14] Mallon, *Paléographie,* p. 22. Cencetti used the term *'ductus*' to mean *'il modo di tracciare le lettere'* ('the manner of tracing the letter') which he saw as either 'set' or 'cursive' with the term *'tratteggio'* (or 'treatment') signifying the number and sequence of strokes (i.e. the mechanical formation of the glyph that Mallon called the *ductus*); *Paleografia,* p. 23. Luigi Schiaparelli, on the other hand, used the term '*tratteggio'* in a less mechanical and more calligraphic sense, to represent the particular way that the *ductus* was executed, for example *'tratteggio corsiva'* ('cursive treatment') for a *ductus* executed under the 'tendency to cursivity'; L. Schiaparelli, 'La scrittura Latina nell'età romana (Note paleografiche)', *Avviamento allo studio della scrittura Latina nel medio evo* (Como, 1921; repr. New York, 1979), p. 95. Bowman and Thomas in examining the palaeography of the Vindolanda tablets follow Mallon and define *'ductus'* as 'the number of strokes which made up each letter and the order and direction in which each stroke was made'; A. K. Bowman and J. D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: The Latin Writing-Tablets,* Britannia Monograph Series, No. 4 (London, 1983), p. 60.
[15] *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol,* ed. and tr. Pierre Flobert, Sources d'histoire médiéval, 17 (Paris, 1997), I, p. 48; also Lynette Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol and the Earliest History of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales,* Studies in Celtic History, XXXVII (Woodbridge, 2017), p. 10.
[16] M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500* (Oxford, 1969; repr. Oxford, 1979), p. xxxvi.

Term	Meaning
Hard media	Means any hard material used as an epigraphic writing-medium, for example slate, stone, metal, wood, brick but also wax tablets.
Headstroke	Following Parkes's usage, a lateral stroke at a high point in any *ductus*, for example the horizontal stroke in **ƈ** or **ð**.[17]
Inflection, inflected	Means the effect caused by alternating heavy and light pressure and straight and oblique strokes using a broad pen-nib, namely alternating thick and thin (or 'hair') strokes, called by French palaeographers the « *poids* » or 'weight' of a form.[18]
Inscriber	Means the craftsman who picked, punched, carved or wrote with a stylus upon hard media, who may or may not have been the same person who composed the text (the 'ordinator') or indeed literate at all.[19]
Letter	Following Isidore, the letter properly belongs to language and is thus spoken.[20]
Letterform	Following Isidore, the written sign that elicits a letter.[21]
Ligature	Following Robert Marichal, '…the connections between two neighbouring letters which preserve their independence'.[22]
Limb	Following Parkes's usage, the unclosed part of a letterform such as **h**.[23]

[17] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.
[18] Mallon, *Paléographie*, p. 23.
[19] See *WAB*, pp. 117-8, for a discussion of the different personnel and roles likely to have been involved in the manufacture of inscriptions in early medieval Britain: Thomas Charles-Edwards based this discussion on Mallon, *Paléographie*, pp. 58-60.
[20] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), 1.14.16.
[21] See n. above.
[22] R. Marichal *et al.*, 'La date des graffiti de la Triclia de Saint-Sébastien', p. 136 & n. 34.
[23] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.

Term	Meaning
Line of Legibility	Means the horizontal line at the level of the top or shoulder of the minim-strokes of a quadrilinear script.
Line of Writing	Means the horizontal line upon which a line of writing 'sits'.
Lobe	Following Parkes's usage, the rounded (but closed) part of a letterform such as **b**.[24]
Majuscule	Following Denholm-Young's usage, 'a two-line script in which all the letters are of equal height, thus: **A B Q F**'.[25]
Membrane	The skin of an animal as prepared for writing.[26]
Minim	Following Parkes's usage, 'the shortest and simplest stroke: that used to form the letters **i m n u**.'[27]
Minuscule	Following Denholm-Young's usage, 'a four-line script, in which some of the letters are taller (ascenders), and some are longer (descenders) than others, as **a b f g**.'[28]
Module	Following Mallon's usage, the dimensions of the letterforms, their size and height.[29]
Monograph	Means a glyph that comprises two or more *ductus* run together, for example '&'.
National hands	Following Mabillon's original seventeenth-century usage, the scripts that arose after the collapse of the common, Empire-wide writing-system in the fifth century, namely '*Gothica*' (which included

[24] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.
[25] Denholm-Young, *Handwriting*, p. 6. In this thesis the term 'bilinear' will be preferred for the reasons set out in Chapter One below.
[26] For a discussion of the preparation of membrane in the Insular context see T. J. Brown, 'The Distribution and Significance of Membrane prepared in the Insular Manner', in *idem, A Palaeographer's View*, pp. 125 – 139.
[27] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.
[28] Denholm-Young, *Handwriting*, p. 6. In this thesis the term 'quadrilinear' will be preferred for the reasons set out in Chapter One below.
[29] Mallon, *Paléographie*, p. 23.

Term	Meaning
	'*Visigothic*'), '*Anglosaxonica*', '*Langobardica*' and '*Francogallic*' (or '*Merovingian*') which Mabillon originally saw as scripts invented by the eponymous barbarian peoples *ab initio*.[30]
New Common Script	Means the non-capital 'new' common script of the Empire, often referred to as 'New Roman Cursive', the first examples of which appear in the Egyptian papyri from *c.* 240 onwards.[31]
Old Common Script	Means the non-capital 'old' common script of the Empire, variously referred to as 'Old Roman Cursive' or 'Cursive Majuscules', which gradually gave way to New Common Script from *c.* 240 onwards.
Ordinatio	Following Parkes's usage, the *mis-en-page* or the manner in which a writer plans, organises and lays out his text on the writing medium.[32]
Ordinator	Means the writer who drafts the text of an inscription on hard media: for example by painting or crayoning a text directly onto stone for subsequent pecking, punching or incising by the inscriber.[33]
Palaeography	Following Brown's usage, the study of the whole artefact of writing as a material, historical and cultural artefact.[34]

[30] Jean Mabillon, *De re diplomatica libri vi* (Paris, 1681), I, XI, pp. i-iii. Lowe notes however that the concept of '*littera longobarda'* or '*Scriptura Langobardica'* had a long history before Mabillon; E. A. Loew, *The Beneventan Script* (Oxford, 1914), p. 25.

[31] For a good English-language summary of this complex and much-discussed (and disputed) process from the Insular viewpoint, see Bowman and Thomas, *Vindolanda,* pp. 55-7.

[32] This concept was developed by Parkes to describe developments in the layout of scholastic texts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the schoolmen found it helpful to add an interpretational graphical organisation to syllabus-texts such as, particularly, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard; Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', in *idem, Scripts, Scribes,* p. 37. In this thesis the concept is used in the more rudimentary sense of the initial formatting, by an 'ordinator', of a draft text intended to be copied onto stone.

[33] Gifford Charles-Edwards identified the curious blobs in the Gn-25/13/AN26 CATAMANUS inscription from Llangadwaladr, Anglesey, as an illiterate inscriber attempting to replicate the blotches of paint that the ordinator had left on the surface of the stone; see *Corpus,* III, p. 182.

[34] See Brown, *A Palaeographer's View,* pp. 21–2, for discussion of the scope of the term 'palaeography'.

Term	Meaning
Quadrilinear	Following Denholm-Young's usage, 'a four-line script, in which some of the letters are taller (ascenders), and some are longer (descenders) than others, as **a b f g**.'[35] Historically referred to as 'minuscule'.
Sagitta	Following Lowe's usage, 'the horizontal bar of of *e*'.[36]
Scribe	Means a member of the (probably quite small) minority of early medieval writers trained to write on membrane using a pen.
Script	Following Parkes's usage, 'the model the scribe has in his mind's eye when he writes', scripts that are related to each other being referred to as 'script-types'.[37]
Script-type	Ludwig Traube's '*Schrifttype*'. Following Traube's usage, distinctive letterforms which persist for several generations but which, in any given instance of writing, cannot be attributed to a specific scriptorium.[38] Traube's pupil, E. A. Lowe, proposed a test for a 'script-type' as follows: '(1) it must possess features differentiating it from other varieties of the same species; (2) the presence of these features must be constant and not sporadic; and (3) the different elements must have coherence and harmony…a harmonious whole…in other words must have style'.[39]

[35] Denholm-Young, *Handwriting*, p. 6.
[36] Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 143.
[37] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.
[38]'Traube's most detailed account of a 'script-type' is found in *Peronna Scottorum*: *ein Beitrag zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und zur Palaeographie des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1900), pp. 469-538, where he discussed the so-called 'ab' script of Corbie, previously considered 'Lombardic'. His other references are incidental ones, though he lectured to the Munich Academy on Insular script and the script of Luxeuil. For a masterly discussion of Traube's thought on the term see David Ganz, 'Traube on « Schrifttypen »', *Scriptorium*, 36, No. 2 (1982), pp. 293-303.
[39] E. A. Lowe, 'The 'Script of Luxeuil: A Title Vindicated', *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. 63, Issue 1-4 (1953), p. 132.

Term	Meaning
Semicursive	Following Cencetti's usage, the treatment of the *ductus* that occurs at various stages on the axis between the two opposite poles of 'set' and 'cursive' scribal treatments.[40]
Serif	Following Denholm-Young's usage, 'the cross-stroke at the top or bottom of ascenders or descenders'.[41]
Set	Following Brown's usage, a script that obtains formality by lifting the pen at all the points at which a cursive script would normally link parts of letters.[42]
Shaft	Following Parkes's usage, the vertical stroke of a letterform such as **t** which does not rise high enough to form a 'stem'.[43]
Stem	Following Parkes's usage, the vertical stroke of a letterform such as **b** which rises above the lobe (or limb) of the letterform (also referred to as an 'ascender').[44]
Stroke	Following Parkes's usage, 'a single trace made by the pen on the page'.[45]
Tendencies or **graphical tendencies**	'Tendencies' fall into two categories. The first category comprises 'basic' tendencies that are essentially structural. They describe the four main ways of writing a script. Two of these 'basic tendencies' relate to the *module* of a script, namely the tendency for it to be either bilinear or quadrilinear. The other two relate to the execution of the *ductus*¸ namely the tendency to write in either a 'set' or 'cursive'

[40] Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 22.
[41] Denholm-Young, *Handwriting*, p. 6.
[42] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 201.
[43] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.
[44] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.
[45] Parkes, *Book Hands*, p. xxxvi.

Term	Meaning
	manner (or a combination, resulting in 'semicursivity').[46] The second category comprises tendencies that are more graphical or aspectual in nature, for example the 'tendency' whereby the slanted alignment of Old Common Script gradually rotated into the vertical alignment of New Common Script, or the tendency of New Common Script to truncate its ascenders and descenders, expand the limbs and lobes of letters and separate letters and words as part of the 'tendency' (described by Alessandro Pratesi as « *librarizzarla* ») that produced book-script.[47]
The 'graphical process' or *processus graphicus*	Means the continuous process whereby the Common Script of a time and place develops into 'concrete and occasional' forms, for example the 'graphical process' that gave **E** > **Є** > **є** > **e**. This dynamic involves the older forms – older scripts – falling out of use in favour of newer scripts which respond better to the needs of the day and which may 'typify' or even become 'canonised' in their turn.[48]
Treatment	Means the manner in which the scribe or inscriber 'treats' Common Script in order to produce his distinctive 'hand'.

[46] Cencetti lists '*tendenze grafice'* as the graphical consequences of the combination of text function, writing-technology and aesthetics, for example the use of a stylus rather than a pen, the currency of execution, the manner of holding the writing-instrument, the relative verticality or inclination of the *ductus*, the rotundity or angularity of the letterforms. Certain of these are inherent 'tendencies' within the graphical process itself (i.e. objective and external to the scribe) but others are scribal and the result of individual choice; Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 24. For Cencetti (and French and Italian palaeography generally) the concept of 'graphical tendencies' is central to the understanding and description of medieval writing as a historical continuation of the Roman writing-system. They see it as misleading to classify scripts as '*generi scrittorii'* or 'types of scripts' on the basis that writing can only be understood as the manifestation of the graphical tendencies that were at work upon the New Common Script bequeathed by the Roman writing-system to medieval Europe at each time and place of writing; Giorgio Cencetti, 'Vecchi e nuovi orientamenti nello studio della paleografia', *La bibliofilia*, 50 (Firenze, 1948), pp. 4-23.

[47] Alessandro Pratesi, 'Note per un contributo alla soluzione del dilemma paleografico: semicorsiva o precarolina?', *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere dell'Università di Bari*, 3 (Bari, 1957), pp. 3-13.

[48] Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 24.

Term	Meaning
Typification	Means that process whereby over more or less time scribes reproduce the characteristics of a script until a distinct 'script-type' emerges with the potential, ultimately, for such script-types to canonize into the 'house-scripts' associated with a particular 'scriptorium'.
***Uncialis* or uncial**	Means the formal book-script of that name that typified and canonized in the fourth century.[49]
Wedge serif	Means the typical Insular wedge at the top of minims or ascenders. Gifford Charles-Edwards explains it as the result of the initial overpressure necessary to apply to a static nib in order to instigate the flow of dense, pre-modern ink for the writing of the subsequent stroke without the pen spluttering.[50]
Writing-province	The Germans' '*Schriftprovinz'*. Means an area where common traditions of writing were shared and passed down.

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[49] For the Insular history of the uncial script-type see E. A. Lowe, *English Uncial* (Oxford, 1960).
[50] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount bog tablets: their implications for Insular epigraphy and palaeography', *Studia Celtica,* 36 (2000), pp. 27-45.

Introduction

The ambition of this thesis is to describe the origin and development of 'British writing' from the fourth to the eleventh centuries, to make connections between artefacts of British writing on different media and in doing so to contribute to the history of the British - subsequently Welsh – church, from the collapse of the Imperial administration in Britannia *c.* 410 to its fatal collision with the Normans at the end of the eleventh century.[1] The difficulty of applying modern geographical and political nomenclatures – such as 'Welsh', 'Irish', 'British', 'English' - to the vastly different circumstances of the early medieval 'Atlantic Archipelago' represented by what we now call Great Britain and Ireland, is a challenge important enough to confront immediately. The term 'British writing' means the writing of late Roman Britain, the writing of the post-Roman Brittonic polities that succeeded it and the writing of early medieval Wales, into which those polities eventually shrank. This 'British writing' is, of course, a subset of 'Insular' writing as a whole, although the perils of seeking to make subdistinctions within this umbrella term was the reason for its coinage in the first place and these we will deal with at length below. 'British writing' for the purposes of this thesis, then, falls into three parts. These are: (i) writing on hard media from *c.* 300; (ii) the early Christian inscriptions of Wales and western Britain (including north Britain, the Isle of Man and the south-western peninsula as far east as Wareham in Dorset); and (iii) the little clutch of manuscripts written on membrane

[1] Marked, perhaps, by the arrival of the first Norman bishop, Bernard, at St Davids in 1115 at the order of Henry I.

from *c.* 800 onwards that are attributed, with greater or lesser scholarly confidence, to early medieval Wales.[2]

Geographically, I will focus on the two distinct regions of *Glywysing* (the modern Glamorgan) and, together, Deheubarth and Brycheiniog.[3] Methodologically, Julian Brown described the holistic historical-palaeographical approach advanced by Ludwig Traube (1861–1907), patriarch of the Munich scholarship that still dominates Insular palaeography, and my intention is to use palaeography in this peripheral, Insular context in the same way:[4]

> '…to go beyond the mere technicalities of [the] subject by relating them to the general trends of European culture…and to share with the philologists and art-historians an honourable place in the commonwealth of historical studies'.

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[2] See Chapter One following for summary handlists of examples of New Common Script from Roman Britain and early medieval manuscripts attributed to Wales. It should be pointed out that this thesis does not consider numismatic evidence, due partly to lack of space but also due to the fact that the early medieval Ireland and Wales were largely non-coin-using. An exception is the discussion of the Icenian bracteate from Undley, Suffolk, in Chapter Four. It should however be emphasised that coins, medals and seals of all kinds were of great interest to both Lhuyd and Wanley and should certainly figure in any wider discussion of epigraphic writing. For Wanley's interest in this evidence see in particular his letter of October 1706 to Robert Harley in which he suggests that many of the seals from Harley's collection should be added to Abraham van Goorle's *Dactyliotheca seu annulorum sigillarium quorum apud priscos tam Graecos quam Romanum usos promptuarium* which had been published in Leiden in 1695; see L. Heyworth (ed.), *Letters of Humfrey Wanley* (Oxford, 1989), no. 108, pp. 241-2. Another significant artefact that should be accounted for in the early development of Insular writing is the inscribed strip form the Staffordshire Hoard; See: http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/explore-the-hoard/biblical-inscription#1 and https://finds.org.uk/staffshoardsymposium/papers/davidganz, (15 Apr. 2019).

[3] Originally the division of south Wales consisted of *Dyfed*, the former *civitas* of the *Demetai* and *Gwent*, from *Venta Silurium* (Caer-went), the former *civitas* of the *Silures.* By the ninth century the western part of Gwent separated as *Glywysing* and from *c.* 1000 this became *Gwlad Morgan* or *Morgannwg* or Glamorgan (after king Morgan ab Owain (*ob.* 974)). *Deheubarth* ('The Southern Part') or *Y Deheu* ('The South') could be used for the entirety of south Wales (as does Giraldus, glossing it as *'Sudwalliam'* or *'Australem Walliam'*) but generally became associated with the descendants of Hywel Dda and the south-west rather than the south-east; *WAB*, pp. 14-15, 17-20, 285, 315-6, 330-1, 532 & n. 152, 586 & n. 20. By Gerald's time, Dyfed or *Demetia* was merely a 'portion' of Deheubarth consisting of seven *cantrefs;* Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Kambriae*, ed. J. F. Dimock, *Giraldi Cambrensis Itinerarium Kambriae et Descriptio Kambriae (Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, Vol. IV*)* (London, 1868), 1. 2. So in this thesis I use 'Deheubarth' as including Dyfed, Ystrad Tywi and Ceredigion but not Glamorgan or Gwent (or indeed Powys). Another artefact which should be considered in any study of early medieval Insular writing is of course the

[4] In the words of T. Julian Brown; *idem*, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 23. The term 'Insular' was originally a coinage of Traube's, used in its historical-geographical sense to describe the early medieval writing of the entire Atlantic Archipelago of Britain and Ireland, which to him meant the writing-provinces of Celtic Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. He also coined the term '*insulare Schrift'* to cover both Irish and English writing, with the aim of emphasising how difficult it was to distinguish them; Traube, *Peronna Scottorum*, pp. 96, 114-6, as cited by Lindsay, *EIS*, p. 42. Subsequently the term 'Insular' as applied to the academic discipline of palaeography *per se* (Traube had used it only to describe scripts) acquired a more practical meaning, referring to the discipline as: (i) concerned with the medieval writing of the Atlantic Archipelago of Great Britain and Ireland; and (ii) carried on by (primarily) English- and German-speaking scholars. This is the sense in which the term was used by Ludwig Bieler in 1949; *idem*, 'Insular palaeography, present state and problems', *Scriptorium*, Tome 3, n°2 (1949) pp. 267–294. Professor Carlo Tedeschi has expressed a dislike of the compartmentalisation inherent in the term – preferring to speak of 'Latin palaeography as carried on by British and Irish scholars' (Carlo Tedeschi, *pers. comm.*, June 2021) but in this thesis I will follow Bieler and use the term 'Insular palaeography' in Bieler's practical sense, to contrast it with the radically different practice of the discipline by French and Italian scholars.

This is something that has not previously been attempted for western Britain, at least at the level of detailed palaeographical analysis or for the entire early medieval period.[5] It is now, however, a project made feasible both by advances in scholarship and by the power and convenience of modern digital reproductive technology.[6] Particularly important are the discovery and publication in the last generation or so of numerous new artefacts of writing from Roman Britain. Curse-tablets, *graffiti, ostraca* and other writing upon hard media now provide, for the first time, a clear picture of the beginning of the story of British and indeed wider Insular writing, namely its genesis in the New Common Script of late Roman Britain. Of particular significance are the *tabellae defixionum* excavated from the Sacred Spring at Bath by Barry Cunliffe and his archaeologists in their 1979-80 campaign, but important too are occasional finds such as the fourth-century uterine phylactery recovered from the site of a villa at West Deeping, near Peterborough, written in an extraordinary fourth-century bilinear script showing numerous correlations with later Insular book-script.[7] This increasing body of New Common Script now provides palaeographers with the crucial interpretational key for almost a millennium of subsequent British writing.[8]

Also highly significant are those advances in scholarship that now provide a far richer and more supportive historical context for the study of British writing than was the case even thirty years ago. Of particular note is work such as that of Wendy Davies on the early medieval

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[5] Alan Lane describes Carlo Tedeschi's *CIL* as follows: 'Tedeschi demonstrates that the British inscription [fifth- to seventh-centuries] are not an incompetent mass of local variations but show an intelligible development from the scripts of the Roman period and that they can be put into a chronological sequence from the early 5th century', *CIL, Prefazione,* p. XII.

[6] Westwood's 1868 *Facsimiles of the Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Manuscripts*, although magnificent examples of nineteenth-century chromolithography, are in fact plates of his drawings: not until 1873 did the Palaeographical Society produce actual photographic facsimiles of the Utrecht Psalter and it was not until 1914 that the first few high-quality colour plates of Insular MSS appeared in the British Museum's *Schools of illumination, reproduced from MSS in the British Museum* (London, 1914).

[7] R. S. O. Tomlin, 'Roman Britain in 1995', *Britannia*, 27 (1996), pp. 443-5; *idem*, ''Sede in Tuo Loco': 'A Fourth-Century Uterine Phylactery in Latin from Roman Britain', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, vol. 115 (1997), pp. 291–294.

[8] Armando Petrucci emphasised the palaeographical significance of this early writing when he noted, in reference to the *CLA*, that 'the least documented chronological subperiod was precisely the oldest, encompassing the third, fourth and fifth centuries; and this was also the most interesting period for 'uncovering the mystery of the origins of [the book]'; Armando Petrucci, *Writers and Writing in Medieval Italy*, tr. Charles M. Radding (New Haven, 1995), p. 2. The same point was made by Robert Marichal in his preliminary remarks to his paper on the *graffiti* from the *triclia* of the Church of St Sebastian on the Via Appia; see Marichal *et al.*, 'La date des graffiti de la Triclia', p. 111.

Celtic charter tradition, most notably the *Book of Llandaff*; the work of Michael Lapidge, Ian Wood and Richard Sharpe on the literary and intellectual culture of the post-Roman British church; advances made by Gifford and Thomas Charles-Edwards, Carlo Tedeschi and John Higgitt in the study of the early Christian inscriptions of western Britain; the sharp and insightful work of Mark Stansbury on the earliest phases of the Insular writing-system and Helen McKee's meticulous examination of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, the 'Cambridge Juvencus', and its complex layers of glossing.

All of this now paints an intellectual, ecclesiastical and historical picture of Late Antique Britain and early medieval Wales from which the absence of a palaeographical contribution is beginning to look like an omission. Palaeography's traditional travelling companion – philology – has already challenged its sister-*Hilfswissenschaft*[9] to catch up: one philologist has referred to the journal *Britannia* as the most prolific source of new Latin in the western Empire.[10] From the palaeographical perspective, the recently-recovered writing from late Roman Britain is of similar European significance, yet it has received hardly any attention. As their cataloguer Roger Tomlin puts it, the 130 or so curse tablets comprising the Bath assemblage represent 'one of the richest and most accessible groups of…Roman handwriting styles outside the Egyptian papyri'.[11]

This body of writing is of critical value to the palaeographer if one considers that no other British writing upon papyrus, wood or membrane survives from the period between the date of the Vindolanda tablets early in the second century and the oldest marginalia in Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1, the 'Lichfield Gospels', of *c.* 800. To cite Tomlin again: [12]

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[9] 'Ancillary discipline' as Traube termed it, see: L. Traube, *Vorlesungen und Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Boll and P. Lehmann (Munich, 1909), I, p. 13; discussed by Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 17.
[10] John Pearce, 'Archaeology, Writing Tablets and Literacy in Roman Britain', *Gallia*, tome 61 (Paris, 2004), p. 43.
[11] Barry W. Cunliffe, Peter Davenport, Verna Care and Roger Tomlin, *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath*, University of Oxford Committee for Archaeology (Oxford, 1985); for the tablets specifically see *Tab. Sulis*, pp. 59-280. Richard Gameson mentions the 'revolutionary' Vindolanda tablets but not any of the increasingly plentiful Romano-British writing in New Common Script more relevant to medieval Insular writing; R. Gameson, 'The study of Early Insularbooks' in R. Gameson (ed.), *The History of the Book in Britain, Volume I c. 400-1100* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 721.
[12] *Tab. Sulis*, p. 60.

> ‘Curse tablets and wooden writing tablets, also found in recent years in large numbers, will have to compensate students of Roman Britain for a paucity of inscriptions, a lack of any native literature, and a loss to their country’s endemic dampness of every single scrap of papyrus.’

Figure 1. Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709).



Bronze bust. Centre for Advanced Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth.

Photograph © Llywelyn2000 (CC BY-SA 4.0)

There is, however, a sense in which an interest in the origin of medieval Insular writing in Roman Britain is nothing new, but rather the resumption of ‘normal service’ after a hiatus of some three centuries. If Edward Lhuyd (1660–1709) had lived beyond 1709 or, perhaps, if Robert Harley (1661–1724) had never lured Humfrey Wanley (1672–1726) away from his work at Oxford, this thesis would be unnecessary; for it is upon the long-neglected insights and unfulfilled ambitions of these two early modern polymaths that this thesis seeks to build.

Lhuyd wrote to Wanley on January 6th, 1703, telling him that ‘It has long been my Opinion that the Irish received their Letters from the Britans and the Saxons from both’.[13]

Lhuyd was the first Welsh practitioner of the kind of scholarship that we have now come to call ‘multi-disciplinary’.[14] He justified his view of the origin of the Insular writing-system not only by reference to the ‘sevral MSS we have…in Wales & the number of old Irish MSS’ but also by reference to the Gn-25/13/AN26 CATAMANVS inscription from Llangadwaladr, Anglesey,

[13] Edward Lhuyd, Letter to Humfrey Wanley, January 6th 1703, ‘Early Modern Letters Online’, http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/profile/work/1ae928e8-24c9-4388-8469-fd4ef6c2886f?sort=date-a&rows=50&people=Wanley&baseurl=/forms/advanced&start=72&type=advanced&numFound=123 (16 Sept. 2022).

[14] See generally Dewi W. Evans and Brynley F. Roberts, *Edward Lhuyd 1660-1709. A Bibliography and Reader’s Guide* (Aberystwyth, 2009) and Brynley F. Roberts, *Anwir Anwedhys Y Mae Yn I Ysgrivennv Ymma: Rhai o Ymylnodau Edward Lhwyd*, Darlith goffa J. E. Caerwyn a Gwen Williams 2008 (Aberystwyth, 2009). For Lhuyd and the early Christian monuments see Nancy Edwards, ‘Edward Lhuyd and the origins of early medieval Celtic archaeology’, *The Antiquaries Journal*, 87 (2007), pp. 165-96. For Lhuyd and Glamorgan, including his encounter with the famous ‘Red Book of Hergest’ in Cowbridge in 1697, see Moelwyn I. Williams, ‘Edward Lhuyd and Glamorgan’, *Glamorgan Historian*, 6 (Cowbridge, 1969), pp. 95-104 and MWG, p. 104.

which he correctly identified as the earliest datable example of Welsh book-script, *c.*625.[15] He was the first Welsh scholar to date medieval writing on empirical, historical grounds in the same way that his correspondent, the 'Accurat, and ingenious Mr Wanley' did in his great 1705 *Librorum Veterum Septentrionalium qui in Angliae Bibliothecis extant…Catalogus* of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.[16] As G. J. Williams puts it:[17]

> 'It has been said of him that he anticipated the methods of present-day research in many ways, but in none more than his determination always to consult authorities at first hand, whether they were written in vellum or cut in stone.'

Late seventeenth-century scholarship had recognised with concern the lack of a systematic account of the origin and development of Insular writing. Contemporary British scholars had appreciated the significance of Jean Mabillon's monumental 1681 *De re diplomatica* and an equivalent British version was mooted, a project which Wanley envisaged as a 'Palaeographical Survey of English Hands from the Earliest Times' - a '*De re Anglorum diplomatica'*:[18]

> 'I believe that some time or other I shall be commended by my Superiors to compose a Compleat Book concerning the Origin and Progress of Writing…I can establish nothing certain as yet: but my present Notion (and the more I consider it the more Reasons I have to confirm it) is that the English-Saxons, the Welsh and the Irish had their Letters from one Common Foundation, that is from the Romans…'

Wanley intended to start with:

> 'The State of the *Runic & Roman* hands, as they were at the time when our Saxon Ancestors are supposed to have taken their letters from them'

before moving on to:

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[15] Lhuyd, Letter to Wanley, January 6th 1703.

[16] Edward Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica* (Oxford, 1707), col. i, p. 226. On Wanley, Kenneth Sisam remarked '…one can seldom look at an Anglo-Saxon manuscript without thinking gratefully of Humphrey Wanley…when the revival of Anglo-Saxon studies came in the nineteenth century, scholars found the bulk of the manuscript materials collected, described, dated and indexed by an expert'; Kenneth Sisam, 'MSS. Bodley 340 and 342: Ælfric's Catholic Homilies', *The Review of English Studies*, 7, no. 25 (Oxford, 1931), pp. 7-22. Glyn Daniel pointed out Lhuyd's methodological debt to earlier antiquarians such as Camden but in particular to John Aubrey, whom Daniel credited with first turning 'antiquarianism into archaeology – the belief in the study of the totality of evidence, and the belief in the study of evidence in the field'; see Glyn Daniel, 'Edward Lhwyd: Antiquary and Archaeologist', *Welsh History Review*, 4, 3 (1967), p. 353.

[17] G. J. Williams, 'The History of Welsh Scholarship', *Studia Celtica*, VIII/IX (1973/4), p. 211.

[18] As Helmut Gneuss termed it; see Helmut Gneuss, 'Humfrey Wanley Borrows Books In Cambridge', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 12, no. 2 (Cambridge, 2001), p. 145. Wanley's letter is BL, MS Sloane 268, cited in Heyworth (ed.), *Letters*, Appendix, p. 469. The impact of Mabillon's work can be seen by the fact that Wanley had advised Samuel Pepys to use Mabillon's *De re* in June 1699; see Heyworth (ed.), *Letters*, no. 63, p. 126.

> 'All the *Anglo-Saxon* hands…from the oldest monuments now extant…together with all the Alphabets, Cubital & Great Uncial Letters, Ligatures, Abbreviations & Occult ways of writing…'.

In Italy, at roughly the same time as Wanley was entering the service of Robert Harley in England, the polymath and father of Italian palaeography Scipione Maffei (1675–1755) was arriving at identical conclusions about the origins of what Mabillon had termed the 'Langobardic' script of Maffei's native northern Italy. This script was initially thought by Mabillon to have been a barbarian invention *de novo* but Maffei's examination of the manuscripts of the early medieval archive of the Verona Chapter (which he himself had rediscovered in 1712) led him instead to the fundamental palaeographical-historical realisation that where the Christian clergy had remained *in situ* after the collapse of the Imperial administration, then so had their writing-system.[19] Hence, the 'Langobardic' script must have been home-grown from the local Roman writing-system and could not have been the invention of the barbarian Lombards, whom Maffei thought to have been illiterate anyway.[20]

Maffei's understanding of the continuity between Roman and medieval writing became historical orthodoxy on the Continent, accepted by the French Maurists René-Prosper Tassin (1697-1777) and Charles-François Toustain (1700-1754) in their six-volume *Nouveau traité de diplomatique*, published in Paris in 1750–65, which built upon the work of their confrère Mabillon of a century or so earlier.[21] In contemporary England, by contrast, this promising common scholarship fell upon stony ground. As a background to the arguments of this thesis and in particular its insistence on the cardinal importance of the writing from late Roman Britain, it is important to understand how and why this seventeenth-century scholarship was passed over, because to a great extent the arguments advanced in this thesis will be

[19] Dr Tino Licht suggests that many of Maffei's Verona manuscripts were in fact written at Ravenna; Tino Licht, *Halbunziale: Schriftkultur Im Zeitalter Der Ersten Lateinischen Minuskel (III.-IX. Jahrhundert)*, Quellen Und Untersuchungen Zur Lateinischen Philologie Des Mittelalters; Bd. 20 (Stuttgart, 2018), pp. 145-7.
[20] Maffei, *Verona*, p. 642.
[21] *'L'écriture apelée lombarde n'est donc point de l'invention de ces barbares'*, Charles François Toustain, Jean Baptiste Raussonnet and René Prosper Tassin, *Nouveau Traité De Diplomatique* (Paris, 1757), iii, p. 272. Lowe suggested that Maffei's ideas were 'too advanced for the time' and only achieved acceptance as the MSS themselves became better-known; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 27.

counterpoints to the three centuries of palaeographical and historical orthodoxy beneath which it was submerged.

In the three centuries after Lhuyd's death not only did Wanley's project remain unfulfilled but his (and Lhuyd's) understanding of the Roman origin of the Insular writing-system was forgotten, swept away by far less empirically-founded historiographical counter-currents. Whereas Lhuyd and Wanley had assumed a fundamental continuity between Roman and medieval Insular writing, later historians insisted upon there having been a total rupture between Roman and medieval Britain. Uniquely amongst the ex-dioceses of the Empire, Christianity, *Latinitas* and every other vestige of Romanised culture – writing included – were all deemed completely to have disappeared from Britannia in the early fifth century.

This happened for a number of reasons. One was that Lhuyd had never been overly interested in the vernacular bardic tradition. The Ossianic, 'Celtic' fervour that grew up in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was far more taken with the bardic and druidic fantasies of Iolo Morgannwg (1747–1826) and William Price (1800–1893) than with the scientific method that Lhuyd and Wanley had inherited from men like Camden, Leland and Aubrey.[22] As part of this, and encouraged by work like Ernest Renan's *La poésie des races celtiques* of 1854 and Matthew Arnold's *On the study of Celtic Literature* of 1867, scholarship came, wrongly, to see 'Celtic' as the antithesis of 'Roman'.[23]

This 'Celtic-Roman' antithesis was amplified in the Victorian age by a racialist

[22] Brynley J. Roberts, 'Etifeddion Edward Lhuyd', *Welsh History Review*, 25, 1 (2010), p. 107. For the historiography of 'Celtomania' see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtosceptism', *CMCS*, 36 (1998), pp. 1-35. For the 'catastrophic results for scholarship' caused by Iolo Morgannwg, see J. P. Jenkins, 'From Edward Lhuyd to Iolo Morganwg: The Death and Rebirth of Glamorgan Antiquarianism in the Eighteenth Century', *Morgannwg*, XXIII (1979), p. 45. It should be pointed out, however, that many antiquarian and scholarly societies sprang up in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Wales whose aims were considerably more in the tradition of Leland, Camden, Aubrey and Lhuyd, for example the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, founded in 1751, with one of its purposes being the holding of discussions on Welsh history and literature and publishing Welsh books; also its offshoot the Gwyneddigion Society, founded in 1770, which published an edition of the poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym in 1789 and the three-volume compendium of ancient Welsh literature, the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, in 1801-7; see Emrys Jones and Dewi Watkin Powell, *The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion: A Concise History 1751-2001* (London, 2004).

[23] Ernest Renan, 'La Poésie des races Celtiques', *Revue Des Deux Mondes*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1854), pp. 473–506; Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London, 1867). For Arnold's work see also Rachel Bromwich, *Matthew Arnold and Celtic Literature a Retrospect, 1865-1965*. The O'Donnell Lecture Delivered in the University of Oxford on 7 May 1964 (Oxford, 1965).

historiography responding to the moral quandary of empire. The so-called 'Germanist' school, most associated with the work of William Stubbs (1825-1901) and E. A. Freeman (1823-1892) held that just as they had conquered the Roman Empire, so had the 'Aryan' peoples (the Germans, Anglo-Saxons, Visigoths and Franks) been destined to conquer their modern German, British, Spanish and French empires. The explanation for this success was that these peoples possessed an inherent propensity to rule other races, this natural quality having been bequeathed by the conquering barbarians of the fifth and sixth centuries to the Imperial paladins of the nineteenth by means of so-called 'germs', namely innate racial (we might today call them 'genetic') characteristics.[24] As Stubbs remarked in his hugely influential 1883 *Constitutional History of England*: [25]

> 'In the regions which had been thoroughly incorporated in the Roman Empire, every vestige of primitive indigenous cultivation had been crushed out of existence. Roman civilisation in its turn fell before the German race: in Britain it had perished slowly in the midst of a perishing people who were able neither to maintain it nor to substitute for it anything of their own'.

A typical description of what this meant to historians in real, physical, terms appeared in William Hoskins's 1955 *Making of the English Landscape*. According to Hoskins, the Anglo-Saxons moved 'into a country that was generally still a wilderness with almost everything yet to be done',[26] a view that modern scholarship describes as the '…persistent

[24] John Gillingham suggests that the historiography of English 'specialness' (and the inferiority of other races) originated in the work of William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Gaimar and other twelfth-century historians. He cites the anonymous author of the *Gesta Stephani* of 1140 describing England as '…the seat of justice, the abode of peace, the apex of piety, the mirror of religion' whereas Wales was 'a country of woodland and pasture…abounding in deer and fish, milk and herds, but breeding a bestial type of man'; John Gillingham, 'The beginnings of English imperialism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 5 (1992), p. 395.

[25] W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England* (3 vols., Oxford, 1883), I, p. 3. On the huge contemporary influence of Stubbs' *Constitutional History* J. W. Burrows remarked that it 'provided the latter part of the nineteenth century with its definitive statement of English constitutional development'; J. W. Burrows, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 1. For similar 'germ' theories in Welsh historiography see E. W. Williams, 'J. E. Lloyd and the intellectual foundations of Welsh history', *NLWJ*, 36, 1 (2014), pp. 40-4; also *idem*, 'J. E. Lloyd and his intellectual legacy; the tribes of Wales reconsidered', *NLWJ*, 36, 2 (2015), pp. 1-68. There were some dissenting approaches: the expatriate Russian jurist Paul Vinogradoff (1854-1925) demonstrated that tribal and tenurial structures endured in Britain through what he called the 'Celtic', 'Old English' and 'Feudal' periods and that 'Celtic evidence helps to explain Germanic facts of tribal custom'; P. Vinogradoff, *The Growth of the Manor*, 2nd edn. (London, 1911), p. 7. However Bede's reference to the English as '*Advenerant autem de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus*' (together with his general attitude and that of even more virulently anti-British figures such as Wilfrid) was more influential in Victorian England; see Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds.), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), I, 15, p. 11.

[26] W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (Harmondsworth, 1955), pp. 42-55.

tendency to imagine that the Anglo-Saxons moved into a largely unpeopled landscape, wielding axes and billhooks to create clearings in a continuous spread of uninhabited woodland and brambles'.[27]

If the seventeenth-century narrative of continuity in Insular writing fared badly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the twentieth century offered no rehabilitation. An analogous historiography of catastrophe and discontinuity, together with convoluted hypotheses about the 'reintroduction' of Christianity and literacy into fifth-century Britain from Gaul or Ireland, continued to be imposed upon palaeography. This narrative was demanded not by the Victorian need to justify the British Empire but by an archaeology which could see nothing of the fifth and sixth centuries above the stratum of so-called 'dark earth' that topped the stratigraphy of Romano-British archaeology. Although the evidence was different, the conclusion was the same as that of Stubbs and Freeman: Roman Britain had simply ceased to exist and anything that looked vaguely Roman must have been 'reintroduced'.[28]

In Wales this archaeologically-driven orthodoxy took root even more firmly than it did in England. When Leslie Alcock (1925–2006) excavated the diagnostic high-status fifth-to-seventh-century multivallate promontory fortlet at Dinas Powys, a few miles south-west of Cardiff, in 1963, he was struck by the extreme poverty of the material artefacts as compared to typical Romano-British assemblages.[29] He suggested that this material impoverishment reflected a society that had undergone not just a technological disaster but also a radical transformation of its entire culture and identity. Its 'Roman' phase had yielded abruptly to a

[27] Steven Bassett, 'How the west was won: the Anglo-Saxon takeover of the west Midlands', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 11 (1998), p. 107.
[28] Although Victorian archaeologists also blotted out the Britons; see Howard Williams, 'Forgetting the Britons in Victorian Anglo-Saxon Archaeology' in N. J. Higham (ed.), *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 27-42.
[29] 'Some 50lb. of iron ore, slag and cinder were collected during the excavations…these figures appear insignificant when compared, say, with a single piece of iron cinder weighing 80lb. which had been built into the foundations of a Roman barn at Great Weldon, Northants…'; Leslie Alcock, *Dinas Powys – An Iron Age, Dark Age and Early Medieval Settlement in Glamorgan* (Cardiff, 1963), p. 44 & n. 3.

'Celtic' phase; aceramic and non-coin-using, something that Alcock saw as a relapse into tribal barbarism. As he put it: [30]

> '…it was only the decayed vestiges of Roman material culture which the Britons of Arthur's age had inherited…it is clear that Romanized influences were feeble in Britain around 500. It is time now to examine the culture of the Arthurian period in its Celtic rather than its Roman aspects.'

Latinitas and writing were amongst those 'feeble' influences. The eminent archaeologists Victor Nash-Williams (1897–1955) and C. A. Ralegh Radford (1900–1998) both explained the early Christian inscriptions, as well as post-Roman British Christianity itself, as fifth-century reintroductions from Gaul. This was despite the fact that Kenneth Jackson had demonstrated in 1953 that the earliest Latin loanwords in Irish were from British ecclesiastical Latin (something that Eoin MacNeill had proposed as early as 1931) and that Rudolf Thurnysen had demonstrated as long ago as the end of the nineteenth century that the spelling of Old Irish derived from British orthographical practice.[31] Tedeschi characterises their view as one of *'trapianto'* or 'transplant' and associated it with the work of Nash-Williams, Jeremy Knight and Elizabeth Okasha. [32] His own view was that:[33]

'such a hypothesis leaves, in reality, numerous unresolved issues'

including the differentiating fact that:

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[30] Leslie Alcock, *Arthur's Britain* (London, 1971), p. 196. Ken Dark characterises Alcock's view of sub-Roman Britain as 'A wild Celtic society, resembling the Iron-Age, about which little is known and where few firmly-established facts can be found'; Ken Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom: British Political Continuity 300-800* (Leicester, 1994), p. 5. Alcock's work on Dinas Powys was revisited in 2013 by Andrew Seaman who conjectured that the Dinas Powys elite in fact came from Romano-British gentry, spoke Latin, were literate and enjoyed a 'very high status material culture…[including] objects…befitting of inclusion in Anglo-Saxon 'princely burials''; Andrew Seaman, 'Dinas Powys in Context: Settlement and Society in Post-Roman Wales', *Studia Celtica*, 47 (2013), p. 18; see also E. Campbell, A. Seaman, A. Lane and G. Noble, 'A new chronology for the Welsh hillfort of Dinas Powys', *Antiquity* (Accepted for Publication, 2022).

[31] *LHEB*, pp. 73, 125; Eoin MacNeill, 'Beginnings of Latin Culture in Ireland', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, vol. 20, no. 77 (1931), pp. 39–48; Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, ed., tr. and rev. by D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin,1975), § 915, p. 566. As mentioned above, there were a few dissenting voices: see P. A. Wilson 'Romano-British and Welsh Christianity', *Welsh History Review*, 3, 1 (1966), pp. 5-21.

[32] *ECMW*, pp. 4, 8 & 10; see also J. K. Knight, 'In tempore Iustini consulis: contacts between the British and Gaulish church before Augustine' in Alec Detsicas (ed.), *Collecteana historica. Essays in memory of Stuart Rigold* (Maidstone, 1981) pp. 54-62 and *idem*, 'An inscription from Bavai and the Fifth-Century Christian Epigraphy of Britain', *Britannia*, 41 (2010), pp. 283-292; also Elizabeth Okasha, *Corpus of early Christian inscribed stones of South-West Britain* (London and New York, 1993). That Britain and Gaul were in close contact and in a position to exchange ideas and practices is not in dispute; Tedeschi's point was simply that post-Roman Britain did not *depend* upon Gaul for the import of its epigraphic tradition.

[33] *CL*, p. 9.

> '...the epigraphy of Britain manifests a distinct individuality, representational, material, linguistic and formulaic, as regards that of Gaul and the Continent.'

With the obvious and most economic explanation for the origin of the Insular writing-system made into an historical impossibility, numerous theories supplanted Lhuyd and Wanley's simple explanation. Writing in 1912 Sir Edward Maunde Thompson stated that the script of the earliest Irish MSS must have been 'borrowed…from the MSS which the Roman missionaries brought with them'.[34] As late as 2018, Tino Licht in his study of the origins of the script known as half-uncial, attributed the creation of the early Irish book-scripts to the influence of Palladius in Ireland (he cites Prosper of Acquitaine's description of Palladius as '*ein Gallier'*) and suggests that the Insular system was created in fifth-century Ireland when '*der entscheidende Impuls zur einer eigenen Handschriften-produktion erfolgte'* ('the decision to produce their own manuscripts was taken').[35] Mark Stansbury has now authoritatively demonstrated that Irish scribes could not have developed their scripts in anything like the way that Maunde Thompson envisaged and both Julia M. H. Smith and Julia Crick discuss at length the fundamental continuity of Romano-British and subsequent Insular writing in excellent chapter-contributions to the 2014 *Cambridge History of Early Medieval Literature*.[36]

Despite its inherent improbability, not to mention the contradictory evidence of philology, this theory of origin of the Insular writing-system gained credence with palaeographers across Europe who would never dreamed of applying it to any ex- Imperial diocese other than the wild Celtic west. In 1916 the great Italian palaeographer Luigi

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[34] Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (Oxford, 1912), p. 371. Thompson does not specify which 'Roman' missionaries, but presumably Palladius, whom Prosper of Acquitaine records as having been sent by Pope Celestine. Thompson's oversight was perhaps that Palladius is described by Prosper as being sent to those Irish who were *already* Christian; Prosper of Acquitaine, *Chronica Maiora saec. IV. V, VI, VII* ed. Th. Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, AA, 9 (Berlin, 1892), i, p. 473.

[35] Licht, *Halbunziale*, p. 56 & n. 189-190. In this, Licht follows Ludwig Bieler and his bibliography does not mention any later Insular scholarship in the field.

[36] Mark Stansbury, 'Conversion and the Origin of Irish Script', in Nancy Edwards, Máire Ní Mhaonaig and Roy Flechner (eds.), *Transforming Landscapes of Belief in the Early Medieval Insular World and beyond. Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 65-87; Julia M. H. Smith, 'Writing in Britain and Ireland, *c.* 400- *c.* 800 in Clare Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge 2013), p. 21; Julia Crick, 'The art of writing: scripts and scribal production' in Clare Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, I, p. 57.

Schiaparelli (1871–1934) asserted that Roman culture had never taken root in Britannia due to 'unfavourable conditions…on the Island' (which he did not specify) and thought Insular writing to have been created by '*Finniano de Clonard'* in the second half of the fifth century, with the help of Gaulish refugees, after which it was exported to a Britain where 'everything was decadence and anarchy'.[37] Giorgio Cencetti (1908-1970) writing in 1966 thought that Roman influence in Britain had been minimal and in any case military and commercial: there had been no '*penetrazione culturale'*.[38] Bernhard Bischoff (1906-1991) in his 1986 *Paläographie des romischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters* also saw Insular writing in distinctively non-British terms: [39]

> 'The history of Insular script – by this term we understand the Irish, the other Celtic scripts, and the Anglo-Saxon together – must begin with the conversion of the Irish to Christianity in the fifth century...'

In 2010, in their account of the development of Latin palaeography in western Europe, the Italian palaeographers Paolo Cherubini and Alessandro Pratesi described Britain as 'isolated' and repeated the venerable misinterpretation of Caesar's comments on the supposed 'orality' of the Druids to explain why Insular writing could not have come from Britain itself: [40]

> 'The culture, transmitted predominantly by the oral means of the caste of the druids, was by nature traditional and characterised by a pronounced isolation'.

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[37] L. Schiaparelli, 'Note paleografiche: Intorno all'origine e ad alcuni caratteri della scrittura e del sistema abbreviativo irlandese', *Archivio Storico Italiano,* Vol. 74, No. 3-4, 283/284 (1916), pp. 15, 26. Richard Sharpe traced this idea back to Heinrich Zimmer's idea of the *'romantische Strasse'* whereby Gaulish missionaries and scholars fleeing Gaul for Hibernia introduced manuscripts, literacy and writing to Ireland without British involvement; H. Zimmer, 'Über direkte Handelsverbindungen Westgalliens mit Ireland in Altertum und frühen Mittelalter', *Sitzingberichte der königliche preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (München, 1909), pp. 363-400, 430-476, 543-613 and *ibid.* (München, 1910), pp. 1031-1119. Zimmer's work became influential (perhaps including upon Schiaparelli) through the lectures of Kuno Meyer in Dublin in 1912; see K. Meyer, *Learning in Ireland in the fifth century and the transmission of letters* (Dublin, 1913), pp. 5-6, 10, cited by Richard Sharpe, 'Books from Ireland, fifth to ninth centuries', *Peritia*, 21 (2010), p. 8.

[38] Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 7.

[39] Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 16. Bishop may of course have been thinking of 'Insular writing' in the sense of a medieval 'National Hand' that originated in Ireland.

[40] Paolo Cherubini and Alessandro Pratesi, *Paleografia Latina. L'Avventura grafica del mondo occidentale* (Città del Vaticano, 2010), p. 167. Patrick Sims-Williams comprehensively critiques the historiography of 'Celtic orality' in 'The uses of writing in early medieval Wales' in Huw Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 15-38. Caesar himself was sceptical on the whole matter: he observed that although the Gaulish Druids codified their *arcana* in orally-transmitted verses they used the Greek alphabet for many purposes other than their *disciplina*. He suspected that their 'orality' was neither innate nor cultural but rather an attempt to protect their privileged social position; Caesar, *The Conquest of Gaul*, ed. and tr. S. A. Handford, (Harmondsworth, 1951), I, i, p. 32.

It was only with the later work of Julian Brown that the core insight comprising the essential continuity between Roman and early medieval Insular writing, the narrative of Maffei, Lhuyd and Wanley, re-emerged as a possible explanation for the origin of the Insular writing-system. Perhaps conscious of the admiration that Traube had held for Maffei, Brown made the point in the same terms that Maffei had used centuries earlier:[41]

> 'There can be no Christianity without books and readers and no books without writers. In the fifth and sixth centuries the Insular church cannot have lived entirely off imported books. The works of Gildas, the Penitentials, the sound education in Ireland to which the letters of Columbanus bear witness, prove that there was no catastrophic break in the traditions of reading and writing between the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain and Columbanus's own departure for Gaul…'

However it is only relatively recently that this thinking has re-entered palaeographical scholarship in any meaningful manner and it has not had the chance to consider the writing from Roman Britain that has been discovered in the meantime. Gifford Charles-Edwards printed reproductions of some of Roger Tomlin's excellent line-drawings of the fourth-century Romano-British curse-tablets in her commentary on the 'Group 1' early Christian monuments of Wales in the latest catalogues and in 2013 Thomas Charles-Edwards described the palaeographical continuity that linked Roman Britain and early medieval western Britain, pointing out how 'the Insular version of half-uncial' was influenced by 'New Roman cursive, a form of script introduced *c.* 300 and employed by the Imperial administration…also…in such private texts as the Bath curse-tablets'.[42] In other words, as Lhuyd wrote to Wanley, 'they had their letters from the Romans'.

The second great counter-current that deprived Insular scholarship of the ability to approach early medieval Insular writing in the empirical manner of Lhuyd and Wanley was not historiographical but palaeographical. It came about in the early twentieth century and is particularly associated with the approach and nomenclature of the *Codices Latini Antiquiores* and the tradition of palaeographical scholarship that has been described as the 'Munich

[41] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 180.
[42] Gifford Charles-Edwards *apud Corpus,* I, p. 80 & fig. 49 a-b; *WAB*, p. 632.

tradition'. 'Munich tradition' refers to the theory and practice of palaeography as carried on in the twentieth century by the distinguished diaspora of German- and English-speaking scholars who had come under the influence of Traube during his tenure as the first professor of medieval Latin philology at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich from 1902 to his premature death in 1907.[43] By all accounts, Traube's teaching at Munich, not to mention his personal charisma, was inspirational. As E. A. Loew (as he then was, 1879-1969) put it: 'to be with him was to be in the presence of a genius – a keen mind, nimble spirit, brilliant, witty yet gentle…I took all his courses…I could not return to Halle…I became a pupil of Traube'.[44]

Many of the leading English-speaking palaeographers of the twentieth century had close links with Traube or his successors. When the now-Professor Emerita Rosamond McKitterick complained in 1995 that British postgraduate students were no longer being taught 'proper palaeography' her lament was that they were no longer being inculcated in the 'Munich tradition'.[45] Lowe himself had undertaken his doctoral work on the early kalendars of Monte Cassino under the supervision of Traube. Wallace Lindsay (1858–1937) travelled to Munich in 1908 soon after Traube's death to examine the great man's notes in preparation for his work on Caroline and Celtic manuscripts and (in particular) their abbreviation-systems, having been inspired by Traube's pioneering discovery of the importance of abbreviations. Via Lowe in particular the Munich tradition found expression in the colossal undertaking of the *Codices Latini Antiquiores.*

Albeit that their individual practitioners pursued a variety of interests and approaches, as a generalisation the spirits of these two – equally distinguished – palaeographical traditions

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[43] For Traube see Gabriel Silagi, *Rückblick Auf Meine Lehrthätigkeit* (München, 1988) and *idem*, 'Ludwig Traube und der münchener Lehrstuhl für Patristik (mit einem exkurs: zur thesaurus-frage)', *Aevum*, 73, no. 3 (1999), pp. 837-90; also Franz Boll's preface and biographical summary in Ludwig Traube, *Zur Paläographie Und Handschriftenkunde. Traube, Ludwig, 1861-1907*, ed. Franz Boll and Paul Lehmann (München, 1909), pp. XI - XLVII. Lindsay's review of Traube's *Nomina Sacra* and Boll and Lehman's *Vorlesungen* is a fine tribute: W. M. Lindsay, 'Traube's Nomina Sacra and Posthumous Works', *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2 (April 1909), pp. 132-6.

[44] E. A. Lowe, 'Autobiographical Note' in Ludwig Bieler (ed.), *E. A. Lowe – Palaeographical Papers 1907-1965*, (2 vols., Oxford, 1972), ii, p. 591.

[45] Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Teaching of Palaeography in Great Britain', *Gazette du livre médiéval*, no. 26 (1995), p. 38.

are different in fundamental respects. The seventeenth-century scholars (like their Italian and French successors) were concerned equally with different writing-technologies and media: coins, inscriptions, and *graffiti* as well as books, whereas Traube and his distinguished diaspora were frequently philologists, concerned originally with the transmission of Antique texts to the Renaissance.[46] As a consequence, their palaeographical work had a natural focus on medieval books, particularly the numerous Carolingian manuscripts (and their libraries) which often contained the oldest and most interesting Classical texts. In addition to this Carolingian-philological focus, a particular methodology gained favour. Traube had been powerfully influenced by the work of the great Norman diplomatist and cataloguer Léopold Delisle (1826-1910), head of the manuscripts department of the Bibliothèque impériale (subsequently nationale) from 1874.[47] Delisle's approach to manuscripts was shaped by his profession of archivist and cataloguer, where the provenance and attribution of documents were paramount.[48] He used the evidence of date and place occurring in the colophons of certain eighth-century Merovingian manuscripts from northern France to ascribe them to one or other of the great houses of the period - Luxeuil, Corbie, Tours, Laon and so on.[49] For example, Épinal, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 68 (Jerome's letters, originally a Murbach book) contained a colophon which enabled it to be dated to the third year of the reign of Childéric, 744;[50] a Gospel-book preserved at the seminary at Autun similarly provided a lengthy colophon which the scribe obligingly dated *'anno tertio regnante domino nostro Pippino rege…'*, that is, the

[46] Traube, 'zur alten Philologie' in *Vorlesungen*, III, *Kleine Schriften*, part 1.
[47] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 25.
[48] As described by contemporaries, *'…peu d'imagination, mais une rare aptitude à recueiller les faits, à les cataloguer, à les classer dans l'ordre le plus logique…beaucoup de sens practique, un esprit prudent…'*, Charles Bémont, 'Nécrologie. Léopold Delisle', *Revue Historique*, vol. 105, no. 1 (1910), pp. 84–91; see also E. Maunde Thompson, 'Léopold Delisle', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 26, No. 101 (1911), p. 77.
[49] L. Delisle, « Note sur trois manuscrits à date certaine », *BÉC*, 6, IV (Paris, 1868), pp. 217-9; *idem*, 'Notice sur un manuscript mérovingien de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique no. 9850-9852', *Notices et Extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, XXXI, (Paris, 1887), pp. 33-47; *idem*, 'Notice sur un manuscript de l'abbaye de Luxeuil copié en 625', *Notices et Extraits*, XXXI (Paris, 1886), pp. 149-164; *idem*, *Notice sur un manuscrit mérovingien contenant des fragments d' Eugyppius* (Paris, 1875).
[50] L. Delisle, 'Note sur un manuscrit mérovingien de la bibliothèque d'Épinal', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 21ᵉ année, N. 3 (1877), pp. 274-276.

third year of the reign of Pippin the Short, 754.[51] The methodology was summarised by Bischoff a century later: [52]

> '…even those manuscripts which survive in isolation represent the product of an established school, and all such schools can be presumed to have developed their own special types of writing, as in the Carolingian period'.

This methodology of identifying the date and place of manufacture for a book in order to identify its script as the usage of a particular identifiable 'scriptorium' was regarded by Traube as Delisle's 'crowning achievement'.[53] Looked at in this way, manuscripts became not only vehicles for texts but historical and cultural evidence of their own times in their own right. However where a manuscript offered no evidence to reveal its 'scriptorium' of origin the palaeographer would be paralysed, or, as Lowe put it, marooned in a state of 'nescience':[54]

> 'In palaeography we mostly splash about in a sea of uncertainty or complete nescience: our ignorance is such that we cling to straws. Every now and then, however, we sight a raft which by careful steering takes us to *terra firma.* Such rafts have been the mainstay of our discipline. They are, of course, our dated and placed manuscripts'.

The palaeographical concept central to this method was the assumption that each 'scriptorium' wrote its own 'script-type'. One of Traube's many seminal palaeographical works was a 1900 paper on the so-called 'ab' script written at the Abbey of St Peter at Corbie, near Amiens, from the later eighth century onwards. The paper explained the similarities shared by different contemporary book-hands by means of the concept of '*Schrifttype*', which Traube explained as the conscious, deliberate creation of a 'scriptorium'.[55] This core methodology of

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[51] Delisle, « Note sur trois manuscrits », p. 248.
[52] B. Bischoff, 'Panorama der Handschriftenüberlieferung aus der Zeit Karls des Großen' in *Karl der Grosse,* II, *Das geistige Leben* (Dusseldorf, 1965), pp. 233-254.
[53] This analysis owes much to Professor Ganz; see Ganz, 'Traube on « Schrifttypen »', pp. 293-4.
[54] E. A. Lowe, 'A key to Bede's Scriptorium, Some observations on the Leningrad manuscript of the « Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum »', *Scriptorium*, Tome 12, n° 2 (1958), p. 182.
[55] Traube, 'Perrona Scottorum', p. 471 *et ff.* for the discussion of '*beneventanischer Schrift'*, '*insulare Schrift'* and p. 495 *et ff.* for '*die ältere Schrift von Corbie'*. What actually constitutes a 'scriptorium' is a matter of opinion. In his 2020 Lyell Lectures at Oxford Richard Sharpe demonstrated that even the greatest of the high-medieval Benedictine houses (his example was St Alban's) did not operate a 'scriptorium' in the sense of a dedicated room housing scribes and illuminators working under a writing-master. Sharpe showed that professional scribes unattached to any monastic house could be traced in London back to at least the time of Canute and that books, even quite prestigious volumes, were being produced in a variety of ways in late Anglo-Saxon England; see R. Sharpe, 'Decay and closure of libraries - The Lyell Lectures 2019 (6)',

'script type - scriptorium' inspired both Lowe and Lindsay who, in the years after Traube's death, undertook extensive work on the early medieval scripts written at the great northern French houses including the Corbie 'ab' and the Merovingian script that they came to term the Laon 'az' script and, in the case of Lowe, the Beneventan script particularly associated with Monte Cassino.[56]

All that said, it was of course not lost on Traube, Lehman, Lowe or indeed anyone else that not every early medieval hand could easily be stamped as the 'house-script' of 'Corbie', 'Laon' or 'Luxeuil'. Traube understood this and his response was the development of a wider concept of '*Schrifttype*' to include 'types' of script that 'typified' over time within a certain geographical *area*.[57] But even these scripts, Lowe affirmed:

> '…[are] invariably the creation of a single master…his style is copied, a school is formed and a type…comes into existence'.[58]

This approach to early medieval writing manifested itself in the *nomenclature* or terminology adopted by the *CLA* to classify and categorise scripts, something which proved ferociously contentious at the time and which remains even today, in the words of Giovanna

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https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/decay-and-closure-libraries-lyell-lectures-2019-6 (17 Dec. 2020). Sharpe did not of course deny the possibility of a corporate writing function and a 'guiding mind' at the most important early medieval centres, for example at Wearmouth-Jarrow in the eighth century, but for Late Antique Britain and the early medieval Celtic west (including Ireland) the traditional Benedictine concept of a 'scriptorium' is highly misleading. Adomnán, for example, describes St Columba as copying books in his own hut on Iona; Adomnán, *Life of Saint Columba*, tr. Richard Sharpe (London, 1995), II, 29, p. 177. Bede also seems to suggest that education and scholarship in Ireland did not operate on an organised, collective basis; during the episcopates of Colman and Finan English migrants in Ireland stayed in one place if they wished to pursue the monastic life but 'others preferred to travel, studying under various teachers in turn'; Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, §27, p. 313. As David Ganz puts it, 'the question of what constituted an early medieval scriptorium, still await[s] explicit discussion'; Ganz, 'Traube on « Schrifttypen »', p. 296.

[56] E. A. Lowe, 'Studia palaeographica: a contribution to the history of early Latin minuscule and to the dating of Visigothic MSS', *Verlag des Königliche Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (München, 1910), pp. 1-91; W. M. Lindsay, 'The Laon az type', *Revue des bibliothèques*, xxiv (1914), pp. 5-27; *idem*, 'The Old Script of Corbie, its Abbreviation Symbols', *Revue des bibiliothèques*, xxii (1912), pp. 405-429; P. Liebaert,'Some early scripts of the Corbie Scriptorium' in W. M. Lindsay (ed.), *Palaeographia Latina* (6 vols., London, New York 1922-9), I, pp. 62-6. For the account of Lindsay's visit to Munich in the year after Traube's death to consult Traube's notes, see Ganz, 'Traube on « Schrifttypen »', p. 293.

[57] Traube, *Vorlesungen* I, p. xlviii.

[58] Lowe, 'The Script of Luxeuil', p. 133. But even the 'canonical' scripts of Merovingian France are open to significant doubt. As long ago as 1947 Leslie Webber Jones pointed out that although many manuscripts in the 'Corbie ab' script had been *preserved* at Corbie, the script had been *written* throughout Picardy and Flanders, at Reims and Paris and as far afield as Cologne, Autun and Montpellier. Moreover, morphological analysis showed not a single canonical 'script-type' but several. Webber Jones ventured no further than to call it a 'Merovingian type', see L. Webber Jones, 'The Scriptorium at Corbie: II. The Script and the Problems', *Speculum*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1947), p. 376. As Richard Sharpe put it, Lowe was 'too much guided by subsequent location in presuming the place of writing'; Sharpe, 'Books from Ireland', p. 11.

Nicolaj '…a somewhat chaotic situation'.[59] The improvement of photographic reproduction in the twentieth century meant that the *CLA* did not need to worry about describing the *appearance* of a script in words because a good photograph could now be printed.[60] An infinitely greater problem, however, was the classificatory names that the *CLA* gave to purportedly similar scripts. Lowe had been confronted with the huge task of providing descriptive captions for each of the printed plates that were the whole *raison d'être* of the *CLA*.[61] His nomenclature provided a rich source of argument because, as Denis Muzerelle (1945–2021) archivist and conservator at the Bibliothèque nationale, put it, '…in relation to scripts, there is no term, however elementary and universal it may be, that is not a vehicle for a certain amount of ideology'.[62]

The sharpest critics of the *CLA's* nomenclature were the contemporary French palaeographers of the 'new' French school. Jean Mallon characterised Lowe's basic nomenclature as '*capitalis quadrata'*, '*capitalis rustica'*, 'uncial' and 'half-uncial'; a hierarchy

[59] Giovanna Nicolaj, 'Questions terminologiques et questions de méthode: autour de Giorgio Cencetti, Emanuele Casamassima et Albert Derolez', *BÉC*, vol. 165, no. 1 (2007), p. 12.
[60] As Bruce Barker-Benfield comments, 'However good the description, it is difficult to visualize a complex letter-form without seeing a specimen'; B. C. Barker-Benfield, 'Bernhard Bischoff (trans. Dáibhi ó Cróinín and David Ganz) 'Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages'', *The Classical Review*, New Series, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1991), p. 206. For the stimulus given to Latin palaeography by advances in the technology of photographic reproduction from as early as 1865 see Denis Muzerelle, 'Une siècle de paléographie Latine en France', in Armando Petrucci and Alessandro Pratesi, *Un secolo di paleografia e diplomatica (1887-1986), per il centenario dell'Istituto di Paleografia dell'Università di Roma* (Roma, 1988), pp. 131-2. Lowe lamented that the lithographs of the *Bibliotheca Casinensis* lacked 'that accuracy which can only be achieved by a mechanical process' and went out of his way to engage the best photographers he could: he was accompanied on his Italian library-Odyssey in the Autumn of 1936 by an expert photographer and he synchronised his visit to the Phillipps collection in Cheltenham with a visit by a famous London photographer; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, Preface, pp. vi-vii and B. Bischoff, '*En route* for *CLA:* For E. A. Lowe and with E. A. Lowe', *Peritia*, 26 (2015), pp. 36, 38. Jean Mallon went even further and was the first palaeographer to make an animated film titled '*Ductus*', showing the evolution of the *ductus* under the various graphical tendencies, see 'Ductus. La formation de l'alphabet moderne', YouTube (filmed 1975, uploaded 27 Dec. 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMBmNBUhMW0 (13 Oct. 2022).
[61] 'There existed, for certain, at least 1500 Latin manuscripts 'prior to 800' which…had to be materially and palaeographically described and to be presented in photographic specimens…'; Bischoff, '*En route* for CLA', p. 30.
[62] Muzerelle, 'Une siècle', 152.

which he described as 'sacred to M. Lowe' but which (in Mallon's view) gave rise to 'infinite difficulties':[63]

> '…« mixed uncial », « quarter uncial », « cursive minuscule », « mixed uncial and half-uncial », « half uncial verging on minuscule », « early minuscule », « precaroline minuscule », « Maurdramnus minuscule »…From this, the question of a general recasting of the classification and relationships of Latin scripts poses itself in a manner impossible to ignore…'

In response, Mallon demanded no less than a complete revolution in Latin palaeography, refocussed upon the new understanding of its roots in, and its essential continuity with, the 'New' Roman writing-system:[64]

> 'the moment has come when it is possible and necessary to create a Roman palaeography, much more independent and of a much wider scope than envisaged by Schiaparelli, who has been the closest to perceiving the idea…'

Mallon insisted that this 'new' palaeography demanded a '*table rase de toute la terminologie'* as a preliminary to the creation of a new terminology which accurately reflected both 'Janus-faces' of every script, namely its historical and palaeographical dimensions, unshackled from what his colleague and friend Robert Fawtier (1885-1966) termed '*…les cadres rigides d'un dogmatisme étroit'*.[65] In Chapter One, we will confront this challenge and propose just such a nomenclature for our British writing, based firmly on its Roman origin and the nature of the graphical process that gave it birth.

A further *lacuna* in the scheme of the *CLA* was epigraphic writing. The Italian palaeographer Paola Supino Martini, writing in 1991, commented that the lack of attention to

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[63] Jean Mallon, 'E. A. Lowe. Codices latini antiquiores, a palaeographical guide to latin manuscripts prior to the ninth century. Part VI (France: Abbeville-Valenciennes) Part VII (Switzerland). Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953 et 1956, etc.', *BÉC*, 115 (1957), p. 200. Gilissen referred to Lowe's categorisations as *'tout pragmatique et artificiel'* and that *'Les appellations données par Lowe – outre que leur inventeur ne s'est pas toujours montré constant – dépassant le nombre de 140*!' ; L. Gilissen, 'Analyse et évolution des formes graphiques', *Anuario de Estudios Médiévales,* Vol 21 (1991), p. 325. Mallon himself calculated them as *'pas moins…de cinquante appellations*'; Mallon, *Paléographie*, p. 18.

[64] Mallon, 'E. A. Lowe', p. 200. Ironically, Lowe had critiqued the nomenclature applied by the Maurists to the Corbie and Beneventan scripts in almost identical terms: 'They put the Corbie and Beneventan types together…and added thereto a great number of other scripts, classified under unintelligible divisions and subdivisions…' ; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 27.

[65] Jean Mallon, 'Observations sur quelques monuments d'écriture latine calligraphies dans les cinq premier siècles de notre ère', *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, 66 (1939), p. 39; R. Fawtier, 'Jean Mallon, Robert Marichal et Charles Perrat, 'L'écriture latine, de la capitale romaine à la minuscule, 1939', *Revue des Études Anciennes*, Tome 44, n° 1-2 (1942), p. 160.

the very many non-manuscript '*nodi principali della storia della scrittura latina'* was a consequence of the '*tradizione Traube-Lowe, Traube-Lehmann-Bischoff*' and that the 'exclusion or scarce regard' for 'all the other graphical expressions [other than *libraria*]' on the part of the 'Munich tradition' came from the fact that their palaeography had never been designed to narrate the development of Latin writing.[66] This was highlighted by Lowe's description of the waxed tablets recovered in 1914 from the Springmount Bog, Ballyhutherland, Co. Antrim in 1914 as a 'bog book' and a 'unique phenomenon'. They are rather quite normal Roman-style writing tablets or *pugillares*, examples of which had been discovered in Britain since the nineteenth century and which were regarded as quite commonplace by French and Italian scholarship. [67] As Julia M. H. Smith puts it, 'When we take all manifestations of writing into account…we greatly extend not only the quantity but the quality of the available evidence'.[68]

This approach has proved unhelpful in the Insular context, given the large amount of extremely important Roman-period and early medieval writing that survives in epigraphic form. The early Christian inscriptions of Wales, for example, had been catalogued by the Oxford polymath J. O. Westwood (1805-1893) as long ago as 1876 with a specific palaeographical purpose in mind: namely to support the work of Henry Bradshaw (1831–1886), Montagu Rhodes James (1862–1936) and Whitley Stokes (1830–1909) on the early medieval

[66] P. Supino Martini, 'Storia della scrittura e storia del libro nell'Alto Medioévo', *Anuario de Estudios Médiévales*, 21 (Barcelona, 1991), p. 389.
[67] *CLA, Supplement*, 1684. As Christian Courtois observed in his commentary and edition of the *Tablettes Albertini* from Vandal-era late fifth-century north Africa,'*L'usage des tablettes de bois par les anciens est chose bien connue'*; Christian Courtois, Louis Leschi, Charles Perrat and Charles Saumagne, *Tablettes Albertini. Actes privés de l'époque vandale* (Paris, 1952), p. 9. Ludwig Bieler also describes the Springmount Tablets as 'the Dublin Bog Book' but this was in his review of the *CLA Supplement* and his quotation marks may suggest that he was not endorsing the term; L. Bieler, 'Codices Latini Antiquiores, Supplement by E.A. Lowe', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (Spring, 1975), pp. 86-88. Bieler himself had edited and translated the Patrician texts in the *Book of Armagh* that referred to Patrick and his disciples carrying portable waxed tablets, see *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. and tr. L. Bieler (Dublin, 1979), pp. 122-3.
[68] Julia M. H. Smith, 'Writing in Britain and Ireland, *c.* 400- *c.* 800' in Clare Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, I, p. 30.

manuscripts preserved in Cambridge libraries of suspected Welsh origin. As Westwood himself put it in 1850, the early Christian inscriptions:[69]

> 'afford proofs of the truths which the want of manuscripts might cause…to be questioned'

and:

> 'are worthy to be prized as highly as the most costly executed manuscripts',

a maxim that was emphasised by Carlo Tedeschi in 1995:[70]

> '…the principal and irreplaceable value of the Early Christian inscriptions in Britain is the fact that they are the only extant evidence for Latin script that we possess for the period between the beginning of the fifth and the second half of the sixth century. They witness for Britain the slow passage from the universalism in writing typical of the Roman world to early medieval 'particularism'.

To summarise, then, the purpose of this thesis is therefore to rewind the clock to Lhuyd's death in his room at the Ashmolean in Oxford on 30th June 1709 and restart the analysis of the Insular writing system, the early Christian monuments of western Britain and the ninth-to-eleventh-century manuscripts attributed to Wales using the newly-discovered writing of Roman Britain as our interpretive tool. This breaks down into the following research aims:

Chapter One builds on the Romano-centric palaeography of Italian- and French-speaking scholarship. I will demonstrate, in practical terms by reference to specific examples of Insular writing, how this 'Mediterranean' approach provides the tools, concepts and terminology best suited to analyse and describe Insular writing more widely and British writing more narrowly, particularly for the earlier part of our period *c.* 300-600. This short chapter will propose a palaeographical methodology, nomenclature and 'validation of concept' for the analysis of Roman and subsequently early medieval British writing in Chapters Two to Four.

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[69] J. O. Westwood and J. Williams, 'Observations on the stone of St Cadfan at Towyn', *AC,* ser. 2, 1 (1850), p. 91.

[70] Carlo Tedeschi, 'Osservazioni sulla paleografia delle inscrizioni britanniche paleocristiane (V-VII sec.): Contributo allo studio dell'origine delle scritture insulari', *Scrittura e Civiltà,* 19 (1995), pp. 22-23. Armando Petrucci similarly notes in relation to the *CLA* that 'the least documented chronological subperiod was precisely the oldest, encompassing the third, fourth and fifth centuries; and this was also the most interesting period for 'uncovering the mystery'of the origins of [the book]'; Petrucci, *Writers and Writing,* p. 2.

Chapter Two focusses on the earliest phase of the Insular writing-system, *c.* 300-600. Selected examples of writing on hard media demonstrate how the New Common Script of late Roman Britain provided not only the morphology but also the 'graphical process' that created the earliest Insular writing-system, namely the internal evolutionary dynamic whereby scripts came into being, achieved some greater or lesser degree of consistency ('typification'), and then declined, to be supplanted by further new scripts emerging out of same rich graphical resource.

I will show how this complex engine of script-evolution accounts for not only the typification and decline of different scripts but also the different scribal treatments (and the resulting 'aspects' or *facies* of individual scripts) that came to characterise British writing throughout the early medieval period. I will show that far more of the development of British writing than has hitherto been supposed can be attributed to Roman Britain and its participation in the radical Empire-wide changes in writing and book production that commenced around the middle of the third century, when the 'old' Empire-wide script-system started to yield to the 'new'.

The methodological approach to British writing proposed in Chapter One, combined with the demonstrative analyses of Chapter Two, lay the foundation for **Chapters Three** and **Four**. These focus more narrowly and with a more historical flavour on the two early medieval writing-provinces of south-east and south-west Wales. Both chapters are structured in two parts, namely: (i) the history and effects of the graphical process on a local level as reflected in the extant writing of the relevant writing-province, sometimes focussing at very local level on the individual farms, churches, districts, *commotes* and *cantrefs* where the writing survives; and (ii) specific and more palaeographical analyses that seek to connect epigraphic writing with manuscripts of uncertain provenance, the aim being to use a holistic, multi-disciplinary

approach to identify local traditions of writing, scholarship and book-production associated with the major ecclesiastical centres of pre-Conquest south Wales.[71]

I justify the regional and historical focus of these two 'south Welsh' chapters mostly because it is across south Wales that the great bulk of early Christian monuments (and hence the greatest body of British writing) from the early Middle Ages survives.[72] Also, it is thought likely that most surviving early medieval manuscripts attributed to Wales are of southern and not northern provenance, Deheubarth and Glamorgan in particular. Thirdly, the use of early Christian monuments (which do not move far) inevitably anchors the discussion to the place at which they survive, particularly where a number of monuments survive at the same place.

In **Chapter Three** I will therefore discuss the early medieval writing-traditions of that part of the *civitas* of the Silures in south-east Wales that became *Morgannwg*, or Glamorgan. This discussion has two aims. Firstly, to show how the graphical process inherent in New Common Script operated to produce a succession of epigraphic scripts that came into use, 'typified' over time but then declined, giving way to other scripts better suited to the needs and tastes of the day. Secondly, I will show how the form, script and function of the early Christian monuments, taken together, link with other evidence for the early medieval history of Glamorgan to cast light upon the poorly understood ecclesiastical culture and landscape of the region in the early Middle Ages. Thirdly, I will show that when external influence arrived in Glamorgan, it came in the form of Anglo-Scandinavian influence in the tenth and eleventh centuries, demonstrating the eastward cultural orientation of the region from the time of Alfred.

As a second exercise, I will analyse the palaeography of two specific artefacts of British writing: CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, the 'Cambridge Juvencus' manuscript of the second half of the ninth century, and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL REX, a late eighth-century cross-shaft that survives

[71] Richard Gameson warns that 'It is the nature of early medieval studies…that certainty is frequently elusive…If a balance of probabilities is frequently the best that can be achieved, we must endeavour to use all the available evidence…'; Richard Gameson, 'The study of Early Insularbooks' in *idem* (ed.), *The History of the Book*, I, p. 719.

[72] Though early Christian monuments are plentiful in the north in the fifth and sixth centuries, they peter out in the seventh, see *Corpus*, III, pp. 34-6.

at the great monastery of St Illtud at Llanilltud Fawr in the Vale of Glamorgan. Certain of the scribal hands of the manuscript resemble forms used in the inscription on the cross-shaft sufficiently closely to suggest that both artefacts are the product of the same writing-tradition.

In **Chapter Four** I will discuss the early medieval writing-traditions of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, the post-Roman mountain kingdom centred on Llangorse lake and the headwaters of the River Usk. The purpose of this discussion will be to demonstrate how these regions' close links with Ireland and their participation in what has been called the 'Irish Sea culture-province' meant that they were from the outset a separate writing-province to that of south-east Wales. If the south-east was conditioned by its cultural inheritance from the highly Romanised Severn-Cotswolds region, the much less Romanised regions of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog were similarly deeply affected by their close geographical and cultural links with Munster and Leinster. Dyfed in particular was thoroughly integrated into the cultural exchange between the Irish Sea culture-province and Carolingian France from early in the ninth century. This exerted an influence upon its writing-traditions not seen further east.

As a second exercise, I will analyse the palaeography of the more significant ninth-to-tenth century inscriptions of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog and the scribal hands of CCCC, MS 153, the 'Corpus Martianus Capella' of late ninth or early tenth century. A cluster of distinctive inscriptions from the Ceredigion hinterland of Llanbadarn Fawr and Llanddewibrefi share the same morphology and the same calligraphic treatment as the scribal hands of the manuscript. The connection supports two of M. R. James's original suspicions about this manuscript, namely: (a) that it originated in Dyfed; and (b) that the first scribal hand, the hand described by him as the 'fine, flat-topped hand', typified into what is perhaps the only (surviving) example of a 'script-type' written in medieval Wales: the book-hand written at the Ceredigion *clas*-church of Llanbadarn Fawr in the late eleventh century, associated with the clerical dynasty of Sulien.[73] As part of this I will consider the 'flirtation' with Caroline minuscule that

[73] M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, Vol. I. (Cambridge, 1912), no. 153, pp. 344-6; Lindsay, EWS, p. 19.

appears in both the manuscript and the epigraphy and discuss the connections that linked ninth-century Deheubarth with the resurgent scholarship of Carolingian France.

If anyone, apart of course from Lhuyd himself, deserves the title of the 'father' of specifically 'British' palaeography then it would be Henry Bradshaw, whom Lindsay considered 'to know these Welsh manuscripts better than anyone'.[74] Bradshaw himself understood that he was a pioneer and encouraged others to add their efforts to his own. He urged future scholars to do as he had done and to strike out in their own direction, commenting that '…people who use what others have found are always far more numerous than those who deliberately go into a library on a voyage of discovery'.[75] But Bradshaw wrote with great verve and this is not a real dichotomy. This thesis is intended to be just such a 'voyage of discovery' but I hope that it will be no less a 'voyage of discovery' for its use of 'what it has found' in Lhuyd, Wanley and Maffei.[76]

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[74] *EWS*, p. 7. Little work was done on the Welsh manuscripts between the days of Wanley and Lhuyd and the mid-nineteenth century. By Bradshaw's day, advances in philology and linguistics in Germany associated with the names of Johan Kaspar Zeuss (1806-1856), Franz Bopp (1791-1867), Kuno Meyer (1858-1919), Heinrich Zimmer (1851-1910) and Rudolf Thurneysen (1857-1940) stimulated academic interest in matters Celtic in Britain. In particular, Zeuss's monumental *Grammatica Celtica* of 1853 put Celtic philology on a sound scientific basis for the first time: in Cambridge the work of both Bradshaw and Stokes was inspired by these pioneering philologists.

[75] Francis Jenkinson (ed.), *Collected Papers of Henry Bradshaw* (Cambridge, 1889), p. 476.

[76] Or, as Lowe put it with reference to 'the long line of investigators from Wanley to Traube and Lindsay' (and with exemplary humility on his part) 'when the pioneer has cleared the field and removed the stumps even small men can plough and reap some harvest', *CLA*, ii, p. ix.

Chapter One. The palaeography of British writing, *c.* 300 – 1100

Introduction and research aims

This Chapter One provides a brief overview of the specific artefacts of writing that comprise 'British writing' and, secondly, proposes a palaeographical approach based on the concepts discussed in the Introduction. Given, however, that the early Christian monuments and their inscriptions have all been catalogued between 2007 and 2013, I will omit them here and only provide summary lists of the other two categories of British writing which have not been so fortunate, namely: (a) the extant examples of New Common Script recovered from Roman Britain; and (b) those early medieval manuscripts that have been attributed to Wales.

New Common Script from Roman Britain

Table 1 below lists the extant examples of New Common Script from Roman Britain known to the writer with a short commentary describing each artefact:[1]

Table 1. New Common Script from Roman Britain.

No.	Provenance	Item	Date	Comment
1.	**Uley, Gloucs. Temple of Mercury.**	Curse tablet, No. 9.	Late third century (?).	Theft of a sheep. Transitional hand in Old – New Common Script.[2]
2.		Curse tablet, No. 68.	Fourth century.	A 'fluent New Roman Cursive of fourth-century date'.[3]
3.	**Rothwell, Lincs.**	List of personal names.	Fourth century.	Found by metal-detecting. New Common Script.[4]

[1] The writer has recorded in the 'Acknowledgments' above his appreciation of the assistance of Dr Roger Tomlin of Wolfson College with this list.
[2] Ann Woodward and Peter E. Leach, *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a Ritual Complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire 1977-9* (London, 1993), pp. 127-8; Tomlin, Britannia, 51 (2020), p. 480.
[3] Woodward and Leach, *The Uley Shrines*, p. 129; Tomlin, *Britannia*, 46 (2015), pp. 398-9.
[4] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 43 (2012), p. 403; Steven Willis, *The Roman Roadside Settlement and Multi-period Ritual Complex at Nettleton and Rothwell, Lincolnshire*, Volume 1, Central Lincolnshire Wolds Research Project (University of Kent, 2013), p. 284.

Table 1. New Common Script from Roman Britain.				
No.	**Provenance**	**Item**	**Date**	**Comment**
4.	**Upper Thames Street, London EC4.**	Amulet.	Late third century (?).	Amulet against the periodic recurrence of malaria. Transitional hand in Old – New Common Script.[5]
5.	**Silchester, Hants.**	Curse tablet.	Fourth century.	Found before 1901. 'Clumsy New Roman Cursive of fourth-century date'.[6]
6.	**Hamble Estuary, Hants.**	Curse tablet.	Late fourth century.	Found by metal-detecting. New Common Script. Probably last third/quarter (or even the end) of the fourth century.[7]
7.	**West Deeping, Lincs.**	Uterine phylactery.	Fourth century.	From the site of the villa at Rectory Farm, West Deeping, halfway between Stamford and Grantham. New Common Script.[8]
8.	**Brandon, Suffolk.**	Curse tablet.	Fourth century.	Dredged from the Little Ouse but more likely to have come from the temple(s) at Hockwold-cum-Wilton nearby. New Common Script.[9]
9.	**Brean Down, Soms.**	Curse tablet.	*c.* 340 - *c.* 390.	Found on the beach below the site of a Roman temple. New Common Script.[10]
10.	**Aylesford, Kent.**	Curse tablet.	Fourth century.	From the site of the villa at Eccles. 'Late' New Common Script.[11]

[5] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 51 (2020), pp. 486-7 also Roger S. O. Tomlin, 'Intermittent Fever: A Latin Textual Amulet from Roman London' in A. Cain and G. Hays (eds.), *Omnium Magistra Virtutum: Studies in Honour of Danuta Shanzer* (Turnhout, 2022), pp. 19-32.
[6] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 40 (2009), pp. 323-4.
[7] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 28 (1997), pp. 455-8.
[8] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 27 (1996), pp. 443-5; *ibid, 'Sede in Tuo Loco'*, pp. 291–294.
[9] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 25 (1994), pp. 293-4.
[10] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 17 (1986), pp. 433-5.
[11] Tomlin, *Britannia*, 17 (1986), pp. 428 & figs. 1 & 2.

Table 1. New Common Script from Roman Britain.				
No.	**Provenance**	**Item**	**Date**	**Comment**
11.	**Bath, Soms. The Sacred Spring.**	Attestation oath, No. 94.	Fourth (possible late third?) century.	Distinctive, expert 'square' New Common Script with some archaic features.[12] Discussed in Chapter Two below.
12.		List of names, No. 95.	Fourth century.	Discussed in Chapter Two below.[13]
13.		List of names, No. 96.	Fourth century.	Same hand as No. 95 above.[14]
14.		Curse tablet, No. 97.	Fourth century.	'practised but careless' New Common Script.[15]
15.		Curse tablet, No. 98.	Fourth century.	'a practised hand': New Common Script.[16]
16.		Curse tablet, No. 99.	Fourth century.	New Common Script.[17]
17.		Curse tablet, No. 100.	Fourth century.	New Common Script.[18]
18.		Curse tablet, No. 101.	Fourth century.	New Common Script.[19]
19.		Curse tablet, No. 103.	Fourth century.	New Common Script.[20]

[12] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 226.
[13] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 228.
[14] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 229.
[15] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 230.
[16] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 232.
[17] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 235.
[18] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 236.
[19] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 238.
[20] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 240.

Table 1. New Common Script from Roman Britain.				
No.	**Provenance**	**Item**	**Date**	**Comment**
20.		Curse tablet, No. 104.	Fourth century.	New Common Script.[21]
21.	**Mildenhall, Suffolk.**	Silver bowl.	Fourth century.	Part of the Mildenhall Treasure. Inscription in 'fourth century cursive letters' under the flange.[22]
22.	**Traprain Law, East Lothian.**	Silver cup.	Fourth century.	Part of the Traprain Law Hoard. Inscription in 'fourth century cursive letters' under the base.[23]
23.		Silver cup.	Fourth century.	Ditto: 'graffito on the underside'.[24]
24.		Silver spoon.	Fourth century.	Ditto: 'fourth-century cursive on the underside of the bowl'.[25]
25.		Silver spoon.	Fourth century.	Ditto: 'fourth century cursive' inside the bowl.[26]
26.	**Silchester, Hants.**	Silver spoon.	Fourth century.	'graffito on the axis of the bowl'.[27]
27.	**Monmouthshire.**	Silver spoon.	Fourth century.	'graffito scratched in late-Roman cursive'.[28]
28.	**Binchester, Co. Durham.**	Brick fragments. List of names (check-list or roster?)	Fourth century.	'New Roman Cursive of the fourth century'.[29]

[21] Tomlin, *Tab. Sulis*, p. 241.
[22] *RIB* ii, 2414.7. There is of course no certainty that these high-status items were not imported.
[23] *RIB* ii, 2414.12.
[24] *RIB* ii, 2414.17.
[25] *RIB* ii, 2420.9.
[26] *RIB* ii, 2420.58.
[27] *RIB* ii, 2430.21.
[28] *RIB* ii, 2420.57.
[29] *RIB* ii, 2491.78.

Table 1. New Common Script from Roman Britain.				
No.	**Provenance**	**Item**	**Date**	**Comment**
29.	**Caves Inn, Warks.**	Tegula fragments. *Abecedarium.*	'probably of fourth century date'.	New Common Script but with Old Common Script **m** and **n.**[30]

Early medieval manuscripts of Welsh origin

As discussed in the Introduction above, 'Insular' writing-traditions in the Atlantic Archipelago of Great Britain and Ireland were so thoroughly integrated during the early Middle Ages that it is extremely difficult to distinguish a manuscript written in Wales from a manuscript written in Ireland or England on palaeographical grounds.[31] Discovering the symptoms – in particular the abbreviations - that would enable such distinction to be made was the purpose of Lindsay's 1912 *Early Welsh Script.* However, even after Lindsay's exhaustive analysis of the hands, abbreviations and scribal practices of the manuscripts, he could only offer a very small and tentative list of usages which, if taken together, might suggest a Welsh origin (or scribe) for a particular hand. Lindsay himself concluded: [32]

> '…the exact criteria which will enable us to pronounce a Latin MS to have been written by a Welsh, and not an Irish scribe have yet to be found.'

Furthermore, not all of Lindsay's 'Welsh symptoms' have stood the test of time. Daniel Huws wrote in 2002 that it remains unknown how many surviving manuscripts are of genuinely Welsh origin and Patrick Sims-Williams similarly notes that Welsh manuscripts have usually been identified on non-palaeographical grounds:[33]

[30] *RIB* ii, 2491.135.
[31] Traube's term 'Insular' was intended to highlight the danger of trying to compartmentalise early medieval writing, the one criticism that might today be levelled at Lhuyd, who, for example, thought that CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 was 'Cumbrian or Pictish'; see Richard Sharpe, 'In quest of Pictish manuscripts', *The Innes Review*, 59, no. 2 (2008), pp. 145-167.
[32] *EWS*, p. 1.
[33] Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000), p. 3; Sims-Williams, 'The uses of writing', p. 23.

> '…there is no easy diagnosis of specifically Welsh as opposed to Irish 'symptoms' and nearly all known anonymous Cambro-Latin works have been identified as Welsh from their subject-matter or manuscript context.'

Since Lindsay's days, even in cases where a manuscript may clearly have been written in Wales, scholarship now often points to a wider 'pan-Celticity'. Bodl, MS Auct. F. 4. 32 is, as originally identified by Lhuyd, a binding of four separate manuscripts.[34] Fols. 19–36, the *Liber Commonei*, is a miscellany of arithmetical, computistical, liturgical and other texts. Despite the fact that it was written by a Welshman *c.* 817-835, various of the texts have been shown to relate closely to Irish material and it has been described as 'through and through a work of Celtic scholarship'.[35] In similar vein, Paul Russell's detailed work on the glosses of another part of Bodl, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37–47, the 'Oxford Ovid', suggests that certain Old Welsh glosses with the prefix *map* are 'best understood as a product of a bilingual Irish-Welsh glossing context' and point to 'the transmission of learning and scribes across the Irish Sea in the ninth century'.[36] Perhaps the most striking example of a 'Celtic team effort' is however CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, the 'Cambridge Juvencus', which Helen McKee has described as a thoroughly international undertaking on the part of a team of some thirteen scribes, Irishmen, Welshmen and a possible Breton.[37] Unpicking from this milieu the distinctively 'Welsh', whether this term is taken as pointing to origin, script, scholarship or indeed the *mamiaith* or mother-tongue of the scribe, risks meaninglessness.

In a doctoral thesis undertaken at King's College London in 1988 under the supervision of Julian Brown and David Dumville, Nicholas Hart-Webb revisited Lindsay's attributions and separated purportedly 'Welsh' manuscripts into three categories, *credibilia, dubia* and *spuria.* Hart-Webb's attributions, accompanied by digital reproductions, is summarised below for two reasons. Firstly, it is the most recent attempt to list early medieval 'Welsh' MSS. Secondly,

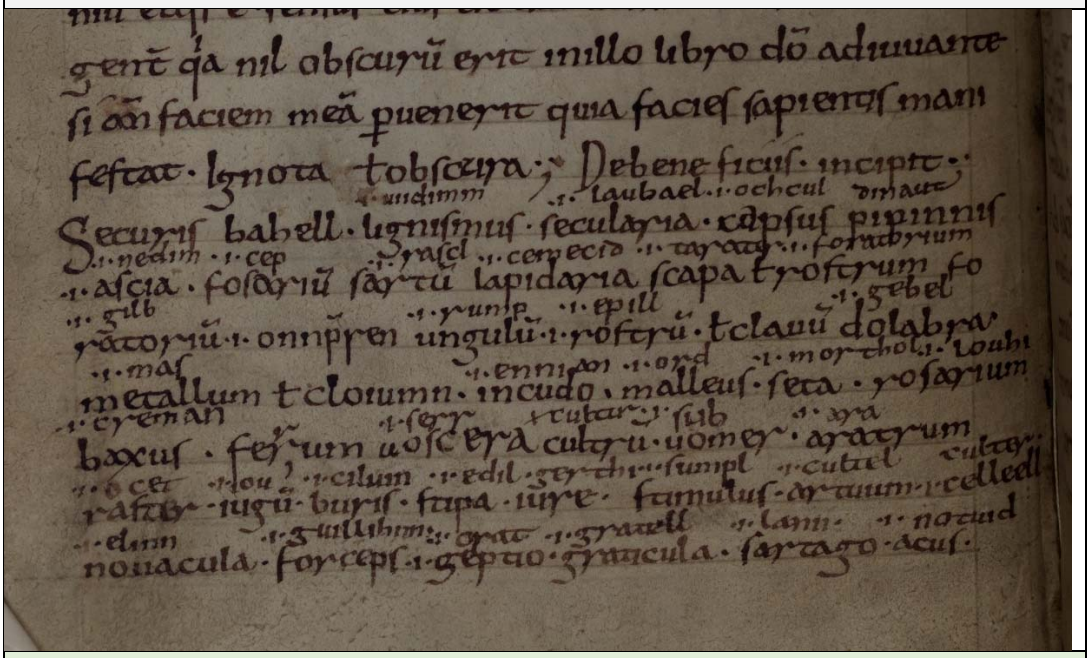
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[34] Lhuyd, *Archaeologia,* VI, I, col. I, p. 226.
[35] Aidan Breen, 'The Liturgical Materials in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS F. Auct. 4. 32', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft,* 34 (1992), p. 121.
[36] Paul Russell, *Reading Ovid in Medieval Wales* (Ohio, 2017), pp. 87-8.
[37] Helen McKee, The Cambridge Juvencus Manuscript Glossed in Latin, Old Welsh, and Old Irish – Text and Commentary (Aberystwyth, 2000), pp. 20-1.

reproductions are provided in order to illustrate that defining common feature which has - unnecessarily - perplexed scholars, namely their apparently infinite variety of scripts, hands and aspects:[38]

(i) **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 572** (Part I (A-D)), '*Codex Oxoniensis Posterior*'; Part I, D, *De aliquibus raris fabulis with glosses*, Cornwall (?), Wales (?), *s.* x; Part II, Penitential and canonical collection, N. E. France (?), *s.* ix[1]).[39]

Figure 2. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 572, Part I, D.

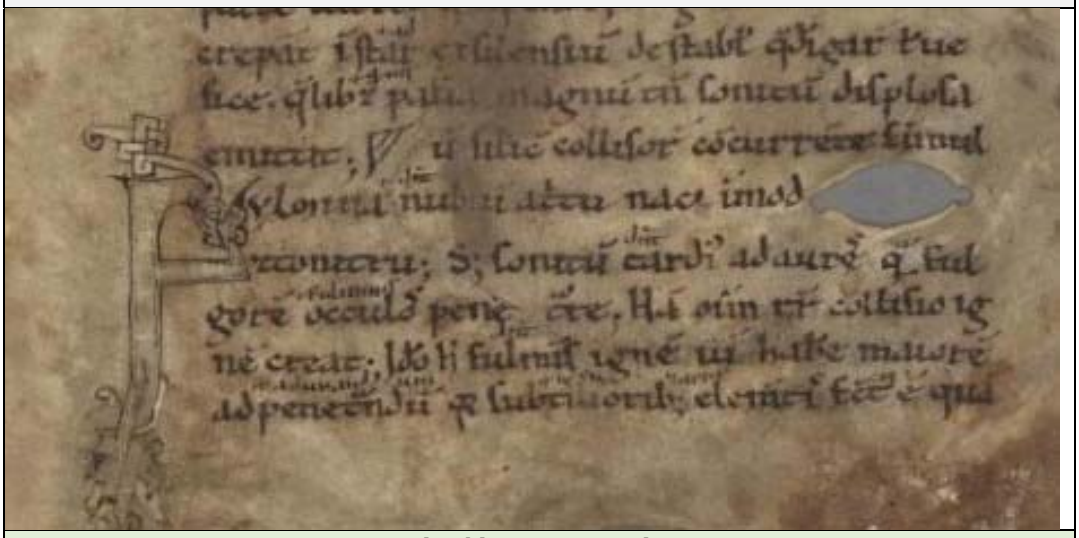


© Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

(ii) **Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 540B** (Bede, *De natura rerum*, Llanbadarn Fawr (?) *s.*xii[in]).[40]

[38] N. Hart-Webb, 'Early Medieval Welsh Book Production' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, King's College, London, 1988), pp. 37-163.
[39] 'MS. Bodl. 572', https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_1591 (17 Nov. 2022).
[40] 'De natura rerum Beda', https://www.llyfrgell.cymru/darganfod-dysgu/arddangosfeydd-arlein/llawysgrifau/yr-oesoedd-canol/de-natura-rerum#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=2%2C3%2C3411%2C2644 (17 Nov. 2022).

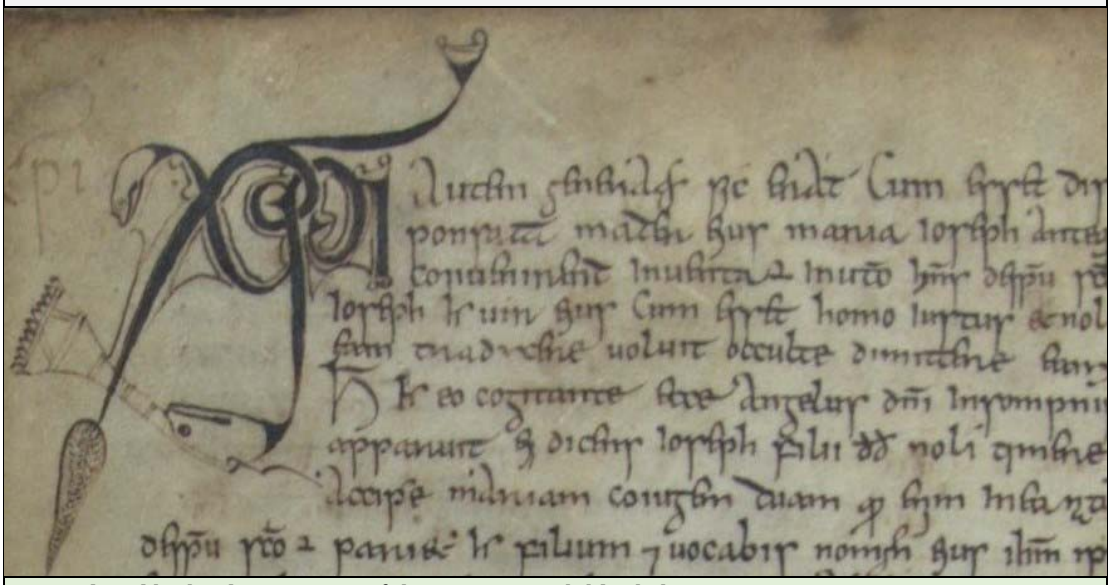
Figure 3. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 540B.



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(iii) **Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 671** (Gospels, *s.*ix[2]).[41]

Figure 4. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 671.

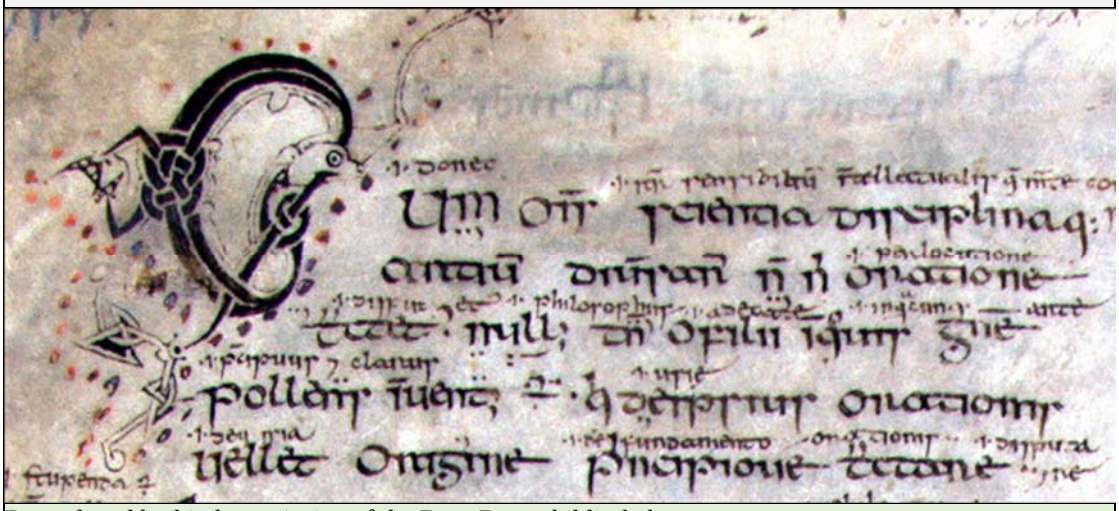


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(vi) **Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. C. 219 (Part Four)** (Pseudo-Augustine, *Paraphrasis Themistiana de Categoriis decem*, *s.*ix[ex]-x[in]).[42]

[41] 'Cod. 671', http://katalog.burgerbib.ch/detail.aspx?ID=129694 (17 Nov. 2022). There is a distinct possibility that this is an Irish hand.
[42] 'Cod. C 219 Sammelband', http://katalog.burgerbib.ch/detail.aspx?ID=130147 (17 Nov. 2022).

Figure 5. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. C. 219 (Part Four)

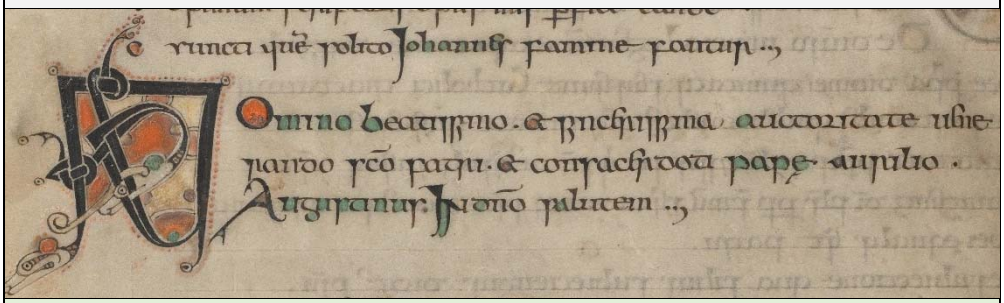


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(v) **Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One)** (Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae, s.*ix^{ex}-x^{in}).[43] For extensive reproductions see Chapter Four below.

(vi) **Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 199** (Augustine, *De trinitate cum additamentis,* Llanbadarn Fawr, 1085-1091).[44]

Figure 6. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 199.

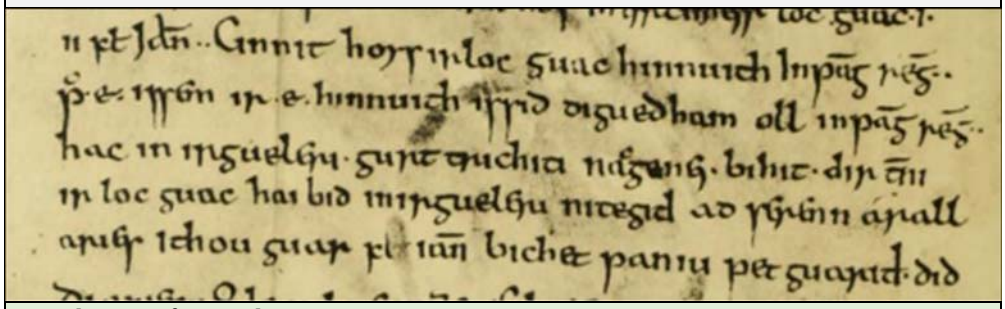


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(vii) **Cambridge, University Library, Add. MS 4543** (*Computus et formae, s.*x^{in}).

[43] 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153: The Corpus Martianus Capella', https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/wb769ft6889 (17 Nov. 2022).
[44] 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 199: Ieuan ap Sulien's Augustine on the Trinity', https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/sk095st1718 (17 Nov. 2022).

Figure 7. Cambridge, University Library, Add. MS 4534.

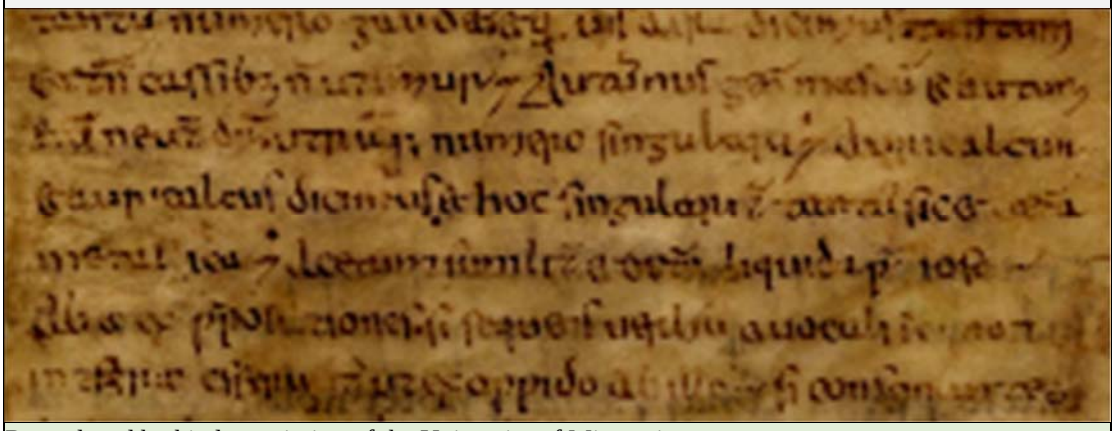


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(viii) **Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42** (Juvencus, *Euangeliorum libri quattuor cum glossis et additamentis, s.*ix^{2}-x^{in}).[45] For extensive reproductions, see Chapter Three below.

(ix) **Columbia, University of Missouri, Elmer Ellis Library, *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, no. 2** *(Florilegia grammatica, s.*ix^{in});[46]

Figure 8. Columbia, University of Missouri, Elmer Ellis Library, *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, no. 2.



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[45] 'Cambridge Juvencus', https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FF-00004-00042/4 (17 Nov. 2022).
[46] 'Special collections and archives', https://library.missouri.edu/specialcollections/exhibits/show/fragmenta-manuscripta/secular-texts/grammar-instruction (17 Nov. 2022). These fragments were unknown to Lindsay. Hart-Webb's attribution of them to Wales as a 'comparative preference chosen from the various types of Insular minuscule' is open to doubt; Hart-Webb, 'Book Production', p. 85.

(x) **Dublin, Trinity College, MS 50** (*Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos, Martyrologium Hieronymi,* Llanbadarn Fawr, 1079-1081).[47]

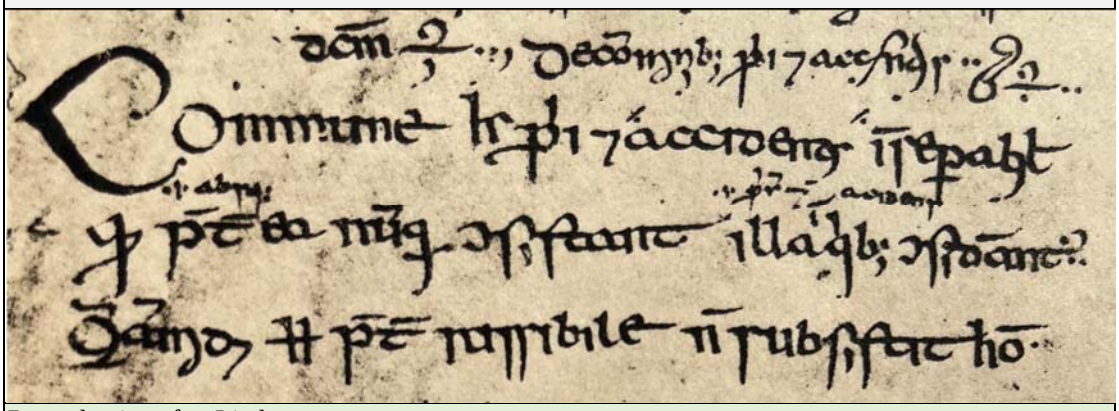
Figure 9. Dublin, Trinity College, MS 50.



© Trinity College, Dublin.

(xi) **Leiden, Rijksuniversiteitsbibliothek, Cod. VLQ. 2, fol. 60** (Boethius, *Isagoge Porphyrii translatio, Lorica Gildae*, *s.*ix^{ex}-x^{in}).[48]

Figure 10. Leiden, Rijksuniversiteitsbibliothek, Cod. VLQ. 2, fol. 6



Reproduction after Lindsay.

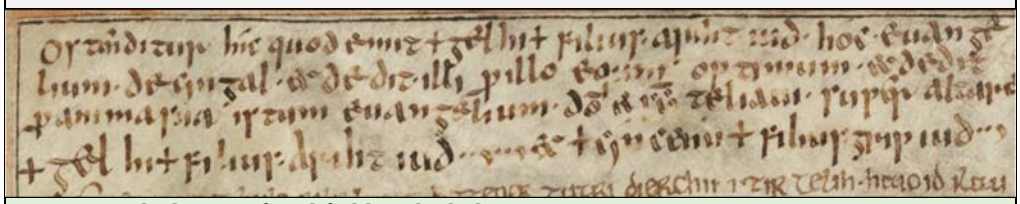
[47] 'IE TCD MS 50', https://manuscripts.catalogue.tcd.ie/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=IE+TCD+MS+50&pos=1 (17 Nov. 2022).

[48] 'Codices Vossiani Latini', https://primarysources.brillonline.com/browse/vossiani-latini/vlq-002-sextus-pythagoreus-macrobius-proba-servius-hervaeus-natalis-osbernus-leo-magnus-porphyrtus-varia/summarized-description-in-english;vossianivlq00202vlq002description?search=porphyrii&searchStart=1&searchTotal=3&search-go=&q=porphyrii&sort=true&fq=collection%3A%22vossiani-latini%22 (17 Nov. 2022).

(xii) **Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1** (Marginalia, *s*.ix[1] (first third)-x[1]; the main text is considered by Hart-Webb to be *dubium*).[49] The additions to the Lichfield Gospels, as listed by Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen are as follows:[50]

(i) **'Chad 1'**, p. 141. Memorandum of gift recording how Gelhi son of Arihtiud bought the gospel-book from Cingal and gave it to the church of Teilo.

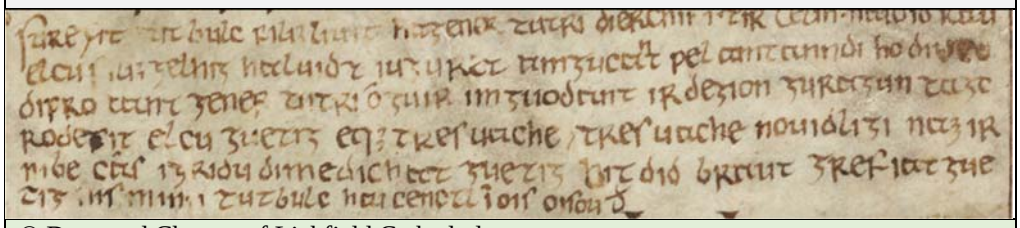
Figure 11. Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1, 'Chad 1'.



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(ii) **'Chad 2'**, p. 141. The *Surexit* memorandum in Old Welsh and Latin, recording the resolution of a dispute.

Figure 12. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 2'.

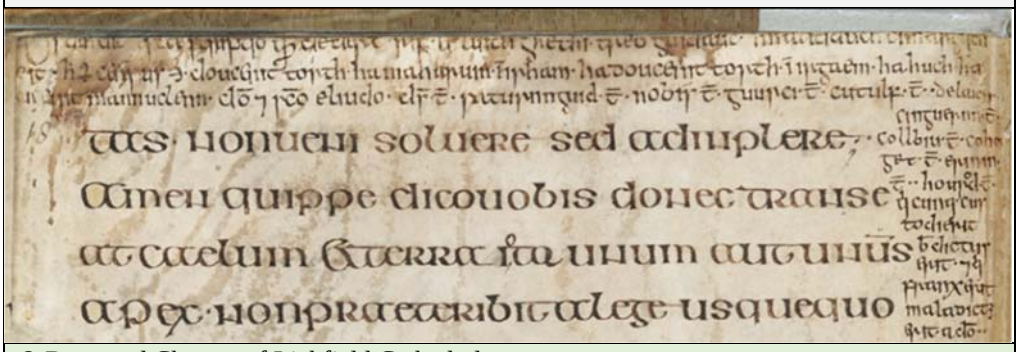


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(iii) **'Chad 3'**, p. 18. A memorandum of the gift to God and St Teilo of Trefwyddog, land likely to have been on the north-west border of Carmarthenshire in the commote of Caeo.

[49] For arguments that the MS was stolen from Lichfield and sold to *Gelhi* see Pamela James 'The Lichfield Gospels: The Question of Provenance', *Parergon* 13, no. 2 (1996), pp. 51-61.
[50] Dafydd Owen and Morfydd E. Jenkins, 'The Welsh marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels. Part I', *CMCS*, 5 (1983), pp. 37-66; 'Part II', *CMCS*, 7 (1984) pp. 91-120.

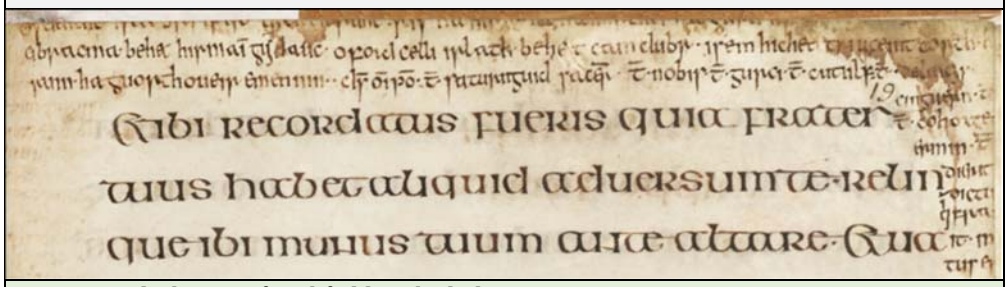
Figure 13. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 3'.



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(iv) **'Chad 4'**, p. 19. Memorandum of further gifts by the same Rhys, the donor of 'Chad 3'.

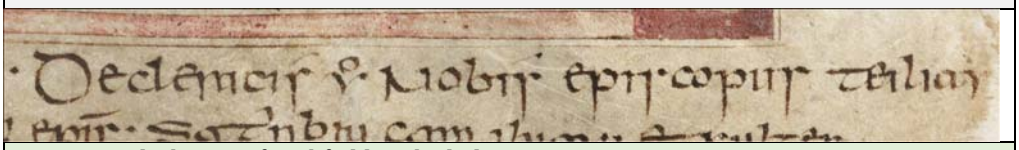
Figure 14. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 4'.



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(v) **'Chad 5'**, p. 218. Manumission of the slave Bleiddudd ap Sulien.

Figure 15. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 5'.

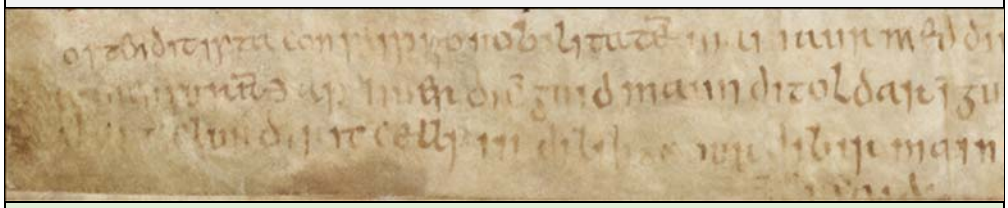


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(vi) **'Chad 6'**, pp. 216-7. Records the *nobilitas* and the *mensura* of '*mainaur med diminih'*. Jenkins and Owen interpret *nobilitas* to be a translation of *braint*, i.e. the status of the place. The place itself - *mainaur med diminih* (the 'manor of

Meddyfynych') - was proposed by Ifor Williams to be a farm now absorbed by the town of Ammanford.[51]

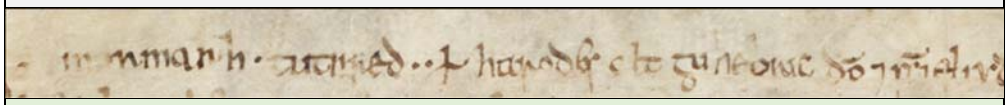
Figure 16. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 6'.



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(vii) **'Chad 7'**, p. 217. A short sentence recording the grant of *Allt Gwefrig* to St Eliudd.

Figure 17. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 7'.



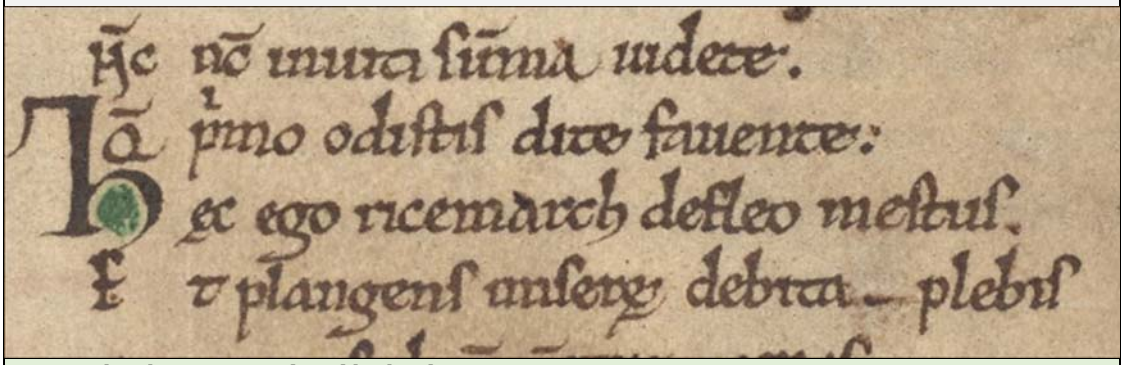
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(viii) **'Chad 8'**, thoughout. Collectively, various personal names which Owen and Jenkins consider to have been in the nature of a *liber vitae*, i.e. persons endorsed in the manuscript for remembrance by the *claswyr*.[52]

(xiii) **London, British Library, Cotton MS, Faustina C. I, (part two), fols. 66-93** (Macrobius, *Commentarium in Somnium Scipionis cum carminibus Ricemarch et excerptis De temporum ratione Bedae*, Llanbadarn Fawr (?), *s.*xi^{ex}-xii^{in}). This manuscript shows proto-Gothic book-script of the very end of our period.[53]

[51] Owen and Jenkins, 'The Welsh Marginalia', 'Part 1', p. 54, citing Ifor Williams, 'Meddyfynych', *BBCS*, 7 (1933), pp. 369-70.
[52] Owen and Jenkins, 'The Welsh Marginalia', Part I, p. 55.
[53] 'Cotton MS Faustina C 1', https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Faustina_C_I (17 Nov. 2022).

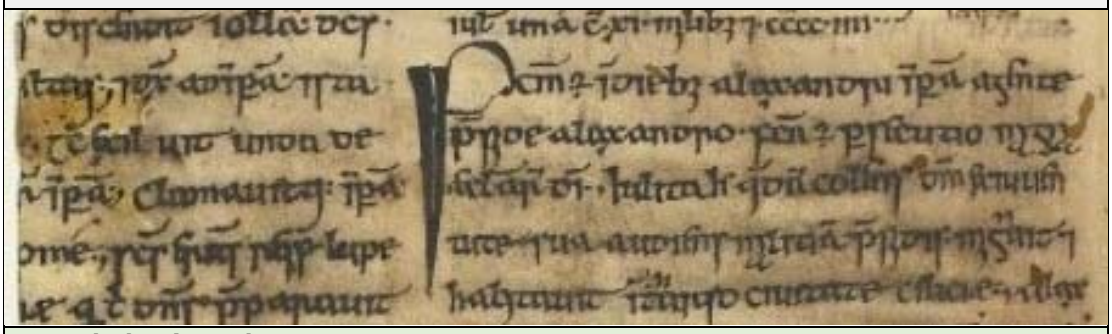
Figure 18. London, British Library, Cotton MS Faustina C. I (part two). Fols. 66-93.



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(xiv) **London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1230** *(Passionarii fragmenta, s.*xi[2]).[54]

Figure 19. London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1230.



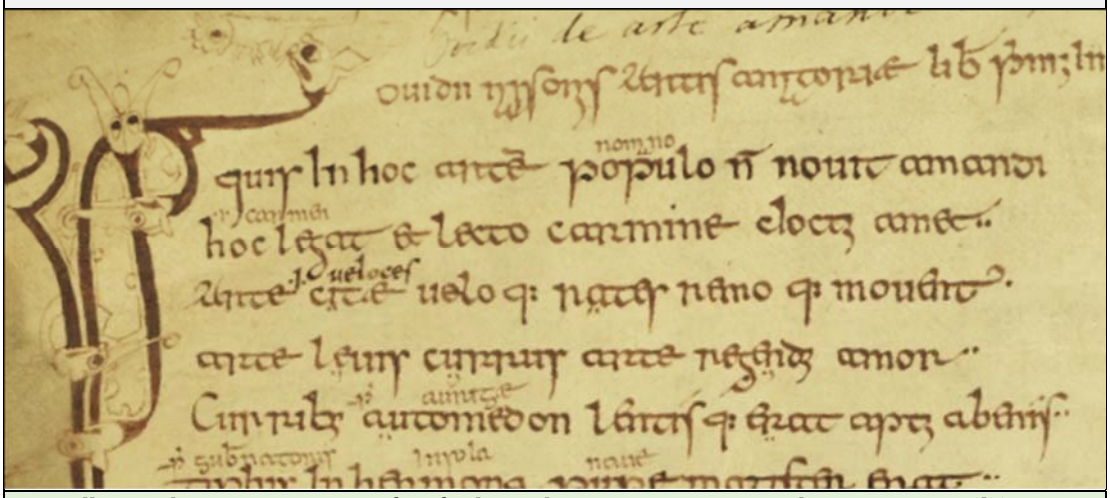
© Lambeth Palace Library

(xv) **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 19-36** (the *Liber Commonei*, *s.*ix[1] (817-835)).[55] For a reproduction, see figure 24 below.

(xvi) **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47** (Ovid, *Ars amatoria, liber primus*, *s.*ix[ex], the 'Oxford Ovid').[56]

[54] 'MS 1230', https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f1230&pos=26 (17 Nov. 2022).
[55] 'MS Auct. F. 4. 32', https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_675 (17 Nov. 2022).
[56] See n. 55 above.

Figure 20. **Oxford, Bodleian Library**, **MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47. The Oxford Ovid.**

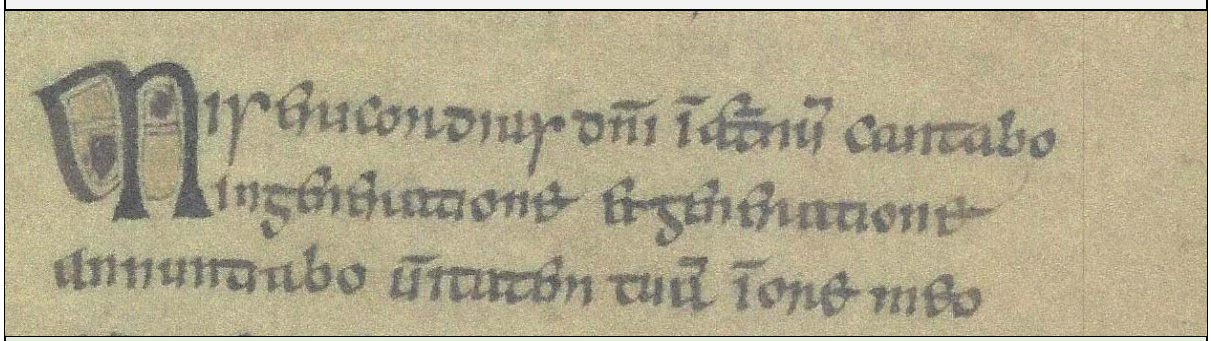


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To this list may be added a manuscript with a Fleury provenance via the collection of Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553-1617) which was unknown to him, Bradshaw and Lindsay:[57]

(xvii) **Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452, fols. 75-84** (Fragmentary Psalter, *iuxta Hebraeos*, *s.*ix^{ex}).[58]

Figure 21. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452.



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[57] But was noted by Helen McKee, see *Commentary*, p. 6.

[58] 'Français 2452', https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc490206 (17 Nov. 2022). For de Thou and his 1617 catalogue see Thomas Falmagne, 'Une troisième version du catalogue des manuscrits de Jacques-Auguste de Thou retrouvée à New York', *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, n° 2 (2020), pp. 294-320. I attribute this MS to Wales on the basis of its artwork, script and abbreviation-system including in particular: (i) the *nota* for *ut* **ꝟ** with the 'seagull'-shape flattened **v** form; (ii) the use of a **2** with a dot beneath for *est*; and (iii) the contraction **O2̄** for *-orum*, an idiosyncracy of later Llanbadarn Fawr book-script. I appreciate Professor Thomas Charles-Edwards and Dr Daniel Huws drawing this MS to my attention.

Palaeographical perspectives on British writing

As can be seen from the reproductions above, these manuscripts are, as a group, characterised by the diverse aspects of their scribal hands. Lowe referred to them as a 'Protean variety…the sport of the species' and Huws comments that 'The diversity of script-form found in the small surviving sample of Welsh books, sometimes within a single book, is remarkable'.[59] To a lesser extent the same variety can also be seen in the contemporary epigraphic scripts. One wonders whether there is any rhyme or reason beneath what looks, on the surface, to be palaeographical chaos or, put another way, whether the expectation of uniformity is a chimera in the first place. The following paragraphs therefore resume the palaeographical discussion of the Introduction, but with these scripts as its subject, and turn to the work of the Italian and French palaeographers, for whom such patterns of scribal diversity are normal.

The conceptual starting-point for our approach to this British writing is Maffei's realisation that the essence of the 'New' Roman writing-system was instability and diversity. Although the basic morphology – the *ductus* – might not change (or change only very slowly), it was nevertheless susceptible to radically different scribal *treatments* which produced radically diverse *aspects*.[60] Accordingly, Maffei thought that Mabillon's concept of distinct 'national hands' was 'false in all its parts' and that the 'four types of foreign national descriptions are not four different types but only one'. Maffei was quite clear that the morphology ('*Il fondo del carraterismo'*) remained static ('*sempre la medesima*') and only the 'accidents' changed, such as *module* ('*grande e picciolo'*) and inflection ('*grosso e sottile'*).[61]

[59] *CLA*, ii, p. xv; Huws, *Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 7. Writing in 1914 Lowe referred to the 'Insular script' being supplanted by Caroline minuscule, when of course only Anglo-Saxon England adopted it and then only for Latin texts. It is revealing that despite Traube's great care with the term, Lowe slipped into equating 'Insular' with 'Anglo-Saxon'; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 45.

[60] Roger Tomlin similarly noted in his tables of the letterforms of the *Tabellae Sulis* that the *ductus* is consistent and only the *treatment* differs; *Tab. Sulis.* p. 88. In fact, Bowman and Thomas make the same point in relation to the Old Common Script of the Vindolanda tablets: 'What strikes us here is the considerable variety of scripts in use and one and the same time. This variety does not apply simply to the letter-forms…but affects the whole character of the writing'; Bowman and Thomas, *Vindolanda*, p. 70.

[61] Maffei, *Verona*, pp. 620-2.

Maffei realised that this fundamental diversity was itself Roman in origin, citing the historical example of Origen whom Eusebius records as retaining some scribes (‘*copisti*’ or ‘copyists’) to ‘*scriver veloce*’ (‘write quickly’, i.e. ‘cursively’) for utilitarian purposes but others (‘*scrivani librarii*’ or ‘book scribes’) to ‘*scriver nobile*’ (‘write nobly’ i.e. ‘set’ or *‘posate’*), the product of which was book-script, ‘*calligrafia, ch’era bella, ed elegante scrittura*’ (‘calligraphy, beautiful and elegant script’). As a man of learning, Origen himself used *‘lettere grandi’* which were different to the *‘scriver commune’*.[62]

In all of this, the most important influence upon the *ductus* and the resulting aspect of a script was that most important palaeographical tendency of all: that of ‘cursivity’. Working from his theory of the consistency of the *ductus*, Maffei realised that ‘cursive’ was not a *type* of script but merely the effect of haste upon the basic, set form of the *ductus* and therefore a scribal ‘*tratteggio*’ or ‘treatment’ that executed the same strokes, in the same order and direction, but without stylus-lifts, that is to say in a single motion of the writing-instrument rather than several. In Maffei’s view ‘cursivity’ reflected either ‘*pigrizia*’ (‘laziness’) or ‘*fretta*’ (‘haste’). The idea that the foundation of any script consisted of essentially ‘set’ individual letterforms was also justified by authority: Maffei cited Quintilian’s account of how children were taught to *join* letterforms together only as the second stage of their learning to write, in other words, the fundamental *ductus* was set.[63] All this meant that the basic, common script remained broadly static in its *ductus* but highly diverse in its *aspects*: in other words, the palaeographical phenomenon that so perplexed Lowe.[64]

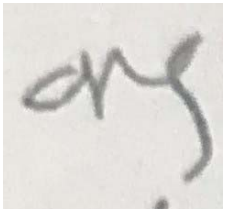
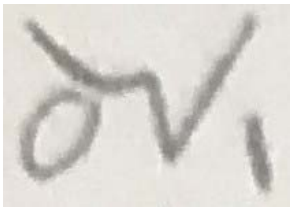
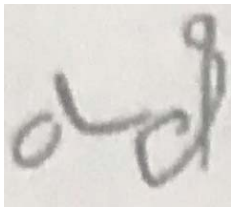
Maffei’s work therefore explained the great variety of the scribal hands of the early medieval archive of the Veronese Chapter as the natural products of the ‘graphical process’ inherent in the Roman writing-system, as bequeathed to early medieval Latin Europe. He realised that this graphical process had generated the new ‘half-uncial’ book-script in the fifth

[62] Maffei, *Verona*, p. 634.
[63] Maffei, *Verona*, p. 638; M. Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio oratoria* (Turnout, 2010), I, i, xxxi, p. 12.
[64] Maffei, *Verona*, p. 633.

and sixth centuries, replacing unwieldy capital and uncial scripts for that purpose.[65] He explained that the grander and more prestigious book-scripts, and the more utilitatian and less calligraphically-adorned scripts of administration and correspondence, were not medieval inventions but simply Roman New Common Script subject to different calligraphic 'treatments' as the needs and tastes of the day demanded.[66] For Traube, Maffei's work ranked second only to that of Mabillon himself and it was Maffei's analysis and terminology that Jean Mallon thought should form the starting point for 'a general classification of the Latin scripts'.[67]

Maffei's explanation of different scripts as reflecting the more-or-less 'set' or 'cursive' treatment that individual scribes administered to a fundamentally unchanging (or only very slowly evolving) *ductus* is strikingly apparent in the British writing of the fourth century. Exactly the same graphical process operated in Roman Britain as elsewhere in the Empire and Roman Britain was an integrated part of the Imperial graphical unity. Figure 22 below reproduces three short excerpts of fourth-century New Common script from *Tabellae Sulis* No. 97 which focus on one *ductus* to illustrate the point, that of the letterform of **a**.

[65] See, for example, Caroline Hammond Bammel's persuasive explanation of early Christian 'half uncial' book script as a response to the need rapidly to disseminate the polemical works of Augustine experienced by the circle of Rufinus of Aquileia; C. P. Hammond Bammel, 'Products of fifth-century scriptoria preserving conventions used by Rufinus of Aquileia: Script', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1984), pp. 347-393.
[66] Maffei, *Verona*, pp. 634-8.
[67] '*Aber in der Tat beruht…bis in unsere Tag'*, Traube, *Vorlesungen*, I, p. 42; Mallon, 'E. A. Lowe. Codices latini antiquiores', pp. 198-201.

Figure 22. ***Tabellae Sulis,*** **No. 97.**		
		
'arg'	***'asi'***	***'ad'***
Wholly cursive treatment of *a*: '*arg*'. A highly current treatment. The three letterforms are written in one motion of the stylus with no stylus-lift. What would, in set treatment, be three separate *ductus* are now connected to form a single monograph.	**Semicursive treatment of *a*: '*asi*'.** The *ductus* of **a** is rotated to enable the second, originally vertical stem-stroke to ligature horizontally forward into a cursively-written s-longa at right-angles, the entire ligature being executed with no stylus-lift. Given, however, that the *ductus* of this form of **a** still shows a stylus-lift between the first (lobe) and second stroke (stem) and **s** fails to ligature with the following **i** (as might be expected of a wholly cursive treatment) the scribal treatment is 'semicursive'.	**Set treatment of *a*: '*ad*'.** Where the *ductus* of the letterform following an **a** offers no natural connection, the **a** is written in a set manner with two separate strokes, separated by a stylus-lift. The only hint of 'cursivity' here is the orientation of the *ductus* and in particular the bend in the second stroke towards the direction of writing, itself a symptom of haste of execution. (The treatment of **d,** by contrast, is wholly cursive, showing the diagnostic entry-loop and double 'tramlines' ascender caused by the uninterrupted ascent and descent of the stylus.)

These excerpts show a clearly expert Romano-British stylus-writer treating the *ductus* of the letterform **a** in all of Maffei's predicted treatments of set, semicursive and cursive within a single short stint of stylus-writing, the distortions of the *ductus* resulting from the application of cursivity and in particular the need to ligature. The notes below each illustration point out the manner in which different degrees of cursivity distort the same *ductus.*

The importance of Maffei's analytic was shown by the fact that when Italian and French scholars came to engage with the papyri excavated in Egypt from the 1890s at sites like

Oxyrhynchus, on the Nile south of Cairo, they returned to Maffei.[68] The diplomatist and palaeographer Luigi Schiaparelli (1871–1934) published a seminal paper, *La scrittura latina nell' età romana* in 1921 which interpreted the papyri in terms of an everyday script – the *'scrittura usuale'* or 'ordinary script' - written according to distinct, identifiable graphical 'tendencies'.[69] Schiaparelli identified four basic 'tendencies' comprising: (i) two different treatments of the *ductus*, ('set' and 'cursive'); and (ii) two different treatments of the *module*, namely majuscule (or 'two-line' 'bilinear' writing) or minuscule, (or 'four line' 'quadrilinear' writing).[70]

Using the papyri, Schiaparelli also fleshed out Maffei's conception of the graphical process. He realised that the cursive tendency to give curves to rectilinear strokes for ease and speed of execution was what had produced uncial out of *capitalis*. The same tendency – *'corsivo e spontaneo'* ('cursive and spontaneous') – had also worked upon the bilinear *module* of uncial and *capitalis* so as to produce minuscule (i.e. quadrilinear scripts). A third tendency, marked by a preponderance of ligatures, was the extreme expression of the cursive tendency, the visible result of which was currently-written quadrilinear script.[71] Over time, Schiaparelli noted, 'the three tendencies which resulted in three species of scripts (uncial, cursive minuscule and set minuscule) became the foundation of medieval Latin script in all its manifestations'. He further explained that it was precisely this ability of individual scribes to apply more than one treatment to the basic (i.e. set) forms of New Common Script – 'polygraphism' – that explained their confusing propensity to 'oscillate' (as he put it) between cursive and set treatments, sometimes within a single scribal stint, without any change in the fundamentals of

[68] For the Oxyrhynchus papyri generally see 'P. Oxy Oxyrhynchus Online', http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/ (17 Nov. 2022) and for the aggregation of all digital papyrological resources see https://papyri.info/ (7 Jan 2023).
[69] Mabillon had posited the idea of a *'scriptura usualis'* but he was not clear as to what form '*scripture usualis*' actually took. The implication is that it was something like the rudimentary alphabet first taught to scribes and that it was different to diplomatic- and book-scripts. Latterly he envisaged two 'basic scripts' – *'duas classes…literatoriam, altera…diplomaticam';* Mabillon, *De re*, V, preface, p. 343.
[70] Schiaparelli, 'La scrittura Latina', p. 5.
[71] Schiaparelli, 'La scrittura Latina', p. 25.

the *ductus*.[72] Figure 22 above shows exactly this propensity at work in a single line of fourth-century tablet-writing and, as we will see further in this thesis, it constantly reappears in early medieval Welsh script until at least the end of the ninth century.

The practical usefulness of this palaeographical analytic for the interpretation of diverse and apparently incoherent early medieval writing came with Schiaparelli's detailed examination of Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare, Codex 490, undertaken in 1924. Codex 490 ('one of the most celebrated volumes of Carolingian Italy') is a mighty codex of some 353 folios comprising a compendium of texts and over forty hands of *s.*viii – ix, all apparently written at Lucca, in Tuscany, just north of Pisa.[73] The hands range from pre-Caroline quadrilinear hands to semicursive diplomatic hands.[74] Schiaparelli's development of Maffei's work in the context of this complex codex provides us with the interpretational key to the complex and heterogeneous British writing described above.[75]

Like Maffei, Schiaparelli realised the futility of trying to categorise radically different treatments of New Common Script into *'genere'* or 'types'. Nor was he concerned to connect any of the hands of Cod. 490 to any putative 'scriptorium' or school of writing at Lucca. The enormous variety of hands would not have revealed much about such a centre anyway, other, perhaps, than that it evidently exerted no scribal discipline upon its inmates (the numerous scribes of Cod. 490 are in any case more likely to have been notaries and clerks). Schiaparelli instead interpreted the Lucca hands as 'common or normal script…spontaneous in their various manifestations and tendencies'. To him, the codex represented a *'vera biblioteca'* that perfectly illustrated how eighth- and ninth-century scribes at Lucca were producing diverse local treatments of Roman New Common Script in response to a whole gamut of practical needs.[76]

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[72] Schiaparelli, 'La scrittura Latina', pp. 3-4.
[73] 'Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana 490', https://www.mirabileweb.it/manuscript/lucca-biblioteca-capitolare-feliniana-490-manuscript/1737 (28 Oct. 2022). For a description see Alden A. Mosshammer, 'Lucca Bibl. Capit. 490 and the Manuscript Tradition of Hieronymus' (Eusebius') Chronicle', *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, vol. 8 (1975), p. 203.
[74] *CLA*, iii, 303 (a)-(f).
[75] L. Schiaparelli, 'Il Codice 490 della Bibliotheca capitolare di Lucca: Introduzione', *Codices ex ecclesiasticis Italiae bybliothecis delecti phototypice express*, i, 2 (Rome, 1924); Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 93.
[76] Schiaparelli, 'Il Codice 490', p. 56.

Early medieval Wales and Ireland did not, of course, feature large teams of lay notaries as existed at places like Ravenna, Lucca or Verona. However the relevance of Schiaparelli's work transcends the social and economic contexts behind these two highly disparate bodies of early medieval writing. Methodologically speaking it is Schiaparelli who first demonstrated Maffei's theory that variety of aspect does not denote separate 'scripts' *per se* but different treatments of the rich and varied graphical repertoire of New Common Script.

The last phase of this 'classical' or 'Romanising' period in Italian palaeography came with the final refinement of Schiaparelli's work by Giorgio Cencetti (1908-1970) in the 1950s and 1960s. Cencetti refined Schiaparelli's analysis of the basic graphical tendencies within the graphical process in that he saw them as coming together in predictable patterns in response to the status and functions of different kinds of texts. The official chancery-scripts of the administration, for example, might be written with the desire to create a formal, authoritative appearance and a scribal treatment creating such aspect would be a guarantee of their authenticity. Hence, this practical need gave rise to '*scrittura cancelleresca*' or 'chancery-script'.[77] Figure 23 below shows, by way of example, the mannered, elongated and formulistic *cancelleresca* written at Ravenna in the mid-sixth century, showing how function and form reflect each other in an elongated, ostentatious aspect.[78]

[77] See, in particular, 'Seminari storico-giuridici di Roma Tre, Intorno Al Corpus Dei Documenti Altomedievali Su Papiro: Tipologie, Testi, Contesti', https://www.seminaristoricogiuridici.it/2018/01/10/internullo_report/ (7 Jan. 2023); also a helpful summary by Dario Internullo, 'Latin Documents Written on Papyrus in the Late Antique and Early Medieval West (5th-11th century): an Overview', https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S5nusZEWWIkKMPA2GGOt0GY4OeJgLG-I/view (7 Jan 2023).

[78] Jean Mallon, 'Le papyrus Butin', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, T. 14, No. 2 (1952), pp. 283-288. Bowman and Thomas note, in the Insular context, that a different script was used for the addresses of the Vindolanda tablets; *Vindolanda*, p. 53.

Figure 23. P. Ital. II 55 ('P. Butini'). Ravennese chancery-script, AD 540-543.



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By contrast, Cencetti noted, books needed to be clear, legible and responsive to the aesthetic expectations of readers. The combination of graphical tendencies that gave rise to book-script were therefore quite different (but similarly predictable and typical): (i) a set treatment of the *ductus*; (ii) a tendency towards 'rotundity', which smoothed angles into curves and enlarged the limbs and lobes of letters (so had uncial developed from *capitalis*); (iii) the verticalization of *ductus* that had formerly been written obliquely or even horizontally; (iv) regular separation of letters and words; and (v) a calligraphic respect for the two parallel lines of legibility and writing.

This particular combination of graphical tendencies resulted in a harmony of dimension, regularity of alignment, accuracy of execution and the relative freedom from abbreviation that characterises *'scrittura libraria'* or 'book-script'.[79] In Chapter Two we will see that it is exactly this process - Alessandro Pratesi labelled it « *librarizzarla* »[80] - that produced the earliest Insular book-script out of the set treatment of late New Common Script, a process that has been described as 'nothing but an adaptation for use with books of the

[79] Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 25.
[80] Alessandro Pratesi, 'Note per un contributo', pp. 3-13.

everyday and documentary minuscule of the Late Antique elite'.[81]

This further work of Cencetti on the concept of the 'graphical process' as the dynamic principle within New Common Script not only explained the nature of the 'occasional' in greater detail than Schiaparelli but also addressed the matter of the evolution of scripts over the centuries. Particular treatments of the *usuale* might, over time and with frequent use, reach a point of equilibrium at which they were generally accepted as 'fit for purpose' and in need of no further change: this process Cencetti described as 'typification' and its result would either be stable scripts sharing similarities, which (like Traube) he called 'types' (or simply 'scripts' in the palaeographical sense) or, a step further, rigid, crystallised scripts comprised of mandatory letterforms which he termed 'canonical'.

However the vigorous daily life of the 'common script' and all of its myriad manifestations, which, in an echo of Maffei, Cencetti called 'the script of business, the ordinary everyday scripts, that used for every necessity of life', tended to threaten and erode these 'typified' scripts, leaving them isolated, archaic and obsolete. As time went by and needs and tastes changed, typified scripts (and particularly canonical scripts) became difficult, illegible, obsolescent and irrelevant. At this point (Cencetti pithily called it their '*tramonto*' – 'sunset') they might collapse and contribute their letterforms and practices to enrich the general repertoire of the 'usual', common script, contributing further graphical resources from which

[81] Serena Ammirati, *Sul libro Latino antico*, Biblioteca degli « Studi di Egittologia e di papirologia», 12 (Pisa, Rome, MMXV), p. 108, citing Paolo Radiciotti, '*Romania* e *Germania* a confronto: un codice de Leidrat e le origini medievali della minuscola carolina', « *Scripta* » I (2008), p. 137. Broadly contemporary with the late Roman writing on hard media, this graphical process of « *librarizzarla* » appears in the earliest Continental codices. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 8907, for example, is an early fifth century codex from northern Italy (Hilary of Poitiers *De Trinitate*, Ambrose, *De Fide*, accounts of the Council of Aquileia of 381) which features extensive marginalia by the Arian bishop Maximinus; see 'Latin 8907', https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc62436s (7 Jan 2023).
These have been published by Roger Gryson and Léon Gilissen; see Roger Gryson, *Scolies Ariennes Sur Le Concile D'Aquilée*, Sources Chrétiennes, No. 267 (Paris, 1980) and in facsimile; Roger Gryson and Léon Gilissen, *Les Scolies Ariennes Du Parisinus Latinus 8907: Un échantillonnage D'écritures Latines Du Ve Siècle*, Armarium Codicum Insignium, v. 1 (Turnhout, 1980). The preface to the facsimile duly notes that *'L'ensemble des scolies témoigne ainsi du polymorphisme de l'écriture commune au Bas-Empire, et, en particulier, du fait que les prétendues semi-onciale et quart d'onciale sont plûtot…des 'cursives posées' que des sous-produits de l'onciale…comme ces appelations risqueraient de l'insinuer. Elles dérivent de la cursive…';* pp. 13-20. The plates of *CLA*, v, 572, reproduce the two treatments of the *scholia* as well as the uncial of the text.

the same process of typification could start anew.[82]

Looking back from the vantage point of 2007 the modern Italian palaeographer Giovanna Nicolaj described this work of Cencetti's as signalling the end of the 'classical' period of palaeography: [83]

> '…the discipline had arrived at its fundamental principles of theory and method as concerns the graphical process…the theory of Cencetti on the graphical process, simple as well as complex, rigid as well as flexible, offers a large range of interpretive and descriptive tools because it combines marvellously the origin and the fluid development of the graphical phenomenon (reflected in its innumerable and different concrete expressions)'.

Discussion and conclusions

The relevance of all this to the study of British writing can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, at the most basic level, British writing must be understood, described and analysed as a provincial inheritance of late Roman (or Romano-British) New Common Script, not as a 'reintroduction' from Gaul or, worse, the invention of sixth- or seventh-century Irish monasticism.

Secondly, not only is British writing wholly Roman in origin, but it was treated by early medieval writers and evolved in accordance with the identical graphical process that operated across the other ex-Imperial provinces. British writing also comprised a *'scrittura usuale'* or 'common script' with each individual hand being a product of the various complex

[82] Cencetti, 'Vecchi et nuovi orientamenti', pp. 5, 8. Alan Bishop saw the chronology differently: 'The history of a script is commonly one of very slow decline from an optimum attained by relatively quick development'; Bishop, 'An Early Example of the Square Minuscule', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1966), p. 247. Dumville considered that the whole history of 'English Square Minuscule' was a 'century long – that is, relatively brief' but, at the same time, acknowledged that the graphical influences that gave it birth stretched long into the past and continued at work in the tenth century and thereafter; David N. Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script: The Background and Earliest Phases', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 16 (1987), p. 162. Lowe describes the Beneventan script as having an extremely long life indeed, remaining in use 'no less than five centuries'; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 41.

[83] Nicolaj, 'Questions terminologiques', pp. 9–28.

permutations of the 'graphical process'.[84] These permutations point us towards the historical context of writing in Britain just as surely as, in the case of the Lucca codex, they point to the very different circumstances of eighth- and ninth-century Tuscany.

Thirdly, diversity of aspect and polymorphism represent the inherent norm of the Roman system: they are not Insular peculiarities. Graphical diversity does not point to a plethora of different 'script types', each the product of a 'scriptorium', but it does point to the needs of time and place and it also offers up opportunities for comparisons between examples of British writing on different media, potentially pointing to local writing-traditions.

The fourth lesson is that 'British writing' must include epigraphy – writing on hard media – as well as book-script written with a pen upon membrane. New Common Script and the graphical process did not confine itself to particular writing-media for the convenience of scholarship centuries hence. The complex relationships between different writing-media and writing-technologies must therefore be accounted for in the business of palaeographical comparison.

Lastly, however, there remains the issue of terminology, or as palaeographers term it, 'nomenclature'. The problems associated with the 'traditional' nomenclature of the *CLA* have already been described. British writing is wholly incompatible with it. Starting from the *tabula rasa* demanded by Jean Mallon, 'Half-uncial' and all its derivative nomenclature will be dispensed with entirely in this thesis. As François Masai noted, this term and its derivatives can never be anything other than 'sterile' and 'dangerous': Mallon considered it to be the worst

[84] The concept of 'common script' in Continental palaeography has oscillated between 'realism' and 'nominalism'. Mallon saw '*écriture commune*' as an actual script, raising the awkward question as to what it looked like, who wrote it and when, whereas Cencetti came to visualise it in Platonic terms as a tendency within the mind of the scribe and not necessarily defined by the writing applied to the page (not unlike Saussure's view of the relationship between *language* and *speech* (see n. 8, p. 24 above)); Giorgio Cencetti, 'Note paleografiche sulla scrittura dei papyri latini dal I al III secolo d. C.', *Memorie,* Ser. 5, 1, Accademia delle scienze dell' Instituto di Bologna, Classe di scienze morali (1950), p. 4 & n. 2. Cencetti's conclusion was that the 'normal' forms were those taught in the schoolroom; *idem,* 'Dall' unita al particolarismo grafico. Le scritture cancelleresche romane e quelle dell' alto medioevo', *Il passagio dall' antichità al medioevo in occidente,* Settimano di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 9 (Spoleto, 1962), p. 241 and *idem,* 'La palaeografica del bibliotecario' (1967, 1969) in Alessandro Pratesi, 'Giorgio Cencetti dieci ani dopie: Tentativo di un bilancio', *Scrittura e civiltà,* 4 (1980) p. 9 & n. 17.

of all of the '*terminologie ancienne très mal fixée*'.[85] As Insular 'half-uncial' is nothing more than the Romano-British set treatment of New Common Script produced by Pratesi's process of « *librarizzarla* » I will calque the Italian term for the process and call it 'Early Insular' (or 'Irish' or 'British' (depending on the context)) book-script'.

I will also dispense with the term 'minuscule'. The *CLA's* use of 'majuscule' for set, calligraphic book-hands whether or not they are bilinear, and its use of 'minuscule' for formal, set display hands with truncated ascenders and descenders, hardly different in their *module* to 'majuscules' is, as pointed out by Mark Stansbury, misleading. It raises the possibility of 'majuscule minuscules' and vice-versa.[86] As Mallon noted, *module* is no different to any other 'graphical tendency'.[87] I will therefore refer to the *module* of scripts as 'bilinear' and 'quadrilinear', or, more accurately, as 'tending to bilinearity or quadrilinearity' and 'Insular minuscule' will simply be 'Later British (or 'Irish' or 'Insular') book-script'.

It is emphasised that the adjectives 'Early' and 'Late' in this nomenclature do *not* suggest that these two broad strata of the Insular wring-system were *sequential.* They instead reflects the fact that New Common Script tending to quadrilinearity and a cursive treatment predominates as the main text-script of *later* Insular manuscripts at the expense of the set treatment tending to bilinearity, which predominated as the *earlier* book-script of choice, from the eighth century onwards. The terms do *not* mean, of course, that a quadrilinear, cursively-treated script was *unknown* prior to the eighth century: the Romano-British evidence makes it

[85] For Mallon's objections to it see *idem, Paléographie,* p. 102 and François Masai, 'La paléographie gréco-latine, ses tâches, ses méthodes', *Scriptorium*, Tome 10, n° 2 (1956) p. 294. For a good illustration of Masai's 'dangers' (she terms it 'embarrassment') see Ammirati's critique of Lowe's classifications of the script of the *Epitome of Livy*; Ammirato, *Sul libro,* p. 46. Ironically, Lowe himself had critiqued the term 'Lombardic' in identical manner 25 years earlier, commenting that 'When we…remember that it was an historical misconception which gave rise to the name, its rejection is no less than imperative' and thought it 'much to be regretted' that Prou and Thompson had not excised it from their latest editions; Loew, *The Beneventan Script,* p. 29. Writing in 1914, Lowe was referring to Maunde Thompson's *Introduction* of 1912 and Maurice Prou's third, revised edition of his *Manuel de paléographie latine et française*, 3e édition (Paris, 1910).

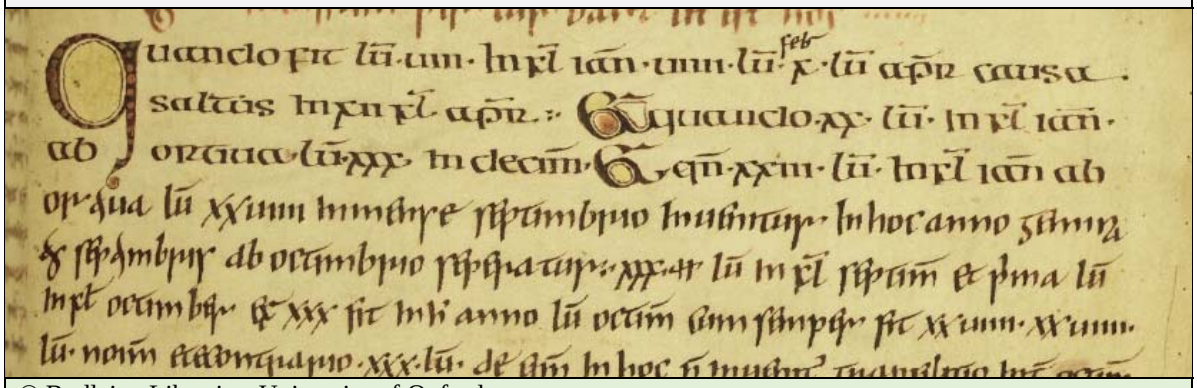
[86] Stansbury highlights the confusion noting that the script of Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek, Generalia 1 (the 'Schaffhausen Adomnán') has variously been described as 'Irish majuscule' (Lindsay, *EIS,* p. 3), 'Irish minuscule' (Lowe, *CLA*, vii, 998), 'Moderately sized script…not on the path to minuscule' (Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography,* p. 116) and 'Irish half-uncial' (R. Gamper and S. Marti, *Katalog der mitteralterlichen Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Schaffhausen* (Dietikon-Zurich, 1998), pp. 67-8); Mark Stansbury, *Iona Scribes and the Rhetoric of Legibility,* E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lectures, 16 (Cambridge, 2014), p. 20.

[87] Mallon, *Paléographie,* p. 102.

abundantly clear that two broad script-treatments existed as early as the fourth century. It is simply a reflection of the fact that the more quadrilinear (and convenient) script came into more general use for manuscripts *after* the more bilinear (and laborious) script ceased to be used as a main text hand.[88]

As a brief illustration of this simplified nomenclature, figure 24 below shows these two scripts in juxtaposition on fol. 19r. of Bodl, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols 19-36 (the *Liber Commonei*) of *c.* 817-835. 'Early Insular book-script' (and in this case in the form of 'Early Welsh book-script') is used with *litterae notabiliores* for the introductory sentence of the text and 'Later British book-script' for the body of the text.

Figure 24. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 19-36. The *Liber Commonei.* Fol. 19r.



© Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

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[88] The process whereby Italianate uncial was superseded by minuscule scripts at Wearmouth-Jarrow for the rapid dissemination of Bede's *opus* is described by Parkes, 'The scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow' in *idem, Scribes, Scripts,* pp. 93-120. However it must be questioned whether Northumbrian scribes in general *only* used uncial prior to the mid-eighth century: both elements of the Insular system would have been available to them as well as their carefully-learned uncial, as Julia M. H. Smith notes, *idem,* 'Writing in Britain', p. 46.

Chapter Two. The British writing-system *c.* 300 – 625

Introduction and research aims

This Chapter comprises three palaeographical studies which illustrate and support the arguments advanced in the previous Chapter. Julia Crick and Daniel Wakelin note, in an excellent recent survey of the earliest phase of the Insular manuscript writing-system, that 'Irish scripts are ultimately indebted to two sources, neither visible now: Roman cursive…and half-uncial, a script of late antiquity'.[1] Here, I develop this perspective, but suggest that the epigraphic evidence in fact provides more glimpses of the very earliest Insular book-scripts than analysis of manuscripts alone can provide. In short, I seek to demonstrate that a detailed consideration of scripts across all available media can reveal the indebtedness of early Insular letterforms to Roman antecedents.

1. Roman Britain, New Common Script and the graphical process

The first analysis shows how the late New Common Script of Roman Britain provided not only: (i) the morphology, or repertoire of letterforms, of Early Insularwriting; but also (ii) the graphical process and typifying treatments of New Common Script responsible for the basic bifurcation of the Insular writing-system into Early and Later book-script.[2]

2. Polymorphism and 'Insular Peculiarities'

The second analysis considers the extensive and unsystematic use of allomorphs in British writing, such as (for example), the curve-backed letterform of **ð** and **Ꝺ** derived from archaic uncial book-script and the straight-backed letterform, **d**, derived ultimately from the disarticulation of capital **D**.[3] I will show that the so-called 'Insular peculiarities' in Early Insular book-script that distinguish it from its Continental equivalent, which so puzzled Schiaparelli in

[1] J. Crick and D. Wakelin, 'Reading and Understanding Scripts' in Orietta Da Rold and Elaine Treharne (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval British Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 52-56.
[2] See the explanation in Chapter One above of the chronological connotations of 'Early' and 'Late'.
[3]Although it should be noted that similar allomorphs of **d** occurred in Old Common Script, as pointed out by Bowman and Thomas in their collation of the letterforms of the Vindolanda tablets; see Bowman and Thomas, *Vindolanda*, p. 58 & fig. 11.

the 1920s and Julian Brown in the 1980s, in fact came from the multiple ancient traditions of writing that were ingested into New Common Script as part of the Empire-wide script-change that we first see in the mid-third century. I will further suggest that these were 'typified out' of Continental book-script but remained in Early Insular book-script as the result of what seems to have been, already in Roman Britain, a certain British-flavoured cultural and intellectual conservatism.[4]

3. Early Insular book-script.

The third analysis takes as its example of Insular writing the wax tablets recovered from the Springmount Bog, Ballyhutherland, Co. Antrim, in 1914. These offer a unique glimpse of Early Insular book-script on a medium other than stone from the period before the earliest Irish manuscripts, *c.* 600. They are thought to be of at least sixth-century date, possibly earlier. This means that they show a script written by clerics in Ireland at the time when 'Irish' usage would have been identical to British usage, before intellectual and cultural leadership moved from the Late Antique British church across the Irish Sea. I will show not only how: (i) the hands of these tablets represent the palaeographical 'missing link' that connects fourth-century New Common Script with the earliest Insular manuscripts, but also how: (ii) certain features of punctuation, abbreviation and *ordinatio* show that the ability to structure and organise written texts for pedagogical purposes was part of the Late Antique British writing-tradition shared with Ireland in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Roman Britain, New Common Script and the graphical process

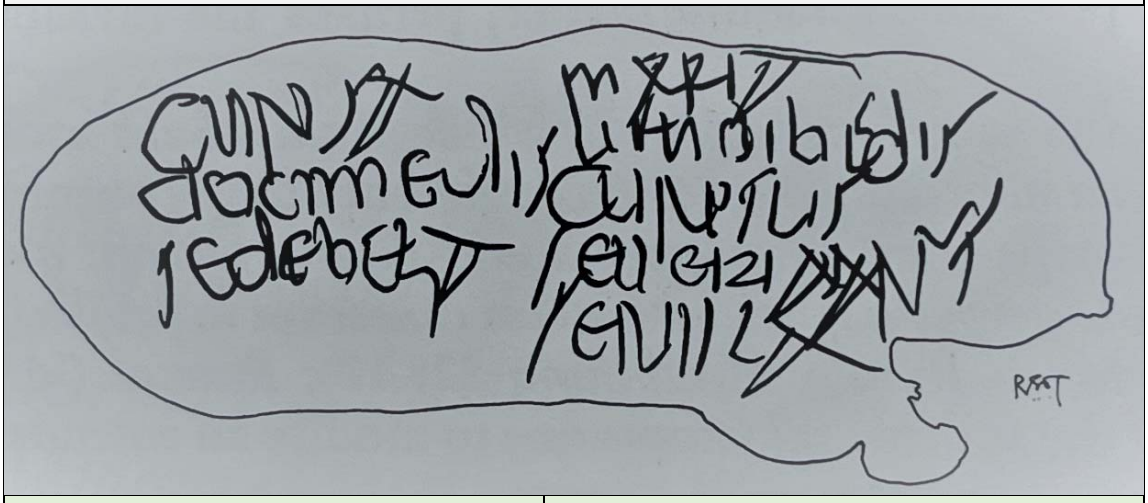
New Common Script in set ductus tending to bilinearity

The two curse-tablets catalogued by Roger Tomlin as Nos. 95 and 96 are the only Bath tablets that he considers to have been written by the same hand. He dates them to the fourth

[4] Jackson notes the conservatism of British Latin as spoken by the educated classes, *LHEB*, pp. 107-8, but Thomas Charles-Edwards suggests that the absence in British Latin of sound-changes found elsewhere may rather be due to the influence of British Celtic, *pers. comm.*, 18th April 2023.

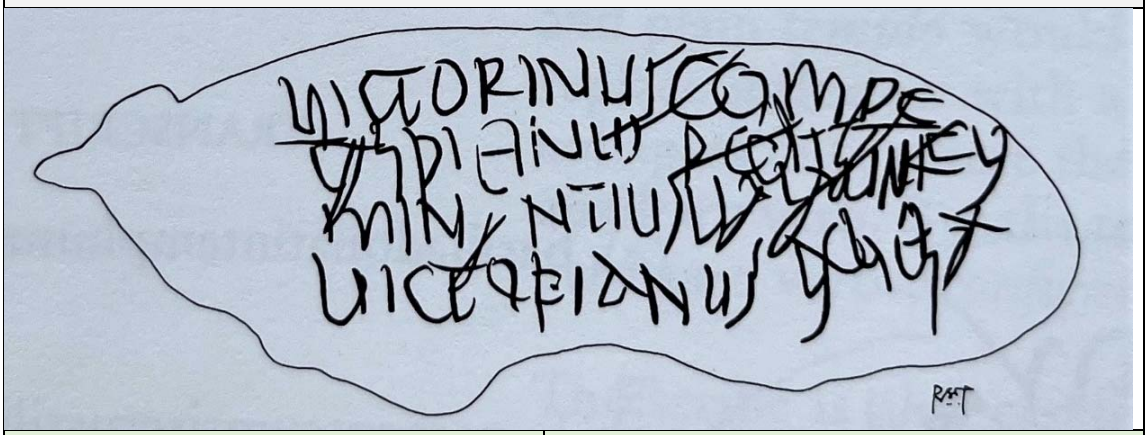
century.[5] They are reproduced, with Tomlin's usual meticulous transcription, in figures 25 and 26 below.

Figure 25. ***Tabellae Sulis,*** **No. 95.**



CUNSA **DOCIMEDIS** **SEDEBELIA**	**MARIA** **VENDIBEDIS** **CUNTUS** **SEVERIA[IA]NUS** **SENI[I]LA**

Figure 26. ***Tabellae Sulis,*** **No. 96.**

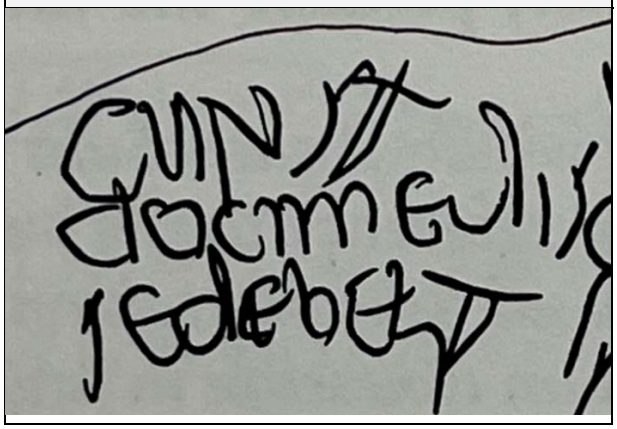


UICTORINUS **TALIPIEINUS** **MINANTIUS** **UICTORIANUS**	**COMPEDITA** **[PE]DITA** **VALAUNE^{I}CUS** **[…]BELIA**

[5] *Tab. Sulis,* Nos. 95 and 96. These two tablets are not in fact conventional 'curses' but lists of names.

These two tablets are seminal to the understanding of early medieval Insular writing. They not only show that the Insular writing-system was *born* in the fourth century, according to the same graphical process that operated across the entire graphical unity of the late Empire, but that it also *evolved* in fourth-century Roman Britain. In particular, Early Insular book-script was not a medieval invention and certainly not a sixth- or even seventh-century Irish confection, but a Romano-British development deriving ultimately from the tradition of Antique book-script that we term 'archaic uncial'. This is demonstrated as follows.

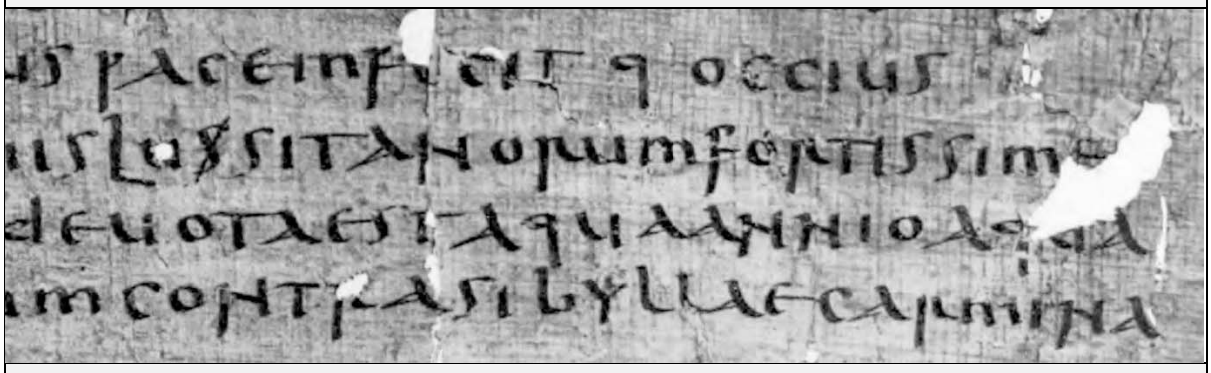
Figure 27. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95. Detail.



The left-hand column of No. 95 (see figure 27 opposite) comprises three personal names. The first of these names, *CUNSA*, is written in an archaic book-script which is substantially that of Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, P. S. I. 1291 and London, British Museum, Papyrus 1532 (Pap. Oxy. 668), *The Epitome of Livy*, *s*.iii[1], from Oxyrhynchus in Upper Egypt. This script is reproduced in figure 28 below together with an even older example of the same style, London, BL, Papyrus 745, the *Fragmentum de Bellis Macedonicis, s*.i^{med} – ii$^{med.}$, also from Oxyrhynchus. [6]

[6] 'TM 61429 / LDAB 257', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/61429 (1 Nov. 2022); 'TM 63267/LDAB 4472', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/63267 (25 Jan. 2023). It should however be noted that Jan-Olof Tjäder saw the hand of London, BL, Pap. 745 as the ancestor of uncial rather than any precursor of New Common Script; J.-O. Tjäder, 'Considerazioni e proposte sulla scrittura latina nell'età romana' in *Palaeographica, diplomatica, et archivistica: studi in onore di Giulio Battelli* (Rome, 1979), p. 43.

Figure 28. Archaic book scripts, s.iii[1] – s.vi[in].



Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, P. S. I. 1291 and London, British Museum Papyrus 1532 (Pap. Oxy. 668). The *Epitome* of Livy. Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, s.iii[1]**.** © The trustees of the British Museum.



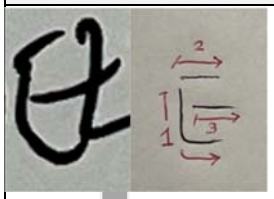
London, BL, Papyrus 745. *Fragmentum de Bellis Macedonicis.*
s.i[med] – ii[med]. Reproduced by kind permission of the British Library.

That these are the same script is shown by: (i) the bilinear *module* of *CUNSA;* (ii) the 'sharply pointed' letterform of **A**; (iii) the bilinear **N** with the first stroke descending below the line of writing and a somewhat curved diagonal; and (iv) what looks like an s-longa but which is in fact the letterform of **S** from archaic uncial book-script with a curved head-stroke and a sinuous body, but which has absorbed the third, residual foot-stroke of the archaic uncial letterform (this letterform is better illustrated by the first **S** in the third name, *sedebelia*, in figure 27 above, where the relict third foot-stroke can be seen: for a comparison see the **S** of *Sibyllae* in the middle of the last line of the reproduction of the *Epitome* above, where the foot-stroke is already almost wholly attenuated).

Jean Mallon's view was that the script of the *Epitome* accounted for all of the early medieval European book-scripts, subject to varying calligraphic treatment.[7] Mallon was, however, somewhat broad-brush in this regard. He overlooked the important part played in the development of the new Christian book-script of Late Antiquity by humble letterforms from everyday utilitarian writing *del popolo*.[8] This is demonstrated by the palaeography of the second two names in the first column of No. 95, *docimedis* and *sedebelia,* which are written quite differently. The script of these second two names features: (i) two fully-cursive letterforms of **d** with the parallel 'tramline' ascenders diagnostic of cursivity; (ii) an **Li** ligature (ligatures are in themselves diagnostically cursive); and (iii) a New Common Script letterform of **b** *panse à droit.* To these cursive letterforms we can add the second instance of **e** in the name *seuerianus* in column two where the top is curved down onto the medial stroke or 'sagitta', the cursive treatment of the archaic uncial letterform that would in time produce the typical **e** of Later Insular book-script.[9] The contrasting treatments are illustrated in the palaeographical 'stemma' in figure 29 below which charts the development using the inscriber's different treatments of the letterform of **E e**.

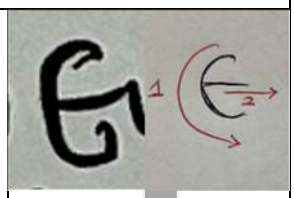
[7] Mallon, *Paléographie,* p. 124. See also *idem,* 'Observations sur quelques monuments', p. 38, 'Planche B', for his morphological analysis of the archaic book-script of both the *Epitome* and the *De Bellis Macedonicis.* Tino Licht points out that the different aspects of the two archaic scripts are largely accounted for by the straightening of the pen-hold in the script of the *Epitome*; the aspect of the *bellis Macedonicis* fragment is attributable to a broad nib held very obliquely; see *idem, Halbunziale,* pp. 66-7 & fig. 18.
[8] Julia Crick describes it as 'upgrading lowly forms of script to new calligraphic standards; *idem,* 'The art of writing', p. 58; the over-emphasis placed by French palaeography on the contribution of ancient *libraria* is critiqued by Tjäder in J.-O. Tjäder, 'Considerazioni e proposte', pp. 41-3.
[9] Tedeschi refers to this form as *'piu tarde'* but its appearance in No. 95 suggests not; *idem, CL,* p. 49.

Figure 29. Early Insular book-script as the product of cursivity.

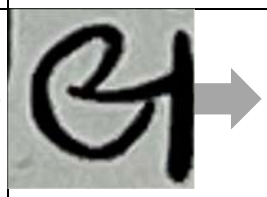


Capital **E** written cursively produces the typical curved-back letterform of archaic uncial book-script. Subject to further cursive treatment, this letterform bends down to connect and ligature forward with a protruding medial *sagitta*. This becomes the letterform of Early Insular book-script, as written, for example, in TCD, MS 55, the 'Ussher Gospels'. Both these letterforms also appear in Old Common Script.

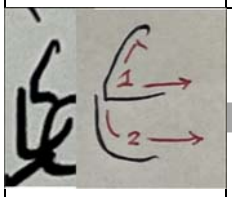
Cursivity



Cursivity







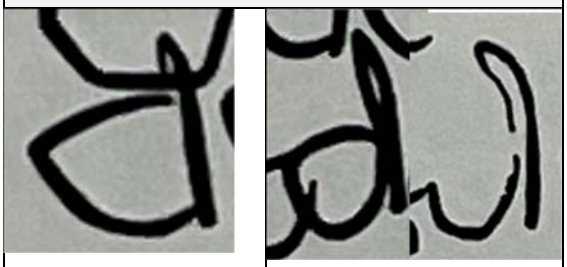


The semicursive 'broken-backed' letterform of E from Old then New Common Script is also taken up into Early Insular book-script, in the case of TCD, MS 55 where the scribe wishes to use its potential for proclitic ligatures.

Albeit that figure 29 above deals with only one letterform, the example suggests that the morphology of the Insular writing-system owes much to fourth-century Roman Britain and that even Romano-British inscribers of relatively humdrum personal items like curse-tablets, could clearly apply *both* treatments to this repertoire at will. In other words, the bifurcation of the Insular writing-system boils down to nothing more than the polygraphism of literate fourth-century Romano-Britons. That this was indeed the graphical process that generated Early Insular book-script is further illustrated in the treatment of one letterform in particular, namely that of **d**.

The fully cursive letterform (right) shows the diagnostically cursive 'tramline' ascenders, but the set letterform (left) exhibits the diagnostic treatment of « *librarizzarla* ». This letterform has: (i) truncated the ascender to the extent that it only just protrudes above the line of legibility; (ii) rotated into verticality; (iii) acquired a strikingly fat, rotund lobe; (iv) expanded the dimensions of the lobe; and (v) extended the bottom of the ascender into a protruberance below the lobe to sit on the line of writing.

Figure 30. *Tabellae Sulis,* No. 95. Detail.

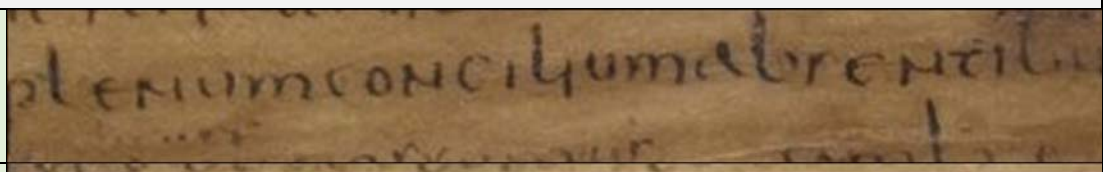


Set, rotund, truncated. Early Insular book-script.	Cursive and quadrilinear. Later Insular book-script.

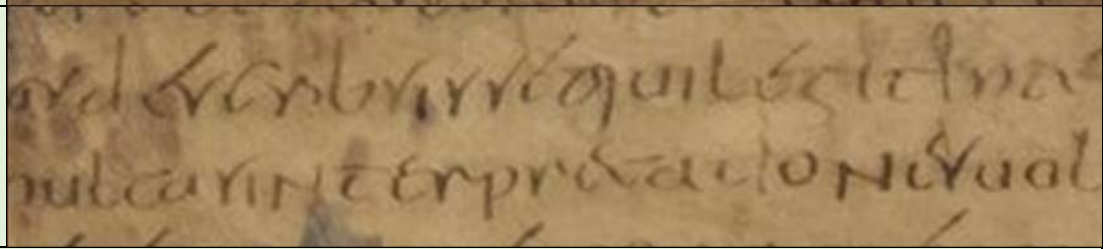
Nor is this advanced fourth-century development in any sense remarkable. Exactly the same phenomenon is observable as a result of the operation of the graphical process elsewhere in the Late Antique Latin West. The early fifth-century *scholia* of the Arian bishop Maximinus in BnF, MS Lat 8907, for example, also oscillate (Schiaparelli's term) between set and cursive treatments.

Figure 31. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 8907

Fol. 298v.



Fol. 306v.



« Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France ». Réutilisation non commerciale.

All of Gryson, Gilissen and Hammond Bammel note how the '…script of the marginalia gradually deteriorates from what looks like half- or quarter-uncial at the beginning to something much more similar to cursive at the end…', in other words, Maffei's *scriver*

nobile and *scriver veloce* and their graphical aspects.[10] Figure 31 above reproduces the treatments of the early and late part of the stint.

The Romano-British evidence therefore provides confirmation of the suggestion made by Paolo Cherubini and Alessandro Pratesi that the 'new Christian book-script' of post-Roman western Europe was a combination of the *'minuscola'* of the *Epitome of Livy* (this thesis rather terms it 'archaic uncial', following Jean Mallon) with the *'corsiva nuova'* (the *'corsiva nuova'* itself being a product of accretion and agglomeration, including letterforms drawn from everyday writing such as *graffiti*).[11] Given the nature of the script-transformation of the mid-third century onwards, it is expected that the 'new' system would indeed show the eclecticism described above and Carlo Tedeschi duly notes that in Britain, at the beginning of the fourth century, there were available the same *'modelli grafice diversi'* as throughout the Empire.[12]

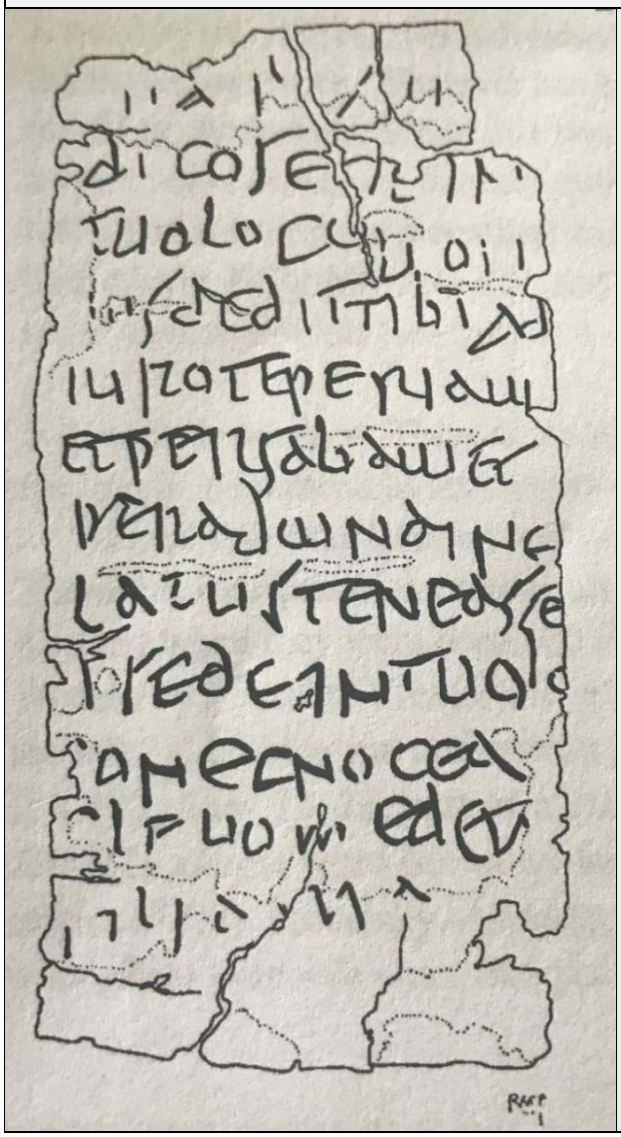
The suggestion that the two broad script-categories of the Insular system were substantially evolved in fourth-century Roman Britain is supported by other artefacts of British writing. A small rectangle of lead sheet was discovered at the site of a Roman villa at West Deeping, Lincolnshire, a few miles north-west of Peterborough, in 1994.[13] It carries thirteen lines of New Common Script of likely fourth-century date.

The inscription itself comprises a 'phylactery' or protective magical text, in this case a Latin translation of a well-known Greek spell commanding the womb of the petitioner, *Cleomedes*, to 'stay in its place'. The spell reflects the belief held by some of the Ancients that the womb was an organ with a volition of its own. Figure 32 below reproduces Tomlin's line-drawing: I have combined his separate diplomatic and reconstructed transcriptions.[14]

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[10] Hammond Bamel, 'Rufinus of Aquileia', p. 383.
[11] This is despite the fact that they mistakenly suggest that the base for Irish script was semi-uncial in conjunction with uncial, courtesy of St Patrick's use of Gaulish manuscripts in the fifth century, '*secondo la tradizione'*; Cherubini and Pratesi, *Paleografia Latina*, pp. 113, 171. By *'tradizione'* they probably mean the accounts of Patrick's visits to Gaul and the visits of Palladius to Ireland as described, for example, in the work of J. B. Bury, *The Life of St Patrick and his place in history* (London, 1905), p. 213.
[12] *CL*, p. 43.
[13] Tomlin, 'Sede in tuo loco', pp. 291-4.
[14] R. S. O. Tomlin, 'Roman Britain in 1995', *Britannia*, 27 (1996), no. 10, p. 443.

Figure 32. West Deeping, Lincs. Uterine phylactery.



ma[t]r[ix] [t]i[bi]
dico sede in
tuo loco vo
..s dedit tibi ad-
iuro te per Iaω
et per Sabaω et
per Adωnai ne
latus teneas se-
d sede in tuo lo-
co nec nocea[s]
Cleuomedem
[f]iliam A[….]
[…]

The aspect of this hand immediately suggests writing of the highest executional quality. Its alignment is highly regular and there is fastidious and consistent letter-spacing. The *ductus* is now rotated entirely into the vertical. Morphologically, the debt owed to archaic uncial book-script is obvious, appearing particularly in the curved-backed letterform of **ȣ** < **O** (relatively rare in the fourth-century record), the large, pointed archaic uncial letterform of **A** in the *adiuro te* of line four where it is used as a *littera notabilior* (a function which we also see it fulfil in contemporary papyri) and the three-stroke archaic uncial letterform of **S** elongated under cursive pressure into the s-longa. All the treatments of **E e** noted in *Tabellae Sulis* No. 95 are also present.

The closeness of this fourth-century script to Early Insular book-script suggests that Late Antique Britain experienced the same needs to disseminate texts in a relatively convenient and economical way as the rest of the Empire. As for what needs these were, it is difficult not to see the palaeographical developments of the fourth and fifth centuries in the context of the two great engines of palaeographical change that we know to have been working flat-out in fifth-century Britain: theological controversy, associated with the doctrines of Pelagius and the intervention of Germanus, and foreign mission, in the form of the evangelisation of Ireland associated with St Patrick. These activities, particularly the mission, would have required books and writing, in volume, and quickly, and *capitalis* and uncial were too time- and resource-intensive.

This was certainly the dynamic that stimulated the same graphical process elsewhere. In Italy, Caroline Hammond Bammel refers to two early *s*.v fragments of Augustine's *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum,* now Orléans, Médiathèque, 192 (169) (fols. 32–33), BnF, Lat. 13368 (fol. 256) and BnF, Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2199 (fol. 1), which she describes as 'something like the ancient equivalent of the modern paperback' (Lowe described the script of the fragments as a 'beautiful, rapid, expert half-uncial similar to that of the Milan Augustine'). She additionally noted that 'an unusually large proportion of the early manuscripts of St Augustine are written in half-uncial script'.[15] The inference is that early Christian book-script was stimulated by the writing-demands of theological controversy. The pity is that neither the Pelagians nor the good Catholics of fifth-century Britain have left us any books to confirm this.

Roman Britain, New Common Script: polymorphism and Insular 'peculiarities'

The graphical process visible in these Late Antique scripts is therefore exactly what the Italian and French palaeographers of Late Antique writing predict. The script-change of the third century resulted, in the words of Robert Marichal, in Europe inheriting 'the most enormous repertoire of the forms that had ever existed in Roman antiquity' or, as the Italians

[15] Hammond Bammel, 'Rufinus of Aquileia', pp. 379-380; *CLA,* vi, 815.

Casamassima and Staraz describe it, 'a multiform reality, dynamic…varied in its morphology and structure…very difficult to understand and interpret historically'.[16]

Understanding the Roman genesis of Insular writing in these Continental terms, as demonstrated in the discussion above, also happens to solve one of the puzzles of Insular palaeography. Schiaparelli and after him Julian Brown thought that Early Insular book-script showed an idiosyncratic morphology as compared with its Continental equivalent. For Brown, the appearance of 'uncial' letterforms of **D G N R** and **S** in Early Insular book-script appeared to be 'independent inventions within the Insular system' on the basis that they did not appear in 'Continental half-uncial'. In the case of the allomorphs of archaic uncial **N** and cursive **n**, for example, he noted that they appeared as allomorphs in Continental documentary scripts of the fifth and sixth centuries but in Insular terms he saw them as 'peculiarities'.[17]

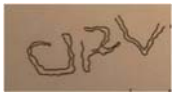
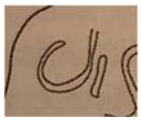
Schiaparelli had puzzled over the same phenomenon some fifty years before in his work on the origins of Irish script. He too noted that Early Irish book-script contained letterforms that did not appear in Continental 'half uncial'. Unlike Brown, however, he realized that this could not be explained by the 'isolation' of the Irish writing-province in the sixth century and instead offered, somewhat *faute de mieux*, the explanation that the Irish introduced spontaneous local eccentricities into the 'canonical' half-uncial that they had copied from imported Continental manuscripts in the sixth century.[18]

The Romano-British evidence discussed above now show that these letterforms were in fact inherited from the fourth century and that the 'idiosyncracy' of the graphical process of Late Antiquity as it operated in Britain was not so much that they were borrowed *into* but rather that they were not typified *out of* Early Insular book-script. In other words, the typification of Early Insular book-script did not result in morphological consistency and embraced a wide

[16] Marichal *et al.*, 'La date des graffiti de la Triclia', p. 112; Emanuele Casamassima and Elena Staraz, 'Variante e cambio grafico nella scrittura dei papiri latini', *Scrittura e Civiltà*, Nº. 1 (1977), p. 18.
[17] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 189.
[18] Schiaparelli, 'Intorno all' origine', pp. 29-30.

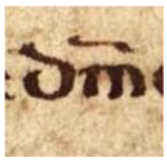
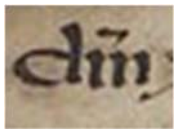
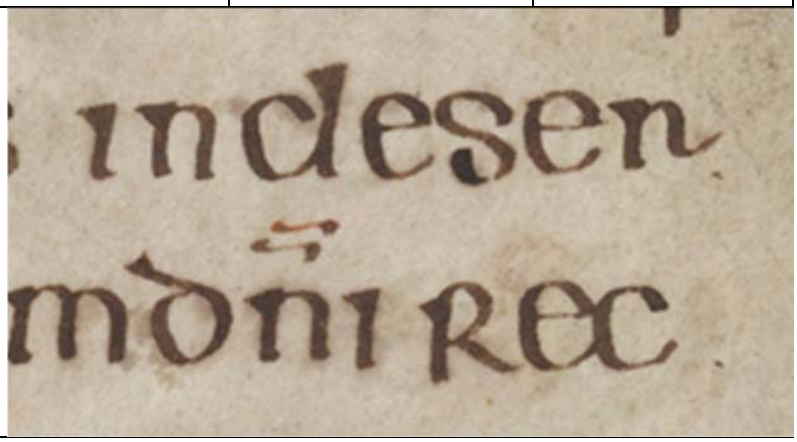
range of allomorphs.[19] Figure 33 below illustrates this using as an example the three Romano-British allomorphs of **D** that appear in *Tabellae Sulis* No. 95 and the West Deeping Phylactery discussed above, tracking them through the western British epigraphic scripts of the sixth century and into the Early Insular book-script of the seventh.

Figure 33. Allomorphs in Early Insular book-script.

Artefact	Cursive New Common Script	Set New Common Script	Archaic uncial
Bath, the Sacred Spring. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95. Fourth century.			
West Deeping, Lincs. Uterine phylactery. Fourth century.			
Crickhowell, Brycheiniog. Memorial slab. Gse-1/43/B2 TVRPILIVS. Sixth century.[20]			
Fowey, Cornwall. Inscribed pillar. DRVST[AV]S/[ANV]S. Middle of the sixth century.[21]			
Llantrisant, Anglesey. Inscribed stone. Gn-6/33/AN46. Sixth century.[22]			
Yarrowkirk, Stirlingshire. Inscribed stone. Second half of the sixth century.[23]			

[19] Tino Licht's work supports this view in that the earliest Continental book-script showing *'Doppelformen'* (in the form of **N** and **n**) is Paris, BnF, MS lat. 12097 which the *CLA*, v, 619, dates to *c.* 523; *idem*, *Halbunziale*, p. 56 & fig. 14.
[20] *Corpus*, I, pp. 159-162.
[21] *CL*, pp. 231-233 & tav. CXIV.
[22] The forms of this inscription from Ty'n Rhosydd Farm are those of book-script. Helen McKee remarks that the inscription shows signs of having been composed on wax tablets. The date of the inscription is by no means certain; *Corpus*, III, pp. 210-216.
[23] *CL*, p. 299 & tav. CLXVIII.

Figure 33. Allomorphs in Early Insular book-script.

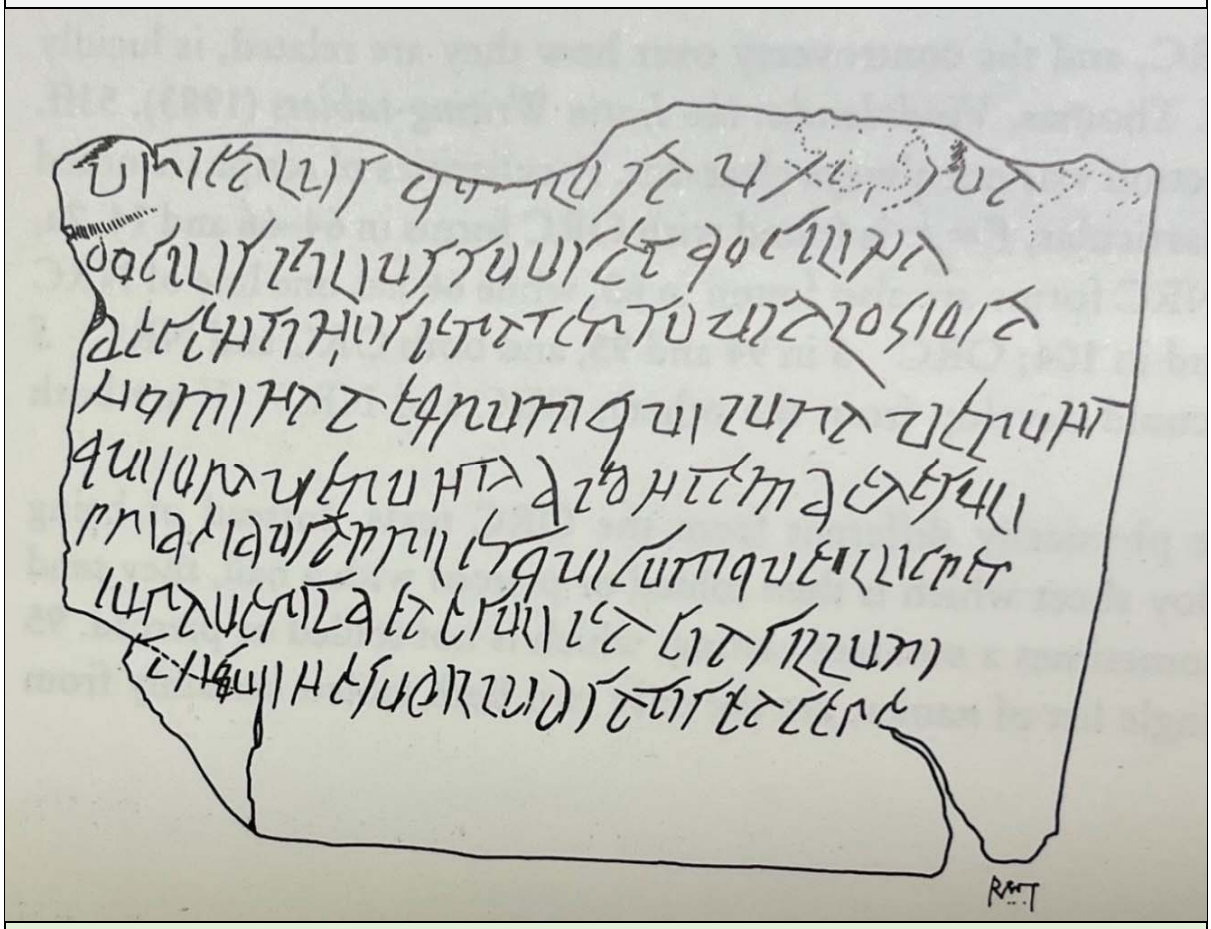
Artefact	Cursive New Common Script	Set New Common Script	Archaic uncial
Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, s.n. The *Cathach* of St Columba. s.vi^{ex}.			
TCD, MS 55. The Ussher Gospels. s.vii^{1}.			
TCD, MS 57, fol. 86r. The Book of Durrow. *c.* 700.			

Roman Britain, New Common Script in set ductus tending to quadrilinearity

The evidence of the fourth century not only explains the morphology and bifurcation of the later Insular writing-system but also it points towards the graphical *aspects*, or *facies*, of later medieval writing. *Tabellae Sulis* No. 94 is perhaps the most calligraphically-striking of the Bath assemblage: Tomlin describes it as a 'distinctive square NRC…by a practised hand'.[24] The script is reproduced in figure 34 below with Tomlin's transcription.

[24] *Tab. Sulis*, p. 226.

Figure 34. ***Tabellae Sulis,*** **No. 94.**



Uricalus Do[c]ilosa ux[or] sua
Docilis filius suus et Docilina
Decentinus frater suus Algiosa
nomina <a> eorum qui iuraverunt
<qui iuraverunt> ad fontem deae Suli(s)
prid(i)e Apriles quicumque illic per-
iuraverit deae Suli facias illum
sanguine suo illud satisfacere

Tomlin dated No. 94 as 'fourth century' but there are reasons to think that the hand may be early fourth century or even late third century. In particular: (i) the incomplete rotation of the *ductus* into the vertical; (ii) letterforms that would be archaic in a later fourth-century context; and (iii) a relatively consistently morphology, i.e. fewer allomorphs than are typical in the later fourth-century scripts discussed and illustrated above. There is a huge gulf between the script of No. 94 and the script of Nos. 95, 96 and the West Deeping phylactery. For example,

its *ductus*, significantly, still slants noticeably forward in the manner of Old Common Script and it still uses the Old Common Script letterform of **A** with only a small return hook at the bottom of the diagonal. This letterform of **A** is an archaism. Similar letterforms appear in (for example) P. Dura. 105 of 230-236 and P. Dura. 97 of 251 (which still feature **b** '*panse à gauche*').[25] These third-century papyri also show some morphological features which are in fact more developed than their equivalents in No. 94, for example a fully developed New Common Script letterform of quadrilinear **n** rather than the Old Common Script letterform of **n** (which looks like an inverted **h**), as written by the hand of No. 94. The letterform of **n** used by the hand of No. 94 appears in papyri that usually pre-date *c.* 250 (it appears in P. Dura. 121 of *c.* 241).[26]

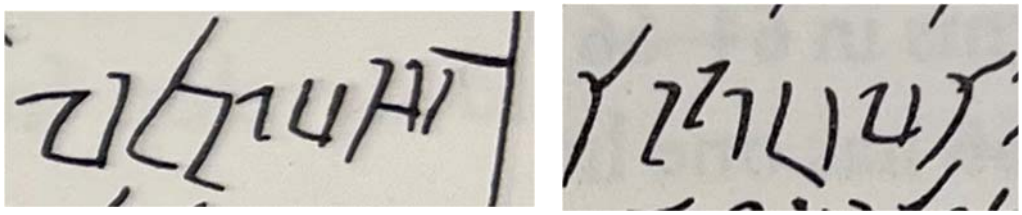
On comparative palaeographical grounds a reasonable case may therefore be made for dating the hand of No. 94 to the second half or even perhaps the middle of the third century. The archaism of this script as compared with the close-to-medieval aspects of Nos. 95 and 96 and the Lincolnshire phylactery is striking and may indicate that fourth-century Roman Britain saw substantial script-evolution.

Archaisms aside, the most striking feature of the hand of No. 94 is its 'square' aspect. Even where the inscriber ligatures, he does so in a manner that creates square compound glyphs rather than the flowing distortions typical of ligatures in New Common Script. So even the highly cursive symptom of ligatures is subjected to a disciplined calligraphic aspect of squareness. The letterform of **e** in figure 35 below is particularly noteworthy: usually the top, second stroke would be written in the form of a **c** atop an **L**, or another **c** glyph, and not a right-angled **L** atop another right-angled **L**. Even in the **er** ligature (in the left-hand column of figure

[25] For P. Dura 105 see 'TM 44837', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/44837 and 'P.Dura 105', http://papyri.info/ddbdp/dura;;105#; for P. Dura 97 see 'TM 44829', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/44829 and 'P. Dura 97', http://www.papyri.info/ddbdp/dura;;97n (25 Oct. 2022).
[26] For P. Dura 121 see 'TM 44853', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/44837 and 'P. Dura 121', http://papyri.info/ddbdp/dura;;121 (25 Oct. 2022).

35 below) the scrupulous privileging of horizontal and vertical strokes at right-angles within the monograph can be seen.

Figure 35. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94. Calligraphic treatment of fourth-century New Common Script.



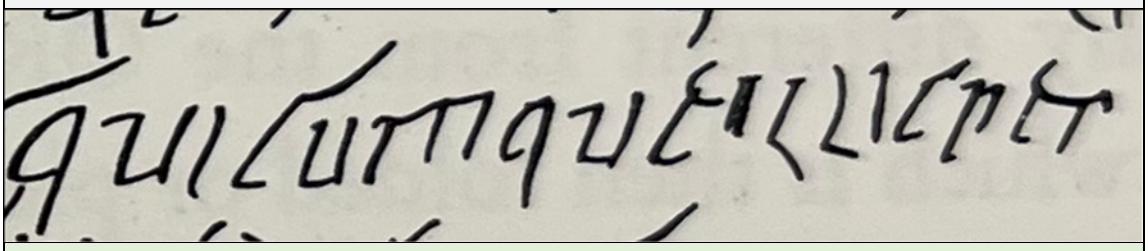
[iura]uerunt ***filius***

The tendency to 'square' lines of regularly-aligned quadrilinear script is a treatment that we will see recur throughout Later Welsh book-script: for example in the more calligraphically careful treatment of the Later Welsh book-script of BnF, MS Français 2452, discussed in Chapter Four below. No. 94 therefore raises the intriguing possibility that the *aspects* of Later Welsh book-script ('square', 'rounded', 'pointed' and so on) were also nascent in the treatments of New Common Script administered by scribes in Roman Britain. The hand of No. 94 shows another remarkable calligraphic feature that supports this idea. Highly mannered horizontal entry-strokes appear at junctures where Early Insular book-script would later develop the diagnostic Insular 'wedged' serifs.[27] The first minim-strokes of **u i l N m** show these entry-strokes as do the first strokes of of **o ꝑ f** and in some cases **s**-longa **ſ**. The combination of: (i) regular alignment; (ii) the truncation of ascenders and descenders to respect the lines of writing and legibility; and (iii) the repeated horizontal visual planes produced by the combination of horizontal entry-strokes and the right-angular *ductus*, all combine together to produce, in some parts of the hand, not just a 'square' but a 'flat-topped' aspect.

[27] For the evolution and a scribe's-eye explanation of the execution of Insular wedge-serifs see Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog Tablets', p. 37.

The hand of No. 94 is by no means, of course, the full-blown *scriptura tunsa* or 'hanging script' of later times, but figure 36 below shows clear deference to the line of legibility in the 'break' of the **c** and **e** of *'quicumque'* as well as in the reduction of the *module* of the letterform of **L** to respect the line of legibility.[28] If one imagines the truncation of ascenders of the **c** and **e** then the line of text would, due allowance made for the absence of ruling, present a markedly 'flat-topped' aspect. Further, if one imagines the inscriber of No. 94 being asked to replicate his text on membrane: (i) using a broad pen; (ii) with the benefit of ruling; (iii) having completed the verticalization of his *ductus*; (iv) substituting wedge-serifs for his stylus entry-strokes; and (v) with the benefit of not much more « *librarizzarla* », the result would be a book-script of distinctly square and 'flat-topped' aspect. Figure 36 below illustrates this aspect of the script.

Figure 36. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94. Squareness.



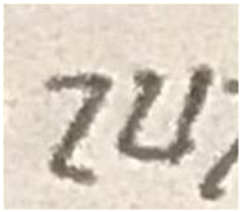
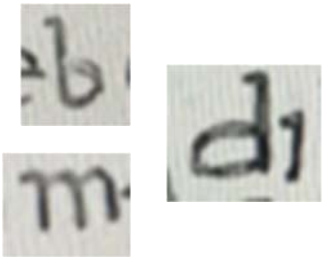
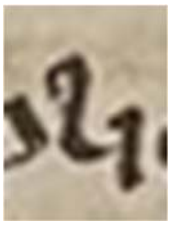
quicumque ***illi*** ***per***

This stylus-calligraphy throws light on another idiosyncrasy of Early Insular book-script, namely its distinctive wedge-shaped serifs and how they came about. No. 94 supports Gifford Charles-Edwards's view that some of the earliest examples of Early Insular book-script (particularly the hands of the Springmount Bog Tablets and TCD, MS 55, the Ussher Gospels) reflect relict cursive features, most notably entry-loops at the top of ascenders (the same entry-loops that had caused Brown to suspect that Early Insular book-script was not a copy of contemporary Continental book-script but an indigenous development).[29] She suggested that

[28] See Traube, 'Perrona Scottorum', pp. 532-3, for the Carolingian references to *'Sunt et tunsae, quas Scotti in usu habent'*.
[29] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 289.

these entry-loops were replaced in Early Insular book-script by calligraphically-formed wedge-serifs in the course of the 'calligraphisation' of 'Phase 1 half-uncial' in the seventh century. Until then, high-status Insular texts were written on papyrus or membrane in unseriffed book-hands, such as that of Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 12 R 33, the *Cathach*.[30] These looped and horizontal Late Antique entry-strokes are illustrated below.

Figure 37. Early scribal entry-strokes.

Fourth century		**Sixth-seventh century**	
			
Bath, the Sacred Spring. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94. Late third or early fourth century. 'Horizontal'	Bath, the Sacred Spring. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 98. Fourth century. 'Looped'	The Springmount Bog Tablets. Sixth century. 'Horizontal'	TCD, MS 55. Ussher I. *s*.vii[2]. 'Looped'

The hand of No. 94 allows us to support her model. It suggests that calligraphic entry-strokes in fourth-century hands may also have been the seeds of the later more elaborate treatment represented by wedge-serifs. Charles-Edwards herself suggested as much in her analysis of the two hands of the Springmount Bog Tablets. She noted that 'The smaller, more formal and deliberate Hand I, seen on folios 3r. and 6, has discarded looping entries to the ascender in favour of a short horizontal or sans-serif'.[31] The fact that she identified 'Hand 1' as a 'scribe' supports the idea that the entry-strokes of the Springmount Bog Tablets derive

[30] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog Tablets', p. 37. That said, 'calligraphisation' is visible in Romano-British writing as early as the date of the Vindolanda tablets. In the words of Bowman and Thomas, Tablet No. 47 'warns us not to apply too rigidly the distinction between bookhand and cursive. No. 47 is not only elegantly written but also shows a marked difference between thick and thin strokes'; Bowman and Thomas, *Vindolanda*, p. 53.

[31] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog Tablets', p. 30.

from a tradition of book-script, such as the hand of No. 94, whereas the entry-loops of, for example, TCD, MS 55, derive from the alternative cursive treatment.

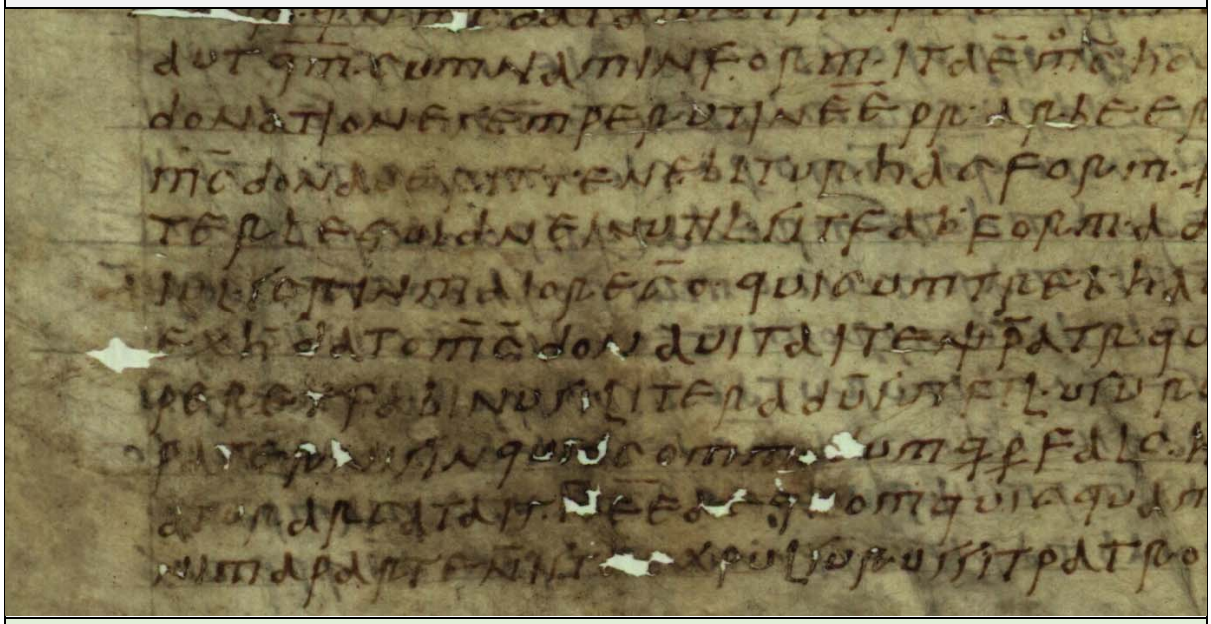
One final aspect of the palaeography of No. 94 is also important for the early history of the Insular script-system. No. 94 shows us how the *function* of a text, and the expectations that contemporary readers had for the appearance of texts fulfilling such function, influenced the treatment and the resulting aspect of the script, an effect which, repeated over time, produced the phenomenon of typification and ultimately canonicity.

The text of No. 94 is not the usual 'curse' but instead a sanction against perjury, a malfeasance particularly abhorred by the Romans.[32] Oaths were an important part of Roman jurisprudence and those sworn in the sanctuary of the deity as supernatural witness and enforcer carried particular weight. The text of No. 94 provides that divine punishment should attend the person who breaks an unspecified oath and Tomlin suggested that as the parties cited in the text were family members, the oath probably concerned family property.[33] In other words, No. 94 is a legal document, what modern lawyers might term an attestation clause.

P. Vindob L90/Vienna, Österreich Nationalbibliothek, MS L 90 is a s.iv miscellany of legal texts thought by Lowe to derive from an Eastern centre of legal studies.[34] Like No. 94 it is written in a highly regular hand with a distinctive square aspect and rightwards inclination. P. Grenfell II, 107/Bodl, MS Lat. Class. g. 1 (P) is a fourth century collection of legal texts from Oxyrhynchus which Lowe described as a 'sloping half-uncial'.[35] This hand shows an even greater tendency towards squareness and rightwards inclination. Both scripts are reproduced in figure 38 on the page opposite.

[32] Cicero commented at length on the depravity of perjury; see Cicero, *Pro Quinctio Roscio Comoedo Oratio. M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes*, ed. Albert Clark (Oxford, 1909), §16, p. 48.
[33] Hot springs were commonly used to test the probity of witnesses in Antique times by threat of physical harm, see *Tab. Sulis*, p. 227.
[34] *CLA* X, **1042; 'TM 62360 / LDAB 3525', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/62360 (8 Dec. 2022).
[35] *CLA* II, 248; 'TM 62723 / LDAB 391', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/62723 (8 Dec. 2022).

Figure 38. Late Antique legal scripts.



P. Vindob L90/Vienna, Österreich Nationalbibliothek, MS L 90.
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P. Grenfell II, 107/Bodl, MS Lat. *Clas*s. g. 1 (P).
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As figure 38 shows, there is a strong aspectual resemblance between these legal texts and that of No. 94. Giovanna Nicolaj and Serena Ammirati have analysed the palaeography of fourth- and fifth-century legal texts, including the two scripts reproduced in figure 38 above. They identify a particular ‘taste’ at work in these legal texts which Ammirati describes in terms

which also apply to the script of No. 94: an angular ductus, a forward-sloping inclination, and an aspect '*piuttosto squadrate*' – 'rather squared', producing a '*semionciale squadrata*'.[36] Licht is happy to term it a '*Juristenhand*'.[37]

No. 94 may well, then, show the hand of someone who knew what *facies* was conventional for a legal text. If so, this would not only be a striking demonstration of how thoroughly the Severn-Cotswolds region was integrated into the graphical unity of the wider Roman world but also suggest that the Romano-British legal system played a part in the typification of Early Insular book-script. We have plentiful references to the legal culture of Late Antique Britain: Patrick addresses his *seniores* in Britain as *cati rhetorici* ('clever rhetoricians') who were *legis periti* ('wise in law') and Gildas refers to British *iudices* (albeit wicked ones) and to a *regula recti iudicii* which Michael Lapidge construes as a reference to a written law code. [38] The implication is that in fifth- and sixth-century Britain men of affairs were engaged with legal and administrative as well as theological literacy. All this provided energy and momentum to the graphical process.

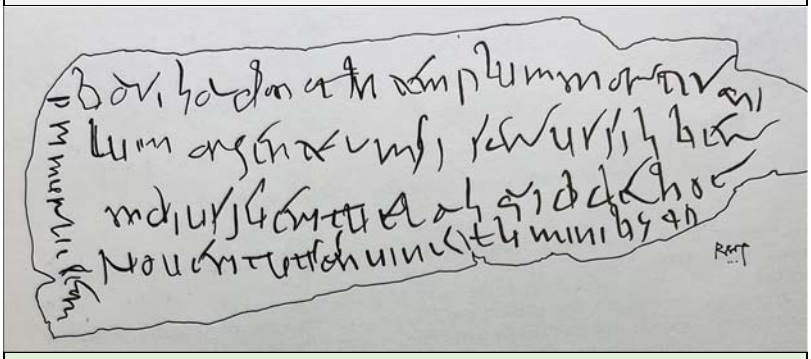
Roman Britain, New Common Script in cursive ductus tending to quadrilinearity

If *Tabellae Sulis* Nos. 94, 95 and 96 point to the set, bilinear element of the emerging Insular writing-system, other *tabellae* point to its less formal scripts. This is the writing that Gifford Charles-Edwards termed the 'undergrowth' of utilitarian everyday hands that were routinely used for inscribing the myriad of wooden, metal and stone artefacts hardly any of

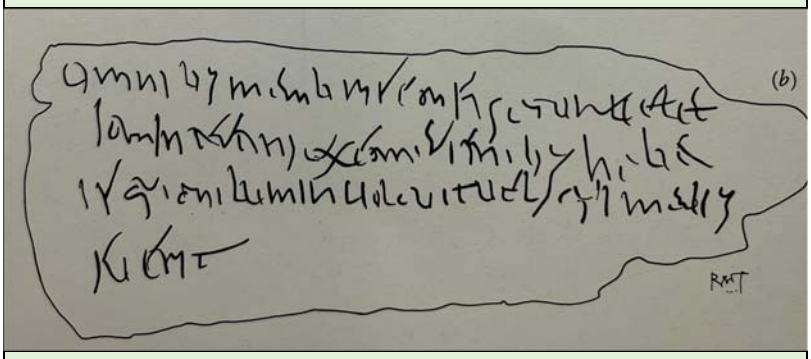
[36] Giovanna Nicolaj, 'Ambiti di copia e copisti di codici giuridici in Italia (secoli v – xii in.)' in A. Ennio Cortese, *Scritti promossi da Domenico Maffei* (Roma, 2001), pp. 478-496; Ammirati, *Sul libro*, pp. 86, 88. The possibility should be noted that the sloping orientation may therefore be a deliberate element of the stylised calligraphic treatment rather than an archaism redolent of Old Common Script.
[37] Licht, *Halbunziale*, p. 73 & fig. 22. In this regard the notably square and regular aspect of Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, s. n., the *Codex Florentinus*, a pandect of Justinian's code of 533-550, should also be noted; *CLA*, iii, 295; https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/627, (5 Apr. 2023).
[38] *Patrick: Confession (et) Lettre à Coroticus*, ed. R. P. C. Hanson and Cécile Blanc, Sources Chrétiennes, 249 (Paris, 1978), § 13; M. Winterbottom (ed. and tr.), Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (London and Chichester, 1978), II, 27; Lapidge, 'Gildas's Education', p. 46.

which have survived.[39] *Tabellae Sulis* Nos. 97 – 101 show just this kind of writing: New Common Script treated cursively, the workaday utilitarian writing of Maffei's '*uomini occupatissimi'* or, in Jan-Olof Tjäder's terms, the writing *'del popolo'* of ordinary folk in fourth-century Britain.[40] No. 97, sides (a) and (b), are reproduced with a transcription at figure 39 opposite.

Figure 39. *Tabellae Sulis,* No. 97.



basilia donat in templum martis ani-
lum argenteum si ser[v]us si liber
ta]mdiu siluerit ve aliquid de hoc
Noverit ut sanguine et liminibus et



omnibus membris configatur vel et
iam intestinis excomesis [om]nibushabe[at]
is qui anilum involavit vel qui medius
fuerit

The contrast between the hand of No. 97 and the hands of Nos. 95, 96 and the West Deeping Phylactery is striking. However scripts like these are just as important to Insular palaeography not merely because they account for the less formal scripts of the Insular system but because they are also fundamental to the understanding of the more formal book-scripts. I referred above to the suggestion of Cherubini and Pratesi that the 'new Christian book-script' of post-Roman western Europe was a combination

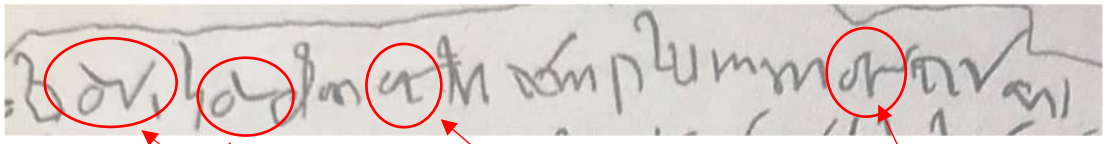
[39] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog tablets', pp. 27–45; Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Epigraphy of Wales 550 – 1000 Examined in a Wider Insular Context: The Interchange between Written and Inscribed Letters', (Unpublished M. Phil. Thesis, University of Wales College Newport, 2000), p. 1. Glimpses of these less formal everyday hands *del popolo* in a Late Antique Insular context are the scratched slates from Inchmarnock on the Clyde Estuary (Argyll and Bute); Christopher Lowe and Daniel Atkinson, *Inchmarnock: an Early Historic Island Monastery and Its Archaeological Landscape*, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Edinburgh, 2008), pp. 128-49; 151-75.

[40] J.-O. Tjäder, 'Considerazioni e proposte', p. 43.

of the *'minuscola'* of the *Epitome of Livy* and the *'corsiva nuova'* represented by hands such as that of No. 97.[41] The hand of No. 97 confirms this theory in the Romano-British context in that many of its letterforms, treated with extreme cursivity, represent 'upwardly mobile' letterforms which were adopted into Early Insular book-script.

The figures and discussion below evidence this by tracing the Romano-British and early medieval career of the most diagnostic, idiosyncratic and typical form of Early Insular book-script, the ***OC*** or ***CC*** letterform of **a**. In the extreme left column on of figure 40 below, we see that the basic *ductus* of **a** comprises two separate strokes: a rotund lobe and a pronounced convex stem, something like ⊂(, and we recall the simple, set letterforms of Quintilian's children.

Figure 40. *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97r.



Basilia donat in templum martis ani –



1	2	3	4
Set letterform of 'a' subject to verticalization and rotundity.	Semicursive letterform of 'a' proclitic ligature with cursive s-longa.	Cursive letterform of 'a': enclitic ligature with Ƈ	Cursive letterform of 'a' proclitic ligature with 'sprawling' letterform of r

This letterform is then subjected to the same phenomenon of scribal 'oscillation' proposed by Schiaparelli as the explanation for the palaeography of the Lucca codex. In column two it

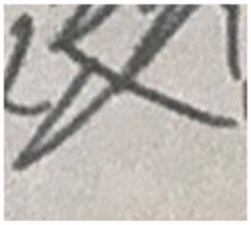
[41] Cherubini and Pratesi, *Paleografia Latina*, pp. 113, 171.

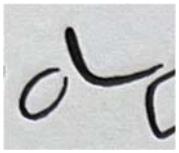
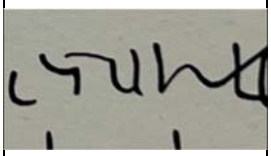
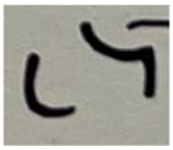
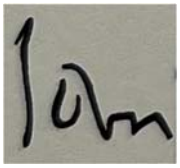
rotates so that the stem can ligature into the following s-longa but in columns 3 and 4 the stylus-lift is dispensed with and the *ductus* is written cursively, severely distorted in two ligatures.

As figure 40 above shows, then, it is the process of ligaturing, and in particular what Lowe termed 'proclitic' ligatures (where it is the first letterform that sacrifices the integrity of its *ductus*; where the second letterform distorts, the ligature is 'enclitic') that change the *ductus*, and not any evolution of the *ductus* itself. The hand of No. 97 shows numerous ligatures involving **a**, to the extent that enclitic **a**-ligatures can be seen as 'obligatory' (another of Lowe's terms, denoting the invariable ligaturing of a particular letterform).[42] In the discussion of the allomorphs of **E** that were taken into Early Insular book-script earlier in this Chapter, we saw that different *ductus* from different scripts (for example archaic book-script, itself originally a cursive treatment of *capitalis*) were taken into Early Insular book-script, accounting for some of its polymorphism. However the script of No. 97 shows us something quite different, in that the allomorphs that it bequeaths to Early Insular book-script are the distorted forms of the *ductus* caused by ligatures. Figure 41 overleaf illustrates this, taking Gifford Charles-Edwards's transcription of the three allomorphs of **a** that appear in the drypoint marginalia of TCD, MS 55, the Ussher Gospels, as the early medieval comparators for the letterforms of No. 97.

[42] Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, pp. 141-2.

Figure 41. Ligatures and the morphology of the Insular script-system.

Tabellae Sulis, No. 96	TCD, MS 59. The Book of Dimma. *s.*viii[2]
	
By way of contrast with the letterforms from New Common Script, this archaic uncial letterform remains as a *littera notabilior* in later Insular usage.	

Tabellae Sulis, No. 97.		TCD, MS 55. Drypoint marginalia. *c.* 600 (below)
Proclitic, obligatory ligature.	Proclitic ductus	
	 	
-asi	Drypoint glosses drawn by Gifford Charles-Edwards.[43]	
	 	
-atur	The ‘lidded’ letterform of Later Insular book-script.	
	 	
Iam	The ‘lobed’ letterform typical of Later Insular book-script	

[43] Gifford Charles-Edwards, ‘The Springmount Bog Tablets’, p. 33.

In all of the processes described above we see how the writing recovered from Roman Britain in the last generation or so accounts if not for the entirety of early medieval British writing, then for very much of it. It shows how the dynamics for the typification of book-script existed in Late Antique Britain; how Antique traditions of book-script were available to Romano-British scribes and how important was the contribution made by different, more utilitarian and everyday forms of writing *del populo,* to the graphical repertoire of early medieval scribes. Save for a certain conservatism, the result of which was a comparatively advanced and unredacted polymorphism in Insular writing, Britannia seems to have behaved, in palaeographical terms, like all the other ex-dioceses.

Early Insular book-script. The Springmount Bog Tablets

The final building-block in our reconstruction of the earliest phase of the Insular writing-system comes from a century or more after the collapse of the Imperial administration *c.* 410. In 1914, a Mr Gregg was cutting peat in a bog close to the village of Clough, some seven miles north of Ballymena, Co. Antrim. At a depth of four feet or so his *sleaghán* hit a bundle of small yew boards bound together with leather straps. The object was identified as having antiquarian interest and was duly sold to the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. The writing tablets – as they turned out to be – took the form of six yew boards *c.* 75mm x 210mm x 7mm thick, originally linked together, accordion-style, by means of piercings and leather thongs. The assemblage was bound together with leather straps wrapped around each end, with a longer carrying-strap to be slung around the shoulder or neck.[44] The two external 'covers' (fols. 1r. and 6v.) are plain wood but each of the internal 'folios' 1v. – 6r. features a rectangular recess filled with beeswax to a depth of about 1mm. Fol. 3v. alone retains something of its original appearance, with blackened beeswax scored to reveal what originally would have been the contrasting lighter yew wood beneath. Unfortunately, on many of the other folia the wax has

[44] Julia M. H. Smith noted the same apparatus for the Faddan More Psalter; *idem, Writing in Britain and Ireland,* p. 33.

perished or was damaged during the original process of prising apart the fused boards. Fols. 1v. – 4r. retain some legible writing, 4v. and 5v. very little and 5r. and 6r. nothing at all.

Figure 42. Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, S.A. 1914:2. The Springmount Bog Tablets.



© National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

The text is that of Psalms 30, 31 and 32 (according to the Vulgate numeration) in the Gallican version, with Old Latin readings and without *tituli*.[45] The tablets were first published to the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland in 1920 by E. C. R. Armstrong, Keeper of Irish Antiquities at the National Museum and R. A. S. Macalister, appointed professor of Celtic archaeology at University College, Dublin in 1909. Both men were deceived by their excellent preservation. They only reluctantly accepted that they were medieval at all, declaring that comparing them with other writing tablets 'would carry us too far', despite the fact that they offered a plethora of early medieval references to wax tablets invoking (amongst others) St

[45] The tablets are therefore most likely a pedagogical object: 'the important element in an ecclesiastic's education was the reading of the Scriptures and – it may be remarked – in especial the reading of the Psalms'; James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: an Introduction and Guide* (Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 624; see also Martin McNamara and Michael T. Martin *The Bible in the Early Irish Church,* Sacred Texts and Their Commentaries: Jewish, Christian and Islamic, Vol. 13 (Leiden, Boston 2022), p. 15.

Ciaran.[46] Transcriptions of all discernable writing were provided, an exercise repeated by Maurice Sheehy as an appendix to Martin McNamara's *Psalms in the Early Irish Church.*[47]

The significance of the Springmount Bog Tablets for British writing is twofold. Firstly, despite being discovered in what is now Northern Ireland, they are representative of 'British' as much as 'Irish' writing in that for the period *c.* 400-600 these cannot have been different: we are wiser to talk of 'Insular' writing. Even if the Springmount Bog Tablets are 'Irish' in the sense that the clerics who wrote them were born in Hibernia, or spoke Irish, their palaeography is nevertheless explicable only in terms of the Late Antique writing that formed the basis of the entire early Insular writing-system both in Ireland and Britain. Secondly, they represent a continuous text of book-script from the palaeographical *terra incognita* of *c.*400-600 when book-script is only visible, if at all, in the odd set letterform that appears along with the generally cursive or semicursive letterforms of New Common Script that intrude into the epigraphic *capitalis* of the contemporary early Christian monuments. In other words, they are a palaeographical 'missing link' between the last Roman scripts and the oldest Early Irish book-script. Figure 43 below shows the better-preserved fol. 3v with Armstrong and MacAlister's reconstruction of the script.

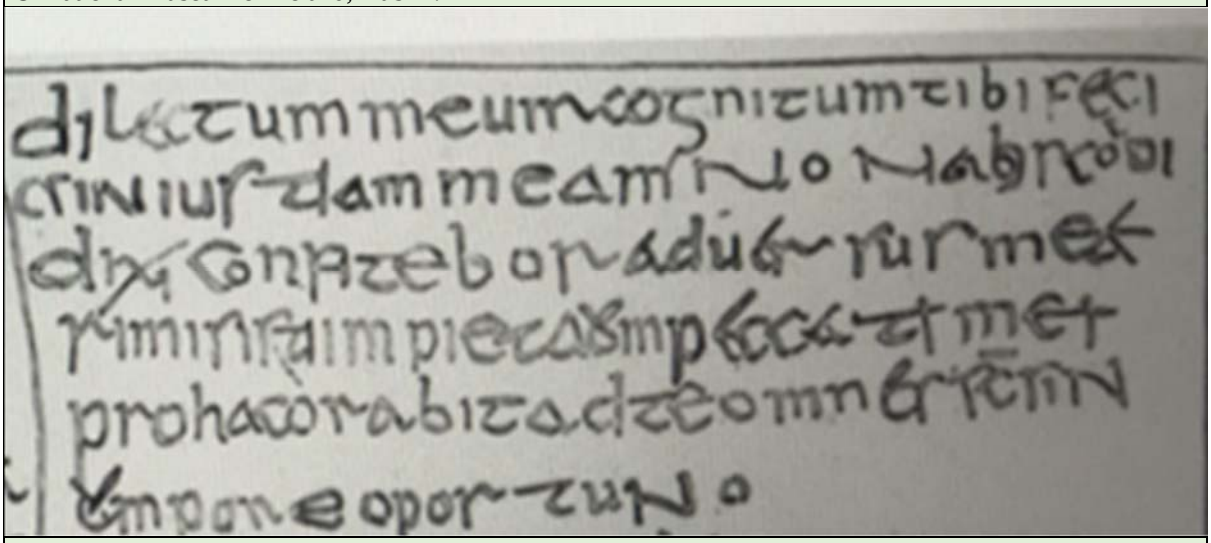
[46] Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, 1914:2; *CLA, Supplement*, 1684; E. C. R. Armstrong and R. A. S. Macalister, 'Wooden Book with Leaves indented and Waxed Found near Springmount Bog, Co. Antrim', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* Sixth Series, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1920), pp. 160-6; D. H. Wright, 'The tablets from Springmount Bog: a key to early Irish palaeography', *American Journal of Archaeology,* lxvii (1962), pp. 219; also Bella T. Schauman, 'The emergence and progress of Irish script to the year 700' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1974), pp. 329-69. For the writing-tablet in Late Antiquity generally see G. Cavallo, 'Le tavolette come support della scrittura: qualche testimonianza indiretta' in E. Lalou (éd.), *Les tablettes à écrire, de l'antiquité à l'époque modern: actes du colloque international du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris 1990,* Bibliologia, 12 (Paris 1992), pp. 97-104; C. H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London, British Academy, 1983), pp. 11 *et ff.* and T. C. Skeat, 'The origin of the Christian codex', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 102 (1994), pp. 263-268. For a description of the excavation and decipherment of a similar but later medieval wax tablet see Michelle Brown, 'The Role of the Wax Tablet in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in Light of a Recent Find from York', *British Library Journal*, 20, No. 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 1–16.

[47] Martin McNamara, *The Psalms in the early Irish Church*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 165 (Sheffield, 2000), p. 116.

Figure 43. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Fol. 3v.



© National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.



Reconstructed script after Armstrong and Macalister.

The actual date of the tablets was realised in 1964 by David Wright who proposed *c.* 600, a suggestion that Bischoff cited with apparent approval, referring to the 'earliest type of Irish script' which 'may be dated around 600'.[48] Brown felt unable to put the script earlier or later than 600 on palaeographical grounds.[49] The American palaeographer Bella Schauman identified 'archaic features' and suggested that 'It is not unreasonable to place them in the 6th

[48] Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 14 & n. 43; D. H. Wright, 'The Tablets from the Springmount Bog: a key to early Irish palaeography', *American Journal or Archaeology*, lxvii (1962), p. 219. Martin McNamara cites a letter written by Bischoff to J. N. Hillgarth in which Bischoff justifies the date *c.* 600 by reference to similarities with St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek MS 1399a, the St Gall Isidore fragments, and Ussher I; McNamara, *The Psalms*, p. 32.

[49] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 223.

century, and indeed they may represent a hand common in Ireland as early as St Patrick's day'.[50] Irish scholars agree that the script is early and derives from 'New Roman Cursive' on the basis that 'Britain must be the source of Irish script...' and that New Roman Cursive 'must have been the informal script written by St Patrick'.[51]

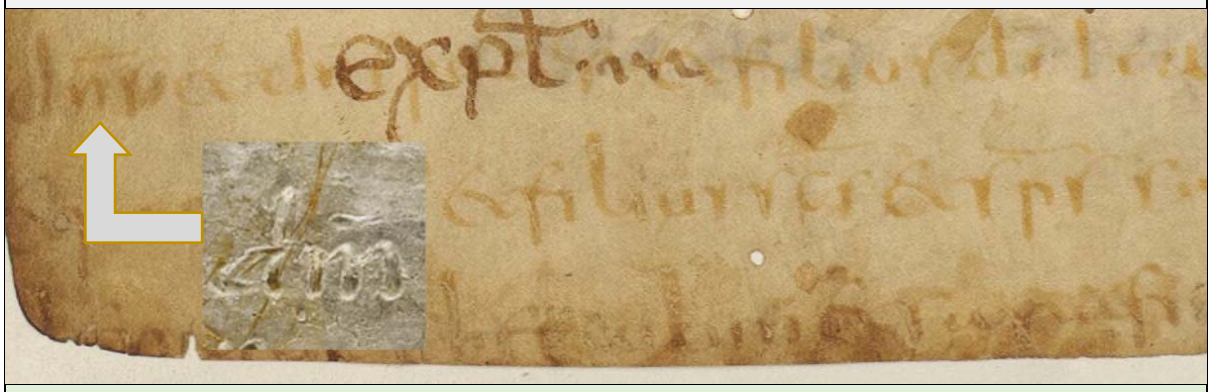
Dumville preferred an early date, on the basis that 'nothing like this can be found in any seventh-century Insular manuscript' (although this is not quite true) and offered the interesting perspective that the early date and the derivative nature of the hands pointed to a possible British context for the tablets: 'While it might seem simpler to rule any scribe from abroad out of consideration, that these tablets were written in a context of sixth- (or fifth-) century British missionary endeavour in Ireland is not absolutely to be excluded…'.[52] Gifford Charles-Edwards seems to have been impressed by Schauman's openness to a very early date despite her own estimate of *c.* 570. [53]

An earlier date is credible. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 13246 is a missal from Bobbio, fols. 296-300 of which are a palimpsest with a lower script, Ambrose on Luke, written in what David Ganz calls 'semicursive' (Lowe's 'quarter uncial' and described by Tino Licht as '*Halbkursive*'). Ganz describes it as a 'rapid and elegant script' and notes its closeness to the glosses of the Bembine Terence, *s.*v.[54] This likely north Italian fifth-century hand is by no means a palaeographical match for the hands of the Springmount tablets but it

[50] Bella Schauman, 'Early Irish Manuscripts – The Art of the Scribes', *Expedition*, 21/3 (1979), p. 37; see also David Dumville *A Palaeographer's Review* (2 vols., Osaka, 2007), I, p. 35. Schauman also suggested a late fifth- or early sixth-century 'arguable' date; see Schauman, 'Irish Script', p. 312.
[51] William O'Sullivan, 'Manuscripts and Palaeography' in Dáibhí O'Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland*, I (Oxford, 2005), p. 517. Recent scholarship proposes closer contact between Ireland and the Roman world, for example: L. Marcini, 'Worlds Apart: The Romans in Ireland?', *Current Archaeology*, 317 (2016) and E. Johnston, 'Ireland in Late Antiquity: A Forgotten Frontier?', *Studies in Late Antiquity*, 1 (2017), pp. 107-23.
[52] Dumville, A *Palaeographer's Review*, I, p. 35.
[53] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Epigraphy of Wales', p. 20. Macalister also speculated about the function that the tablets performed in the scholastic context and formed the view that 'The writing is too good to be that of a mere pupil: it was probably written by a master for the purposes of instruction'; Armstrong and Macalister, 'Wooden Book with Leaves', p. 166.
[54] *CLA*, v, 653 and David Ganz, '*Tino Licht. Halbunziale Schriftkultur im Zeitalter der ersten lateinischen Minuskel (III-.IX. Jahrhundert)*. Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 20. Hiersemann. Stuttgart 2018. €216.', *Peritia*, 31 (2020), p. 308. For the Bobbio palimpsests see Michiel Van Den Hout 'Gothic palimpsests of Bobbio', *Scriptorium*, Tome 6, n°1 (1952), pp. 91-93 and C. H. Beeson, 'The palimpsests of Bobbio', *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (6 vols., Rome, 1946), VI, pp. 162-184.

has at least a resemblance. A high-resolution reproduction of the bottom of fol. 297v. is set out as figure 44 below which compares the contraction of *dominus* at the beginning of l.1 and that of *dominum* from fol. 1v. of the tablets (the inset).

Figure 44. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 13246. The Bobbio Missal.



« Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF » Réutilisation non commerciale.

The hand of the tablets was described by Lowe (he saw only one hand at work) as an 'early Irish minuscule' which he described as 'inexpert'.[55] Brown called it 'literary cursive' (his term for the set 'academic' script exemplified by the *scholia* of the Bembine Terence) and thought it 'expertly written'.[56] O'Sullivan thought it the same '*litterae Africanae*' or early 'half-uncial' as the hand of the copyist of Ussher 1 and that '[the] angularities [of the script] are clearly due to the stylus, not the script, which is the formal script of 'Usserianus...an example of the Irish half-uncial that pre-dated the invention of the Insular script'. He considered Bella Schauman to have been 'misled' when she stated that the hand(s) show vestiges of 'ancient Common Script' (but there is a whiff of nationalism about this) and pointed instead to the hands of TCD, MS 55 and Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS 26 Sup. (Rule of St Basil, the 'Milan Basileus'), a manuscript perhaps taken to Bobbio by Columbanus himself prior to 613.[57] O'Sullivan (like Lowe) saw only one hand at work which he described as '…a practised scribe,

[55] CLA, Supplement, 1684.
[56] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, pp. 227, 232.
[57] O'Sullivan, 'Manuscripts and Palaeography', pp. 519, 533, 548. For Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS 26 Sup. see *CLA*, ii, 312 and 'Basilius, Regula', http://foundationsirishculture.ie/record/?id=8 (5 Dec. 2022). This comparison is not a very good one and Lowe himself in his *CLA* entry struggled to compare the idiosyncratic hand of the Basileus with other early Irish scripts. The lower script of the palimpsest leaves of the Bobbio Missal is a better comparator, as noted above, as is Schauman's reference to Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS S 45 Sup.

writing rapidly and employing a well-established canon'. This 'canon' was distinctively Insular and a form of 'half-uncial' (although O'Sullivan shows sensitivity to that problematic term).[58]

As for the 'Insular' nature of the 'canon', Schauman compared the script of the tablets with Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS S 45 Sup., another Bobbio palimpsest dating from before 622, described by Dumville as one of the Continental 'manifestations of Irishness spread across the seventh century'.[59] Schauman noted that this manuscript showed Continental influence (perhaps from the need to make the text legible to non-Irish readers) which highlighted the difference between 'Insular' and 'Continental' 'half-uncial', discrepancies which Lowe had used to calibrate many *CLA* dates for Bobbio manuscripts.[60]

The Springmount Bog Tablets. Script and treatment

In the discussion of the British Late Antique writing above we saw the coming together of not only the morphology but also the scribal treatments and aspects that were to typify as part of the development of book-scripts within the later Insular system. However as discussed in both the Introduction and Chapter One, the Italian palaeographers and in particular Cencetti noted that the earliest book-scripts were in fact produced by a quite a specific, definable combination of graphical tendencies working in concert, a process described in the aggregate by Pratesi as that of « *librarizzarla* » or 'working-up-into-book-script'. I have argued above that much of this process had already been accomplished in the fourth century, but the Springmount tablets give us a precious glimpse of how it continued throughout the fifth century.

For Cencetti, the aesthetic motivation for the typification of book-script was a combination of *'chiarezza'* or 'clarity' and elegance, aspiring to produce scripts that were 'not only clear…but beautiful'.[61] This was achieved, however, by specific, identifiable graphical

[58] O'Sullivan, 'Manuscripts and Palaeography', p. 520.
[59] Jerome on Isaiah, *CLA*, iii, 365; Dumville, *A Palaeographer's Review*, I, p. 27.
[60] Bella Schauman, 'The Irish script of the MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS S 45 Sup. (ante ca. 625)', *Scriptorium*, xxxii (1978), pp. 3-18.
[61] Cencetti, 'Vecchi et nuovi orientamenti', p. 7.

tendencies, namely: (i) the spacing out of letters; (ii) harmony of dimensions; (iii) regularity of alignment; (iv) care in the tracing of strokes; (v) simplicity in abbreviations; and (vi) perpendicularity (as opposed to inclination) of *ductus*.[62] The following analysis is intended to show how much of this process had been achieved by the likely date of the Springmount Bog tablets in the sixth century and how much was left to later Insular scribes.

'Clarity'

Both the Springmount hands aspire to clear word- and letter-spacing and the clear presentation of lines of text. Line-justification is managed competently with spaces at the end of the lines being filled with the occasional elongated *sagitta* forward from the archaic uncial letterform of **E**. Overruns are also dealt with neatly by means of *ceann fo éite*, 'head under wing'.[63] Subject to the uncertain factors of scribal competence and the informality of the medium, the script shows the typical regular alignment, on both horizontal and vertical planes, of book-script. Occasionally the tendency to cursivity is too strong to be resisted and ligatures occur, mostly, however, at the 'obligatory' junctures: *ampersands*; where a head-stroke of a **C** or *sagitta* of an **E** ligatures forward, or where an **i** follows an **L**. Figure 45 below shows two examples of the scribe's interpolation of ligatures.

Figure 45. The Springmount Bog Tablets. 'Clarity' and cursivity.



e-ligature. '*nec*'.

Li ligature. '*inclina*'.

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'Beauty'

[62] Cencetti, *Paleografia*, p. 26.
[63] For this term see C. Finlayson, *The Celtic Psalter: Edinburgh University Library Ms. 56.*, Umbrae Codicum Occidentalium, 7 (Amsterdam, 1962), pp. xvii-xviii.

An aesthetic value-judgment primarily, but Gifford Charles-Edwards saw two hands at work in the tablets. ‘Hand I’ she described as ‘smaller, more formal and deliberate’ and detected it on fols. 3r and 6r. She thought it to show a book-scribe. ‘Hand II’ (responsible for the rest of the writing) she saw as a less practiced, novice hand and drew attention to ‘how ignorant of penmanship the practitioner of stylus-writing might be’.[64] The hands are by no means easy to distinguish but the control of alignment and *module* on fol. 3r. does seem to be more skilful than that of fol. 3v. Also on fol. 3r. there appear: (i) a calligraphic idiosyncracy where the **m** of ‘omnes’ is written within an enlarged capital **O**; and (ii) a calligraphic display-form of **g**, with a right-angled cross-stroke at the end of the sinuous descender. Figure 46 below shows these features as well as the generally well-spaced and regular lines of writing.

Figure 46. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Fol. 3r. Hand I.



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Despite the writing-technology and the fact that the exercise is clearly pedagogical, Hand I nevertheless shows good acquaintance with the letterforms and treatments of book-script. The scribe writes neatly, with a slightly squarer-ground stylus than Hand II and shows awareness of the ‘pointed’ graphical aspect as well as the significance of inflected strokes to that aspect. Good wedged serifs are also written with care. Figure 47 below shows both these calligraphic accomplishments:

[64] Gifford Charles-Edwards, ‘The Springmount Bog Tablets’, pp. 30-31.

Figure 47. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Serifs, inflections.





Fol. 3r. Hand I.
Letterform of **d** and **l** with wedge-serif.



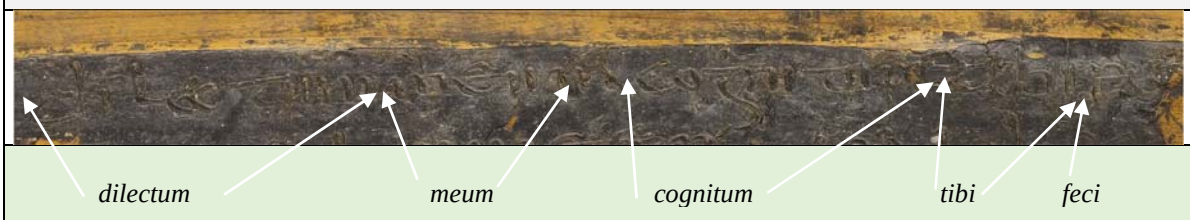
Fol. 3r. Hand I.
Letterform of **m** with thick and thin strokes of a broad stylus.

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'Spacing'

Figure 48 below shows part of Psalm 32:5 with the first and last letters of each word indicated by arrows to give some idea of the extent of word-spacing.

Figure 48. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Word-spacing.



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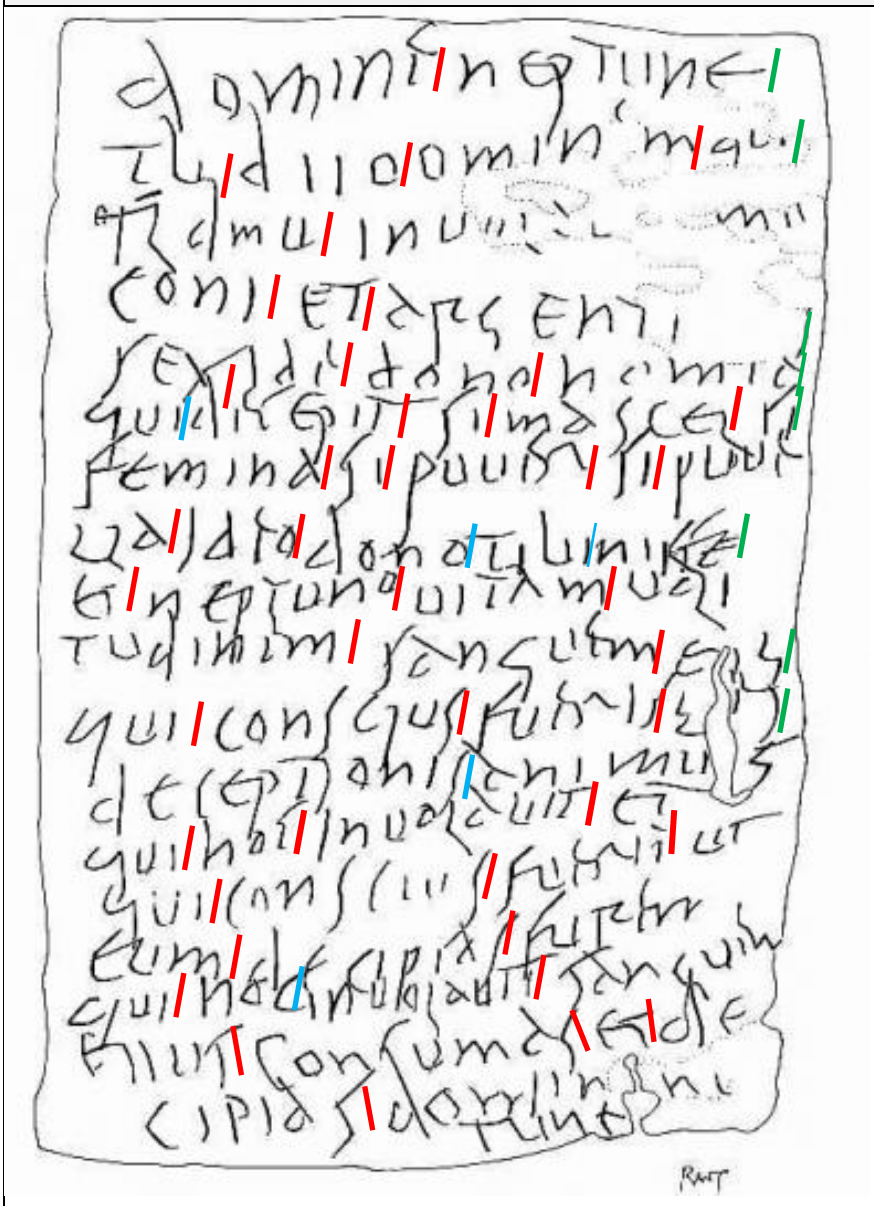
As Armstrong and Macalister's transcription shows, word-spacing is not advanced in this text but it certainly exists. In any case, word-spacing is visible in the very latest examples of New Common Script from Britain, suggesting that it was therefore part of the graphical *ordinatio* of British writing from at least the fourth century, despite the fact that it is not particularly advanced in the hands of the tablets. The following discussion demonstrates this and the issue is worth the brief digression in that it points to Roman Britain bequeathing a much wider and more sophisticated literacy to the early Middle Ages than basic letterforms alone.

In 1982 Mr Norman Owen, a metal dectorist, discovered a small rolled-up cartridge on the shores of the Badnam Creek, a tributary of the River Hamble in Hampshire. The 'cartridge'

turned out to be a well-preserved late fourth-century *tabella defixionum* cut from sheet lead, some 84 by 128mm. The tablet was published by Tomlin in 1997.[65] The hand of the Hamble *tabella* is very possibly the latest 'Roman' hand that we possess. It includes the rare use of **k**; the words are separated either by spaces or by the elongation of final letters at the end of the lines; polymorphism is advanced to the point where (for example) three entirely distinct allomorphs of **e** occur and the *ductus* is entirely perpendicular. Roger Tomlin attributes the artefact to the very late fourth century on the basis of its reference to '*argentioli*'. The earliest silver coins appearing in late Romano-British treasure hoards are the silver *siliquae* struck at the mint at Arles in the names of Constantius II and Julian Caesar in the late 350s, but far larger issues were struck at various Imperial mints in the 360s and especially at Trier from 375 onwards. The likelihood is therefore that the Hamble tablet was inscribed in the last third or perhaps quarter of the fourth century, when the Trier issues had achieved widespread circulation in Britain.[66] The tablet, with Tomlin's diplomatic and reconstructed transcriptions merged, is reproduced in figure 49 below.

[65] R. S. O. Tomlin, *Britannia*, 28 (1997), pp. 456-458.
[66] Andrew Burnett, 'Clipped Siliquae and the End of Roman Britain', *Britannia*, 15 (1984), pp. 163-68. Other features indicate a late date. '*Hominem*' is spelled without the aspiration – '*ominem*' – and there are other late vulgarisms such as '*sanguem*' for '*sanguinem*' and the insertion of a double-u in hiatus between vowels to create a 'w'; Tomlin, *Britannia*, 28, p. 457 & n. 4 (7-8).

Figure 49. The Hamble *tabella* of *Muconius.*



domine neptune

t[i]b[i] d[o]no [h]ominem qui

ldmu (i.e. 'solidum')
inuolau[it] mu

coni et argenti[olo]s
sex ide[o] dono nomi[n]a
qui decepit si mascel si

femina si puuer si puue

lla ideo dono tibi niske
et neptuno vitam vali
tudinem sanguem eius

qui conscius fueris eius
deceptionis animus

qui hoc involavit et
qui conscius fuerit ut

eum decipias furem
qui hoc involavit sanguem

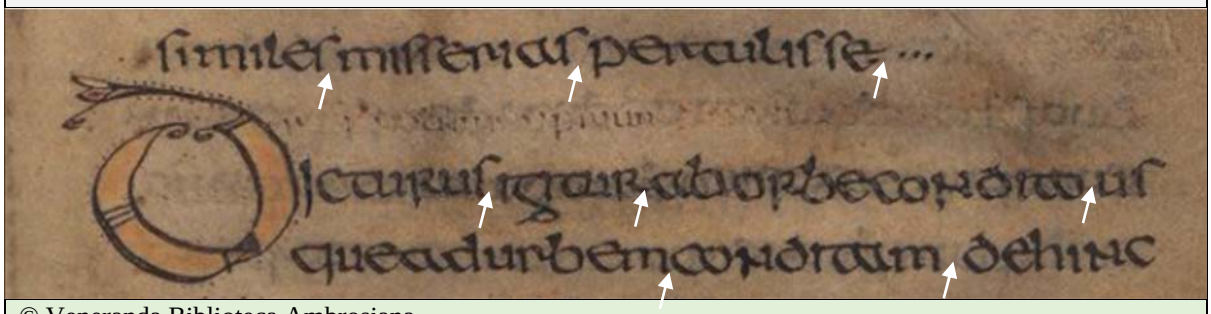
eiius consumas et de
cipias domin[e] nep
tune

In the figure above, over Tomlin's line-drawing, I have inserted short oblique lines to indicate the following: (i) red lines show word-spacing; (ii) blue lines show *scriptio continua* (i.e. no word-spacing); and (iii) green lines show the justification of a line of text without overrun to the next line. As can be seen, the red lines above are surrounded by considerable space: whatever measure one adopts, these are unmistakeable 'word spaces'. This is surprising because word-separation by Insular scribes is thought to have been an Irish, not Roman invention: Malcolm Parkes stated that the Irish scribes 'soon abandoned the *scriptio continua* which they had found in their examplars' and introduced spaces between words in a graphical

reflection of their 'recognition of the word as an isolable linguistic phenomenon'.[67] However the idea that word-separation was invented by the Irish during their encounter with the Latin grammarians seems at odds with the clear word-separation in this very late fourth-century Romano-British text.[68]

The explanation for this may lie in the fact, also noted by Parkes, that the *notae communes* and abbreviations used by the Irish seem to have come from 'the less formal handwriting used for documents', a description that might well apply to the hands of *tabellae defixionum.*[69] The hand of the Hamble *tabella* therefore suggests that word-separation might have been another element of the writing-system acquired by the Irish in Late Antiquity.[70] It is noticeable in this regard that where the hands of the tablets show crowding and biting it is often in response to the need to justify the lines of text *per cola et commata* and avoid recourse to *ceann fo éite.* The green lines in figure 49 above show that justifying the end of a line without breaking a word was also part of the *ordinatio* of at least one fourth-century Romano-British scribe.[71] Figure 50 below shows Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana D. 23 Sup., the 'Bobbio Orosius', *s.*vii.

Figure 50. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D. 23 Sup. The Bobbio Orosius.



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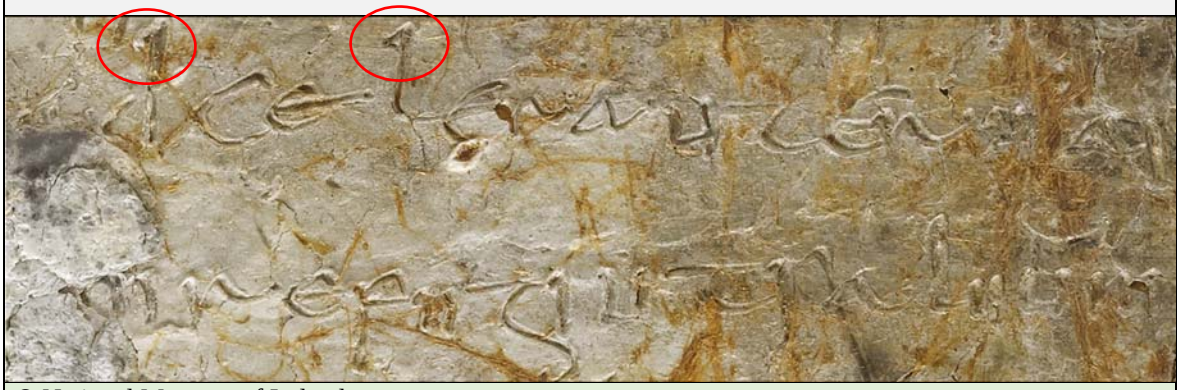
[67] M. B. Parkes, 'Insular Scribes and the Grammar of Legibility' in *idem, Scribes, Scripts,* p. 3. See also Paul Henry Saenger, *Space Between Words: the Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford, 1997).
[68] Tomlin noted that word division in the *Tabellae Sulis* was 'rare'; *idem, Tab. Sulis,* p. 86.
[69] Parkes, 'Grammar of Legibility', p. 5.
[70] Ammirati notes that Antique *scrittura posata o calligrafia* was marked by generous inter-columnar spaces and margins, see Ammirati, *Sul libro,* p. 28, and notes P. Oxy VI 884/Bodl, MS. Lat. class. e. 20 (P), a *s.*v fragment of a papyrus codex of Sallust's *Catiline War* from Oxyrhynchus, as showing good word-separation as well as large white spaces to indicate changes of sense or theme; *Ibid,* p. 53; *CLA,* ii, 246; 'Bodleian Library MS. Lat. class. e. 20 (P)', https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/ddc85952-3a0d-4de2-908b-819f83317a92/# ; 'TM 62693 / LDAB 3881', https://www.trismegistos.org/tm/detail.php?tm=62693 (all 8 Dec. 2022).
[71] As evidenced by the use of the *interpunctus* (and other graphical devices denoting word-separation) in Antique texts such as Virgil; see Ammirati, *Sul libro,* pp. 27, 29.

Due account being made for the tendency of the Irish scribes to prefix prepositions to the following word, the word-spacing, though not perfect, is not too dissimilar to that of the Springmount hands.

'Harmony'

The best way of understanding the concept of 'harmony' in palaeography is to think of it as the opposite of the 'oscillation' that Schiaparelli described within the numerous hands of the Lucca Codex. Early medieval scribes could change their treatment of the *ductus* not only within the same stint but within single lines of text, as we have seen, but 'harmony' is achieved where the *ductus* is regularly and consistently treated in the same manner. The Springmount hands show allomorphs but the extract from fol. 1v. in figure 51 below nevertheless shows a smooth and fluent execution of set and semicursive quadrilinear *ductus* with careful wedge-serifs at the top of the ascenders of **d** and **l** (circled, for clarity) and a practised regular alignment.

Figure 51. The Springmount Bog Tablets. 'Harmony' of treatment.



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'Regularity'

Both inscribers were clearly practised at writing 'frame-ruled', that is to say, with only the vertical borders of the indented wax-filled writing rectangles in the corner of their eye against which align the lines of script. The fact that both scribes manage as well as they do goes a long way towards explaining why more utilitarian manuscripts in the early Middle Ages

dispensed with the pricking and ruling of horizontal lines: where the status and function of the text permitted, a competent tablet-writer might be trusted to write respectably horizontal lines of text on membrane by dint of long practice on wax (or, indeed, other hard media such as slate or lead).

'Care'

One need only contrast these two hands with some of the more utilitarian fourth-century hands such as *Tabellae Sulis* No. 97 to see a significant increment of scribal care being applied. This is notwithstanding various textual errors (for example **dneperavi** (in line one of fol. 1v in place of *'domine (or dne) speravi'*), **eogo** (for *'ego'* in line eight of fol. 3r.) and so on). 'Care' in the calligraphic sense is shown in the wedge-serifs in figure 51 above.

'Simplicity'

This is represented by a combination of factors: relatively infrequent ligatures, letter- and word-separation, a generally set *ductus* and a neat and orderly *ordinatio.*

'Perpendicularity'

The two hands are rigidly perpendicular, a seminal characteristic of the early book-scripts that is well illustrated in the relative slant of the hand of *Tabellae Sulis* No. 94 to the vertical alignment of, for example, *Tabellae Sulis* Nos. 95 and 96.

In conclusion, although the Springmount hands do not show the accomplished, calligraphic Early Irish book-script of (for example) TCD, MS 55, the Ussher Gospels, we can certainly relate them to the more workaday script of, for example, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 12 R 33, the *Cathach* of St Columba. What is perhaps most striking is how close the Springmount hands are to *both* the scripts of the fourth century *and* those of the seventh. This suggests that relatively more of the graphical process of « *librarizzarla* » occurred in fourth-century Roman Britain and proportionately less than might be thought in fifth- or sixth-century Late Antique Britain or, indeed, seventh-century Northumbria.

The Springmount hands therefore show continuity with the palaeography of fourth-century Roman Britain and evidence the ongoing process of « *librarizzarla* » in Late Antique Britain. However there is one feature of the early Insular writing-system which it is not possible fully to trace back into Roman Britain. This is its extensive abbreviation-system. In his work on the earliest Irish book-script Lindsay (following Traube) suggested that before the full system of abbreviations used by Insular scribes came into being there must have existed an earlier, more primitive system, relying upon what he called '…'syllabic suspension', in which the initial letterform (or some of the syllables) does duty for the whole word'. He lamented that we lack the very earliest Insular manuscripts that would have borne witness to this system but noted two manuscripts in which glimpses of it might be seen; Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C. 301 inf. (a summary Latin translation of the commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the psalms, Bobbio, *s.*viii) and Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 63-64 (Augustine's letters, from St Bertin, *s.*viii[2]).[72] In general terms, these manuscripts show only: (i) suprascript letterforms; (ii) suspensions; and (iii) contractions.

The Springmount tablets show a very similar system and bear out Lindsay's analysis. Table 2 below lists the abbreviations folio-by-folio to give an idea of their frequency of use.

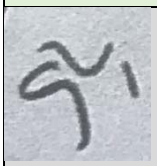
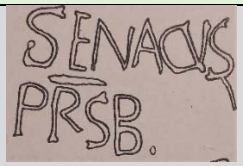
Table 2. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Abbreviation-system.

Fol.	Abbreviation	Expansion/Comment
1v.	***dne dm dne spm dno se***	*Nomina sacra* or comparable. '***se***' probably for '*sancte*'.
	am	'*autem*': archaic syllabic suspensions like ***au at*** precede the use of the later more usual Insular 'horned' **h'**-symbol.
2r.	***dne***	On this fol., '*lebor*' is written instead of '*laetabor*' and '*iniicus*' instead of '*inimicos*'. It is not obvious whether these are intentional suspensions without the usual marks or simply slips.
	dne	

[72] *EIS*, p. 70; *CLA*, iii, 326; *ibid*, vi, 737; *EIS*, p. 70.

Table 2. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Abbreviation-system.		
2v.		See above.
	am	
3r.	***dne dns dm dno***	*Nomina sacra.*
	am oms	**‘*oms*’** for ‘*omnes’*.
3v.	***dns spu scs***	*Nomina sacra*.
	abscodi dilio	**‘*abscodi*’** for ‘*abscondi’* and ‘***dilio***’ for ‘*diluvio’*.
4r.	***dno***	As above.

This rudimentary system is paralleled in other Early Insularepigraphic writing. Some Late Antique graffiti from northern Spain and the Languedoc discussed by Mark Handley show a similar limited pattern: ***SC̄S;*** ***B̄TS*** (for *-bertus*); ***pƀ***, ***pƀr*** or ***PR̄*** (for *presbyter*).[73] *Tabellae Sulis* 97b shows a form of *qui* with a suprascript **u**. DSD-16 (from Exmoor, dated by Tedeschi to the fifth or early sixth century) shows the name CARANACI rendered as CARĀACI, and

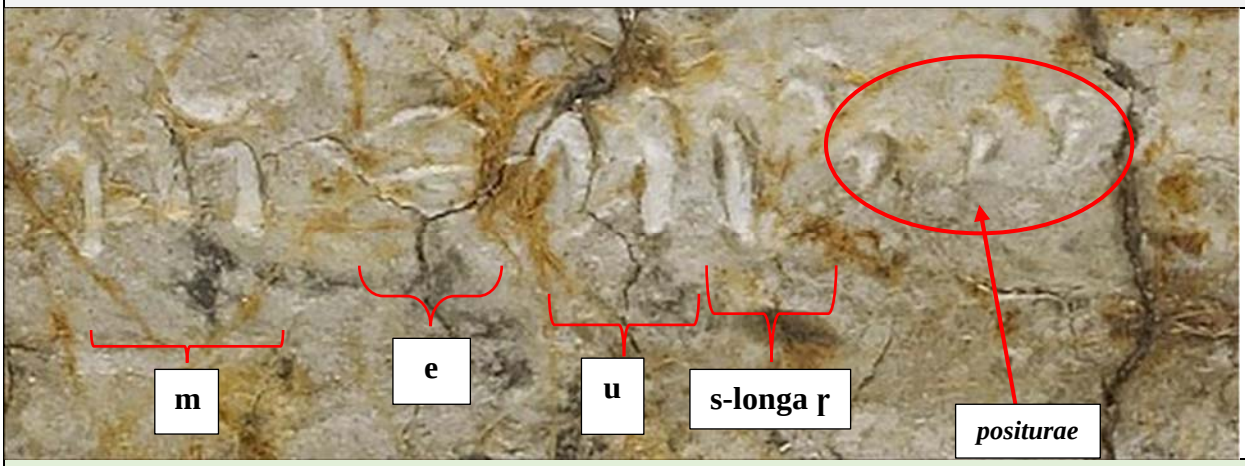
Figure 52. The earliest British abbreviation-system.			
***Tabellae Sulis*. No 97 (b).** Fourth century.	**Winsford, Soms. Inscribed pillar. DSD-16 CARANACI.** Fifth or sixth century.	**Aberdaron, Gwynedd. Inscribed slab. 78/Gn2/CN3 SENACVS.** Sixth century.	**The Springmount Bog Tablets.** Sixth century.
			
qui	CARA(N)ACI/NEPVS	SENACVS PR(E)SB(YTER)	dn̄o
	Image after Macalister	© Crown copyright *RCAHMW*	© National Museum of Ireland

[73] Mark Handley, ‘Scratching as Devotion: Graffiti, Pilgrimage and Liturgy in the Late Antique and Early Medieval West’ in Katharina Bolle, Carlos Machado and Christian Witschel (eds.), *The Epigraphic Cultures of Late Antiquity* (Stuttgart, 2017), pp. 563 & fig. 2, 564 & fig. 4.

77/Gn1/CN2 VERACIVS and 78/Gn2/CN3 SENACVS (Aberdaron, Gwynedd, sixth century) both render *'presbyter'* as **PB̄R** and **PR̄SB** respectively (see below).[74]

As well as an early abbreviation-system the Springmount tablets show an early system of punctuation. Hand II marks the end of each column of text on fol. 2r. with a collection of marks that look like medial commas, as illustrated in figure 53 below.

Figure 53. The Springmount Bog Tablets. Punctuation.



Fol. 2r. ***meus*** ,,,

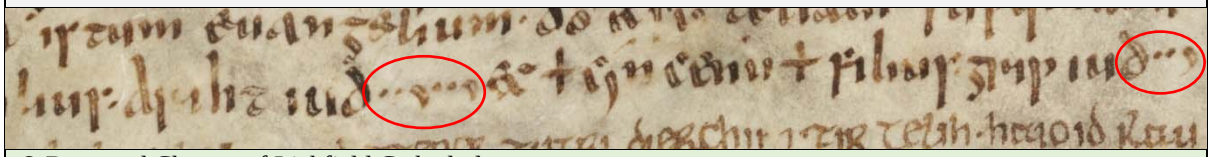
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Macalister transcribed these marks as three commas sitting upon the line of legibility but this is inaccurate as they are written medially, as figure 53 above shows.[75] Parkes also noted them and thought that they were the 7-shaped mark that Isidore called the *positura* but written currently, in the form of commas.[76] They are written at the medial level, midway between the lines of writing and legibility, suggesting that the earliest Insular punctuation was at this level, something that is supported by, for example, the Bobbio Orosius shown in figure 50 above. In Later Welsh book-script, too, the 'Chad 1' memorandum of gift on p.141 of Lichfield,

[74] *CL*, p. 283 & tav. CLVII; *Corpus*, III, pp. 241-246.
[75] Oddly, Macalister prints the medial *punctus* at the correct level; see Macalister and Armstrong, 'Wooden Book', p. 163. David Wright criticised their publication of the tablets as 'entirely inadequate'; Wright, 'The Tablets from Springmount Bog', p. 219.
[76] Parkes, 'Grammar of Legibility', p. 7; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 1.21.9.

Cathedral Library, MS 1, punctuates at the same medial level, albeit with two *puncti* and a *positura* rather than three *positurae*, as illustrated below.

Figure 54. The Lichfield Gospels. 'Chad 1'. Punctuation.



© Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral

The presence of punctuation by way of medial *positurae* and *puncti* in the Springmount hands suggests that although Insular conventions of punctuation may have been encouraged and systematized by the precepts of Isidore, the basic system did not originate with the reception of Isidore's works in Ireland in the seventh century but originated in Roman and post-Roman usage (as, of course, it did for Isidore himself).

In addition to the ability to abbreviate and punctuate, the Springmount inscribers also show an ability to organize their text on the page, something that points to the pedagogical function of the text. Fol. 2r., for example, shows quite a sophisticated *ordinatio.* The text is divided into two columns, written *per cola et commata,* neatly aligned and justified. The lines in the left-hand column begin with oversized letterforms, the first line showing the largest of all, **ЄX**, by way of *litterae notabiliores.* Not only are these *litterae notabiliores* larger in *module* than the rest of the text but they are emphasized by additional space between them. After them, the script shrinks to its normal *module* and normal word-spacing. Figure 55 below shows the larger, bilinear *module* of the start of the line with the large, broken-backed **E** and a letterform of **X** with a greatly exaggerated cross stroke.

Figure 55. The Springmount Bog Tablets. *Diminuendo*.



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In other words, the text-section represented by column one is structured by the graphical convention that was to become the *diminuendo* marking its beginning, with punctuation marking its end. In this regard it is worth remembering that although Malcolm Parkes attributed the creation of the 'grammar of legibility' to Irish scribes, he acknowledged that they nevertheless obtained their basic forms 'from their exemplars'.[77] The evidence of fol. 2r. suggests that at least a basic graphical apparatus of text-structuring, or *ordinatio*, formed part of the literacy that the western British writing-province provided to Ireland in the fifth century.[78] This is supported by the evidence of the Oxyrhynchus papyri which shows that the organization of the text on the page was important from earliest times: Serena Ammirati notes the frequent use of *'dispositive grafico-testuali'* ('graphical-textual apparatus') in the *mis-en-page* or *'impagazione'* of many papyri, something she attributed to Greek-speaking scribes needing to organize parallel Greek-Latin texts for military-administrative purposes.[79]

[77] Parkes, 'Grammar of Legibility', p. 6. In this regard Stansbury makes the important point that although the *grammatici* taught the *principles* of punctuation they did not teach *when* to use the *distinctiones* or how to represent them graphically. The layout of texts *per cola et commata* as recommended by Jerome and Cassidorus was therefore, in part, a way of skirting around this problem, particularly when texts needed to be read aloud; Stansbury, *Iona Scribes*, p. 26.

[78] Or, indeed, which the Irish may have obtained from elsewhere in early medieval Christendom. The Faddan More Psalter still retains its original leather cover which is internally stiffened by papyrus, something which the National Museum of Ireland considers to 'emphasise the far-reaching contacts of the early Irish church'; https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Irish-Antiquities-Division-Collections/Collections-List-(1)/Early-Medieval/The-Faddan-More-Psalter/Contents-and-Cover, (29 Oct. 2023).

[79] Ammirati, *Sul libro*, pp. 25, 47.

Discussion and conclusions

Firstly, the fact that the hands of the Springmount Bog tablets continue to show the polymorphism of the fourth-century Romano-British hands suggests that the typification of book-script out of New Common Script in fifth- and sixth-century Britain, whatever else it may have involved, did not produce a uniform morphology. Put another way, the graphical process of « *librarizzarla* » operated at the level of the scribal treatment of the *ductus*: it did not operate at a morphological level so as to produce a canonical alphabet. This difference between the Late Antique British writing and more canonical and consistent Continental scripts is highlighted by a quick glance – for example - at a very early script like that of Montserrat, Abadia S. Maria de Montserrat, P. Monts. Roca, inv. 128-178, the 'Barcelona-Montserrat miscellaneous codex'.

This is a papyrus codex of fifty-two folios dating from the second half of the fourth century and probably written in Italy (see figure 56 below).[80] The script is noticeably more consistent in its morphology than its Insular cousins: the only morphological aberration Tino Licht notes is the 5-shaped *ductus* of **G**.[81]

[80] *CLA*, xi, 1650; 'TM 59453' https://www.trismegistos.org/text/59453 (9 Oct. 2022). For a discussion see 'The Barcelona-Montserrat Greek-Latin Codex: Another "Bodmer" Codex with Mixed Contents', https://brentnongbri.com/2018/04/21/the-barcelona-montserrat-greek-latin-codex-another-bodmer-codex-with-mixed-contents/ (9 Oct. 2022).
[81] Licht, *Halbunziale*, Tafeln III.

Figure 56. Montserrat, Abadia S. Maria de Montserrat, P. Monts. Roca inv. 128-178.

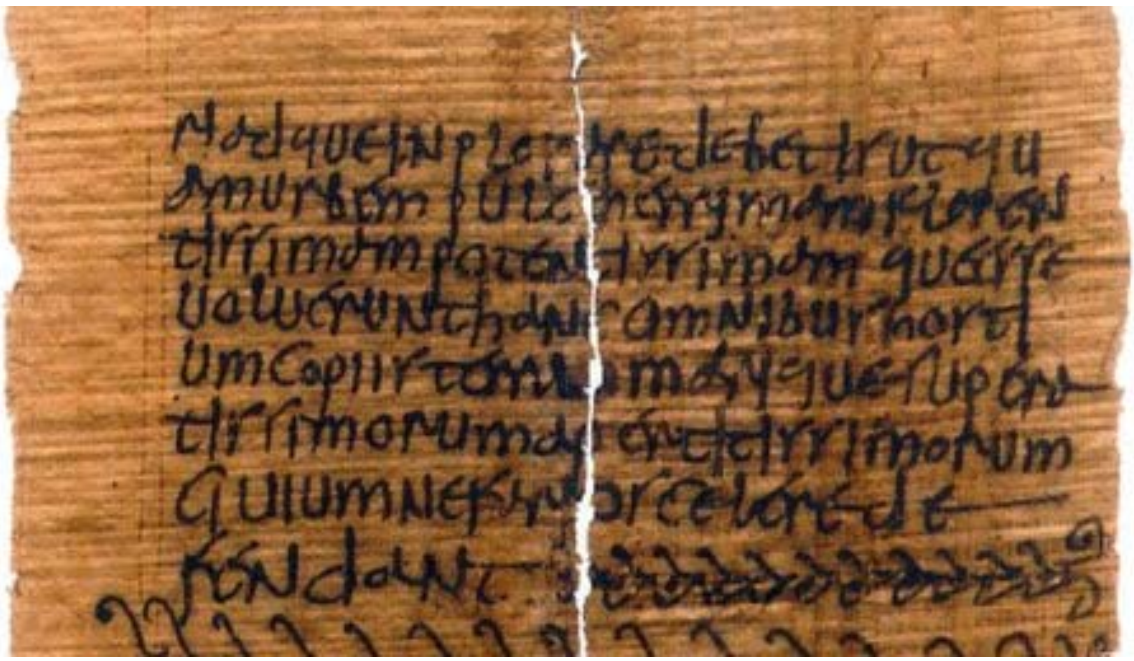


Image in the public domain.

Secondly, the fact that word-separation, abbreviation, punctuation and text-structuring all appear in British writing *c.*300-600 strongly supports the recent scholarship that holds that the Late Antique British church not only survived the cessation of Imperial administration *c.* A.D. 410 but continued to exist and flourish to high intellectual standards. As Richard Sharpe put it:[82]

> 'Sketching a narrative…from the textual sources sets out the positive case for the existence of a normal western church in Britain during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. It provides the basis for recognizing a post-Roman Christian society in Britain that endured after 429 and evolved within Britain to produce not only Gildas's Latin culture but also the asceticism of Samson…[we see] a prosperous and self-confident church the inheritance of an elite Christianity in the Roman province, a Christianity centred in the towns of the later Roman administration and in the villas of the wealthy'.

Bede's well-known account of Augustine meeting persons whom Bede (or his British informant) described as '*episcopos siue doctores proximae Brettonum provinciae*' *c.* 602-4, suggests that the kind of learning described by Sharpe survived in the British church to at least

[82] Richard Sharpe, 'Martyrs and Local Saints in Late Antique Britain' in Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 82-5.

600.[83] The palaeography discussed in this Chapter strongly supports this contention that fifth- and sixth-century Britain was capable of far more than merely utilitarian literacy. St Jerome himself was prepared to endorse the British heresiarch Pelagius as *'homo Latinissimus'* and Sidonius Apollinaris, an aristocrat of exquisite sensibility who shuddered to hear Gothic drinking-songs and 'hideous' Celtic speech, went so far as to describe the Briton, Faustus of Riez, abbot of Lerins *c.* 433 and bishop of Riez *c.* 462, as *'Athenaei consors'*. [84] Thomas Charles-Edwards's view of the intellectual status of Late Antique Britain is strongly supported by the evidence of palaeographical evolution discussed in this Chapter:[85]

> '[it]…illustrates the ability of Britain c. 400 to produce figures who would subsequently be amongst the most influential Latin theologians in the lands around the Mediterranean. Secondly…even though Britain had slipped out of the reach of Imperial power, it was not cut off from Provence, the most deeply Romanized part of Gaul and a major centre of the growing monastic movement in the West.'

Thirdly, the graphical process at work in Late Antique Britain *c.*300-600 operated in the same way as elsewhere. The British seem to have been more conservative than was the norm, as suggested by the fact that not only did the morphology of New Common Script cease to typify after the collapse of the graphical unity of the Empire but transitional letterforms, showing development between 'old' and 'new' systems, became frozen in the Insular graphical repertoire, as indeed did letterforms born out of the distortions of ligatures. Even at the earliest stage of British writing, therefore, there existed a reluctance to innovate. However it arose, it would prove strong enough to cause the British writing-province to resist the wholesale

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[83] *Ecclesiastical History,* II, §2, pp. 138-9. See also Richard Sharpe, 'Martyrs and local saints', p. 86 and Charles Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain* (London, 1981), p. 351.
[84] Michael Lapidge, 'Gildas's Education', p. 33. Faustus enjoyed a high reputation after his death, eventually turning into a mythological figure. Columbanus had a high opinion of him *c.* 600; see *Sancti Columbani Opera,* ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker (Dublin, 1957), p. 86; C. Stancliffe, 'The Thirteen Sermons attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship' in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 93-202; W. Stokes (ed.), 'The Bodleian Amra Choluim Chille', *Revue Celtique,* 20 (1899), § 55, pp. 254, cited in *WAB,* p. 201.
[85] *WAB,* p. 202.

adoption of Caroline book-script and the standardized Irish 'national hand' many centuries later.[86]

Fourthly, however, it is important that 'conservatism' should not be taken to mean that the persons who commissioned and executed British writing accepted their writing-tradition slavishly or unthinkingly, or that they were unaware that they were 'conservative' or different. The centuries after the cessation of the Imperial administration saw the demise and creation not just of political units but of the identities, aspiration and origin-myths that accompanied them and writing, like any other visual art, offered the potential to make powerful statements of status and identity. In Chapters Three and Four the development of British writing will be related to the political and ethnographic diversity of early medieval Britain and interpreted not just as a means of communication but as a powerful symbol-system utilized for the aggrandizement of the social elite.

Lastly, and at the most basic level of British self-consciousness, the conservatism of the British writing-system seems to have become part of a much wider assertion of identity. Increasingly impoverished, increasingly politically threatened and increasingly geographically confined, the Welsh clung to the practice and usage of Roman writing as, over time, the distant memory of their Roman Christianity and Roman citizenship came to define them as a people, over and against the barbarian English. An involuntary inheritance turned, over time, into a deliberate choice, something colourfully described by the Breton Benedictine Dom. Louis

[86] Tomás Ó Carragáin argues for an analogous conservative aesthetic in Irish church architecture: once a particular form became established, it was repeated throughout the early Middle Ages in a strikingly conservative manner; Tomás Ó Carragáin and Paul MacCotter, *Churches in the Irish Landscape: AD 400-1100* (Cork, 2021).

Gougaud as ‘a spirit of pertinaceous particularism and inveterate confidence in their own [Celtic] traditions’.[87]

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[87] Dom Louis Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands*, tr. Maud Joynt (London, 1932), p. 387. Charles Plummer observed as long ago as 1896 that the ‘…Celts were…perpetuating an older system which had become obsolete elsewhere’; *Venerabilis Bedae Opera Historica*, ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford, 1896), ii, p. 354. Wendy Davies states that ‘Britain perpetuated archaic continental practices’ and that despite developments in the Irish church from the late sixth century and changes in Brittany from the ninth, ‘change’ (from a ‘base’ state of what Davies calls ‘deviant patterns…only slightly touched by continental reform’) only occurs in Wales in the late tenth and eleventh century. In general terms therefore the scholar should ‘…expect Welsh things to tend to be archaic’; Wendy Davies, ‘The myth of the Celtic Church’ in Nancy Edwards and Alan Lane (eds.), *The Early Church in Wales and the West: Recent Work in Early Christian Archaeology, History and Place-names*, Oxbow Monograph, 16 (Oxford: 1992), pp. 20-21

Chapter Three. The writing-province of early medieval Glamorgan, *c.* 400–1100

Introduction and research aims

In the next two chapters I will focus upon early medieval south Wales to show how the Romano-British inheritance discussed in Chapter Two above developed after *c.* 600 within two distinct southern Welsh writing-provinces in two very different ways: in the west, the minimally Romanised, Irish-dominated region of Deheubarth with its satellite cultural province of Brycheiniog; in the east the intensively Romanised region comprising the modern Gwent and Glamorgan. This Chapter therefore focusses on the writing-province of early medieval Glamorgan, *c.*400-1100, with four main themes.

Firstly, I will show how the Glamorgan writing-province inherited the Romano-British 'graphical process', the engine of palaeographical evolution described in detail in Chapter Two. The epigraphic scripts of the early Christian monuments typify, then collapse, in distinct 'script-phases', traceable in the radical palaeographical differences between the inscriptions.

Secondly, in a more historical context, I will consider the early Christian monuments of the ninth-to-eleventh centuries as a graphical totality: construction, artwork, iconography, location, function and script; the intention being to cast light upon the history of the pre-Conquest church in Glamorgan. This analysis has, inevitably, an intensely local focus: the early Christian monuments come from farms, fields, roadsides and hillsides where their writing served a whole range of functions and purposes specific to each particular time and place and to the people who were both their authors and audience.

Thirdly, I will ask whether idiosyncratic forms and treatments of writing in different media can point to shared, local writing-traditions. The palaeography of certain of the early Christian monuments from Llanilltud Fawr bears comparison with certain of the hands that appear in CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and I will propose that this is supportive of Helen McKee's

tentative ascription of that manuscript to south-east Wales and by far the most likely centres therein, Llanilltud Fawr and Llancarfan.[1]

Fourthly, on a regional level, I will suggest that the graphical process that operated in the early medieval Glamorgan writing-province shows far less external influence than is case for Deheubarth to the west (for which see Chapter Four). I will suggest that the Glamorgan writing-province, although as open to external influence as anywhere else in Wales, adhered much more faithfully and for much longer to the usage of Late Antique Britain than did Deheubarth. The west was much more influenced by the Irish Sea culture-province which connected it not only with the intellectual powerhouses of the Irish midlands but also Carolingian France from early in the ninth century. In contrast, when from the time of Alfred onwards the early Christian monuments of Glamorgan reflect external influence, that influence is unmistakably Anglo-Scandinavian.

In this regard I draw the reader's attention to two preliminary matters, as follows.

Firstly, and importantly, there is the vexed and difficult matter of dating the early Christian inscriptions which, generally, offer no internal evidence of date. This means that approximate dates must be inferred from the odd dateable inscription, a small number of fixed chronological points which are then used to postulate relative sequences of the monuments as a body, whether on the basis of script, morphology, typology, artwork, iconography or howsoever. In particular, Patrick Sims-Williams has established an accepted relative chronology based on linguistic criteria. Where the date of an inscription is germane to the argument, I will therefore set out the assumptions on which it is calculated.

Secondly, as regards the choice of English or Welsh place-names I will follow the highly inconsistent local usage of modern Glamorgan which is predominantly English-speaking but with Welsh place-names nevertheless prevalent in everyday usage. I will therefore refer to the more common 'River Neath' rather than the 'River Nedd' but will refer to the 'River

[1] McKee, *Commentary*, pp. 8, 75.

Afan' rather than the 'River Avan' or 'River Avon' simply because 'Afan' is the customary usage of the area. In referring to the early medieval region or district of 'Margam', conjectured by some historians to have formed a hundred, or in Welsh a *cantref*, of its own, I will use the early medieval '*Margan*' as opposed to the modern 'Margam'.[2] References to the later Cistercian abbey and the modern village are however to 'Margam'.

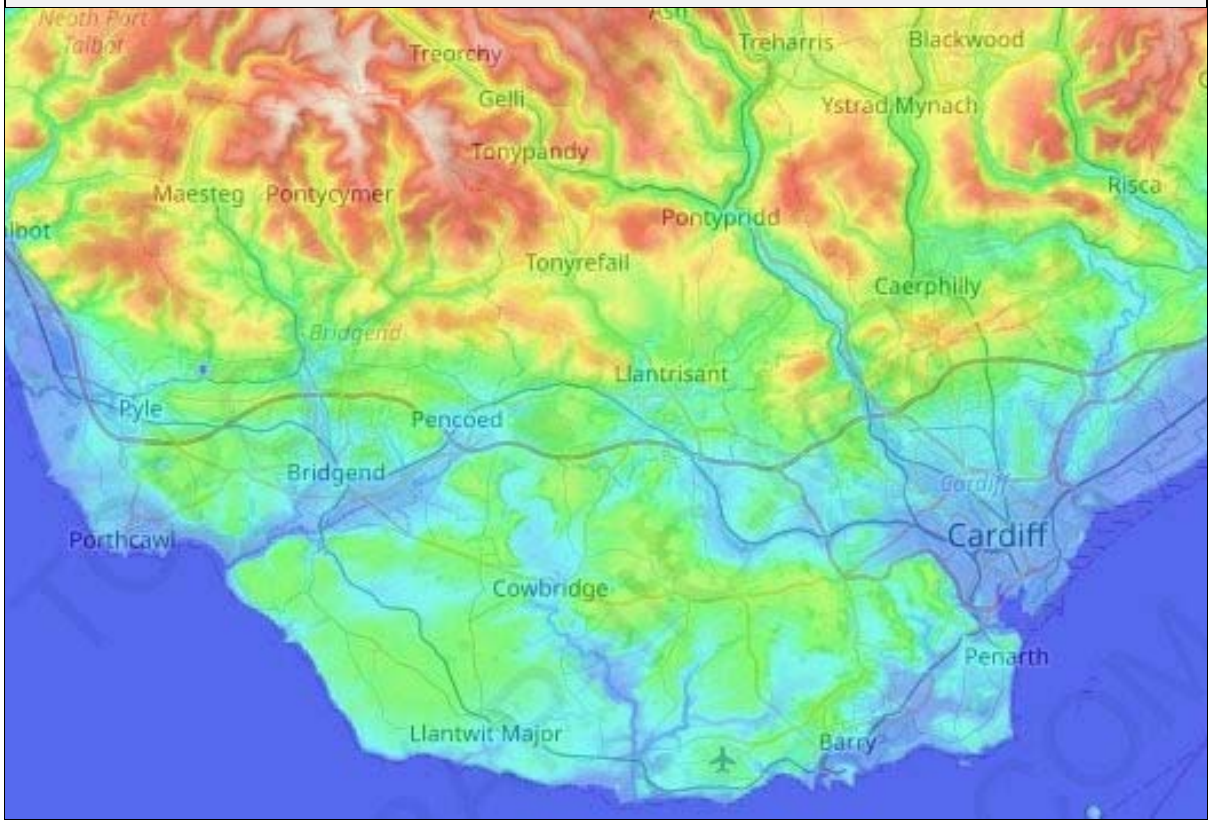
Part One. The graphical process in the writing-province of early medieval Glamorgan

Background

Geography

The history of Glamorgan has always been determined by the extreme contrast in its topography. The county is physically characterised by two very different regions, fertile lowlands along the coast, in Welsh the *bro*, and rugged glaciated uplands cut by the deep river-valleys, in Welsh the *blaenau.*

Figure 57. Glamorgan. Topography and relief.



[2] *LL*, p. 224, where *Merthir miuor* (the modern Merthyr Mawr) is described as '*in marcan*'.

A modern historian describes the landscape as follows:[3]

> 'The characteristics of a county are rarely so varied as those which make Glamorgan a place of absorbing interest. Its absolute diversity, its dissimilar features and surprising contrasts are its most striking attractions. Climate, soil, topography and products are all divergent and it may be noted that the inhabitants themselves are no less diverse'.

The relief map in figure 57 above shows these contrasting zones, with upland elevations above 1000 feet marked in orange, increasing with altitude to red, and lowland elevations in blue, increasing in altitude to green. These contrasts in the landscape, offering more or less economic opportunity, were critical for early medieval society. The resources offered by the land in different places offered either the basic means of subsistence or, in addition, the potential for generating wealth in the form of agricultural surplus. Apart from a few rare items of the very highest status, such as the exquisite silks excavated from the Llangorse crannog, the 'best horse' with which Gelhi purchased the Chad Gospels for Llandeilo Fawr, or the sword with the gilded hilt which the aristocrat Gorgynnif used to purchase land from King Meurig in a seventh-century Llancarfan charter, most wealth in early medieval Wales took the form of agricultural surplus.[4]

The sources tell us that ale and bread were valuable, as were meat and cheese, but bees, honey and its by-product, mead, were even more precious. However it was cattle that formed the common unit of account in the early medieval economy. Even Gorgynnif's gilded sword was assessed in terms of cattle: the charter states that it was 'worth twenty-five cows'.[5] Cattle comprised the currency of the age, given the absence of struck coinage, and Pierre-Yves Lambert has pointed out how Latin *scripulus* < Old Welsh *yscribl* (a 'scruple' or 'as', worth two 'obols') came to mean 'cattle' just as Latin *solidus* < Old Breton *solt* < Modern Breton

[3] C. J. O. Evans, *Glamorgan. Its History and Topography* (Cardiff, 1938), p. 6.
[4] Alan Lane and Mark Redknap, *Llangorse Crannog: the Excavation of an Early Medieval Royal Site in the Kingdom of Brycheiniog* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 276-312; Melville Richards, 'The 'Lichfield' Gospels', *NLWJ*, XVIII (1973), p. 138; *Vita Cadoci*, *VSBG*, § 65, p. 133.
[5] Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that silver, in *scripuli* and *unciae*, units of weight, were also used but that 'Whereas land was generally valued in terms of its renders…the accoutrements of aristocratic life were valued in cows'; *WAB*, p. 287.

saout.[6] The early medieval importance of cattle is still detectable in the modern landscape. Jonathan Kissock has argued that the field- and parish-boundaries of the Gower Peninsula preserve the outline of the extensive early medieval cattle ranches, or *llociau*, where the herds were pastured over the summer before being brought into the byre for the hard months of the year.[7]

The early medieval ideal of wealth was therefore expressed in terms of the opportunities offered by the land. Prosperity was a place which offered good soil for the plough, pasture for the beasts, rivers and streams for salmon and sewin, woods in which pigs might forage and flowering meadows for the bees. That the early medieval sources dwelt so much on this idyll is explained by how scarce such land must have been in early medieval Wales: even in modern times only some 7% of Wales enjoys the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, categorised as grades 1 ('excellent') to 3a ('good to moderate').[8]

In Glamorgan, the coastal lowlands include the fertile vale between the River Taff and the River Ogmore known as the Vale of Glamorgan (in Welsh, the *Bro Morgannwg*) but they also extend northwards in a narrowing tongue of land along the coast to the River Neath, where the mountains come down to the sea. This littoral enjoys a good share of these better soils. Moreover, the proximity of the sea means that it also enjoys the same early start to the growing season and relative freedom from early and late air frosts as famously clement Pembrokeshire: Sir John Lloyd described this part of Glamorgan as 'well-sunned plains'.[9] Figure 58 below

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[6] P-Y Lambert, 'Old Welsh Glosses on Weights and Measures' in Paul Russell (ed.), *Yr Hen Iaith. Studies in Early Welsh* (Aberystwyth, 2003), p. 130 & n. 11. See also Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'The Seven Bishop-houses of Dyfed', *BBCS*, 24 (1970-2), p. 261, for a discussion of cows (and different kinds of cows) as currency in early medieval Wales and Ireland but the increasing use of the *scribl* or *scripulus* as a unit of currency post-800.

[7] Jonathan Kissock, '*Llannau*, *llysoedd* and *llociau*: identifying the early medieval landscape of Gower', *Landscape History*, 35:2 (2014), p. 14. The extensive complex of enclosures at *Y Bwlwarcau* on Mynydd Margam above the site of the Cistercian Abbey has similarly been interpreted as a central farmstead surrounded by stock enclosures, see Edith Evans, 'Romano-British Settlement in South-East Wales', *Internet Archaeology*, 48 (2018) https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.48.8 (18 Apr. 2022).

[8] 'Agricultural land classification: predictive map', https://gov.wales/agricultural-land-classification-predictive-map (11 Mar. 2022). For how the poorer uplands were populated and exploited in the early Middle Ages see Cyril and Aileen Fox, 'Forts and Farms on Margam Mountain Glamorgan', *Antiquity*, 8, no. 32 (1934), pp. 395-413.

[9] J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales*, 3rd edn. (2 vols., London, 1911), I, p. 273.

reproduces the topographical relief map at figure 57 above, but with the addition of a black line representing the approximate division between this favoured lowland zone and the northern uplands with their poorer moorland terrain. This topographical division has profound significance for the understanding of the early medieval writing-province of Glamorgan because it represents the watershed for the availability of the surplus wealth necessary to sustain the highly resource-intensive activities of studying, teaching, obtaining exemplars and writing and manufacturing books.[10] As Melville Richards put it, in an age when, in general, comestibles could not be preserved or transported, 'the church was being sustained by the [local] tribesmen just as the lord was'.[11]

Figure 58. Glamorgan. The coastal littoral.



[10] The *RCAHMW* overlies its distribution map of early Christian monuments onto a base-map of soil types and elevation contours in recognition of this interrelation of the monuments and the landscape, see *RCAHMW*, I, 2, pp. 4-5.

[11] Melville Richards, 'Places and persons of the early Welsh church', *Welsh History Review*, 5, 4 (1971), p. 337. For the concept of 'environmental determinism' which argues that both general features and regional variations of human cultures and societies are determined by the physical and biological forms that make up the earth's many natural landscapes see John L. Brooke, 'Environmental Determinism', *Oxford Bibliographies* (Oxford, 2016), https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199363445/obo-9780199363445-0045.xml (1 May 2022).

In political and historical terms, south-east Wales between the Wye and the Tawe represented the ancient *patria* of the Silures. The Silures, who gave the Roman army such difficulties during the Flavian-era conquest, became a thoroughly integrated part of the wealthy province of *Britannia Prima*, forming the westernmost part of the intensively Romanized Severn-Cotswolds cultural zone. The Romano-British civilisation of the Severn-Cotswolds region and that of south-east Wales were one: a good illustration of this is a delightful figure of Fortuna, carved in fine Cotswolds Oolite, excavated at a substantial Roman villa at Llanilltud Fawr.[12] High-status villas were built in south-east Wales (ten certain and five probable, between Oystermouth in the west and Caerwent in the east) and numerous Romanised farmsteads and *vicus*-type settlements have been identified, for example at Cowbridge.[13]

This close cultural connection continued throughout the Roman period and beyond. In the fourth century, when massive circuit walls and bastions were added to the Silurian *civitas*-capital at Caerwent, fine mosaics and wall-paintings were also being commissioned by the townspeople, just as they continued to be across the Severn-Cotswolds region. We now know that mosaics were being laid at the palatial villa at Chedworth, near Cirencester, well into the fifth century and south-east Wales formed part of this culture.[14] The region was therefore exposed in full to all of the social, intellectual, cultural and economic developments of *Brittania Prima* and its successor post-Roman polities.

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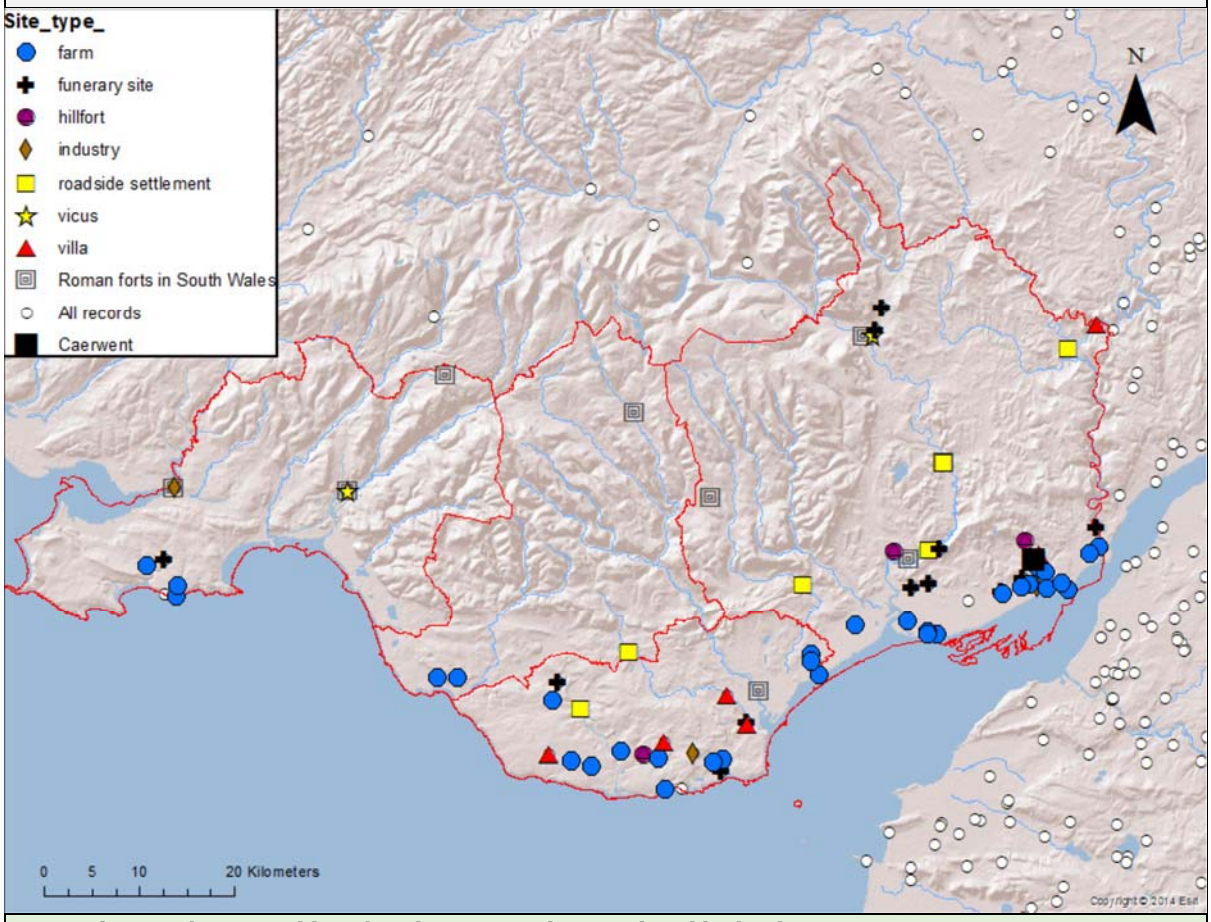
[12] BBC News 'Roman stone statue of Fortuna', https://museum.wales/collections/online/object/d159323f-2fd8-3485-b328-ba9f71c4aa8c/Roman-stone-statue-of-Fortuna/footer/ (30 Aug. 2022).

[13] Edith Evans, *Romano-British South East Wales Settlement Survey*, GGAT Report No. 2001/023 (Swansea, 2001); also Andy Sherman and Edith Evans, *Roman roads in Southeast Wales*, GGAT Report No. 2004/073 (Swansea, 2004). On 4th November 2015 Cotswold Archaeology hosted a research seminar in Cardiff as part of a project examining regional and chronological variation in Roman rural settlement in Wales through analysis of farm layouts, domestic architecture and agricultural practice. See in particular the presentation and maps by Dr Alex Smith: 'Southern perspectives: A characterisation of Roman rural settlement in South Wales' (unpublished presentation delivered 4 November 2015 at Cotswolds Archaeology Welsh Regional Meeting), https://cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AS_Wales_seminar.pdf (18 Apr. 2022).

[14] Martin Henig, 'Roman Art and the Culture of South-East Wales' in John R. Kenyon and Diane M. Williams (eds.), *Cardiff. Architecture and Archaeology in the Medieval Diocese of Llandaff*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, XXIX (Leeds, 2006), pp. 1-2 & fig. 3. For the late mosaic floor at Chedworth see BBC News 'Chedworth Roman Villa: Mosaic's age stuns historians', https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-55256415 (30 Aug. 2022). Martin Papworth further notes that wine and olive oil were continuing to arrive at Chedworth in the fifth and sixth centuries; see 'Fragmentary finds', https://the-past.com/feature/the-case-for-chedworth-villa-exploring-evidence-for-5th-century-occupation/ (29 Oct. 2023).

The map reproduced at figure 59 below shows the distribution and nature of Roman rural settlement in south-east Wales as mapped by Dr Alex Smith of Cotswolds Archaeology. The basic distribution shadows the topographical maps at figures 57 and 58 above, clustering along the more economically productive littoral. If pushed to locate, geographically, the writing-province of early medieval Glamorgan, it would be this prosperous coastal strip with its villas, farms, roads and deeply Romanised culture.

Figure 59. Glamorgan. Roman settlement.



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The Roman imprint upon this part of Wales included literacy from an early date. We possess a Vindolanda-style wooden writing slip from the site of the legionary fortress at Caerleon, dealing with troop movements and datable to *c.* 75-80, the military highways were studded with milestones and Wendy Davies has shown that Roman legal literacy accompanied military-administrative literacy in Wales: the Roman practice of alienating land by written

charter took root in Wales and evolved over the centuries in increasingly 'Celticised' form.[15] *Romanitas* also survived in intangible form, in the minds of men as an identity and a loyalty available for adoption, including in response to external pressure. The glory of Rome loomed large in the Welsh imagination throughout the Middle Ages: when the tenth-century rulers of Dyfed wished to reinforce their authority and legitimacy they did so by omitting some Irish and adding a layer of Roman names to their genealogy, thereby associating themselves with the ancient *imperium.*[16] This identification of the Britons-becoming-Welsh with Rome was encouraged by the increasing threat from Anglo-Saxon England. As far as the Welsh were concerned, or at least some of them, and at least by the tenth century *Armes Prydain*, their patrimony was all of Roman Britain and it was the Anglo-Saxons, the 'scavengers of Vortigern', who would, one day, be pushed back across the sea as foretold by the prophecies.[17]

Much of the impact of Romanisation upon south-east Wales is explained by the length of time the region was subjected to it. Following the traditional account in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the 'fall of the West' has always been taken to have been the Battle of Dyrham *s.a.* 577 at which three British kings were defeated and Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath taken by the Anglo-Saxons.[18] Modern scholarship is however beginning to see the *Chronicle*'s account in a much more complex context. It may not represent the sudden apocalypse after which the Late Antique culture shared by south Wales and the Severn-Cotswolds region collapsed back into its western redoubt. Recent research by John Blair on English village names west of Cirencester, for example, suggests that the earliest stratum of Anglo-Saxon settlement in this

[15] M. W. C. Hassall and R.S.O. Tomlin, 'Roman Britain in 1985 (II Inscriptions)', *Britannia*, Vol. 17 (1986); Gse-11/258/G92 CANTVSVS from Margam is a milestone dating to the reign of Maximinus (309-14); *Corpus*, I, p. 452; Wendy Davies, 'The Latin charter-tradition in western Britain, Brittany and Ireland in the early mediaeval period' in Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamund McKitterick and David N. Dumville (eds.), *Ireland in early medieval Europe: studies in memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 258–280.
[16] Kari Maund, *The Welsh Kings* (Stroud, 2000), p. 23.
[17] For the prophecies of Myrddin, see A. O. H. Jarman, 'The Merlin Legend and the Welsh Tradition of Prophecy', in R. Bromwich *et al.* (eds.), *The Arthur of the Welsh: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature* (Cardiff, 1991), p. 119; for hope for the restoration of British power across all Britain see *Armes Prydein o Lyfr Taliesin*, ed. Ifor Williams (Cardiff, 1955), pp. xii-xx. For detailed work on the construction of identity and nationalism in early medieval Wales see Rebecca Thomas, *History and identity in early medieval Wales* (Woodbridge, 2022).
[18] *Chronicle, s.a.* 577; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Settlement of England in Bede and the Chronicle', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 12 (1983), pp. 1–41.

area is unlikely to be earlier than *c.* 650, meaning that Anglo-Saxon domination of Cirencester itself, and subsequently westwards down the Cotswolds escarpment towards the Severn at Gloucester, only starts to reveal itself in the landscape in the century or so *after* the date of Dyrham. Scholarship is coming to accept this sort of ethnic and cultural continuity as evidencing a fragmented society right across early medieval Britain, for the probability of late British cultural and ecclesiastical survival is not limited to the West. Accumulating evidence for the survival of late-sixth century British ecclesiastical traditions in even such a non-liminal territory as Kent has been described by Blair as 'unusually persuasive'.[19]

Despite the fact that its Roman inheritance was the predominant cultural influence upon early medieval south Wales, the people and the institutions by which it was transmitted to the Middle Ages are frustratingly unclear. The main conduit of Roman 'continuity' was clearly the post-Roman British church which was connected with both the church in Gaul until at least the time of Columbanus and the church in Ireland from at least the time of Patrick.[20] Unfortunately we know painfully little about it, either physically or in terms of its organisation, at any time between the arrival of Christianity in Roman Britain and the witness of Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century. As Christopher Brooke remarked, 'the true physiognomy of the Welsh Church before the Danish raids is hidden from us in impenetrable obscurity' and Huw Pryce dishearteningly warns that 'the historian approaching this topic would be well advised to take a vow of silence'.[21] Faced with these difficulties, it might look like a tantamount-to-hopeless task to try to identify those places where writing was preserved and carried on in early medieval

[19] John Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England* (Princeton, 2018), p. 48. Richard Sharpe makes a similar observation in response to Celtic-style Old Testament clerical names appearing in seventh-century Kent, see R. Sharpe, 'The Naming of Bishop Ithamar', *The English Historical Review*, Volume 117, Issue 473 (September 2002), pp. 889–894.

[20] Ian N. Wood, 'Columbanus, the Britons and the Merovingian Church', in Lynette Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol*, pp. 104-7.

[21] C. N. L. Brooke, *The Church and the Welsh Border in the Central Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1986), p. 94; Huw Pryce, 'Pastoral care in early medieval Wales', in John Blair and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Pastoral care before the parish* (Leicester, 1992), p. 42. Pryce's remarks were more to do with pastoral care but they are apposite to the whole matter of the pre-Conquest church in Wales. When discussing the kind of church that the Briton Patrick might have sought to establish in Ireland, Richard Sharpe remarked that we do not know 'what manner of church a fifth-century British cleric would be used to…'; Sharpe, 'Some problems', p. 239.

Glamorgan, let alone connect those places with any surviving early medieval writing-traditions let alone actual manuscripts. The literary and intellectual life of the early medieval Welsh church seems just as impenetrably obscure as every other aspect of its history.

Archaeology and history

Nor does archaeology offer much help. No pre-Conquest religious building of any sort survives above ground in Wales.[22] There survive what may be stone architectural fragments from one or two of the most notable monastic sites, suggesting that at least some of the fabric of some of the wealthiest pre-Conquest churches was stone, but the archaeological evidence for Wales generally and Glamorgan in particular is desperately sparse.[23] Religious artefacts, other than the early Christian inscriptions themselves, are also few. A *chi-rho graffito* on a pewter dish recovered from the *civitas*-capital at Caerwent is of probable fourth-century date and we possess some hand-bells, but there survives nothing like the magnificent liturgical metalwork of early medieval Ireland.[24]

Perhaps the most promising recent excavation was carried out at Llandough, near Penarth, less than two miles from the high-status early medieval promontory fort at Dinas Powys excavated by Alcock in 1963. This revealed an extensive multi-period cemetery associated with the early medieval monastery known to have existed at the site. However the associated monastic buildings were supposed by the excavators to be hidden under the Victorian church and no ground plan for a pre-Conquest Welsh monastery could therefore be retrieved.[25] Even at what we know to have been the greatest of the pre-Conquest Glamorgan monasteries, Llanilltud Fawr, only the common linear axis of the western and eastern churches and some possible pre-Conquest foundation courses remind us physically of its early medieval

[22] The church at Presteigne, Radnor, may have pre-Norman material but is described by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust as 'Saxon'; see 'Radnorshire Churches Survey Church of St Andrew, Presteigne', https://cpat.org.uk/Archive/churches/radnor/16939.htm (30 Aug. 2022).
[23] David Petts, *The Early Medieval Church in Wales* (Stroud, 2009), p. 9.
[24] *Corpus*, I, p. 41 & figs. 36 & 37.
[25] Neil Holbrook and Alan Thomas, 'An Early-medieval Monastic Cemetery at Llandough, Glamorgan: Excavations in 1994', *Medieval Archaeology*, 49, no. 1 (2005), pp. 1-92.

history.[26] At Llancarfan, the other great pre-Conquest monastery of the Vale of Glamorgan, pre-Norman remains are even scarcer. A fourteenth-century window lighting the present rood loft contains a fragment of Sutton stone carved with an interlace which may be a reused architectural fragment from a pre-Conquest church.[27] There therefore remains an acutely frustrating contrast between the plentiful references in the charters to churches and monasteries and our pitifully scant archaeological knowledge.

Thankfully a disparate collection of other evidence fills at least some of these gaps, particularly for the later period from the ninth to eleventh centuries.[28] Some of the charters preserved in the *Book of Llandaf* and elsewhere give us glimpses of ecclesiastical and dynastic arrangements during this later period, complementing other evidence such as Asser's *Life* of Alfred, the *Annales Cambriae*, the *Brut y Tywysogion*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, hagiographies and genealogies. There is not the space to rehearse this evidence here, but one example is the 220/G63 HOUELT disc-headed slab-cross from Llanilltud Fawr which commemorates a *Houelt* son of *Res.*[29] This is likely to have been that Hywel ap Rhys, King of Glywysing, whom Asser records as subject to Alfred in the early 880s and whose death in 886 is recorded in the *Annales Cambriae s.a.* 885.[30] Both men appear in the genealogies preserved in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 20.[31] A charter in the *Book of Llandaf*, no. 236 of *c.* 885, then gives us a family group comprising Hywel, his wife Lleugu, his sons Owain and Arthfael and his daughters Ermithridh (an Anglo-Saxon name) and Nest, with the king gifting two bondmen

[26] 'The early buildings of the monastery have disappeared, but the foundations of the Western church may well incorporate masonry laid before the Norman Conquest of the area'; Geoffrey R. Orrin, *The Medieval Churches of the Vale of Glamorgan* (Cowbridge, 1988), p. 239. Orrin seems to be relying on the account of the restoration of the Western church in 1899 which included the clearing away of accumulated earth and debris from the walls, the paving of the medieval earthen floor and the relocation of the early Christian monuments inside the Western church as described by G. E. Halliday, 'Llantwit Major church, Glamorganshire', *AC* (1900), pp. 129-156; *idem.*, 'Llantwit Major church, Glamorgan', *AC*, (1905), pp. 242-250. For the status of Llanilltud Fawr in the ninth and tenth centuries see *WAB*, pp. 125, 159.
[27] Orrin, *Churches of the Vale*, p. 187.
[28] For a survey of these see J. K. Knight, 'Sources for the Early History of Morgannwg' in H. N. Savory (ed.), *Glamorgan County History. Volume II. Early Glamorgan.* (Cardiff, 1984), pp. 365-404.
[29] *Corpus*, I, p. 369-373.
[30] *Asser's Life of Alfred*, ed. W. H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), §. 80, p. 66; *Annales Cambriae, A. D. 682-954: Texts A-C in Parallel*, ed. & tr. D. N. Dumville (Cambridge, 2002).
[31] *MWG*, §8, p. 341.

and their issue to Bishop Cyfeilliog.[32] Although partial and fragmentary, pictures like these can occasionally be stitched together.

Of particular significance for the understanding of where and how writing evolved and was used in early medieval Glamorgan is the economic evidence of how and where the wealth essential for the resource-intensive business of education and book-production was obtained and used. An important pointer to this, at least for the immediate pre-Conquest period but perhaps, to some extent, for earlier periods, is contained in the longest of the Welsh hagiographies, the *Vita Cadoci.* This *vita* was written by the cleric Lifris of Llancarfan *c.* 1090 and rewritten by another Llancarfan cleric, Caradog, no later than 1138-9. The earliest manuscript of the text is BL, Cotton MS Vespasian A. XIV, fols. 17r.-43v., copied perhaps at Monmouth, *c.* 1200.[33] The first 44 chapters are the work of the two Llancarfan clerics and recount the usual fantastical doings of the saint, but a separate tract, or appendix, was added later as chapters 48 to 52. This contains a detailed account of the 36 canons whom St Cadog was imagined to have endowed at Llancarfan.[34] The tract lists the canons themselves and their individual prebendaries. These comprised an *atrium* (‘*atrium*’ in this context being cognate with *llys* or ‘court’, in the sense of an enclosed settlement containing buildings including the main *neuadd* or ‘hall’) with each such *atrium* benefitting from a smallish parcel of land by way of a garden, dug for fruit and vegetables, and a larger expanse of farmland, the *villa* or *tref,* which seems to have been the arable land under the plough.[35]

This description probably only relates to very late arrangements at the very wealthiest *clas* church on the eve of the Conquest but some elements of this portionary arrangement may

[32] *LL*, p. 236.
[33] *Vita S. Cadoci*, *VSBG*, §§ 48-52, pp. 119-122. For the Monmouth compilation see K. Hughes, ‘British Museum MS. Cotton Vespasian A. xiv (‘*Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium*’): Its Purpose and Provenance’, in N. K. Chadwick *et al*., *Studies in the Early InsularChurch* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 183–200, reprinted with annotation in K. Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Scottish and Welsh Sources*, ed. D. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1980), pp. 53–66.
[34] A similar arrangement is described in the *Vita Sancti Iltuti* of *c.* 1140 where Illtud is described as endowing fifty canons; *Vita S. Iltuti, VSBG,* §12, p. 210.
[35] Knight, ‘Sources’, pp. 395-8; Hywel David Emanuel, ‘An analysis of the composition of the Vita Cadoci’, *NLWJ,* 7, 3 (1952), pp. 217–227.

go back earlier, perhaps to the ninth century.[36] For example, the earliest hagiography, the First Life of St Samson of Dol, probably of the late seventh or early eighth century, contains an episode in which a nephew of St Illtud conspires to murder Samson, fearing that the precocious young deacon will deprive him of his hereditary rights at his uncle's monastery.[37] This evidence – both early and late – points to hereditary kin-interests as the holding-structures of wealth in early medieval Glamorgan. In the interpretations of epigraphic writing that follow in this Chapter I shall argue that this system of wealth-appropriation is intimately connected with writing in two important ways.

Firstly, it *enabled* writing in that it was the system by which the surplus wealth necessary to support teaching and learning could be accumulated and allocated for those purposes. As Richard Gameson puts it, 'If we…define a *scriptorium* as an organised group of scribes, decorators and binders, we are dealing with a costly and complicated organism that required considerable institutional commitment'.[38] Secondly, as a system, it was also a *consumer* of writing, both supporting clerical literacy and commissioning epigraphic writing as means of reinforcing and defending its entrenched *braint* or 'privilege', the social and political function that Aimee Pritchard pointed to when she describes the early Christian monuments as 'high status pieces'.[39]

So given the relative poverty of early medieval Wales, this means that economic evidence has a much greater potential to point to the elusive centres of book-production than is the case for early medieval England. For wealthy late Anglo-Saxon England, the list of centres to which book production has been attributed only contains twenty-nine names (although the computation comes with caveats).[40] For Wales, even for the *Bro Morgannwg*

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[36] *WAB*, p. 607. F. G. Cowley noted (in respect of both the *Vitae* of Illtud and Cadog) that 'Both authors attempt, rather unsuccessfully, to ascribe to the founder-saints conditions which in fact obtained at Llancarfan and Llanilltud Fawr in the eleventh century'; F. G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066-1349* (Cardiff, 1977), p. 5.
[37] *The Life of St Samson of Dol*, ed. Thomas Taylor (SPCK, 1925), p. 22.
[38] Richard Gameson, 'Anglo-Saxon scribes and scriptorium' in *idem* (ed.), *The Book in Britain*, I, pp. 102-103.
[39] Aimee Pritchard, 'The Origins of Ecclesiastical Stone Architecture in Wales', in Edwards and Lane (eds.), *The Early Church'*, p. 255.
[40] Gameson, 'Anglo-Saxon scribes and scriptoria', pp. 102-103.

with its relative agrarian wealth and strong Roman traditions, the centres capable of sustaining the early medieval curriculum and producing books cannot have numbered more than a handful at most.

The distribution of early Christian monuments

Paucity of historical evidence means that the early Christian monuments are of paramount significance. As Thomas Charles-Edwards puts it:[41]

> 'The post-Roman inscriptions of Celtic Britain attest both its cultural unity and its local variety, its continuity with Roman Britain and also the widespread impact of Irish settlement. Although the inscriptions are brief, they offer crucial evidence on several major issues'.

To date, most attention paid to these monuments has been for the purpose of cataloguing them in order to provide a resource for scholarship. Studies like Charles-Edwards's comparison of 223/G65 IUTHAHEL and 220/G63 HOUELT to demonstrate fluctuating intellectual standards at Llanilltud Fawr in the late eighth and ninth centuries are few and far between, but such work gives us a glimpse of just how fruitful the multi-disciplinary study of the inscriptions can be. [42]

As can be seen from the *RCAHMW* and Nash-Williams's distribution maps, reproduced in figures 60 and 61 below, the early Christian monuments of Glamorgan primarily survive from Llanilltud Fawr westwards. As is well known, the earlier and later monuments show different patterns of distribution. The earlier fifth-to-seventh century inscriptions reflect a civic, late-Roman provincial commemorative tradition. They are primarily tombstones, or memorials, and are widely distributed. They can appear at roadsides and on mountain-tops. The later eighth-to-eleventh century inscriptions have multiple, more complex functions and are much more closely connected with the church or, more precisely, with the elite wealth- and power-structures where secular and ecclesiastical interests merged. This difference in

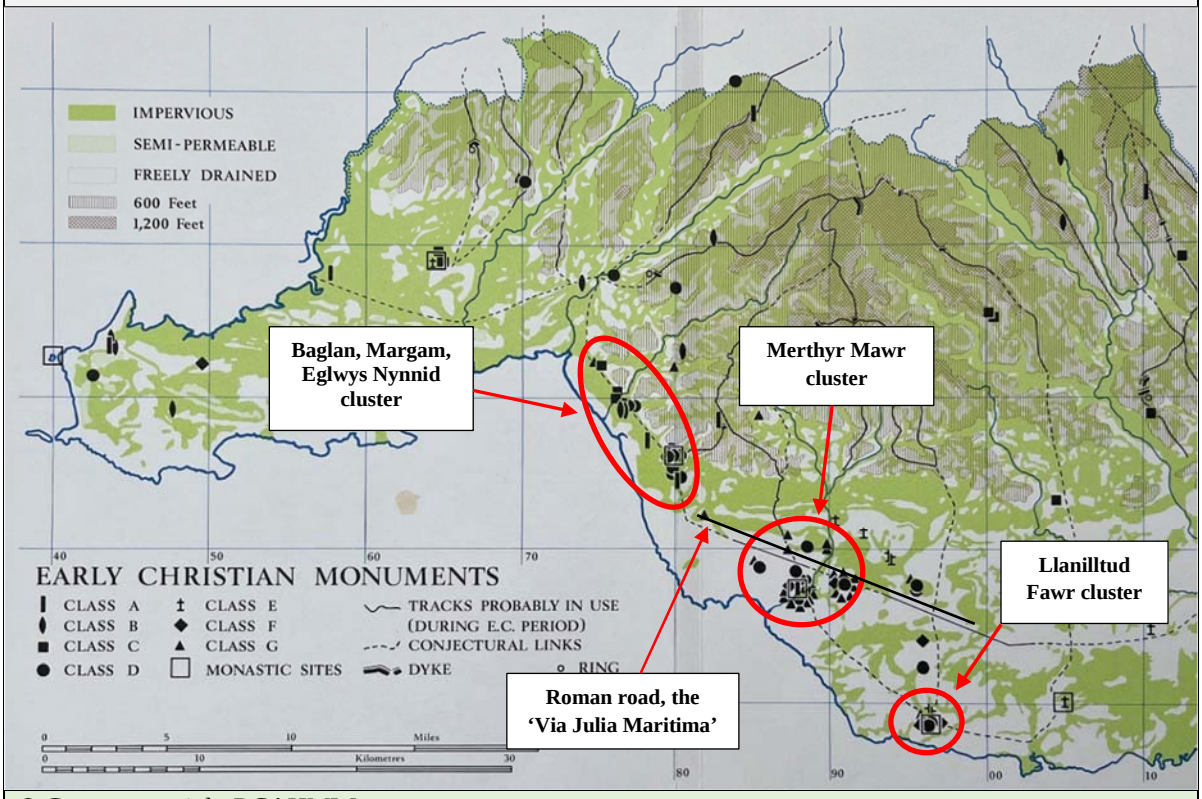
[41] *WAB*, p. 116.
[42] *WAB*, p. 626.

distribution and function has sometimes been seen as a break but Armando Petrucci notes that it is in fact an evolution typical in Ancient world:[43]

> 'In the nascent aristocratic "polis" the recording of the dead…became a process of shared identification that had high political significance. Writing and image constituted basic and decisive elements in this'.

In Glamorgan the early Christian monuments, particularly those from the eighth-to-eleventh centuries, survive in three very distinct clusters. The first is in the Margam area, including what are now Aberafan, Baglan and Eglwys Nynnid. The second is at Merthyr Mawr, just north-west of the confluence of the Rivers Ewenny and Ogmore near the later Norman castle. The third cluster is at Llanilltud Fawr, where a collection of opulent monuments bear witness to the enduring significance of Illtud's sixth-century foundation and its royal connections. In the maps below I have highlighted these three discrete clusters in red ovals.

Figure 60. Glamorgan. Distribution of early Christian monuments after the *RCAHMW*.

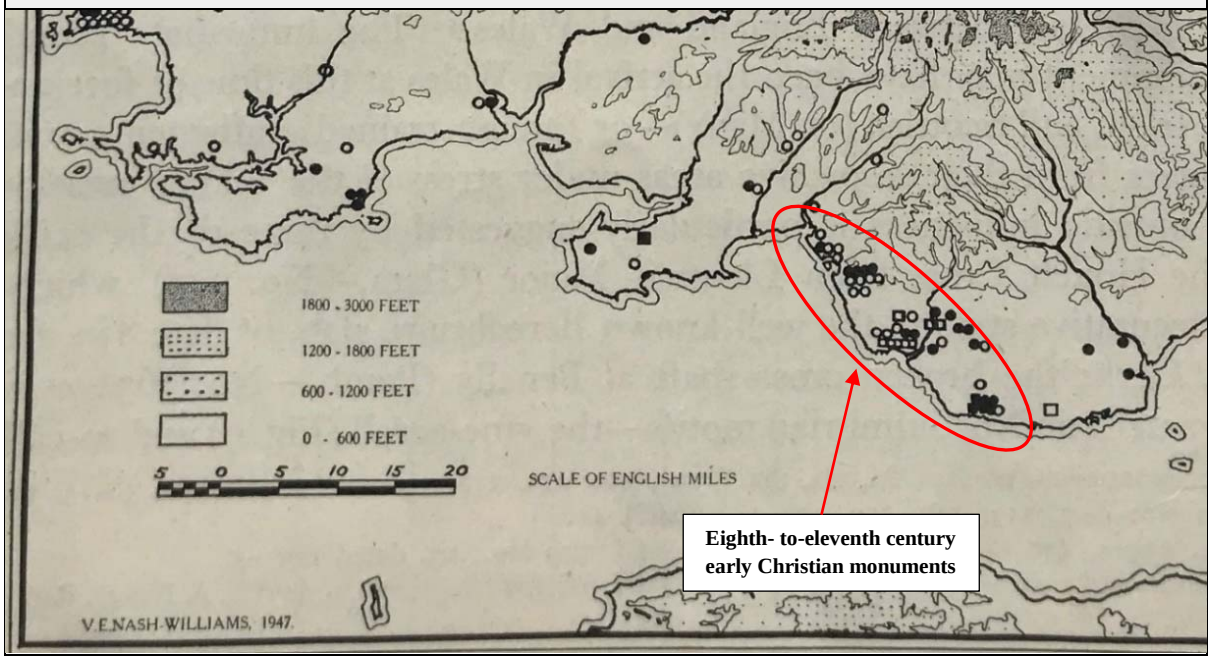


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[43] Armando Petrucci, *Writing the Dead*, tr. Michael Sullivan (Stanford, 1998), p. 7.

Nash-Williams's map at figure 61 below is more representative of the ecclesiastical nature of the clusters in that it omits the earlier monuments with their more extensive distribution-pattern.

Figure 61. Glamorgan. Distribution of 'Group III-IV' early Christian monuments after the *ECMW*.



Some of the cultural and economic dimensions of this distinctive distribution-pattern are obvious immediately, in that the monuments are overwhelmingly located on good-quality farmland and show close correlation not only to the Roman coastal road but also to the pattern of Roman settlement discussed above. It is however unknown how the pattern relates to contemporary political and administrative arrangements. These, as for much of the rest of Wales, are unclear. The skeleton, as for the rest of Wales, seems to be that the Roman-era *civitates* devolved into petty kingdoms out of which emerged, perhaps much later by processes that are obscure, a system of political and territorial division based upon two basic administrative units, the *cantref* and the *cwmwd*, in English, the 'cantref' and the 'commote'. For much of the early medieval period this system is likely to be anachronistic, perhaps highly so. Thomas Charles-Edwards proposes that the systematisation of *cantrefi* and *cymydau* was the creation of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in Gwynedd as late as the eleventh century and Philip

Jenkins cautions that 'the existing post-Norman accounts of Welsh administrative structures were over-formalized and largely fictional'.[44] However Charles-Edwards also acknowledges that individual *cantrefi* and *cymydau* may, nevertheless, have been very old by the time of Gruffudd. So Gruffudd's work may have been a reorganisation or systematisation of administrative divisions whose names were often 'not likely to have been coined in the eleventh century'.[45]

Scholarly consensus tentatively reconciles this idealised scheme with political realities in Glamorgan, at least in the later pre-Conquest period, as follows.[46] From the River Tawe to the River Ogmore lay the *cantref* of *Margan*; from the River Ogmore to the River Thaw lay the *cantref* of Gwrinydd*;* from the River Thaw to the River Taff lay the *cantref* of Penychen.[47]

Figure 62. Glamorgan. *Cantrefi* and *cymydau.*



According to Gruffudd Hiraethog, s.xvi. The *cantref* of Margam may have comprised the *cymydau* of Nedd, Afan, Margam, Tir Iall, Kenfig and Newcastle. © RCAHMW.

This, however, is not certain. Sir John Lloyd thought that the *cantref* of Penychen had taken in the whole of what is now the Vale of Glamorgan, from the River Taf to the River Ogwr, and that the *cantref* of Gwrinydd lay to the north, between the River Ogwr and the River

[44] Gower formed a western *cantref* of its own outside *Morgannwg*; Philip Jenkins, 'Regions and Cantrefs in early medieval Glamorgan', *CMCS*, 15 (1988), pp. 31-50.
[45] *WAB*, p. 568.
[46] J. Beverley Smith, 'The Kingdom of Morgannwg', in T. B. Pugh (ed.), *Glamorgan County History*, III (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 12-16; Knight, 'Sources', pp. 395-8.
[47] Jenkins, 'Regions and Cantrefs', pp. 31-50. Guy refers to the region of *Margan* as a *cantref; idem*, *MWG*, p. 103.

Tawe, with Margam as a *cwmwd* within it.[48] The two maps at figure 62 are those published by the *RCAHMW* based upon the sixteenth-century lists of Gruffudd Hiraethog in NLW, Peniarth MS 147.[49]

Margan

Epigraphic scripts, c. 400–800. General.

Having set the geographical, historical and (so far as possible) political-administrative context, we turn now to early medieval Glamorgan as a writing-province.

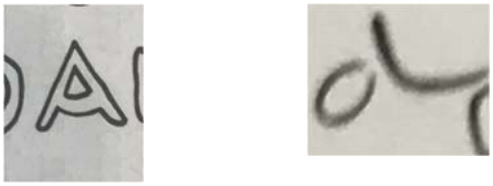
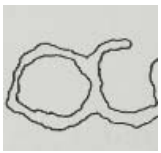
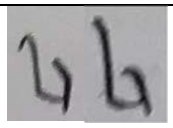
Given the intensely Romanised landscape and culture of south-east Wales, the writing of late Roman Britain naturally represents the interpretational key for the earliest phases of the post-Roman writing province. The discussion that follows therefore takes in evidence from across the Late Antique western British writing-province There are unfortunately no manuscripts or *pugillares* extant from anywhere in western Britain from the period prior to *c.* 800, the approximate date of Lichfield, Cathedral Library MS 1 and its earliest marginalia. Lost are the texts that Michael Lapidge identifies as available to Gildas, lost is the Welsh copy of Pelagius's commentary on the Pauline Epistles copied by 'Meirion disciple of Peibio in the time of kings Elise and Selyf', probably 675 x 750, the only witnesses for which are the recopied scribal colophons of BnF, MS lat. 9530 and Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 5.[50] The only witness to British writing between the end of the fourth century and *c.* 800 is therefore the epigraphic inscriptions of western Britain on stone.

As is well known, this witness takes three forms. Firstly, there is the earliest epigraphic base-script comprising late-Romano-British provincial *capitalis.* Secondly, into this base-script intrude letterforms deriving from New Common Script, what scholars have called 'cursive intrusions' (although there is very little that is truly cursive about any of their *ductus*). Thirdly,

[48] Lloyd, *History*, p. 273 & n. 265.
[49] 'Mapping the historic boundaries of Wales', https://rcahmw.gov.uk/mapping-the-historic-boundaries-of-wales-commotes-and-cantrefs/ (31 Aug. 2022).
[50] Michael Lapidge, 'Gildas's education', pp. 27-51; David N. Dumville, 'Late-seventh or early-eighth century evidence for the British transmission of Pelagius', *CMCS*, 10 (1985), pp. 39-52.

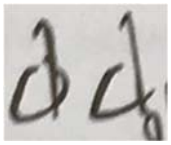
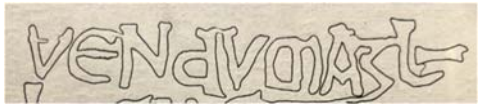
from the early seventh century onwards Late Antique epigraphic *capitalis* is replaced by an epigraphic adaptation of Early Insular book-script. From this complex palaeographic dynamic the commentary at figure 63 below traces the broad evolution of New Common Script from the fifth to the eighth centuries using examples from across the Late Antique western British writing-province.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
A	 Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC (L); *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97 (R)	 C-17 TAET=UENE. Newbridge, just inland north of Newlyn, Cornwall. Late seventh-century.[51]
	The typical ***OC*** letterform of **a** of Early Insular book-script tends to replace the epigraphic capital **A** in the later seventh century. In the earlier seventh century the eclectic inscription of Gse-6/54/B21 CATACVS, from Llanfihangel Cwm Du, between Brecon and Crickhowell, still uses the capital A with crossed 'teepee'-style ascenders.[52] More cursively-treated letterforms of **a** survived as part of the 'undergrowth' of everyday utilitarian letterforms.	
B	 *Tabellae Sulis*, Nos. 97 & 98.	 C-32 [-COI]BI (or COLINI). Priory of St Nicholas, Scilly Isles. First half of the sixth century.[53]
	Like **a**, non-capital letterforms of **b** are uncommon in the earlier inscriptions. Innovation seems to come first in the West Country.	

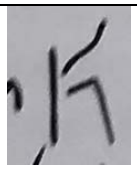
[51] *CL*, I, p. 246 & tav. CXXV.
[52] *Corpus*, I, pp. 194-6.
[53] *CL*, I, pp. 264-5.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
D	 *Tabellae Sulis*, Nos. 97 & 98.  *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95.	 Gse-1/43/B2 TVRPILLIVS. Crickhowell, Brycheiniog. Sixth century.[54]  Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI. St Fagans, Cardiff, Glamorgan. Early seventh century.
	Like the epigraphic letterforms of **a** and **b** above, the letterform of **d** is an excellent example of the typification described as « *librarizzarla* ». Tedeschi refers to this as a 'minuscule' letterform as does Gifford Charles-Edwards.[55] Nash-Williams regarded the letterform as 'half-uncial derived from cursive'.[56] Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI shows that the process had produced the calligraphic etoliated wedge-serif and bilinear *module* by at least the seventh century. This suggests that the Hiberno-Northumbrian scribes of the great Insular Gospel-books had available to them a calligraphic version of Early Insular book-script that was fully mature at the time of Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI.	

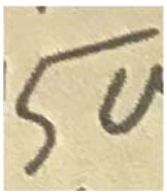
[54] *Corpus*, I, pp. 159-162.
[55] *CL*, I, p. 264; *Corpus*, I, p. 161.
[56] *ECMW*, p. 224.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
E	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95.  *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 96.	 Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI.
	The curved-backed letterform of **E** derives from the tradition of archaic book-script represented by the *Epitome of Livy*. With its letterforms of **E N d** and **ð** with their pronounced wedge-serifs, and if Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI is indeed early seventh century, this suggests that Early Insular book-script in calligraphic form was already formed by the early seventh century in the Brittonic west.	
F	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No.97.  Hamble *tabella* of Muconius.	 Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC. Margam Mountain, near Llangynwyd, Glamorgan. Second half of the sixth century.  Gso-21/144/CM9 QVENVENDANVS. Henllan Amgoed, north of Whitland, Carms. Second half of the sixth century.
	Insular New Common Script ligatures **f** + **i** extremely frequently: Lowe described such inveterate ligatures as ‘obligatory’.[57]	

[57] Loew, The Beneventan Script, p. 141.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
G	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No.97   *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 98	 Gn-32/103/MR8 CANTIORI. Ffestiniog, Gwynedd. Penmachno church. First half of the sixth century.[58]  Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC.

Nash-Williams remarked that the sinuous or sickle-shaped form of **G** was met with 'occasionally' in Roman times.[59] Tomlin's collated table of letterforms instead suggests that it was in fact the dominant letterform in New Roman Cursive, where it takes on a **5** - shaped *ductus*.[60] Tedeschi's collated tables suggest that **G** was more fluid in its *ductus* than other letterforms. As an approximation, of the 170 inscriptions that Tedeschi collates, 60 feature some letterform of **G**. Of these, very roughly 33 are the capitular **G** letterform or some cursively-written treatment of it; ten or so are of the **S**-shaped sinuous or sickle-shaped letterform and some 14 or so are the **ȝ** letterform, with a few reversed letterforms and the odd scribal confection.[61] The relative (approximate) chronology of these letterforms as they appear in the epigraphic record is as follows: the **G** letterforms are the earliest, the **S** letterforms are later and the **ȝ** letterforms the latest. For example, the early Gso-15/245/P58

[58] *Corpus*, III, pp. 385-9.
[59] *ECMW*, p. 227.
[60] *Tab. Sulis*, p. 94; *CL*, pp. 68-81.
[61] *CL*, pp. 68-81.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.		
Letter form	**Romano-British**	**Epigraphic intrusion**
	CVRCAGNI inscription from Maenchlochog in the Preselis (late fifth-early sixth century) features a cursively-rendered **G** letterform.[62] A generation or two later the Gn-32/103/MR8 CANTIORI inscription features a cursively-drawn **S** letterform (reproduced above) and a few generations later the diagnostically eclectic Gn-25/13/AN26 CATAMANVS inscription of *c.* 625 features a fully-developed **ð** letterform.[63] However this relative epigraphic chronology does not synchronise with the actual development of the letterform in New Common Script because *Tabellae Sulis* No. 98 already shows a **5**-shaped letterform (also reproduced above), showing that the fully-developed Insular **ð** existed centuries before the date of the CATAMANVS inscription *c.* 625.[64] The geographical distribution of the letterforms of **G** in the 'Group 1' early Christian inscriptions is also interesting. Of the Welsh letterforms catalogued by Tedeschi 27 out of 40 inscriptions which feature any letterform of **G** use the 'canonical' letterform of the base *capitalis*, **G**. Of the Cornish, Devon, Somerset and Dorset inscriptions, ten out of 17 use the 'half-uncial' letterform. A statistical response to this apparent leaning towards the **ð** letterform outside Wales might simply be that more early Welsh inscriptions survive, hence the earlier letterform would naturally predominate. That said, Nash-Williams makes the point that the early letterforms (**G** and sinous **S**) continue in use in Wales 'to the end of the seventh	

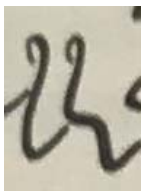
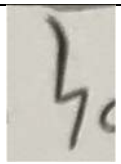
[62] *Corpus*, II, pp. 237-8.
[63] In relation to the complex issues of dating the early inscriptions discussed in this table, the Gn-25/13/AN26 CATAMANVS inscription, from Llangadwaladr, Anglesey, is an important fixed point in that it can not only be dated accurately, but shows a particularly seminal stage of palaeographical development. King Catamanus (*Cadfan* in Welsh) is known to have died in 625, giving a strong probability that the inscription was created *c.* 625 as his memorial. An extended discussion (with this as the conclusion, supported by linguistic evidence) is at *Corpus*, III, pp. 180-183.
[64] The reader's attention is drawn to the inherent imprecision of relative chronologies in this context.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
	century and beyond' by which time they are entirely superseded in the Cornish, Devon, Somerset and Dorset inscriptions.[65] These go over entirely to the **ð** letterform, as seen in Tedeschi's inscriptions C2, C30, C31, DSD7 and DSD17 (dated by him to the second half of the sixth century), C5 and C14 (end of the sixth and/or beginning of the seventh century), C15, DSD 11 and DSD 15 (seventh century) and C14 (end of the seventh century).[66] One explanation for this different regional pattern of usage is that south Wales was more reluctant to abandon Romano-British letterforms and did not frequently use the **ð** letterform for epigraphic purposes until the second half of the sixth century. It is possible to see in this pattern a relative conservatism in south-east Wales and it may not be a coincidence that this equates with the greater Romanisation of the region, as compared to the south-western peninsula.[67]	
H	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97	 Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC

[65] *ECMW*, p. 224, n. in relation to forms G^{1-4}.
[66] For C2 see *CL*, p. 226 & tav. CX; for C30 see *CL*, p. 261 & tav. CXXXVIII; for C31 see *CL*, p. 263 & tav. CXXXIX; for DSD7 see *CL*, p. 273 & tav. CXLVIII; for DSD17 see *CL*, p. 284 & tav. CLVIII; for C15 see *CL*, p. 243 & tav. CXXIII; for DSD11 see *CL*, p. 278 & tav. CLIII; for DSD15 see *CL*, p. 282 & tav. CLVI; for C14 see *CL*, p. 242 & tav. CXXII. The dating methodology offered by Tedeschi for these inscriptions is as follows: C2: relative palaeographical considerations such as horizontalized epigraphic letterforms, typically those of **I**; C30 a similar methodology, based upon *'…l'abbondanza e il grado di evoluzione…de alcune forme grafice..'*; C31, as aforesaid, *'…le caratteristiche paleografice suggeriscono…'*; DSD7, *'Le caratteristiche paleografice, in accordo con quelle linguistiche* [i.e. the *CIB*]; DSD17 *'…databile per via paleografica'*; C15, *'L'abbondanza di forme assai evolute in direzione della capitale decorative insulare e l'impagazione relativamente regulare…'*; DSD11, '*Le caratteristiche paleografice…*'; DSD15, *'La scrittura…il numero e sopratutto il levello di evoluzione delle forme insulari…'* ; and C14, *'Le caratteristiche monumentali…e grafice…'*. Tedeschi mitigates the risk of imprecision in these relative sequences by the use of corroborative evidence (for example linguistic and typological) and by fairly broad time-periods but the core of his method lies in his conception of the graphical process as it operated over time, in the western British writing-province, and upon the base-material of the '*sistema di scritture insulari'*; see *CL*, p. 44.
[67] The Romanisation of the south-west is likened to the shallower Romanisation of Deheubarth (as compared to Glamorgan) in Chapter Four below.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 98	 Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI
	The BODVOC inscription shows the horizontal entry-stroke of *Tabellae Sulis* No. 94 and supports the idea that this calligraphic flourish developed into the wedge-serif that we see in the VENDVMAGLI inscription.	
L	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94.  *Tabellae Sulis*, No.98.	 Gso-37/346/P60 MACCVDICCL.  Gso-38/379/CM35 CATVRVG. Merthyr, east of Carmarthen, Carms. Later fifth or early sixth century.[68]
	 *Tabellae Sulis, No.97*  *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 95	 Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC  Gso-21/144/CM9 QVENVENDANVS.

[68] *Corpus*, II, pp. 267-9.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

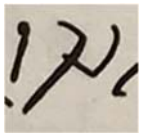
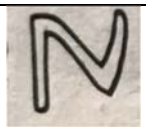
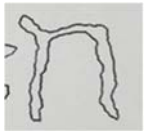
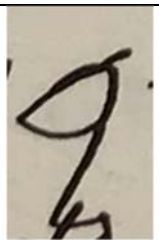
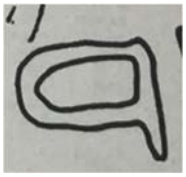
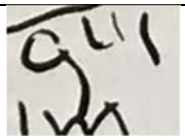
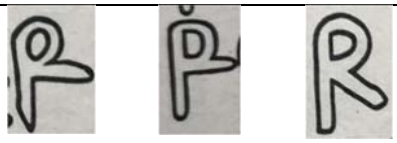
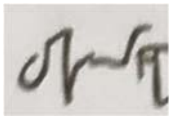
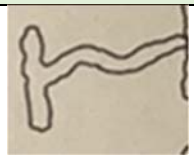
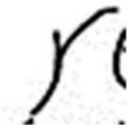
Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
	The letterform of **L** that shows the slanting, straight foot-stroke is the letterform of Old Common Script that survived into New Common Script alongside letterforms of **L** with a more right-angular *ductus*. The descent of the foot-stroke beneath the line of writing (sometimes in more curvilinear form) lives on as an archaism in Later Insular book-script. The **Li** ligature is 'obligatory' (in Lowe's terms) and finds reflection in the typical subscripts of Later Welsh book-script.	
N	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No.96  *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94  *Tabellae Sulis*, No.98.	 Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC  Gso-37/346/P60 MACCVDICCL.  C-17 TAET=UENE

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

<table>
<tr><th>Letter form</th><th>Romano-British</th><th>Epigraphic intrusion</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">If one considers the statistical frequency of the two letterforms of N n using Tedeschi’s collations, out of 170 inscriptions the N letterform appears in 15 and n in only two relatively late Cornish inscriptions. As with other letterforms, the archaic uncial letterform of N points to a more conservative Welsh usage, with greater innovation in the West Country. The two Romano-British letterforms provide the identical letterforms of TCD, MS 55, the Ussher Gospels, as below. These letterforms show just how closely the book-script follows the stylus-writing and how the differences are purely down to the use of a broad nib or indeed the pressure applied:
 </td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Q</td><td>
Tabellae Sulis, No. 94</td><td>
Gso-11/140/CM6 TALORVS. Cynwyl Gaeo, between Lampeter and Llandovery, Carms. Sixth century.</td></tr>
<tr><td>
Tabellae Sulis, No.99</td><td>
360/CM5 PAVLINVS. Cynwyl Gaeo, as above. Fifth century.[69]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Two letterforms appear: q and a cursively-rendered quadrilinear letterform of Q.</td></tr>
<tr><td>R</td><td>
Tabellae Sulis, No. 96</td><td>
Gse-13/229/G77 BODVOC</td></tr>
</table>

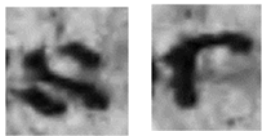
[69] *Corpus*, II, pp. 208-211.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94.  *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 97.	 Gse-3/270/G28 TEGERNACVS. Gelli-Gaer, Capel Brithdir, Glamorgan. Late fifth or sixth century.[70]
	The lower letterform illustrated above is the cursive or semicursive letterform of New Common Script. It is one of the rare thoroughly cursive intrusions, described by Sir John Morris-Jones as the 'sprawling form'.[71] However it, too, was acceptable as an allomorph in Early Insular book-script, as TCD, MS 55 shows below:  	
S	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 99  The Hamble *tabella*	 Gse-3/270/G28 TEGERNACVS  Gso-28/143/CM8 CARANTACVS. Llandysilio, Pembs. Sixth century.[72]

[70] *Corpus*, I, p. 305.
[71] J. Morris-Jones, 'Taliesin', *Y Cymmrodor*, xxviii (1918), Appendix II, pp. 277-8.
[72] *Corpus*, I, p. 217.

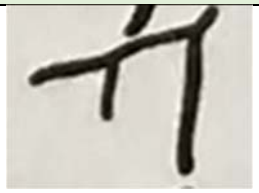
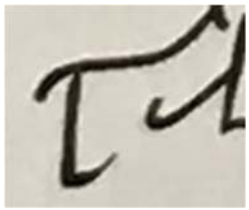
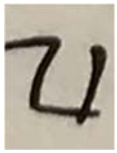
Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
	Most of the inscriptions feature either capital **S** or archaic uncial **S** with three strokes and two stylus-lifts (as exemplified in the *Epitome of Livy*, thus:  The letterform intrudes in cursive and semicursive form, with separate stem and head-stroke. S-longa was not regarded as unacceptable in Early Insular book-script and is an example of an 'upwardly mobile' letterform as in Dublin, Ireland Royal Irish Academy, MS 12 R 33, the *Cathach*, below:[73]  This letterform is a very early epigraphic intrusion, appearing in the Gn-37/183/D9 BROHOMAGLI inscription from Pentrefoelas near Penmachno, dated by Tedeschi to the first half of the sixth century.[74]	

[73] S-longa appears in the very earliest examples of Early book-script, for example Manchester, John Rylands Library, Pap. 472, fol. 1v., a fourth-century liturgical fragment from Egypt; TM 64321/LDAB 5542; https://www.trismegistos.org/text/64321, https://papyri.info/dclp/64321 (5 Apr. 2023). It is also customary in the Ravennese chancery- and book-scripts of the sixth century, see for example, Ravenna, Archepiscopal Archive, MS 1, various works of Ambrose, 475-525; *CLA*, iv, 412, https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/754, (5 Apr. 2023) and the Veronese archive, see Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, 31, various works of Augustine, 676-700, *CLA*, iv, 492, https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/840, (5 Apr. 2023). It features in later Early Insular book-script in Bodl, Douce 140, the 'Douce Primasius' of 680-720, *CLA*, ii, 237, https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/556, (5 Apr. 2023).

[74] On comparative palaeographical grounds, and with the support of the *CIB*; see *CL*, p. 218 & tav. CV.

Figure 63. New Common Script as epigraphic intrusions, *c.* 400-700.

Letter form	Romano-British	Epigraphic intrusion
T	 *Tabellae Sulis*, No.96.  *Tabellae Sulis*, No.96.	  Gse-9/205/P12 MACCVTRENI. Cilgerran, Pembs. Church of St Llawddog. Second half of the sixth century.[75]
	The *tabellae defixionum* and the inscriptions record an archaic, straight-topped letterform of **T** with a Roman-style oblique *ductus* as well as a developing letterform of **C** where the stem is still relatively straight but which has taken on a foot-stroke to the right.	
U	 Hamble *tabella*.  *Tabellae Sulis*, No. 94	 Gse-3/270/G28 TEGERNACVS  (Reversed) Gse-9/205/P12 MACCVTRENI
	As with other letterforms, the *ductus* of **U** could be treated cursively or set.	

[75] *Corpus*, II, p. 313.

This table, then, provides a glimpse of the Insular script-system as reflected in the inscriptions of the fifth to seventh centuries. Its fidelity to late Romano-British writing on hard media is extraordinary: it is no exaggeration to say that the scribes of *Tabellae Sulis,* given pen and membrane, could have produced a book-script very close to that of TCD, MS 55, even down to the wedge-serifs at those junctures where a pointed stylus executed monoline entry-strokes. In most cases, we see cursive, quadrilinear treatments of New Common Script but in a smaller number of cases (**a** and **b** are good examples) innovation seems to have occurred most strongly in the West Country and relatively late. As we know that all of the letterforms of the earliest medieval Insular writing were already present in the New Common Script of Roman Britain, these patterns may, if the relative sequences of epigraphic dating are reasonably robust, give us a glimpse of different usages, and different fidelity to tradition, in different areas of the Late Antique Brittonic west.

Epigraphic scripts, c. 800–1100 – Baglan and Eglwys Nynnid

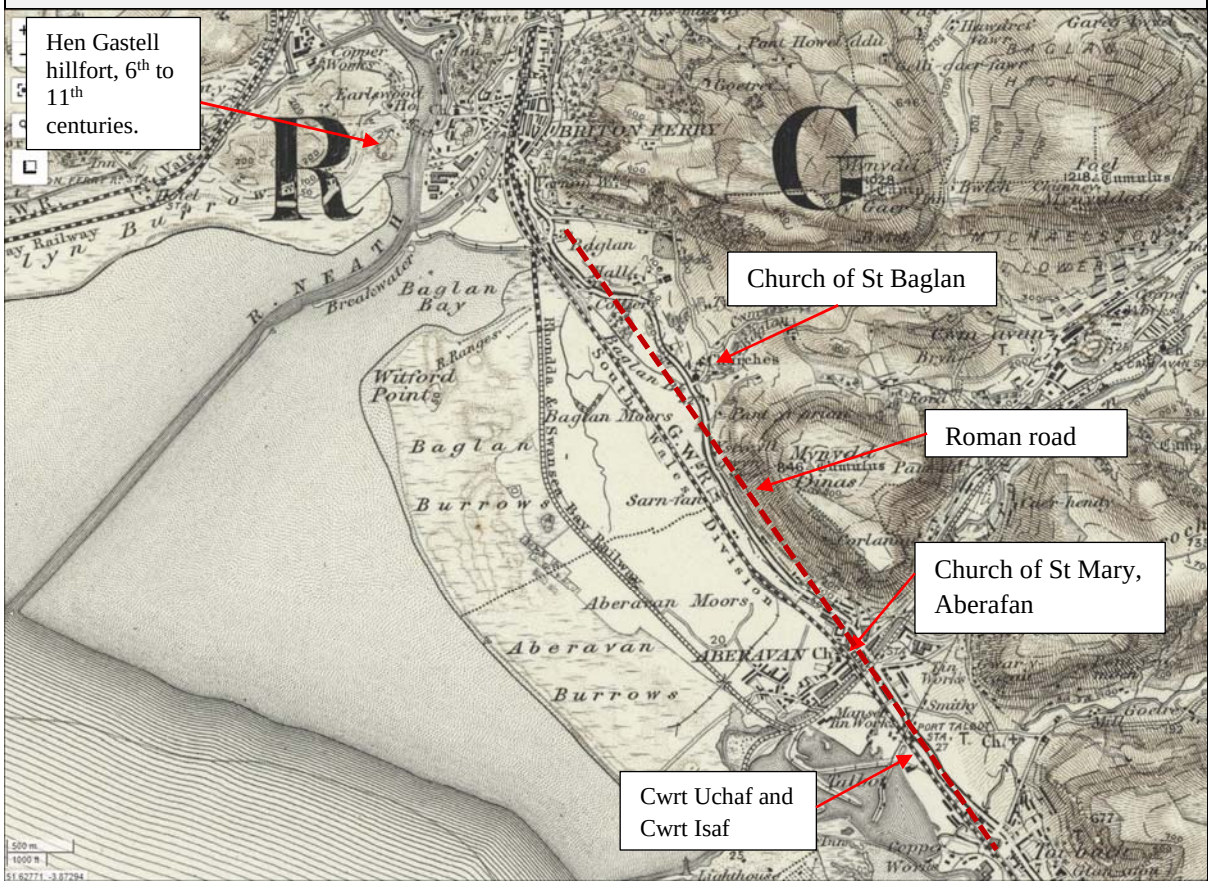
From the eighth century onwards, the region of *Margan* seems to have had a number of major churches within a diverse, polyfocal ecclesiastical landscape that also included smaller churches, ecclesiastical estates and cult *foci* such as *martyria* and holy wells.[76] In the north, between the Rivers Neath and Kenfig, the sites of St Mary's church at Aberafan, on the north bank of the River Afan, and the former parish church of St Baglan at Baglan, south of the Afan, have both yielded early medieval Christian monuments.[77] St Mary's is close to the old *caput* of the Lords of Afan on the north bank of the river and both it and the church at Baglan sit almost in the shadow of a major early medieval promontory fort at Hen Gastell, Briton Ferry.

[76] Similarly, Richard Sharpe notes that small churches were very common in the landscape of early medieval Ireland; Sharpe, 'Some problems', p. 254. T. Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland* (New Haven, 2010), pp. 225-33, discussed the small size of many Irish churches.

[77] 263a/G2 is a smallish rough slab with a cross incised on either side with rounded terminals, first noted in St Mary's churchyard in the nineteenth century; 191/G4 BRANCU from Baglan old church is discussed below and G5 is small, square slab with a Maltese-looking cross of probable eleventh- or twelfth-century date; see *Corpus,* I, pp. 263-8.

This association of secular and ecclesiastical sites reflects similar early medieval arrangements at places like Llandough, where the monastery seems to have been associated with a promontory hillfort at Dinas Powys, and Llanilltud Fawr, close to the early medieval *llys* of Gwrinydd at Llysworney (in Welsh, '*Llyswrinydd*', the 'court of Gwrinydd').[78] Figure 64 below uses a historical base-map from which the massive modern industrialisation of this area is mostly omitted, so that these older historical features are clearer. The Roman military highway is marked with red dashes.

Figure 65. Baglan, Glam.



The significance of the fort at Hen Gastell as a key node of political power in early medieval Glamorgan is unmistakeable. It enjoys a superb strategic position atop a steep knoll at the mouth of the Neath estuary. It sits above the notorious ford where the Roman coastal highway crosses the River Neath at what is today Briton Ferry, the saltmarsh and quicksands

[78] Knight, 'Sources', p. 375; Jenkins, 'Regions and cantrefs', p. 45.

of which gave Giraldus and Archbishop Baldwin such difficulty *en route* to safety at Swansea.[79] Its position would not only have controlled communications along the Roman coastal road but also access to and trade with the interior by means of the Neath and Swansea valleys. The photograph reproduced below as figure 65 gives a good impression of the impressive strategic situation of the site, even with the clutter of industrialisation in the foreground.

Figure 65. Hen Gastell and the Neath estuary.



Much of the site was destroyed by quarrying in the early twentieth century but excavations revealed that the earliest post-Roman inhabitants commanded similar wealth and patronage as their equivalents at Dinas Powys or Tintagel. The earliest stratigraphy revealed sherds of eastern Mediterranean *amphorae* of sixth-century date. The site was occupied until at least the early tenth century and intermittently after that.[80] Subsequently the native Welsh rulers of the area moved a mile or two south to Plas Baglan where a small castle was built late

[79] Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Kambriae*, I, 8, pp. 72-3.
[80] F. Wilkinson, 'Excavations at Hen Gastell, Briton Ferry, West Glamorgan 1991-92', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39, I (1995), pp. 1-50; *RCAHMW, Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan Volume III - Part 1a Medieval Secular Monuments. The Early Castles from the Norman Conquest to 1217* (Cardiff, 1991), pp. 140 & fig. 95; also 'Hen Gastell', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/401406/archives?term=Hen%20Gastell (11 Mar. 2022).

in the twelfth century, a move that is perhaps suggestive of pre-existent connections with the site of the early medieval church at Baglan.[81]

It is therefore no surprise that the nearby church at Baglan seems to have been a 'minster' in the early medieval period, that is to say a major church with potential daughter-foundations. The English term works in a Welsh context. The Welsh recognised the distinction between these 'major' (monastic or secular) churches and other kinds of church. Albeit written slightly outside our period, between 1137 and 1148, the *Vita* of Gruffudd ap Cynan (1054/5 – 1137) records Gruffudd as providing bequests for *'multisque praecipuis aliis ecclesiis'*, rendered in the Welsh *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* as *'eglwysseu pennaduraf'*, the 'highest-ranking churches'.[82] That the pre-Conquest church at Baglan fell into this category is suggested by several pieces of evidence.

Firstly there is the enormous size of the later medieval parish, which included the present parishes of Aberafan, Baglan itself, Michaelston-super-Afan and Glyncorrwg, an area some twelve miles in length reaching from the coast inland to the head of the Rhondda valley between the headwaters of the Rivers Neath and Afan. John Blair has pointed to the early medieval churches in the west Midlands, the territories of the Hwicce and Magonsaete, and noted that those that managed to avoid despoilation by the Vikings became 'the basis of a parochial geography which survived thereafter'.[83] Extensive later medieval parish boundaries are therefore frequently taken to reflect the *parochiae* of major early medieval foundations.[84] The survival of very large parishes like these in post-Conquest Glamorgan suggests that there existed early medieval minster-like churches in Glamorgan with large *parochiae*.

[81] 'Plas Baglan', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/307236/ (11 Mar. 2022).
[82] *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd Ap Cynan*, ed. Paul Russell (Cardiff, 2005), § 34, p. 88; *Historia Gruffud Vab Kenan*, ed. D. Simon Evans (Caerdydd, 1977), pp. 31-2.
[83] John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), p. 307.
[84] This term is not without complexity. Richard Sharpe traced the origin of the term *paruchia* to the work of James Kenney and Kathleen Hughes and defined it (in Ireland, at least) as 'the proprietary control of a mother-church over its dependencies which are likely to be secular charges in which the mother-church was obliged to maintain a ministry in return for the alms of the people served'; Sharpe, 'Some problems', p. 247.

Secondly, local tradition recalls a major foundation at Baglan: Lhuyd's local correspondent Anthony Thomas recounted the tradition that the church at Baglan had been 'more than ordinary sacred' and the saint's crozier-head survived as a relic until the seventeenth century. Thirdly, there survives a brief lection-style *Vita* that associates Baglan with St Illtud, the kind of connection that a major church would look for when the historical prestige of the founder needed to be upgraded to reflect the later prosperity of the church.[85]

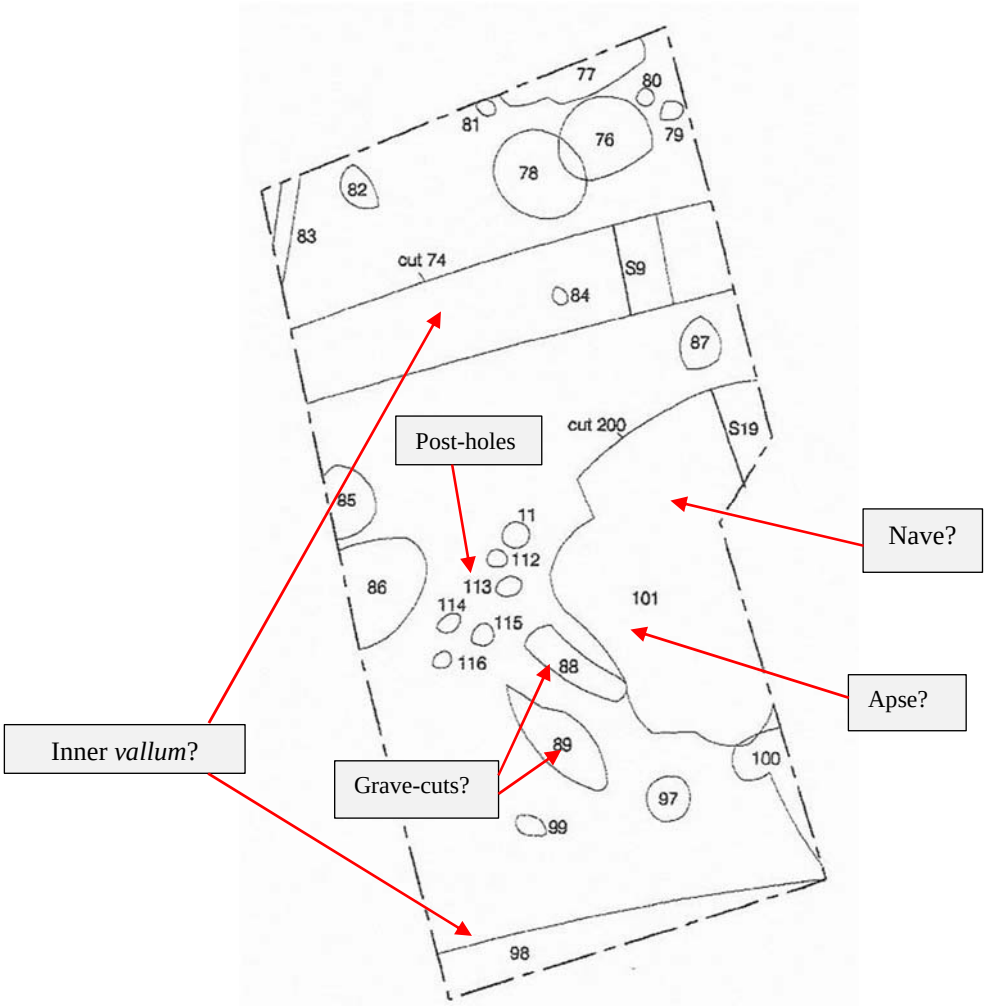
Nor does Baglan seem to have been the only important ecclesiastical site in the northern part of the putative *cantref* of Margan. Excavations at the former Cistercian grange at Eglwys Nynnid, a few miles to the south, in 2000-1 revealed an 'east-west aligned rectangular feature…with a clearly apsidal western end, interpreted as the footings of a small church or chapel'. The excavated dimensions were 7.8m wide and at least 6m long, that is, some 25 feet wide and 18 feet long, bearing in mind that the only part of the 'nave' was excavated.[86] Figure 66 below shows the excavated features with the excavator's interpretations redacted into the text-boxes and arrows.

Chronologically, the name 'Eglwys Nynnid' is certainly pre-Conquest. Tomos Roberts has suggested that Welsh *eglwys* place-names are generally early and that only one *eglwys* tends to appear in each commote, further suggesting that they were significant centres, i.e. '*the* church' of the commote. The Llandaff charters further suggest that the term *'eglwys'* actually refers to a physical building in that an *'eglwys'* is often referred to as sitting within its *'agro suo circa se'*, i.e. surrounding ecclesiastical estate.[87] The 'Gazetteer' entry in the *Corpus* for Eglwys Nynnid states that the apsidal structure was thought by the excavator to have been of 'twelfth or thirteenth century date' but although this is true for some of the fabric of the Cistercian grange surviving within the modern farmhouse some 40 metres away, it is not at all

[85] Edward Lhuyd, *Parochialia*, III, Cambrian Archaeological Association Supplement (1911), pp. 27-8.
[86] H. J. Thomas, 'Eglwysnynnid Farmhouse, Margam (SS 8031 8474)', *Morgannwg*, XXXII (1988), p. 93; Peter Boyer, *An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief at Eglwys Nynnid Farm, Water Street, Margam, Neath and Port Talbot* (London, 2003), pp. 6, 13. The writer discounts the assumption that Margam itself was a significant pre-Conquest church based on the evidence in Dr Edith Evans, *Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in south-east Wales*, GGAT report no. 2003/030 (Swansea, 2003).
[87] Wendy Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm* (London, 1978), p. 38.

what the excavator says about the rest of the site.[88] The excavator's view was rather that 'earlier structures were also present, including the apsidal feature' and that a worked shale gaming-piece recovered from the context might well be early medieval.[89]

Figure 66. Excavations at Eglwys Nynnid 2000-1.



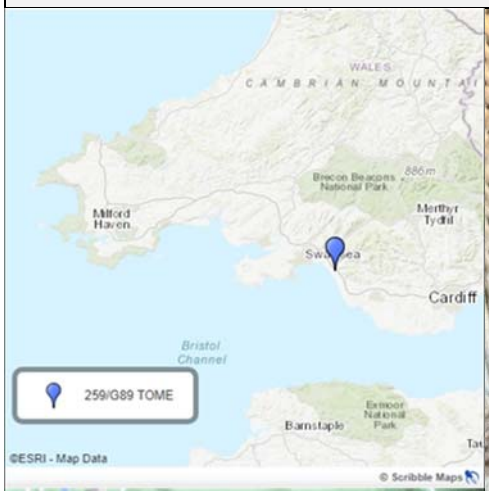
©Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. Reproduced by kind permission.

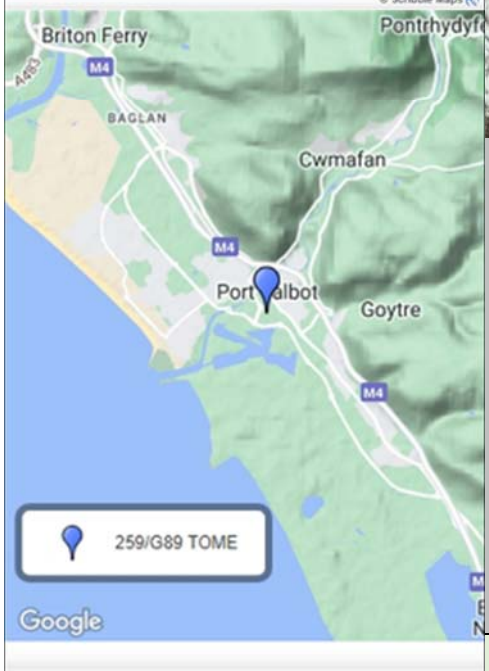
The political and ecclesiastical importance of these sites – and the landscape around them - is matched by a rich local writing-tradition that finds expression in a number of high-status inscriptions. Following on from the survey at figure 63 above, the earliest example of the epigraphic use of Early Insular book-script from the northern part of the conjectural *cantref* of Margam is 259/G89 TOME. This monument (illustrated in figure 67 below) is a massive

[88] *Corpus*, I, p. 565.
[89] Boyer, *Eglwys Nynnid*, para. 8.3, p. 48.

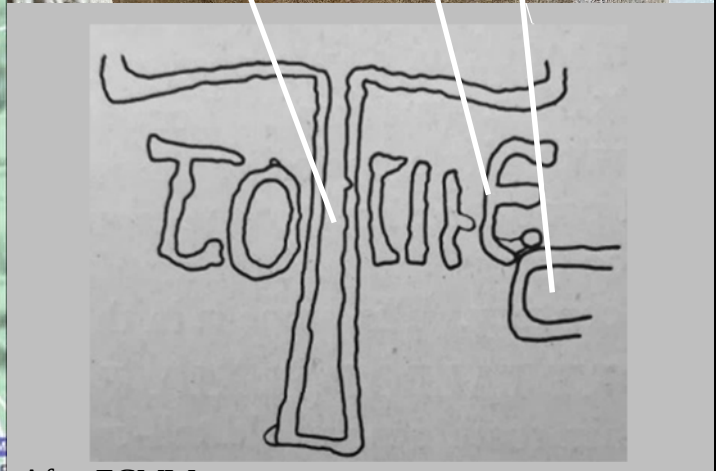
cross-carved cylindrical pillar. It is one of a series of early Christian monuments recovered from the vicinity of *Cwrt-Isaf* or 'Lower Court' Farm, a former medieval farm and Cistercian grange which previously stood close to the current Port Talbot railway station. The pillar was first noted by a local antiquarian prior to 1847 and was discussed by Westwood in one of his numerous early contributions to *Archaeologia Cambrensis*.[90]

Figure 67. Port Talbot, Glam. Cwrt-Isaf Farm. Cross-carved cylindrical pillar. 259/G89 TOME.









After ECMW.

TOME
'Tome [recte,'Tomae']
'Of/to Thomas'

[90] J. O. Westwood, 'Notices of early inscribed and sculptured stones in Wales', *AC*, 3rd Series (Cardiff, 1857), p. 55.

The writer inspected this massive pillar during the winter of 2021 and again during the autumn of 2022. Unfortunately the inscription is much weathered (figure 67 above tries to compensate for this with arrows for ease of reference). No reproduction of it appears in the *Corpus* and the reproduction in figure 67 above is after the *ECMW*. Scholars have described the script in different terms. Nash-Williams described it as 'Round half-uncials, clumsily picked' but Gifford Charles-Edwards saw it differently, as a 'line of geometric capitals with square-footed **T**, flattened oval **O**, three-bar **M** and squarish **E**'.[91] Given the current state of the surface of the monument it was difficult for the writer to make a judgement, even in conditions of strong, oblique sunshine in the well-lit Margam Stones Museum where the monument is preserved.

The state of preservation of the **M**, in particular, does not now allow it to be definitively identified as the diagnostic 'gated' display-form. That said, notwithstanding its poor preservation, the aspect and alignment of the inscription strongly supports Gifford Charles-Edwards's assessment of the morphology. The letterforms are bilinear and of consistent and uniform *module,* notwithstanding the somewhat oversize **E**, and the alignment of the inscription is excellent. The inscription shows the epigraphic base-script that replaced epigraphic *capitalis* in the seventh century: an epigraphic variant of Early Insular book-script, written with bilinear module, regularly aligned, of noticeably square and monumental aspect and featuring the display-letterforms of geometric capitals, letterforms which Gifford Charles-Edwards has persuasively suggested to have had an epigraphic origin.[92]

Turning to the general typology of the monument, the *ordinatio* of 259/G89 TOME shows a common Welsh-Irish format comprising the name of the commemorated person split out either side of a central cross. The format is widely encountered in other areas of Britain

[91] *ECMW*, p. 161; *Corpus,* I, p. 446.
[92] On stone but also very likely on wood, see Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The East Cross Inscription from Toureen Peacaun: Letterform Analysis and a Suggested Reading', *Archaeology Ireland,* 17, no. 1 (2003), pp. 13–15. It should be noted however that Tedeschi suggests that the *'aspetto geometrizzante…angoli rettio acuti'* may have been influenced by the *'sistema grafico runico'*; *CIB,* p. 44.

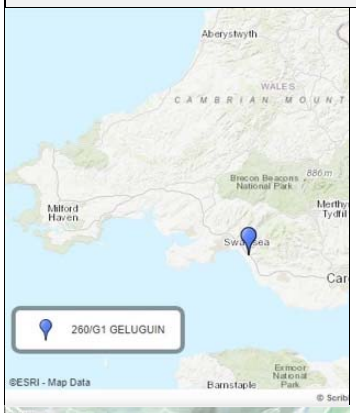
where epigraphic usage was influenced by Irish practice. Good examples are the so-called 'pillow stones' recovered from the early monastic sites at Hartlepool and Lindisfarne and associated with the Irish mission to Northumbria, which Lionard and Henry saw as reflecting Clonmacnois influence.[93] These too use a cross which divides a monumental bilinear inscription.[94] Considering these art-historical parallels as well as the palaeography, Nash-Williams, the *RCAHMW* and the *Corpus* concur in ascribing an early date to 259/G89 TOME. Nash-Williams suggested seventh-to-ninth century, the *RCAHMW* proposed an eighth- or ninth-century date: the *Corpus* opted for a date in the first half of the ninth century 'or earlier'.[95]

A relatively early seventh- or eighth-century date for this inscription would best explain the palaeography. Brief though the inscription is, we see a palaeography that is absent from the later ninth- and tenth-century inscriptions from Margan and indeed anywhere else in Glamorgan. The palaeography of 259/G89 TOME shows a typified version of Early Insular book-script at its epigraphic apogee in the Glamorgan writing-province. From this high-point the subsequent history of epigraphic writing in the writing-province follows exactly the rhythm predicted by the graphical process. Challenged by the vigorous, graphically eclectic treatments of New Common Script used for tablet-writing, administration and correspondence, the morphologically-consistent base-script of TOME will enter into its own *tramonto,* increasingly admitting more quadrilinear letterforms semicursively - or cursively - treated, along with their increasingly irregular aspects. Mirroring the *tramonto* of the script, we will see a parallel diminution in the quality of the iconography and artwork.

[93] *CASSS*, Vol. 1, 'Hartlepool 01, Durham', https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/catvol1.php?pageNum_urls=220&totalRows_urls=532 (5 Sept. 2022); *CASSS*, Vol. 1, 'Lindisfarne 22-34', https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/catvol1.php?pageNum_urls=358 (5 Sept. 2022).
[94] For Clonmacnois cross-inscribed slabs with the name of the deceased split in two by the shaft of the cross, see Pádraig Lionard and Françoise Henry, 'Early Irish Grave-Slabs', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. 61 (1960/1961), p. 119, fig. 14, nos. 5 & 122; fig. 16, no. 10.
[95] *ECMW*, p. 161; *RCAHMW*, pp. 21, 40-1; *Corpus*, I, p. 448.

Another early Christian monument recovered barely a mile away from 259/G89 TOME bears out this analysis of how the graphical process operated at a local level in early medieval Margan. 260/G1 GELUGUIN (see figure 68 below) is a cross-carved slab recovered from near the site of the later St Mary's church in Aberafan. The maps attached to figures 67 and 68 suggest that with these two monuments we are looking at a genuine local writing-tradition.

Figure 68. Aberafan, Glam. The Croft. Cross-carved slab. 260/G1 GELUGUIN.





After *ECMW*.

CRU
X
XPI
GELUGUI
N·

'The cross of Christ. Geluguin [is buried here]'

Although, like 259/G89 TOME, 260/G1 GELUGUIN shows art-historical and iconographic parallels with Ireland, the palaeography of 260/G1 GELUGUIN is wholly British and related to that of 259/G89 TOME. Like 259/G89 TOME, the inscription of 260/G1 GELUGUIN uses a treatment of Early Insular book-script of better quality than subsequently appears anywhere in Glamorgan, even on the grandest monuments. It, too, may therefore be relatively early: perhaps of the seventh or early eighth century, as Nash-Williams thought.[96] The script is set, with only a single possible ligature (or more likely 'biting') forward from the *sagitta* of the archaic uncial round-backed letterform of **E** into the following **L**, showing any

[96] *ECMW*, p. 163.

tendency to cursivity. The script tends to bilinearity with the ascenders and descenders severely truncated; the letterform of **L**, for example, shows the same *module* as the round-backed archaic uncial letterform of **E**. The letters generally show a consistent *module* and are regularly aligned save for the bottom of the letterform of Insular **G** falling beneath the line of legibility. The quality of this script is shown by the fact that the ordinator had in his repertoire fine, bilinear archaic uncial letterforms of **E** and **R**; the asymmetrical letterform of **X** is also that of Early Insular book-script. That said, the *ordinatio* of the inscription shows shortcomings in that both *CRUX* and *GELUGUIN* are finished with subscript letters, a feature redolent of less formal modes of writing. The alignment and general aspect are not quite so monumentally regular as 259/G89 TOME and the script, although a well-rendered book-script, is more a text-hand than a grand, square display-hand like that of TOME.

Given the quality of the Early Insular book-script in these two early inscriptions, a third monument from Baglan itself, 191/G4 BRANCU (see figure 69) comes as a surprise. 191/G4 BRANCU is admittedly somewhat later: it is probably a late ninth- or early tenth-century cross-carved grave-slab, but it departs radically from the British palaeography of its two earlier neighbours and indeed the other early Christian monuments of Glamorgan, in that it shows an inscription executed in a style much more closely associated with the great monastic centres of the Irish midlands and along the Shannon.

Figure 69. Baglan, Glam. St Catherine's Church. Cross-carved slab. 191/G4 BRANCU.





+BRANCU:F
'Brancu made it'

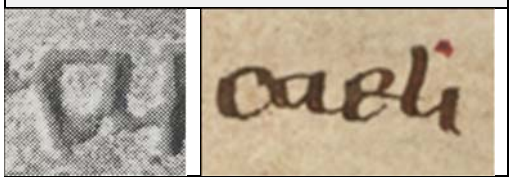
(This reproduction is of the more legible cast of the monument, as printed as fig. G4b in the *Corpus*).[97]

The palaeography of 191/G4 BRANCU is unique amongst the later Glamorgan inscriptions. The inscription represents an example of the 'pointed' calligraphic treatment of Later Welsh book-script, as can be seen in the careful formation of acute angles within the *ductus* of the letterforms of **r**, **a** and **n**. Further, the letterform of **b**, written cursively, has the usual serif at the top of the curved ascender. After the much grander Early Insular book-script of 259/G89 TOME and 260/G1 GELUGUIN from the same small locality, 191/G4 BRANCU represents a stark contrast.

The idiosyncratic nature of this script in a ninth-century Glamorgan context is confirmed, above all else, by its dispensing with the ubiquitous straight-backed variant of the ***OC*** form of **a** that was universal in the local epigraphic tradition, in favour of a flat-topped letterform of **a**, with a 'lid' and a pointed bottom, replicating the letterform of Later Welsh book-script that would find its way into English 'square minuscule' in the tenth century.[98]

[97] *Corpus*, I, p. 266.
[98] An example of this transmission being CCCC, MS 32, a *s.*x^{med} copy of Boethius's *De Institutione Arithmetica* from St Augustine's, Canterbury, which Bishop thought to have been copied from a Welsh exemplar and glossed by a second scribe writing Caroline minuscule but with Celtic abbreviations and spellings; see T. A. M. Bishop, *English Caroline Minuscule* (Oxford, 1971), p. 3, pl. 4.

Figure 70. 191/G4 BRANCU and CUL, MS. Ff. 4. 42.



Good parallels with this letterform of **a** are found in the hand of the copyist and some of the glossators in CUL, Ff. 4. 42 (see figure 70 opposite for a similar *ductus* of **a** with a flat top, straight stem and pronounced 'tail').[99] Given the tentative ascription of a south Wales provenance for the Cambridge manuscript (discussed in detail below) the appearance of this kind of book-script at a major ecclesiastical centre in Glamorgan in the ninth century raises the possibility that the inscription was executed by scribes whose customary book-hands were indeed similar to those that appear in the text and extensive *scholia* added to CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42.

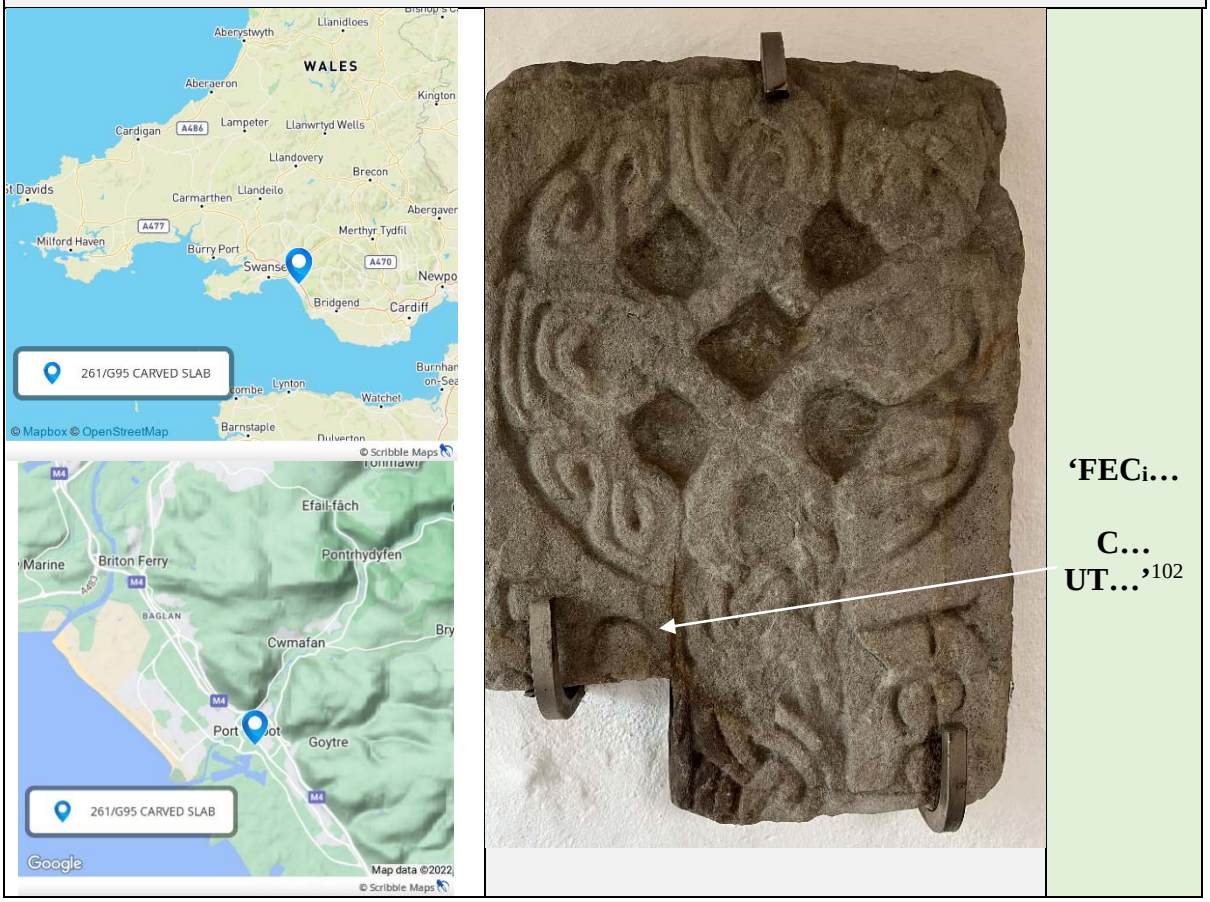
Irish analogues for 191/G4 BRANCU suggest that the monument functioned as a gravestone, either recumbent or standing at the head of the grave. The typography of a cross accompanied by a name is typical Irish usage and usually taken as commemorating a senior cleric.[100] If this holds true for 191/G4 BRANCU, suggesting that a cleric at Baglan in the ninth century could expect to be commemorated by a memorial of this quality executed in fine Irish style, then the site and the clerics who controlled it must have been connected with Ireland very intimately indeed, to the extent that they preferred to commission a high-quality Clonmacnois-style memorial eschewing the traditional local epigraphic script.

That said, in the *Corpus* Redknap and Lane offer a nearby early Christian monument as a 'close parallel' with 191/G4 BRANCU.[101] 261/G95 (the inscription is badly mutilated) is another cross-carved stone of the later ninth or early tenth century, recovered from a demolished building known locally as *Yr Hen Gapel* ('The Old Chapel') which formed part of

[99] Helen McKee also notes this form as borrowed by English scribes *c.* 900 in squarer form to become a diagnostic feature of the earliest English 'square' minuscule; McKee, *Commentary*, p. 6; although the argument goes back to Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script: The Background', pp. 147-79.
[100] Catherine Swift suggests that names without patronymics commemorate ecclesiastics, see C. Swift, 'Early Medieval Irish Grave-Slabs and their Inscriptions', *Durham Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 14-15 (1999), pp. 116-8.
[101] *Corpus*, I, p. 457.

Cwrt Uchaf or 'Upper Court' farm, the neighbouring farm to Cwrt Isaf, the location of 259/G89 TOME described above. This fragmentary stone is reproduced at figure 71 below.

Figure 71. Port Talbot, Glam. Cwrt Uchaf. Cross-carved slab. 261/G95



As a comparison of figures 69 and 71 above shows, the typology and iconography of the monuments is indeed close. Like 191/G4 BRANCU, 261/G95 is a gravestone in the Irish style. Lionard and Henry published a number of similar slabs from Clonmacnois and the Irish typology is confirmed by further analogues from the Irish Sea culture-province, for example the Isle of Man.[103] However the fragmentary inscription of 261/G95, so far as it survives, is, in palaeographical terms, nothing like that of 191/G4 BRANCU. The epigraphic script of 261/G95 stands foursquare within the local tradition and shows an epigraphic Early Insular

[102] Not reproduced in the *Corpus* is the possible subscript **i** in ligature with the **C** of ***FEC*ı[C]** *(sic)* above, kindly drawn to the writer's attention by Professor Thomas Charles-Edwards.
[103] Lionard and Henry, *Grave Slabs*, p. 102, fig.1, nos. 1-4, 12, 15, 16 & 18. Nash-Williams, *ECMW*, p. 163 & n. 1, cites William Gregory Wood Martin's *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (Dublin, 1888), pp. 81 & 83-4 for other examples and notes the presence of this type of grave monument in the Isle of Man, for which see P. M. Kermode, *Manx Crosses* (London, 1907), pp. 112, 122.

book-script in the style of 259/G89 TOME and 260/G1 GELUGUIN, quite unlike the calligraphic, quadrilinear book-script of 191/G4 BRANCU. What little of the inscription survives shows a bilinear script with a fine, round-backed archaic uncial letterform of **E** and a typically Late Antique New Common Script letterform of **F** as well as the alignment and aspect of 259/G89 TOME and 260/G1 GELGUIN.

Palaeographically, the consistency of 259/G89 TOME, 260/G1 GELGUIN and 261/G95 reveals 191/G4 BRANCU as an interloper but, taken together, all four provide a fascinating snapshot of the cultural and intellectual influences at work in this northern part of the putative *cantref* of Margan in the eighth and ninth centuries. All the monuments, but especially 191/G4 BRANCU, point to strong Irish influence. Irish influence of this degree is usually more associated with Deheubarth but even as late as *c.* 1090, Lifris of Llancarfan's *Vita Cadoci* has the saint declare 'I now burn with ardent longing to sail to Ireland in order to study'.[104] Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that the Irish settled in the west of Glamorgan and south-west Britain and that 'the clearest evidence that Irish was a spoken language in Wales comes from Kenfig in Glamorgan' in the form of the sixth-century bilingual Latin-ogam inscription of Gse-12/198/G86 PVMPEIVS CARANTORIUS, formerly situated at the side of the Roman road as it passes from Kenfig to Eglwys Nynnid, barely a couple of miles south of the above four monuments.[105]

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[104] Patrick Sims-Williams provides a comprehensive index of personal names from British inscriptions with those of certain or possible Irish derivation indicated, see *CIB*, pp. 421-438 & 459–464. Numerous Irish names appear in the contemporary Cornish inscriptions in similar fashion, see Elisabeth Okasha, *Corpus of Early Christian inscribed stones of south-west Britain* (London, 1993), pp. 343-5. Mark Handley comments that 'Some of those whose Irish names are preserved in the inscriptions of western Wales may be the descendants of early settlers there, but, given the well-known mobility of the personnel of the Insular church, it is possible they are Irish clerics working in Wales, as others did in eastern Scotland, independent of any previous settlement'; Mark A. Handley, 'Isidore of Seville and 'Hisperic Latin' in Early Medieval Wales: The Epigraphic Culture of Llanllyr and Llanddewi-Brefi' in John Higgitt, Katherine Forsyth and David N. Parsons (eds.), *Roman, Runes and Ogham: Medieval Inscriptions in the Insular World and on the Continent* (Donington, Lincs., 2001), p. 31. For relations between Ireland and Wales more generally see Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'Britons in Ireland, c. 550-800', in John Carey, John T. Koch, and Pierre-Yves Lambert (eds.), *Ildánach Ildírech. A festschrift for Proinsias Mac Cana*, Celtic Studies Publications, 4 (Andover and Aberystwyth, 1999), pp. 15–26; D. Simon Evans, 'The Sir John Rhŷs Memorial Lecture: Welsh and Irish Before the Normans – Contact or Impact', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, LXXV (1989), pp. 143-161. Lifris's plea is from *Vita S. Cadoci*, *VSBG*, §10, p. 47.

[105] Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 161, 170-1; *Corpus*, II, pp. 438-441.

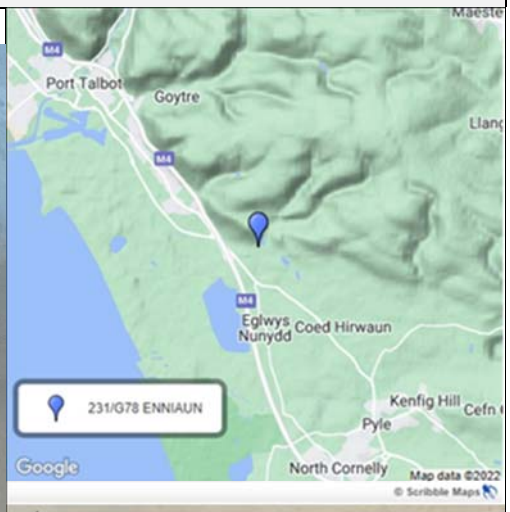
In the second part of this Chapter I will discuss CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and the very tentative suggestion that it many have originated in south-east Wales. As is well-known, Helen McKee saw the copious multilingual *scholia* added to the manuscript as reflecting an 'international' team of some thirteen Welsh, Irish and possibly Breton clerics at work at the same place at broadly the same time.[106] All this might be thought to point towards a more western provenance for the MS, but the palaeography of 191/G4 BRANCU is so alien that it can only show the actual presence of Irish book-scribes in Glamorgan in the ninth century, acting as epigraphic ordinators.[107] This makes it possible to contemplate that 'international' scribes could indeed have been as present in ninth-century Glamorgan as anywhere else in Wales. What Paul Russell describes as the 'bilingual Irish-Welsh glossing context' revealed in both Bodl., MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47 and CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 could therefore have been hosted by Glamorgan as well as Deheubarth.[108]

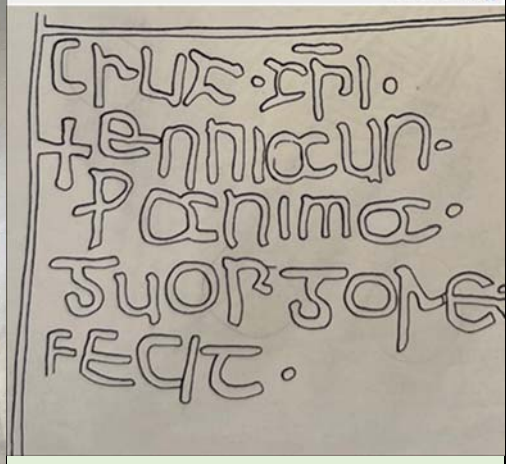
The cluster of early Christian monuments from what we may imagine as the *parochia* of Baglan is paralleled by a similar cluster from the vicinity of Margam, a few miles to the south. One of the most important of these is 231/G78 ENNIAUN, of probable late ninth-century date. Its original location is unknown but the Pennant sandstone from which it was quarried is local to the Margam area. It was first recorded relatively late, in 1879, having been removed to the former Cistercian chapter-house as part of the collection of the Mansel family which obtained the former abbey from the Crown after the Dissolution.[109]

[106] McKee takes extreme care over this attribution: the evidence is described by her as 'straws in the wind…blowing south-east'; McKee, *Commentary*, p. 75.
[107] Anthony Harvey thought it likely that Bradshaw's glossators 'E' and 'G' were Irish; see Anthony Harvey, 'The Cambridge Juvencus Glosses – Evidence of Hiberno-Welsh Literary Interaction?' in Per Sture Ureland and George Broderick (eds.), *Language contact in the British Isles: Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium on Language Contact in Europe, Douglas, Isle of Man, 1988* (Berlin, New York, 1991), p. 193.
[108] Paul Russell, *Reading Ovid in Medieval Wales* (Ohio, 2017), p. 88.
[109] *Corpus*, I, p. 408.

Figure 72. Margam, Glam. Disc-headed slab-cross. 231/G78 ENNIAUN.







CRUX·XP̄I
+ENNIAUN·
ꝑ ANIMA·
GUORGORE͂T·
FECIT·

Typologically 231/G78 ENNIAUN shows the development of a common Glamorgan format and shares parallels with the 220/G63 HOUELT cross from Llanilltud Fawr.[110] It comprises a tapering slab-shaft supporting a disc-head incised with a spatulate Celtic cross, not

[110] *Corpus*, I, pp. 368-373.

unlike those from Baglan and its vicinity described above. In marked contrast with the Irish influence visible in the Baglan cluster of monuments described above, however, 231/G78 ENNIAUN shows a debt to contemporary Northumbrian fashion. The identical triple-plaited/braided style of over-and-under interlace that appears in the main panel of the shaft-slab appears in northern Anglo-Scandinavian contexts, as do the smaller panels to the immediate right of the inscription, with their diagonal and triangular frets.[111] Figure 73 below shows some of the parallels from Northumbria. Analysis of the Glamorgan early Christian monuments has often focussed on local 'schools' of production, envisaging 'master craftsman's workshops' but correlations like those in figure 73 are so close that they instead beg the question whether the presence of itinerant Anglo-Scandinavian craftsmen in Glamorgan may not be a more feasible explanation.[112] This suggestion may be supported by the fact that very similar angular, swastika-like fretwork confined within square panels also appears on Aberlemno 3, an ornate Pictish 'Class II' symbol-stone from Aberlemno, Angus, the 'Pictish' face of which has long been taken as representing the battle of Nechtanesmere of 685, but which is now thought to be of mid-ninth-century origin.[113]

[111] For example, 'Workington 3A', *CASSS*, II, https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/corpus_images_vol2.php?set=143; 'Blackwell, East Derbyshire 1', *CASSS*, XIII, https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/catvol13.php?pageNum_urls=63&totalRows_urls=187 (30 Jan. 2023).
[112] *Corpus*, I, p. 117.
[113] 'Aberlemno 3', https://canmore.org.uk/site/34863/aberlemno-3 (14 Mar. 2023); R. Trench-Jellicoe, 'A missing figure on slab fragment no 2 from Monifieth, Angus, the a' Chill Cross, Canna, and some implications of the development of a variant form of the Virgin's hairstyle and dress in early medieval Scotland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 129(1) (1999), p. 618. For the suggestion that the battle occurred at or near Dunachton in Badenoch, north of the pass of Drumochter and hence in Northern Pictland see Alex Woolf, 'Dún Nechtain, Fortriu and the Geography of the Picts', *Scottish Historical Review*, 85 (2006), pp. 182–201.

Figure 73. Anglo-Scandinavian panelled fretwork in Glamorgan.



Aberlemno, Angus. Aberlemno 3, detail. Ninth century.



Margam, Glam. 231/G78 ENNIAUN. Late ninth century.



Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. 220/G63 HOUELT. Mid- late-ninth century.



Lindisfarne 06, Northumbria. Last quarter of the ninth to first half of the tenth century.[114]

© Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, University of Durham/Tom Middlemass

[114] See also the identical patterning on 'Norham 05', *CASSS*, I, https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/catvol1.php?pageNum_urls=430&totalRows_urls=532 (5 Sept. 2022).

Figure 73. Anglo-Scandinavian panelled fretwork in Glamorgan.



Durham Cathedral, Northumbria. Hurworth 01. First to third quarter of ninth century.

© Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, University of Durham/Tom Middlemass

However Anglo-Scandinavian the artwork of 231/G78 ENNIAUN, the palaeography of the inscription is emphatically local to the Glamorgan writing-province. That the inscription inhabits the local writing-tradition is illustrated by its use of the formula of Irish derivation, ***CRUX XP̄I***, shared also by 211/G49 (from Llangyfelach, north of Swansea, a ninth-century grave-slab) and 233/G81 GRUTNE (also from Margam, of the tenth century).[115] However 231/G78 ENNIAUN shows that in the time elapsed since the date of the 260/G1 GELUGUIN inscription, perhaps a century or so if we are right to see 260/G1 GELUGUIN as late eighth or early ninth century, epigraphic writing in Margan had entered into a second 'sunset': the decline of Early Insular book-script as an epigraphic script.[116]

Apart from ligatures, the prevalence of abbreviations is the most important indication of cursivity. In the 260/G1 GELUGUIN inscription only the *nomen sacrum* is abbreviated, ***XP̄I***. As Traube pointed out, the early abbreviation of the *nomina sacra* by Christian scribes was effected on grounds of reverence, not convenience. They emulated the Hebrew scribes who used what the Greeks came to call the *tetragrammaton*, the four-letter Hebrew theonym יהוהtransliterated as **YHWH**, for the name of God.[117] In 260/G1 GELUGUIN, therefore,

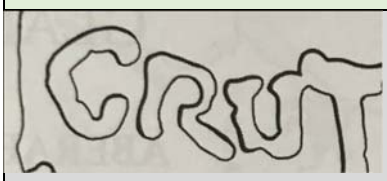
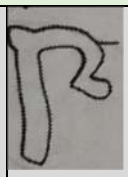
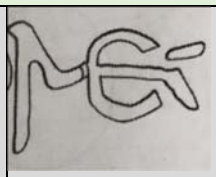
[115] *Corpus*, I, pp. 347-8, 422-5. This categorisation is Nash-William's; *ECMW*, p. 163. For examples of the Irish usage of this formula, see Wood Martin, *Rude Stone Monuments*, pp. 81, 83-4; for Manx usage see Kermode, *Manx Crosses*, pp. 112, 122.

[116] The dating of 260/G1 GELUGUIN is, as noted above, subject to wide variation. Nash-Williams could offer no window narrower than seventh-to-ninth centuries (*ECMW*, p. 163) but Patrick Sims-Williams opts for linguistic periods 22-8, which commence *c.* 800 (*CIB*, p. 294). The *Corpus*, I, p. 262 opts for a 'probable' ninth-century date. The comparative/relative palaeographical arguments here would put it on or before *c.* 800 rather than significantly later.

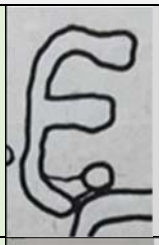
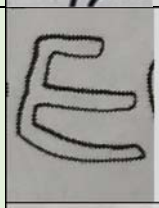
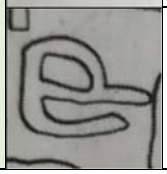
[117] Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, pp. 28-9.

contraction is not therefore symptomatic of cursivity. 231/G78 ENNIAUN, by contrast, shows the same abbreviation of the *nomen sacrum* but also the usual abbreviation **ꝑ** for *pro* and a ligatured *et.* It also features allomorphs comprising cursive letterforms. For example, in contrast with the well-executed, bilinear archaic uncial letterform of **R** in 260/G1 GELUGUIN, 231/G78 ENNIAUN shows two allomorphs of **R**. The first letterform is the cursive 'sprawling' letterform of **r**, something like **r**. The second allomorph is the intermediate letterform, the 'shepherd's crook' letterform of **ɼ**, the letterform that represents the halfway evolutionary point as archaic uncial **R** dislocated and flattened into the **r** of New Common Script**,** a letterform which fossilised in British writing for the entire early medieval period. The relative degeneration of these letterforms and treatments is illustrated in figure 74 below:

Figure 74. Margam, Glam. The *'tramonto'* of typified epigraphic book-script. The letterform of R.

260/G1 GELUGUIN, late eighth century.	231/G78 ENNIAUN, late ninth century.	
		 

The treatment of **E** in ENNIAUN is an even more striking morphological illustration of the decline of the Glamorgan epigraphic base-script, as traced in figure 75 below.

Figure 75. Margam, Glam. The *'tramonto'* of typified epigraphic book-script. The letterform of E.		
259/G89 TOME, eighth century (?).		Geometric capital. Display-form.
231/G78 ENNIAUN, late ninth century.		Geometric capital. As above.
		Archaic uncial ligature of *et.*
		Later British book-script. New Common Script usual letterform; also early English square minuscule letterform.

The ordinator uses one square display-letterform in *FECIT*, clearly influenced by the epigraphic tradition of geometric capitals, but the initial occurrence in the name *ENNIAUN* is the usual quadrilinear letterform of Later British book-script with a closed lobe and the *sagitta* extended forward in anticipation of ligature. For comparison purposes, as there is no instance of **E** in 260/G1 GELUGUIN, figure 75 above instead shows the pattern of epigraphic allomorphs as between 231/G78 ENNIAUN and 259/G89 TOME.

This *tramonto* can be followed through in Margan into the tenth century. 233/G81 GRUTNE is a small but attractive and well-preserved disc-headed cross, probably of the tenth-century, reproduced in figure 76 below.[118] This inscription shows relict letterforms from the previous phase of epigraphic base-script, for example the characteristic ***OC*** letterform of **a** with the usual epigraphic vertical stem, and an archaic uncial letterform of bilinear **S** in the name *Ahest*, with which the ordinator or the inscriber (or both) appear to have had the usual

[118] *Corpus*, I, pp. 422-5.

epigraphic difficulty. The cursive s-longa is far more competently executed, suggesting that the ordinator was more comfortable with this everyday letterform. Similarly, the letterform of **r** is the 'sprawling' cursive letterform, including a very currently-written, jagged letterform as in the *pro* of the penultimate line. The initial **d** of *di, 'dei'*, shows a rare, calligraphic, wedge-serif.

Figure 76. Margam, Glam. Disc-headed pillar-cross. 233/G81 GRUTNE.



Gifford Charles-Edwards thought this to be an indication of reverence for the *nomen sacrum* and her argument seems borne out by the fact that the second occurrence of **d**, in *crizdi*, appears to revert back to the curved monoline letterform of stylus-writing.[119] The allomorphs of **E** in 233/G81 GRUTNE also show the same degeneration from the typified apogee of Early Insularbook-script as does 231/G78 ENNIAUN. The first letterform, in *nomine*, is curved with the upper part almost closed onto the *sagitta*; the second letterform, in *Grutne*, is a square letterform, most likely from the tradition of geometric capitals; the third letterform, in *Ahest*,

[119] *Corpus*, I, p. 422

is a better-executed archaic uncial letterform where the upper curve does not close down upon the medial stroke and the *sagitta* does not extend forward in anticipation of ligature.

By the tenth century, therefore, the local Margan epigraphic base-script, initially comprising an epigraphic variant of Early Insular book-script embellished with geometric display-capitals, had reached the same point in the graphical process that epigraphic *capitalis* had reached in the early seventh century. It had succumbed to the perennial vigour of New Common Script and had become thoroughly permeated by intrusive letterforms and treatments from that eclectic repertoire of letterforms, now augmented by previous graphical innovations collapsed back into its morphologically diverse *sincronia*. True to the voracious appetite of the graphical process, however, the declining base-script nevertheless bequeathed its graphical innovations to the *sincronia*, in particular the ***OC*** letterform of **a** and relict geometric capitals, which look increasingly incongruous in the ninth- and tenth-century inscriptions as the base-script around them declines dramatically in both morphological consistency and quality of execution.[120]

This reading of the effects of the graphical process in tenth-century Margan is confirmed by the one feature of the 233/G81 GRUTNE inscription that most conspicuously reflects Early Insular book-script. As mentioned above, the inscription shows one calligraphic feature only, the wedge-serif atop the truncated ascender of the contraction ***dī.*** This is clearly not derived from the less formal tablet-writing style treatment of New Common Script that accounts for most of the other letterforms in the inscription. It suggests that the ordinator had either seen Early Insular book-script with its set treatment of **d** with an unclosed lobe, a truncated ascender and a wedge-serif, or he had seen a similar letterform as written in the 'flat-topped' treatment of Later Welsh book-script, for example the letterform of 'Hand A' of CCCC, MS 153, as figure 77 shows.

[120] Lowe describes this graphical process of 'rise and fall' occurring within other early medieval writing provinces in terms of the 'careers' of scripts: 'The Insular script produced examples of beautiful penmanship before the Beneventan can be said to have begun its course. When the Beneventan had reached its highest development, the Visigothic was at the end of its career'; Loew, *The Benenventan Script*, p. 41.

Figure 77. 233/G81 GRUTNE and CCCC, MS 153, 'Hand A'.



233/G81 GRUTNE	CCCC, MS 153, 'Hand A'

It is the very solitariness of this letterform that highlights the decline of the epigraphic base-script in tenth-century Margan: the totality of the inscription shows that this letterform from Early Insular book-script was not the natural script of the ordinator. Where a polygraphic book-scribe functioned as an ordinator the calligraphic results are plain to see, as shown by the strikingly different palaeography of 191/G4 BRANCU and some of the Deheubarth and Brycheiniog inscriptions that will be considered in Chapter Four. 233/G81 GRUTNE is however quite unlike these more calligraphic inscriptions. The contrasting 'sore thumb' appearance of this letterform suggests that by the end of the ninth century obsolescent letterforms from Early Insular book-script were being used in the same way as the relict geometric capitals, namely to 'stiffen' or confer dignity upon a base-script that was coming to resemble informal tablet-writing.[121]

The last two inscriptions from early medieval Margan that illustrate the final phase of the operation of the Romano-British graphical process in the local writing-tradition date to the eleventh century. Along with 200/G87 DRIM from Eglwys Nynnid, they represent the end of the local epigraphic tradition in the northern part of the putative *cantref* centred around the likely pre-Conquest minster-churches at Baglan and Eglwys Nynnid.

236/G84 ILQUICI and 237/G85 ILCI are a pair of large, imposing, panelled slab-crosses from the farm, previously the Cistercian grange, of *Cwrt-y-Defaid* ('The court of the sheep') barely a mile north of Eglwys Nynnid.[122] Nash-Williams dated both monuments to the eleventh century, although the *RCAMHW* was prepared to broaden this out and suggest a tenth-

[121] It is worth recalling that medieval writers regarded the writing of letters, as difficult hard work. A colophon to Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, X (8) fol. 158v., remarks 'He who does not know how to write letters thinks it no work. Three fingers write but the whole body labours'; Saint-Benoît De Port-Valais, *Colophons de Manuscrits Occidentaux des Origines au XVIe Siècle* (6 vols., Fribourg, 1965), 6, No. 22,831; also discussed in Stansbury, *Iona Scribes*, p. 11 & n. 46.
[122] *Corpus*, I, pp. 427-433 & 434-8.

or eleventh-century date. The *Corpus* follows the *RCAMHW*.[123] Figure 78 below shows them as currently displayed in the Margam Stones Museum and provides an impression of their imposing size.

Figure 78. Eglwys Nynnid, Glam. Cwrt-y-Defaid. Panelled cross-slabs. 236/G84 ILQUICI and 237/G85 ILCI.



ILCI·[FE]CIT H[ANC]·CRUCE M·I[N]M[O]MIN E·DI SUMMI	*'Ilci made this cross in the name of God the most high'*	**PETRI ILQUICI ……ACER ……CHANC ……T**	*'Of Petrus Ilquic…'*

[123] *ECMW*, pp. 152, 154; *RCAHMW*, nos. 919-920, p. 53; *Corpus*, I, pp. 433, 436.

As can be seen in figure 78, both monuments are badly worn due to having been used as the two parts of a footbridge across a small stream at the farm, an arrangement recorded and sketched by Donovan during his travels through Wales in 1805.[124] Despite this, it is clear that the monuments are related.

To take the context of function and landscape first, these inscriptions are at the most basic level commemorative and votive, having been set up for the health of the souls of the persons named. However they are particularly imposing monuments and it is impossible to miss their economic and political message. Cwrt-y-Defaid is barely a mile from Eglwys Nynnid and if we are prepared to see the apsidal building excavated at Eglwys Nynnid as a church, and a major one at that, then it too would very likely have been of tenth- or (more likely) eleventh-century date and thus broadly contemporary with not only these two monuments but also 200/G87 DRIM(?), also dated to the eleventh century. These inscriptions can therefore be seen as part of an ecclesiastical landscape with Eglwys Nynnid as its focus.

We can also reasonably speculate that *Ilci* and *Ilquici* may have been members of the entitled ecclesiastical kindred; and if the ecclesiastical kindred at Eglwys Nynnid were erecting monuments of this size in the eleventh century, then they may also have had the wealth to invest in the kind of building that the archaeology suggests existed at Eglwys Nynnid.[125]

Following on from the ninth-to-tenth century Margan inscriptions discussed above, one would have expected to see in these eleventh-century inscriptions an epigraphic script comprising semicursive and cursive letterforms mixed with relict survivals from earlier phases of the epigraphic tradition, in other words, the continuing degeneration of the epigraphic

[124] Edward Donovan, *Descriptive Excursions through South Wales and Monmouthshire* (London, 1805), ii, p. 5.
[125] The Eglwys Nynnid excavator envisaged a 'small ecclesiastical complex' but the dimensions of the footings of the uncovered apsidal building – '7.8m wide and at least 6m long' would have made it, whatever it was, considerably larger than, for example, the church at Llandaff in the time of Bishop Herewald (1056-1104) which is reported as 4.6m broad and 8.5m long, with a symmetrical apse 3.66m long and 3.66m wide. The apsidal feature at Eglwys Nynnid would have been about twice as big as the eleventh-century apse at Llandaff and would have dwarfed the twelfth-century church structures at Burry Holms and Barry Island; Boyer, *Eglwys Nynnid,* para. 7.3.1, p. 24; Mark Redknap, 'Early Medieval Llandaff: The Evidence of the Early Christian Monuments' in Kenyon and Williams (eds.), *Cardiff*, p. 31; also Pritchard, 'The Origins of Ecclesiastical Stone Architecture', pp. 249-51 & fig. 13.1.

tradition. This is exactly what we see in 200/G87 DRIM(?) from nearby Eglwys Nynnid, dated to the tenth-eleventh century.[126] Also, as I will show below, it is the palaeography of contemporary inscriptions from the second Glamorgan littoral cluster of early Christian monuments at Merthyr Mawr, namely 239/G98 SCILOC, 240/G99 NERTAT and 255/G117 ARTHMAIL. However 236/G84 ILQUICI and (to a greater extent) 237/G85 ILCI show an epigraphic script which is quite different than that of these contemporary monuments. It is set, predominantly bilinear, relatively regularly-aligned and well-spaced in terms of both letter- and word-separation. Both inscriptions show a disciplined ability to produce a consistent *module* and quadrilinear *ductus* and show the morphology of severely truncated ascenders and descenders and oversize, rotund bows and lobes, the diagnostic graphical tendencies, as we have seen, of the process of « *librarizzarla* ».

Morphologically, book-script letterforms abound. In ILQUICI the letterforms of both **E** and **R** are archaic uncial letterforms and there is no suspicion of any closure of the upper stroke of the curved-backed **E** down onto the *sagitta*, nor of it extending forward in anticipation of ligature. The inscription also shows a relatively well-executed, straight-backed epigraphic allomorph of the ***OC*** letterform of **a** that is ubiquitous in the Margan inscriptions. ILQUICI even seems to show a rare letterform of **T** with a straight stem and a slight upward turn to the head-stroke in addition to the usual Insular **Ꞇ** letterform. The ILCI inscription is, if anything, even more distinctive. It shows an uncial, serifed letterform of **L** with a square-ish foot and vertical, straight ascender that protrudes above the line of legibility in a very un-Welsh manner; a bilinear, square letterform of **Ꞇ** which shows the influence of geometric capitals, having a foot that turns ninety degrees along the line of writing; a monumental letterform of **R** with bilinear *module*; square letterforms of **C** and **E** reminiscent of geometric capitals and bilinear, square letterforms of **M** and **N**. The letterform of **d** is the typical letterform of Early Insular book-script which shows, to an even greater extent, the tendencies whereby the lobe is

[126] *Corpus*, I, pp. 441-4.

expanded and the ascender truncated. The only concession to cursivity is the appearance of an s-longa in the usual ***dī summi*** formula.

Gifford Charles-Edwards was struck by these inscriptions. She notes that serifs, particularly at the top of the letterforms of **L**, are visible in both inscriptions and suggests that these inscriptions were 'put on the stone by a scribe' as opposed to a mere tablet-writer.[127] They therefore represent something of an aberration, a palaeographical puzzle. Why are they so different to all the other local eleventh century inscriptions?

There are a number of possible explanations for these two idiosyncratic inscriptions. Firstly, it must be recalled that by the late date of these inscriptions at least two epigraphic base-scripts (epigraphic *capitalis* and epigraphic Early Insular book-script) had already typified, decayed and contributed their morphology into the graphical repertoire available to contemporary ordinators. Hence, by the eleventh century in Margan, although an epigraphic ordinator had no typified epigraphic script to draw upon, he could nevertheless resort to an extremely rich and varied repertoire of letterforms should the need arise to draft an *ad hoc* inscription for which the local tablet-script might be thought inadequate. The two exceptional and closely-related Cwrt-y-Defaid inscriptions may point to just such process of graphical innovation.

This interpretation of the palaeography may be thought special pleading but there is evidence which lends it weight. Firstly, there exist other examples of devised or concocted epigraphic scripts amongst the early Christian monuments of Wales. One such confection is the 301/P6 CATUOCONI inscription of the eighth or early ninth century, from Caldy Island, Pembs.[128] Another example, attributed to the tenth-eleventh century and hence more broadly contemporary with the Cwrt-y-Defaid inscriptions, comes from the church at Clodock in the Ewyas borderlands just west of the Wye.[129] Early medieval epigraphic ordinators who were

[127] *Corpus,* I, p. 433.
[128] *Corpus,* II, pp. 294-9.
[129] *Corpus,* I, pp. 529-30.

not, for whatever reason, inculcated in a local epigraphical tradition seem to have been quite capable of striking out on their own. They remained capable of making graphical choices in response to the status and function of their text and the importance of the monument. In this context, it may be no coincidence that the Cwrt-y-Defaid inscriptions are of huge size and that the archaeology points to sufficient wealth at Eglwys Nynnid to fund a sizeable apsidal church.

Secondly, it is perhaps more likely that an inscription would be concocted or innovated at a time when the traditional epigraphic base-script had declined to the point at which it could no longer be written in any respectable form by the local clerical ordinators. We know this to have been the case in Margan and the poorest epigraphic script by some distance appears on the very grandest monument from the northern Margan cluster. The great late tenth- or early eleventh-century 234/G79 CONBELIN disc-headed slab-cross shows an ordinator who had no command whatever of the traditional local epigraphic base-script and who crammed a ragged *Schulschrift* into one of the quadrants of the wheel-cross. As Lowe put it, 'the temper of an age is reflected in its calligraphic products'.[130] So these two inscriptions may represent an innovative local attempt at a bespoke epigraphic script.

However there is another explanation for these two idiosyncratic inscriptions which has nothing to do with the state of the local epigraphic tradition. Many of the letterforms that appear in 236/G84 ILQUICI and 237/G85 ILCI have a distinctly un-Welsh aspect. In particular, ILCI shows an uncial **R** in *crucem* and ILQUICI shows uncial **E T** and **R** in *petri.* Other letterforms look like square capitals, for example consistently-executed bilinear square letterforms of **C E M** and **n** in ILCI. All of these letterforms have much more in common with the display-scripts used for rubrics and *tituli* in contemporary Anglo-Saxon manuscripts than with the late local epigraphic script. The presence of local epigraphic letterforms such as the straight-backed epigraphic variant of the ***OC*** letterform of **a** in ILQUICI shows that the ordinator was unlikely to have been English but, historically speaking, there is no reason why an eleventh-century

[130] Corpus, I, p. 414 & fig. G79c; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 13.

Glamorgan cleric, called upon to draft an inscription for a massive high-status monument for a powerful local kindred, should not have seen and been inspired by eleventh-century English display-scripts. If the excavated apsidal structure at Eglwys Nynnid is indeed pre-Conquest then it points to the influence of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical architecture, with the great apsidal Mercian church at Deerhurst north of Gloucester on the banks of the Severn one possible source. The Cwrt-y-Defaid inscriptions may point in the same direction but rather, and additionally, to the analogous and well-attested literary connections between eastern Wales and western England in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[131]

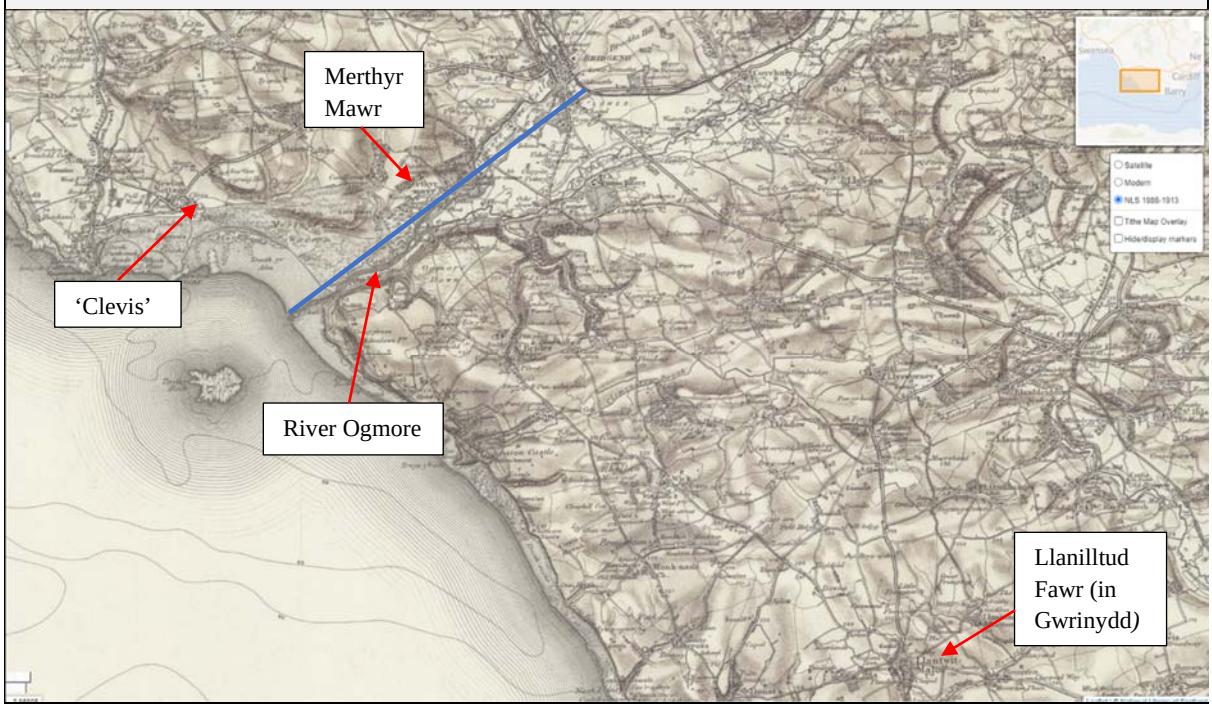
Epigraphic scripts, c. 800–1100 – the 'martyria'

The discussion above considers the early Christian monuments and the writing-traditions of south-east Wales as reflected in the evidence from the northern part of Margan

[131] This is an area in need of research. We know that a schoolmaster named *Ioruert* ('Iorwerth') was active at Winchester in the mid-tenth century and that Urban (i.e. '*Gwrgan'*) Bishop of Llandaff 1107-1134 had been a priest at Worcester despite also being part of the powerful clerical kindred of Llancarfan; see Helen McKee, 'The circulation of books between England and the Celtic Realms' in Gameson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book*, p. 341; D. Crouch, 'Urban, first bishop of Llandaff, 1107-1134,' *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, 6 (1989), pp. 20-41. Bishop noted that a glossing hand, probably added to Bodl, MS Lat. th. c. 4 (Sedulius, with the commentary of Remigius of Auxerre, *s.*xi[1]) when it was at Worcester, closely resembles the hand of one of the Welsh glossators of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, which itself travelled to Worcester early in its life (interestingly, Bodl, MS Lat. th. c. 4 itself, between ll. 350 and 351, carries the rubric *'Explicit carmen Sedulii de Miraculis ueteris testament. incipit prologus quatuor Euangelistarum'*; 'MS. Lat. th. c. 4', https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_6718, (17 Mar. 2023)).
Worcester may therefore have attracted Welsh clerics as it enjoyed an intellectual revival in the eleventh century: Bishop points to the high scribal standards of, for example, CCCC, MS 265 (Wulfstan's Handbook, *Penitentiale, Leges, Canones*, etc., *s.*xi) which shows 'several excellent hands'; *idem*, *English Caroline Minuscule*, Appendix, p. 20, plate 3 & n. 1; also 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 265: Wulfstan's Handbook and other ecclesiastical extracts', https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/nh277tk2537 (26 Dec. 2022). Manuscripts like Bodl, MS Auct. F. 4. 32 fols. 19-36 and 37-47 (the *Liber Commonei* and the Oxford Ovid) were in the hands of Dunstan at Glastonbury in the mid-tenth century and someone must have carried them from south Wales to Wessex; see Mildred Budny, "St. Dunstan's classbook' and its frontispiece: Dunstan's portrait and autograph' in Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks, and Tim W. T. Tatton-Brown (eds.), *St Dunstan: his life, times and cult* (Woodbridge,1992), pp. 137-141. Bodl, MS Lat. th. c. 3, ff. 1-2 and CUL, MS Ee. 2. 4 comprise a fragmentary copy of Smaragdus's *Commentary on the Rule of St Benedict*, dated by Bishop 'probably' to *s.*x[med] and of probable western (Glastonbury?) origin. The scribal hand shows: (i) Welsh abbreviations; (ii) a form of **x** which 'recalls the form of Welsh script'; and (iii) 'the Welsh or Cornish form of suprascript *a*'. Interestingly for the purposes of the present discussion, Bishop also noted that the 'Headings and passages from the Rule have an admixture of majuscules from various alphabets'; Bishop, *Caroline Minuscule*, Appendix, p. 3 & pl. 3. This manuscript, then, seems to show a similar kind of scribal process as visible in the Cwrt-y-Defaid inscriptions, namely a scribe with 'western/Celtic' habits devising his own display-script from the resources available to him, Bishop's 'other alphabets' being no more than a synonym for the *sincronia* of New Common Script. There is therefore manuscript as well as epigraphic evidence for tenth/eleventh century scribes within a putative south-western British writing tradition innovating in the matter of display-scripts. Codicologically, Gameson notes that this Smaragdus MS was ruled closed when other contemporary Glastonbury MSS (e.g. Bodl. Hatton MS 30) were ruled open, which is also consistent with Welsh practice, see Gameson, 'The material fabric' in *idem* (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, I, p. 59 & n. 198.

and particularly the cluster of monuments from the area between the Rivers Afan and Kenfig that I associated with two possible major minster-churches at Baglan and Eglwys Nynnid. We now turn to the second major cluster of early Christian monuments surrounding the ecclesiastical *foci* of the southern part of Margan, namely the area between the Rivers Kenfig and Ogmore. The starting point for the ecclesiastical landscape of this region seems to have been two or perhaps three churches described in the Llandaff Charters as *martyria*, the most important of which seems to have been a substantial pre-Conquest foundation at Merthyr Mawr on the north bank of the River Ewenni.[132] Figure 79 below shows this area with a blue line representing the River Ogmore.

Figure 79. Margan, Glam. Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in the south.



Early medieval ecclesiastical organisation between the Rivers Kenfig and Ogmore, at least for the ninth and tenth centuries, is somewhat better-attested in the documentary record than for Baglan and the northerly part of Margan. Llandaff charter no. 212 records that in *c.* 862 King Hywel granted *Merthyr Buceil* and *Merthyr Miuor* to Bishop Cerennyr; *Merthyr*

[132] For *martyrium* place-names in Wales see David N. Parsons, *Martyrs and Memorials: Merthyr Place-names and the Church in Early* Wales (Aberystwyth, 2013).

Miuor was subsequently corrupted to *Merthyr Mawr,* the name borne by the site today. In addition to these two *merthyr* churches there was also, nearby, a further *Merthyr Glywys* which appears in the boundary-clause of another Llandaff Charter, no. 224. This records the grant by King Cadwgon of three *modii* of land, some 125 acres, to Bishop Wulfrith, *c.* 935.[133] Of these three *merthyr* churches *Merthyr Buceil* is enigmatic but may have been the predecessor of the later medieval chapel of St Roque, a now-ruined medieval chapel within the grounds of a country house close to Merthyr Mawr.

Wendy Davies thought that *Merthyr Glywys* and *Merthyr Miuor* were the same but given that *Merthyr Glywys* appears as a separate place in the bounds of *Merthyr Miuor* in Llandaff charter no. 212, this seems unlikely.[134] Onomastics may support this view. There is a small hill above the current church at Newton, Porthcawl, which bears the name 'Clevis Hill'. The site is only a mile or so from Merthyr Mawr as shown in figure 79 above. 'Clevis' may well equate to *Glywys.* In work on Chrètien de Troyes, Patrick Sims-Williams demonstrated that the medieval French proper name *Cligès* is likely to derive from Breton *Glygis,* Middle English *Cleges,* both of which derive in turn from written Old Welsh *Gliguis.* These forms are Anglicised as *'Cleuis > Clevis'*.[135] The next village to Newton, the modern Nottage, has also provided evidence for early medieval ecclesiastical activity.[136] The evidence therefore suggests a major minster-church at Merthyr Mawr by the tenth century with possible daughter-churches at the small nucleated coastal havens of Newton and Nottage.[137] The cult of *Glywys* seems to have provided the spiritual patronage for the *parochia*.[138]

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[133] Davies, *Microcosm,* pp. 180, 224.
[134] Davies, *Microcosm,* p. 99 & n.1.
[135] Patrick Sims-Williams, 'A Turkish-Celtic problem in Chrétien de Troyes: The name Cligès', *Études Celtiques,* vol. 29 (Paris,1992), p. 495.
[136] Knight, *Account,* pp. 229-30.
[137] This would seem to have been the case at another Welsh *merthyr*, *Merthir Teudiric* (Mathern, Monm.) which in the papal bulls addressed to Bishop Urban of Llandaff it is described as '*Merthir Teudiric* together with its churches'; *LL,* 31, 33; cited by Thomas Charles-Edwards, *WAB,* p. 284.
[138] *Corpus,* I, p. 465. *Glywys* is named as the grandfather of Cadog in the *Life of St Cadog*; see *Vita Cadoci, VSBG,* § 24, p. 118. Thomas Charles-Edwards sees Merthyr Mawr as an important church: see *WAB,* p. 159.

Having placed Merthyr Mawr in its ecclesiastical landscape, we turn to the epigraphy. Merthyr Mawr represents the second of the three great clusters of early Christian monuments from the ninth to the eleventh centuries that concentrate in the Glamorgan littoral. Numerous monuments survive from the site of the church of St Teilo itself and from nearby. Many of the monuments were discovered, or collected, during the destruction and rebuilding of the medieval church in 1849-51. They now reside underneath the roof of a lean-to to the rear of the church, as figure 80 below shows.

Figure 80. Merthyr Mawr, Glam. Early Christian monuments.



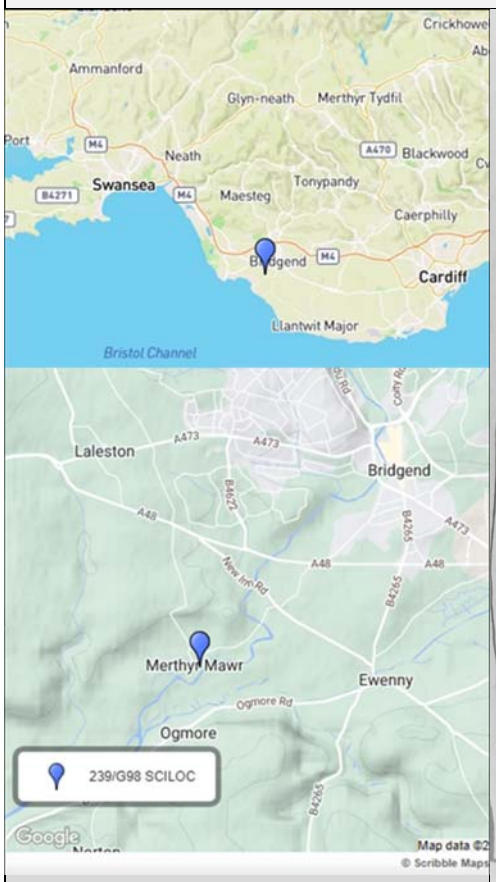
© John Salmon. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic

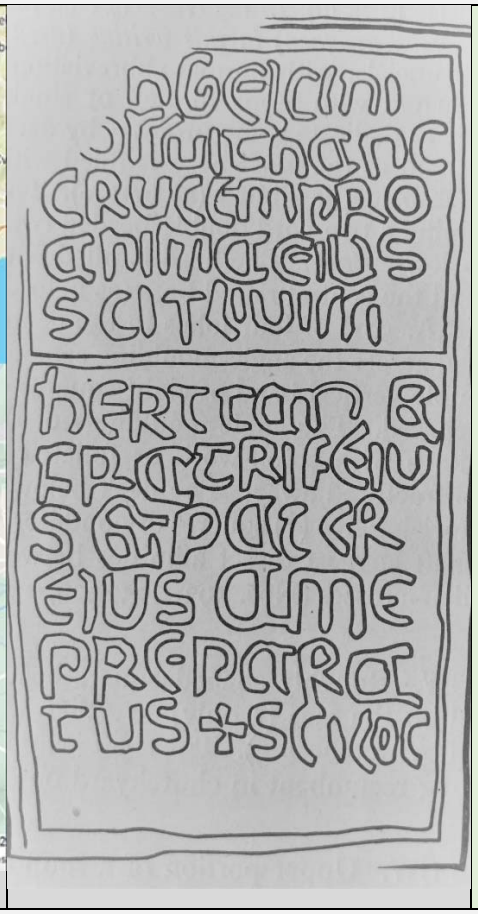
The site was important for a long period. A very early Christian monument commemorating one *Paulinus,* possibly as early as the late fifth century, survives at the site of the church itself.[139] From the end of the period, numerous carved stones survive from the tenth- to- twelfth centuries, inscribed with cartwheel crosses, geometric crosses, Maltese crosses and *cross-formys*. Many of these are sepulchral in purpose and make clear that burial at Merthyr Mawr, *ad sanctos,* was sought after by persons of sufficient substance for their graves to be

[139] 238/G100; *Corpus,* I, pp. 473-4.

marked with monuments.[140] However as we also saw at Baglan and Eglwys Nynnid to the north, other stones have a different typology and function. The monuments all, however, reflect the importance of the site throughout the entire early medieval period.

Figure 81. Merthyr Mawr House, Glam. St Roque's Chapel. Slab-cross. 239/G98 SCILOC.





**[CONBELANI
[P]OSSUITHA
NC
CRUCEMPRO
ANIMAEIUS
SCIGLIUISSI**

**NERTTANET
FRATRISEIU
SETPATER
EIUSAME
PREPARA
TUS+SCILOC**

'Conbelan set up this cross for this soul [and the souls of] *the saintly Glywys, Nertan and his brother and his father. Prepared by me Sciloc'.*

Inscription after *ECMW*.

Three early Christian monuments from the vicinity of Merthyr Mawr support the interpretation of the final phase of the epigraphic writing-tradition of Margan as proposed above. These are 239/G98 SCILOC (see figure 81 below), 240/G99 NERTAT (see figure 82 below) and 255/G117 ARTHMAIL (see figure 83 below).

To take 239/G98 SCILOC first, it belongs, in typological terms, to the late series of Glamorgan slab-shafted crosses when pyramid-shafts and three-dimensional circular heads (for example 233/G78 GRUTNE and on a larger scale 231/G78 ENNIAUN) gave way to simpler

[140] *Corpus*, I, pp. 477- 481.

rectangular slabs with a cross incised into the upper panel. In these later monuments the inscription-carrying panels tend to occupy the entire body of the shaft in place of the extensive panels of carved plaitwork of the previous phase of Glamorgan slab-shafted crosses, for example 231/G78 ENNIAUN, which has only a small inscribed panel beneath a large expanse of Anglo-Scandinavian plaitwork. 239/G98 SCILOC and 240/G99 NERTAT differ only in that the wheel-crosses are still carved out as three-dimensional crosses, rather than incised into the upper panel, the economic technique also used for 237/G85 ILCI and 236/G84 ILQUICI from Cwrt-y-Defaid.

If one accepts that the incising of crosses onto a panel is less costly and time-intensive than the carving of a three-dimensional wheel-cross proper, and if it can be assumed that corners tend to be cut later rather than earlier in a tradition, then 239/G98 SCILOC looks earlier than the likely eleventh-century Cwrt-y-Defaid panelled slab-crosses. In relative typological terms a broad late tenth- or eleventh-century date would make sense. The *Corpus* accordingly proposes an eleventh-century date 'on stylistic and palaeographical grounds' although the *ECMW* refers not to any substantive relative-dating features of style or script but merely to the 'loose syntax of these late inscriptions' and, by way of a footnote, cites 223/G65 IUTHAHEL, from Llanilltud Fawr, as a comparator. The comparison with 223/G65 IUTHAHEL is not a particularly good one given that it is now dated with reasonable confidence to *c.* 775.[141] Furthermore, dubious Latinity is endemic in the early Christian inscriptions and is by no means diagnostic of any particular period.

239/G98 SCILOC also shows palaeographical features which might well argue for an earlier date than the two large Cwrt-y-Defaid stones. In particular, the ordinator and inscriber have made a decent fist of reducing bilinear **S** to the correct proportions; **R** is also well-executed, as is the curved-backed letterform of archaic uncial **E**. The *ordinatio* is also of a relatively higher standard than is typical of later inscriptions, for example the chaos of 200/G87

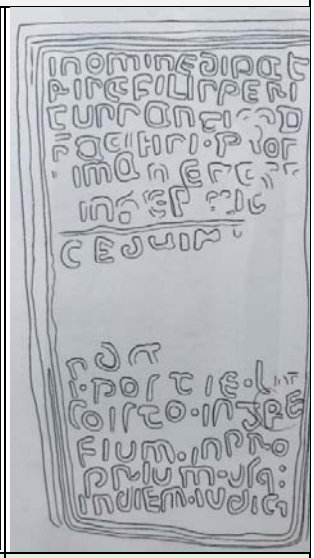
[141] *Corpus*, I, p. 465; *ECMW*, p. 154.

DRIM(?) from Eglwys Nynnid. Letterform separation, word- and line-spacing, alignment and consistency of *module* are of better quality than most of the Margan inscriptions and the inscription is also well-justified, with none of the usual end-of-line crowding or distortion as the inscriber runs out of space.

239/G98 SCILOC therefore shows a relatively well-rendered epigraphic version of Early Insular book script, which is more consistent with an earlier date. There is no reason why this monument could not be tenth century, contemporary with the dispositions concerning Merthyr Mawr recorded in the Llandaff charters discussed above. Commenting on its orthography Patrick Sims-Williams supports this suggestion, noting that by the eleventh century one would expect to see SCILOC spelled 'SCILAUC' or 'SCILUC'.[142]

Figure 82. Merthyr Mawr House, Glam. St Roque's Chapel. Slab-cross. 240/G99 NERTAT.





INNOMINEDIPAT RIS&FILISPERI TUSSANTI[PR]A RATI[P]IRI·PRO[A] [N]IMANERT[AT] INREPA[RIO..	*'In the name of God the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, prepared by Pirus for the soul of Nertat in his [eternal] refuge…for that place in writing, in perpetuity until the day of judgement'.*
[C]EDUNI […G…I…] RDA… I·POS[TIE]·LO	

© Remembering Bridgend https://www.facebook.com/rememberingbridgend/photos/1519114881444254. Inscription after *ECMW*.

The grounds for dating 240/G99 NERTAT (see figure 82) to the eleventh century seem better founded than for 239/G98 SCILOC.[143] 240/G99 NERTAT shows a substantial relief-frame

[142] Although he also acknowledges that the orthography may be conservative or that *Sciloc* might have been a Cornishman or Breton; *Corpus*, I, p. 465. His point illustrates well the complexities attendant upon relative and comparative dating schemes for the early Christian inscriptions, even when the base data (in this case linguistic) has itself a relatively settled chronological sequence.
[143] See the discussion at *Corpus*, I, p. 472.

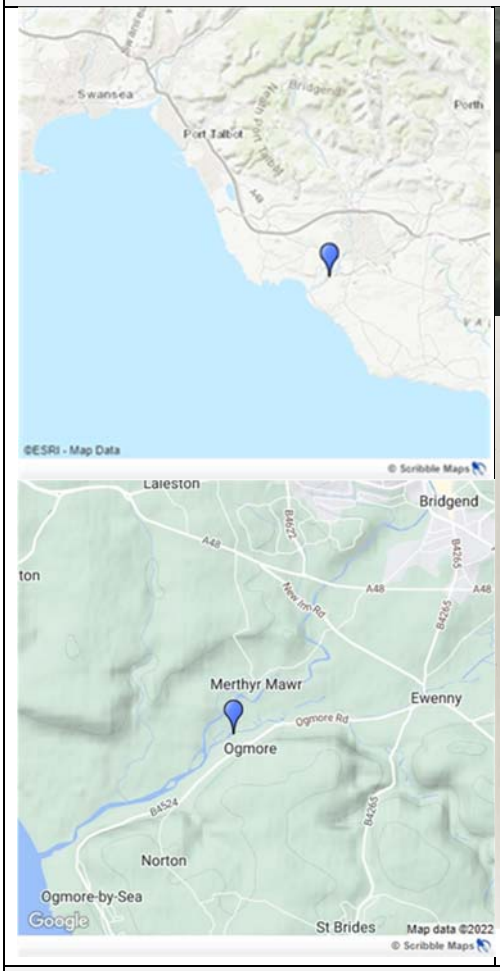
bounded by pronounced baluster-style side-mouldings, a feature of the Cwrt-y-Defaid slab-crosses. Similar mouldings, sometimes more substantial than the core of the cross-shaft itself, are a feature of later, composite pillar-crosses both in Wales and England.[144] The palaeography is also consistent with a later date although the irregularity of the inscription may be due in part to the ineptitude of the inscriber who seems to have struggled badly throughout. Typologically 240/G99 NERTAT clearly stands in the same local tradition as 239/G98 SCILOC but as Gifford Charles-Edwards rightly observes, it shows none of the alignment, regularity or consistency of *module* of the other inscription.[145] It resembles most closely the eleventh-century 200/G87 DRIM (?) inscription from Eglwys Nynnid.

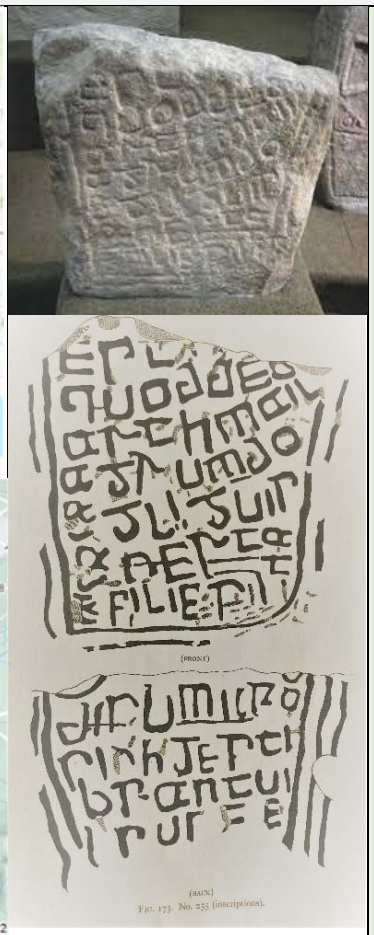
240/G99 NERTAT must be interpreted in the light of a third monument, 255/G117 ARTHMAIL.This monument is a fragment – perhaps about the bottom half – of a panelled cross-shaft bearing an extensive inscription on both faces. It was discovered at Ogmore Castle in 1929, built into a lime-kiln, but is certainly connected with Merthyr Mawr only a few hundred yards to the north.[146] The inscription records the grant by one *Arthmail* of an '*agrum*' to God, Glywys, Nertat and Fili the bishop (the reading is unclear due to the state of preservation).[147] 239/G98 SCILOC also records that it was set up for *Glywys* and *Nerttan* (presumed to be cognate with '*Nertat*'). Hence, the beneficiaries of donations at Merthyr Mawr seem to have been God – *Glywys* – *Nertat* in that order. 240/G99 NERTAT is somewhat incomplete in this regard as although the donor – *Pirus* – references the Trinity, he otherwise commemorates only *Nertat* and not *Glywys*. The three inscriptions seem to show a common, local cult involving *Glywys* who is clearly regarded as a saint and *Nertat* whose identity and status is unclear but who was clearly also deemed worthy of commemoration and reverence:

[144] Rosemary Cramp terms them 'roll mouldings' (if plain) or 'cable mouldings' (if striated); Rosemary Cramp, *Grammar of Anglo-Saxon Ornament: A General Introduction to the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* (Oxford, 1991), p. xxiv.
[145] *Corpus*, I, pp. 471.
[146] *Corpus*, I. pp. 494 – 497.
[147] For the various different readings, see 'OGMOR/1', https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/stone/ogmor_1.html (6 Sept. 2022).

perhaps *Nertat* was the head of the church.[148] The eleventh-century date for 255/G117 ARTHMAIL is Nash-Williams's and was accepted by the *RCAHMW* without comment, although neither Nash-Williams nor the *RCAHMW* provide reasons.[149]

Figure 83. Ogmore Castle, Glam. Slab-cross. 255/G117 ARTHMAIL.





Inscription after *ECMW*. Photograph © NMW

Front

EST…
QUODED[IT]
ARTHMAIL
AGRUMDO
ETGLIGUIS
ETNERTAT
ETFILIE…

'[…be it known] *that Arthmail gave* [this] *field to God and Glywys and Nertat and Fili…'*

Back

DI SUM(M)I CRO
S(?) IR HGERTI
BRANTUI
[B]RUS [FE]

'In the name of) God the most high, the cross of Jesus [for the family of Brantui][son of][Brancia]…'

The most striking visual parallel shared by the ARTHMAIL inscription in terms of general aspect and *ordinatio* is in fact not with either of the Merthyr Mawr inscriptions but rather with 233/G81 GRUTNE, from Margam, of likely tenth century date. The two inscriptions are not morphologically identical: they are certainly not by the same ordinator and

[148] The Vita Cadoci, § 56, p. 126, refers to the placing of a grant in the hands of the abbot of Llancarfan: 'Unde prefatus Rodri tenuit cartam siue graphium super manum Conigc, abbatis Nantcarbanan, in confirmationem huius donationis'.
[149] *ECMW*, p. 160; *RCAHMW*, no. 926, pp. 55-6.

the mixture of semicursive and cursive letterforms is different. However they share many similarities. The manner of execution of the inscriptions is identical. The alignment of both inscriptions veers sharply upwards towards the end of the lines, suggesting that the inscriber was working with a twisted or oblique posture and failing to reach or move sufficiently far to finish the final lines of text in regular alignment. He appears to have aligned each line of text not with a notional line of writing but by reference to the already irregular line above, resulting in the curvature increasing as the inscription progresses.[150] Further, there is the striking use of the wholly cursive 'sprawling' letterform of **r** in both inscriptions, a letterform which does not appear in 239/G98 SCILOC or 240/G99 NERTAT which use either the archaic uncial letterform of **R** or else a bilinear disarticulated version of the same letterform with the third stroke separated from the stem. The square capital letterform of **E** used in the ARTHMAIL inscription also appears in the GRUTNE inscription as does an epigraphic letterform of **h** with a square aspect.

Using a relative palaeography based upon the general predicted effects of the graphical process at work in a particular writing-tradition is highly uncertain, particularly if one takes into account the difficulties of reducing writing onto stone. Despite this, 233/G81 GRUTNE and 255/G117 ARTHMAIL show something of a sequence, using the same style of script with the same combination of allomorphs and applying the same misalignment, but with these idiosyncratic features more advanced in 255/G117 ARTHMAIL. That the palaeography of ARTHMAIL shows it to be later than GRUTNE therefore seems reasonable. The question is whether the palaeography of ARTHMAIL can be dated on a comparative basis sufficiently precisely to associate the monument with the other land-grants known to have occurred in the Merthyr Mawr area between the time of Kings Hywel and Cadwgon, *c.* 862-935.

Obviously, land-grants could be made at any time, but what seems to be the 'initial' grant of Merthyr Buceil and Merthyr Miuor, by King Hywel to Bishop Cerennyr, c. 862, might

[150] Gifford Charles-Edwards thought that this misalignment was similar to 239/G98 SCILOC but the reproductions in *Corpus,* I, G98g, p. 465, show the SCILOC inscription to be quite horizontally aligned.

have triggered or encouraged further grants such as that of King Cadwgon to Bishop Wulfrith *c.* 935 and, perhaps, the ARTHMAIL grant to *Fili* the bishop (or whoever the recipient was on behalf of the saint, perhaps *Nertat*). If the *Corpus* and the *RCAHMW* are correct to ascribe GRUTNE to the tenth century then ARTHMAIL could well be a generation or two older.[151] The implication of this is that its grant was later than that of King Cadwgon and that the ecclesiastical aggrandisement of Merthyr Mawr continued at least through the tenth century and/or into the eleventh. The text of the grant may also point to a relatively later date. The grant comprises an *agrum*, the accusative singular of *ager*. Wendy Davies notes its appearance in the ARTHMAIL grant and glosses it as 'appurtenant land…a coherent unit or estate' without settlement, i.e. agricultural land.[152] Land of this kind could well have been added to previous grants and Davies also notes that the term *terra* tended to replace it from the tenth and eleventh centuries.[153] This is consistent with the palaeographical suggestion that the inscription could be late tenth or earlier in the eleventh century, perhaps recording the last in the series of grants concerning Merthyr Mawr of which we have evidence.

Epigraphic scripts, c.800-1100. Discussion and conclusions

This discussion of Merthyr Mawr completes the description of the graphical process at work in early medieval Margan from the fifth to the eleventh centuries. Viewed: (i) through the lens of the graphical process as it operated on the New Common Script of *Britannia Prima*; and (ii) as that graphical and literary inheritance manifested itself in the epigraphic palaeography of the area; and (iii) combined with multi-disciplinary perspectives from history, archaeology, linguistics and historical geography, some conclusions can be offered as follows.

In the first place, the early medieval writing-tradition of this relatively small region provides striking corroboration of the analytic of post-Imperial palaeographical change as described by the Italian scholarship of the twentieth century. At a fundamental level, the Roman

[151] *Corpus*, I, p. 424; *RCAHMW*, part 3, no. 910.
[152] Davies, *Microcosm*, p. 40. Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that in the late ninth and early tenth century charters of group 'G', *ager* only occurs in the general sense of 'land'; *WAB*, p. 286.
[153] Davies, *Microcosm*, p. 41.

graphical inheritance of Britannia Prima – Late Antique New Common Script and provincial epigraphic *capitalis* - functioned, developed and evolved in exactly the same way as in the other 'National' writing-provinces that fractured out of the Imperial graphical unity in the fifth century. Even the epigraphic scripts of such a small region we see rise and fall of preferred base-scripts, their gradual typification and subsequent *tramonto*. We also see epigraphic ordinators re-using their graphical resources, not just as palaeographical fossils or unconscious archaisms, but as living letterforms offering themselves up as part of the *sincronia* of New Common Script, capable of responding to particular needs and especially the 'stiffening' or 'dignifying' of later epigraphic scripts that were perceived to be inappropriate to the status of the text or monument.

Secondly, using a multi-disciplinary approach that places individual artefacts of British writing into their economic, political and social context, we see that when taken as a totality, they allow inferences to be made about contemporary ecclesiastical and cultural history that augment and support that non-palaeographical scholarship. In the ongoing historical discussions throughout this Chapter I have, in this way, tried to demonstrate the cardinal importance of Jean Mallon's approach to every single example of writing: namely that one must interrogate thoroughly *both* the Janus-faces of each script, namely its historical and palaeographical dimensions.[154] Or, put another way, and as Brown's paraphrase of Traube's doctrine puts it, we cannot address palaeographical 'technicalities' without also aspiring to an 'honourable place in the commonwealth of historical studies'.[155]

Thirdly and in more specific terms, the combination of methodological and multi-disciplinary approaches described above allow a number of historical conclusions to be advanced in relation to early medieval Margan. The first of these is that monumental writing was an important part of the aggrandisement and consolidation of elite interests. The nature and distribution of that writing points to concentrations of wealth and resources around major

[154] Mallon, 'Observations sur quelques monuments', p. 39.
[155] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 23.

minster-churches at Baglan, Eglwys Nynnid and Merthyr Mawr, sat in a diverse ecclesiastical topography of smaller churches, *martyria* and, no doubt, other foci of devotion. Secondly, it is possible through the epigraphy to see the ebb and flow of ecclesiastical power, for example the acquisitions of Merthyr Mawr and the possible late importance of Eglwys Nynnid with its enigmatic archaeology and even the cult which provided the spiritual patronage. Thirdly, we see a fascinating matrix of foreign influence at work in a writing-province which, at least on the evidence of its script-evolution, remained conservative and faithful to Late Antique tradition. At Baglan we see strong Irish influence and perhaps even the actual presence of Irish book-scribes acting as ordinators. Fine early ogam inscriptions nearby show that this was no isolated phenomenon, as do the much later hagiographies. However we also see equally striking Anglo-Scandinavian artwork that is so identical to contemporary Northumbrian and indeed Pictish sculpture that the explanation of 'influence' is inadequate. The work is so identical that the more reasonable explanation is that of itinerant craftsmen working right across the island of Britain.

In the final part of this Chapter Three I wish to turn to the third great cluster of Glamorgan early Christian monuments from Llanilltud Fawr and push the methodology described above even further. I will not focus on the relatively better-known ecclesiastical history of the two great monasteries of Llanilltud Fawr and Llancarfan for which we relatively plentiful evidence. I will instead investigate what the light the surviving epigraphy may throw upon the possible connection, proposed by Helen McKee in the most guarded terms, between south Wales's most famous pre-Conquest monasteries and one of early medieval Wales's most fascinating written relics, CUL, MS. Ff. 4. 42, the 'Cambridge Juvencus'.

Gwrinydd

Llanilltud Fawr

Figure 84. Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. 'Double' church of St Illtud.



© Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales

As befits the former great monastery of Illtud and the burial place of local royalty, Llanilltud Fawr preserves a collection of the grandest early medieval monuments. Formerly the collection was housed in the 'western' of the two conjoined churches, aligned on the same axis, that comprise the current upstanding medieval church at Llanilltud Fawr. As at other former *clas* churches, such configuration seems to reflect the early medieval predilection for double churches on the same axis at the innermost heart of the *podum* or *monasterium*, in Welsh the *llan.*[156] In recent years the ruinous medieval Galilee Chapel has been sensitively restored using

[156] Llanbadarn Fawr shows a similar configuration, see Alfred Worthington (1834-1927), *Church and Inn, Llanbadarn Fawr,* 1880-1899, oil on canvas, 100 x 125 cm (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Museum of Wales), https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/church-and-inn-llanbadarn-fawr-120651 (26 Oct. 2022).

local materials and traditional methods to form a spectacular new exhibition and interpretation space for the early Christian monuments, as figure 85 below shows.[157]

Figure 85. Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. Western Church, the Galilee chapel. Early Christian monuments.



Left to right: 222/G66 SAMSON; 220/G63 HOUELT; 223/G65 IUTHAHEL; 224/G67 SCREEN-PILLAR (with identical damaged stub of same on extreme L).

© Rectorial Benefice of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast
https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/structure/parish/2241/

In the discussion of the Llanilltud Fawr early Christian monuments that comprises the remainder of this Chapter, I will adopt a different approach to that of the first part of this Chapter in relation to Margan. This is for historical reasons. For the Margan early Christian inscriptions I have used a multi-disciplinary approach to place them in their historical context as evidence for the organisation and nature of the early medieval church in Margan, something about which we know almost nothing. Further east, however, at Llanilltud Fawr, Llancarfan and Llandough, we are dealing with the most famous monasteries of early medieval Wales

[157] 'Galilee Chapel, Llantwit Major', http://dcfw.org/galilee-chapel-llantwit-major/ (26 Oct. 2022).

about which we are better-informed, at least in the sense that we know that they were important and we know where they were. Llanilltud Fawr, in particular, appears prominently in documentary sources throughout the early medieval period. We are told that it was Illtud's 'magnificent monastery', associated with St Germanus, hosted church synods, buried kings, and retained its prestige long enough for the Llancarfan clique who compiled the Book of Llandaff to feel the need to denigrate its historical prestige in favour of their various Llandaff-Teilo fabrications.[158] We benefit from similar kinds of evidence for the somewhat later foundation at Llancarfan and Llandough has been subject to modern excavation.

Given this relative wealth of evidence I do not therefore intend to examine the monuments from the viewpoint of what they might tell us about the ecclesiastical history of early medieval Gwrinydd. In any case, the more dynamic landscape of probable minster-churches and smaller churches in the northern part of Margan finds reflection in a very diverse cluster of early Christian monuments in a way that the more historically stable monastic landscape of Gwrinydd does not. Huw Pryce points to this contrast in ecclesiastical dynamics when he notes that in Wales the best land had ecclesiastical estates carved out of it at a relatively early date, thereby 'undermining the integrity of mother-church *parochiae'*.[159]

This distinction between the ecclesiastical landscapes of Margan and Gwrinydd is reflected in post-Conquest ecclesiastical disputes. In 1140-3 Gilbert Foliot, Abbot of St Peter's, Gloucester, complained that 'new' chapels had been built in his parish of Llancarfan and claimed by Bishop Uthred of Llandaff. The Papal Legate duly directed Bishop Uthred that the divine office was not to be sung in them without the Abbot's permission. So in the 1140s it seems that the church at Llancarfan was felt to need 'new' chapels, perhaps by modernising

[158] Patrick Sims-Williams notes that Llanilltud Fawr seems to have been the location for annual episcopal synods according to the *Life* of St Samson, for example the one that appointed Samson; see Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Book of Llandaff as a Historical Source* (Woodbridge, 2019), pp. 158, 174 & n. 124.
[159] Pryce, 'Pastoral care', p. 58. Llandaff charter 152 (albeit asterisked as 'dubious' by Wendy Davies), purports to record King Morgan as freeing Llancarfan, Llanilltud Fawr and Llandough from royal exactions in penance for the murder of his uncle, *c.* 670; Davies, *Microcosm*, p. 169.

Norman prelates and perhaps because it had none previously.[160] Another grant, of Robert Fitzroy *c.* 1141, mentions 'Lankarvan' with 'lands and tithes' but no 'chapels'.[161] The same pattern can be seen in eleventh-century England. John Blair notes that the Domesday returns for Chertsey Abbey show outlying manors to have been relatively well-supplied with churches 'with the notable exception of the great block of land around Chertsey itself'. His interpretation of this Anglo-Saxon evidence is that the Chertsey monks 'had taken a coherent decision to build churches on the outlying manors, while keeping an old-fashioned pastoral system, centred on the abbey and its priests, in the core estate'.[162]

Given, then, that the ecclesiastical landscape was much more secure, monolithic and stable south of the River Ogmore across the rich cornland of the *Bro Morgannwg* I will approach the early Christian monuments of Llanilltud Fawr not for what they can tell us about the ecclesiastical arrangements of the period but rather for what they tell us about the state of learning and the writing-traditions at these known centres of early medieval ecclesiastical life, in particular Llanilltud Fawr.

Part Two. Ireland, Glamorgan and England. The epigraphic scripts of Llanilltud Fawr and the scribal hand of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, the *Cambridge Juvencus*

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42. The Cambridge Juvencus

Introduction

One of the most notable and interesting Welsh manuscripts, the origin of which we do not know, is Cambridge, University Library MS. Ff. 4. 42, the so-called 'Cambridge Juvencus'. The manuscript principally comprises a metrical rendering of the Gospels, the *Libri evangeliorum IV,* by the Spanish Christian poet Gaius Vettius Aquilinus Juvencus (*fl.* 330). The text was popular in the early Middle Ages as an example of correct (if somewhat monotonous) Virgilian prosody but without the embarrassment of paganism.

[160] Mandate by Henry, Bishop of Winchester as Papal Legate to Uthred, Bishop of Llandaff; see *Cartæ*, I, no. XCV, p. 89.
[161] *Episcopal Acts*, L.106, p. 638.
[162] Blair, *The Church*, pp. 394-5.

The Cambridge manuscript is exceptional in a number of aspects. Firstly, it has been the object of an outstanding modern examination by Dr Helen McKee of Royal Holloway College, The University of London.[163] Dr McKee emphasises the significance of the manuscript as occupying a 'prime place in the visible history of Insular handwriting in Wales'. This is not least because the main hand of the copyist, plus the hands of numerous emendators and glossators, show a whole team of scribes at work at single centre in Wales, probably south Wales, in the years around or after *c.* 850. As she puts it, the manuscript provides a 'vivid illustration of scriptorial developments at one Welsh house from the ninth century and beyond'.[164]

The manuscript is interesting in the context of our consideration of the great monasteries of south-east Wales for two reasons. Firstly, the manuscript contains some internal evidence that prompted McKee herself (albeit with a high degree of circumspection) to attribute it to south-eastern Wales and possibly Llanilltud Fawr or Llancarfan.[165] Secondly, the main hand and some other of the thirteen or so hands evidenced in the manuscript seem to share the same somewhat utilitarian category of book-script that we see reflected in the Glamorgan epigraphic scripts, raising the possibility that at some centre in south Wales epigraphic ordinators and book-scribes were using the same script for the production of both inscriptions and manuscripts. In the remainder of this Chapter I will set out a short case-study which considers whether any of the early Christian inscriptions extant at Llanilltud Fawr are capable of offering any credible palaeographical parallels that might suggest that this centre was Llanilltud Fawr itself.

[163] Building, of course, upon the pioneering work of Henry Bradshaw: 'The copy of Juvencus marked Ff. 4. 42 in our own University Library has been an object of study for me for the last eighteen years, and I have worked on it at intervals with such minuteness that I may fairly say that the various handwritings which appear in it are as familiar to me as those of the closest friends'; Jenkinson (ed.), *Collected Papers*, p. 455.
[164] McKee, *Commentary*, pp. 8-9.
[165] See 'Cambridge Juvencus (MS Ff.4.42)', https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FF-00004-00042/1 (20 Oct. 2022) for the digital resource; for the print facsimile edn. see Helen McKee, *Juvencus Codex Cantabrigiensis Ff.4.42*, (Aberystwyth, 2000) and for commentary and text see McKee, *Commentary.*

Text and scribes

The contents of the manuscript are as set out in table 3 below, which follows McKee's analysis. It gives an idea of the complex nature of the manuscript, the numerous different hands and the extensive *scholia*:

Table 3. CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42. Scribes and stints.

Fols.	Scribe, date	Text (inc. *scholia*)
1r.	**C**, *s.*ix/x.	Nine Old Welsh *englynion*, the 'Juvencus Nine', beginning '*Omnipotens auctor tidicones…*'[166]
1r.	**The '*Matthus in Iudea*' scribe**, *s.*ix/x.	Seven lines commenting on the evangelists.
1r.-v.	**E**, *s.*x[1].	Isidorian extracts (from the *Etymologiae*) and a quotation of Jerome's entry on Juvencus from the *De uiris inlustribus.*
1v.	'**The Beginner'**	*Abecedarium,* an alphabet pen-trial.
2r – 55r.	**A**, *Núadu, s.*ix[2]	The Juvencus text, *Euangelium libri quattouor* with two prefaces. The text is corrected and supplemented by two scribes whom McKee names the 'First' and 'Second Revisor (*s.*ix/x)'.
2r.-v.	**C**, *s.*ix/x.	Interlinear glosses in Latin only.
2r.-7r., 15r.	**E**, *s.*x[1].	Glosses, including a lengthy addition in the margin of fol. 15r. on the 'four types of tree-trunk'.
2v. – 5v.	**B**, *s.*ix[ex]	Glosses, Latin, Old Welsh and Old Irish.
7v.-55r.	**G**, *s.*x[1].	Takes over from Scribe E as 'principal glossator' in Latin, Old Welsh and Old Irish.
24r.-53r.	**F**, *s.*x[1].	Glosses in Latin, Old Welsh, Old Irish and 'South-West Brittonic', possibility Old Breton.[167]

[166] For the *englynion* see Whitley Stokes, 'Cambrica: 1. The Welsh glosses and verses in the Cambridge codex of Juvencus', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1860), pp. 204-32; T. H. Parry-Williams, 'The Juvencus glosses', *BBCS*, 1 (1921), pp. 120-23; T. Arwyn Watkins, 'Englynion y Juvencus', in R. Geraint Gruffydd (ed.), *Bardos: penodau ar y traddodiad barddol Cymreig a Cheltaidd cyflwynedig i J.E. Caerwyn Williams* (Cardiff, 1982) pp. 29-43.

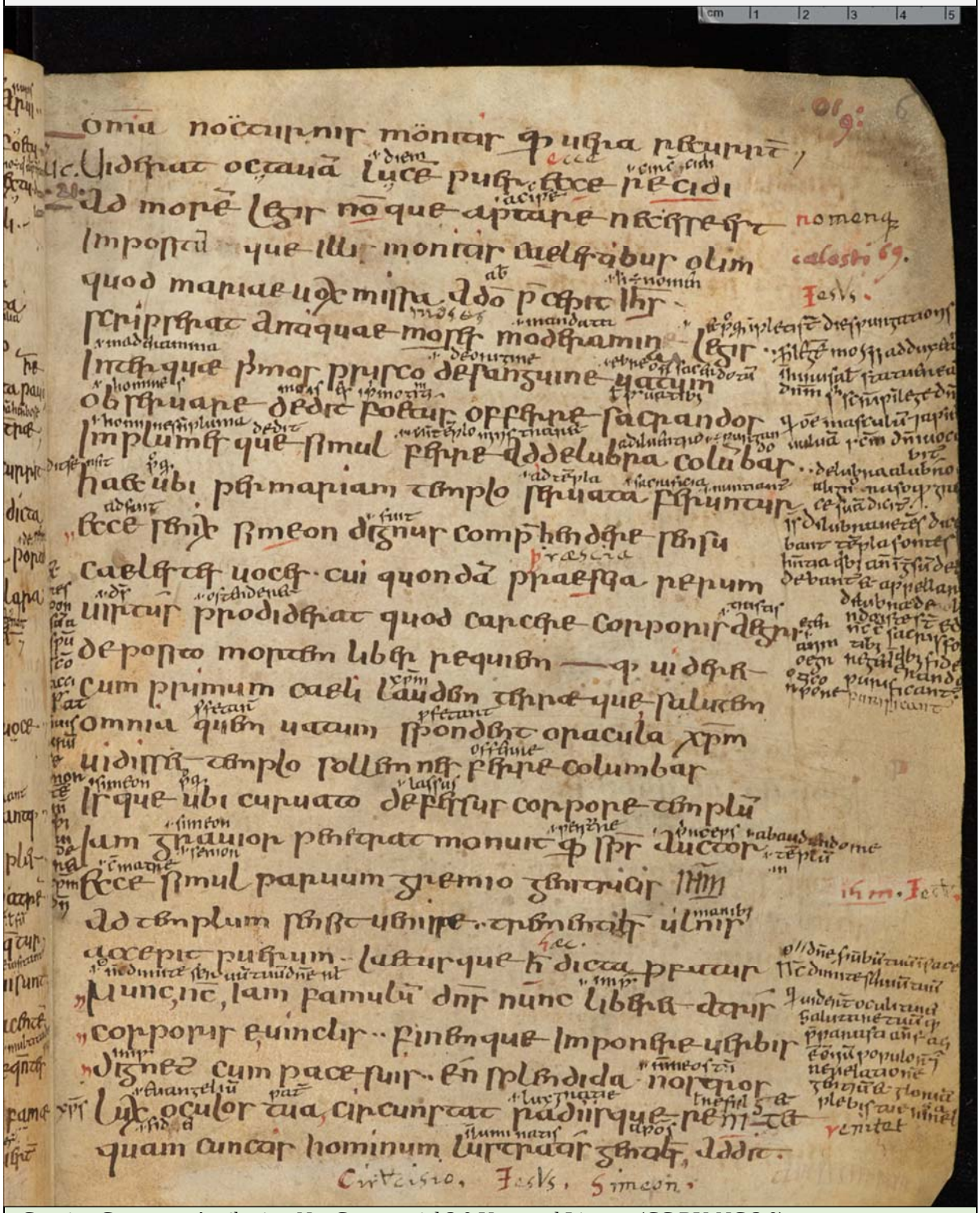
[167] McKee, *Commentary*, pp. 22-3.

Table 3. CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42. Scribes and stints.		
Fols.	**Scribe, date**	**Text (inc. *scholia*)**
25v., 26r., 26v.	**C**, *s.*ix/x.	Three Old Welsh *englynion*, the 'Juvencus Three', beginning *'Niguorcosam nemhenunaur henoid…'*
36r.	***Cyfeilliog***	Cryptogram, asking for prayers for brother *Cemelliauc.*
55v, col. i	**C**, *s.*ix/x.	Latin hexameters, including the reference to God having saved *Féthgna* from the plague.
55v, col. ii	**D**, *s.*ix/x.	Sequence to Our Lady, *'Arbor diua summa apostolorum…'*. Scribe D makes no other contribution to the manuscript.
Various	***Antonius the Scribbler****, s.*x[1].	Pen-trials, scribbles and occasional incomprehensible brief glosses.

Figure 86 opposite , showing fol. 6r., is a good representation of the general appearance of the manuscript in its earlier, more heavily-glossed collations. The copyist is Scribe A, the (probable) Irishman *Núadu* and the marginal glosses are those of Scribe E, distinguished from the other main glossator, Scribe G, by his letterform of **d** having a diagonal ascender rather than the entirely flat ascender, with its final upward curl, as written by Scribe G in his glossing stints from fol. 7v onwards. The red and black notes in the larger hand, characterized by a curious use of capital V for u (as seen in the *IesVs* in the bottom margin) are of the early seventeenth century and were discussed by J. C. T. Oates who thought them to be the hand of the first identifiable modern owner of the manuscript, Richard Amadas of Hallingbury Magna, Essex (1585-1629). Helen McKee however noted that other Cambridge manuscripts owned and annotated by Amadas show a different hand and speculated that the Juvencus additions are those of a relative or acquaintance of his, although recent British Library research states that

‘The manuscript has been annotated in a script that is identical to that found in Amadas’s testament’.[168]

Figure 86. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42. Fol. 6r.



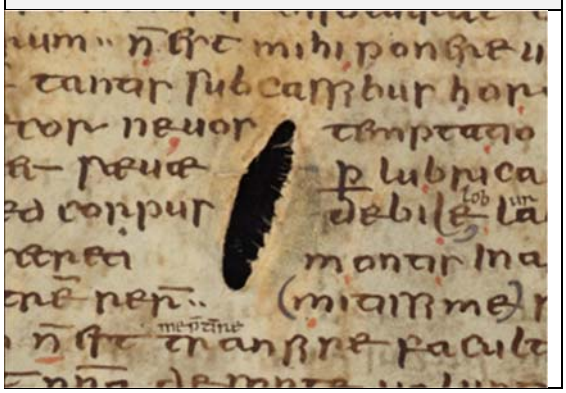
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License (CC BY-NC 3.0)

[168] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 40; J. C. T. Oates, ‘Notes on the Later History of the Oldest Manuscript of Welsh Poetry: The Cambridge Juvencus’, *CMCS*, 3 (1982), pp. 81-87; British Library, ‘In search of the books of Richard Amadas’, https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2020/05/in-search-of-the-books-of-richard-amadas.html, (30 Jan. 2023).

Codicology

The manuscript has page dimensions of approximately 260mm x 195mm, giving a writing-area of approximately 215-240mm x 150-160mm. The pages vary between 27 and 36 lines of text, noticeably denser towards the end of the text, suggesting that the copyist had a finite supply of membrane. The manuscript is paginated on the upper right corner of each recto in red pencil in a sixteenth-century hand and there is also a modern pencil foliation. The leaves seem originally to have had bevelled corners, an Irish habit, and holes in the gutter point to a binding prior to the current seventeenth-century binding.[169] Quiring comprises quinions, as per Bodl MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47 and CCCC, MS 153, and quaternions, with the bifolia generally (though not invariably) arranged in the Insular manner, HFHF. The manuscript is written in a single broad column and is usually described as having been 'frame-ruled', that is, with vertical bounding lines in the margins but without horizontal rulings to take the lines of text. Hart-Webb maintained that horizontal rulings were present but had become indiscernable due to the thickness and coarseness of the membrane, a suggestion which Helen McKee has now disproved.[170]

Figure 87. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42. Membrane.



The quality of the membrane is generally poor. Many of the membranes are coarse, leathery and stiff, or greasy and yellow, and many contain holes and flaws, occasionally repaired. Figure 87 opposite gives some idea of the general quality. In codicological terms this is no *de luxe* production. It is a rough-and-ready utilitarian schoolbook.

[169] Hart-Webb, *Book Production*, p. 72 and David Ganz, 'The earliest manuscript of Lathcen's *Eclogae Moralium Gregorii* and the dating of Irish cursive minuscule' in Pádraic Moran and Immo Warntjes (eds.), *Early medieval Ireland and Europe: chronology, contacts and scholarship* (Turnhout, 2015). However the CUL *Digital Library* describes this as later 'trimming and rounding'; see 'Cambridge Juvencus (MS Ff.4.42)', https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FF-00004-00042/5 (8 Sept. 2022).
[170] Hart-Webb, *Book Production*, p. 72; McKee, *Commentary*, p. 32.

Palaeography

The manuscript is palaeographically complex. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the hand of the copyist of the text is unique, idiosyncratic and without contemporary parallel. Secondly, the numerous other contributors show a variety of hands representing different treatments of Later Welsh book-script. They include, to greater or lesser extents, the abbreviations that spread into Irish and western British manuscripts after *c.* 850 which have been described as 'Late Celtic'.[171] In the analysis that follows, and for reasons which will become clear, my interest is mainly with the simpler, cruder hands of the manuscript, namely: (a) the hand of the copyist himself; and (b) the hand of 'The Beginner' and in particular his *abcdarium* pen-trial on fol. 1v.

Provenance

The manuscript appears to have arrived in England by the early eleventh century when fols. 2r.-5v. were glossed in a 'Style 1' Anglo-Caroline minuscule as written *c.* 960-1020. Similar hands appear in manuscripts with Worcester provenance.[172] Its history after this time is unknown, as are its whereabouts at the Dissolution. As mentioned above, the manuscript's earliest known modern owner was Richard Amadas. It then passed into the possession of Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649) who acquired several other Amadas books and whose collection passed to Cambridge University in 1664.

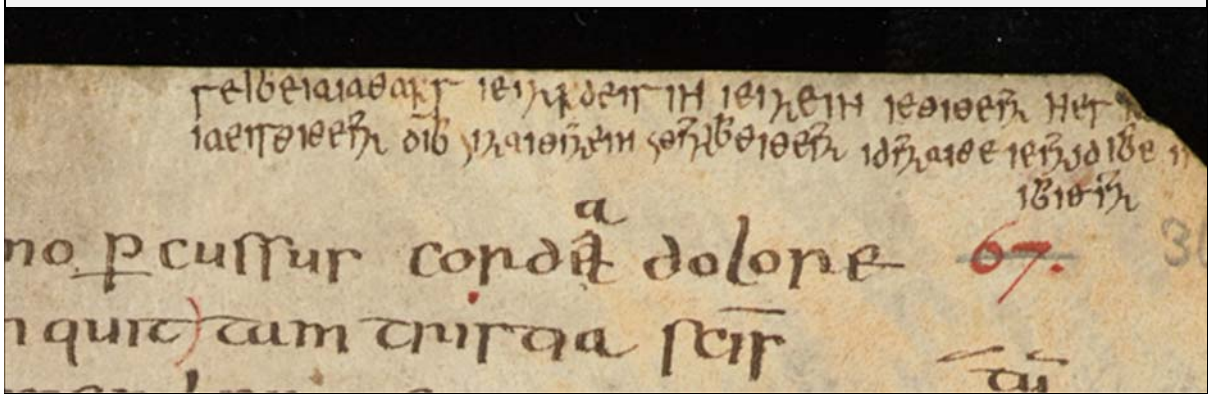
In the course of her commentary on the manuscript Dr McKee hazarded a guess as to where the manuscript might have been written. Notwithstanding her caveat that '…the case for a south-east origin can never be more than a highly speculative suggestion' and that 'hardly any manuscripts from Wales can be localised' she was prepared to state that all of the scribal work evidenced in the manuscript (the copying of the text as well as its subsequent emendation and the *scholia*) had been undertaken at the same place and at approximately the same time,

[171] Dumville, *A Palaeographer's Review*, I, pp. 125-6; idem, *Three Men in a Boat. Scribe, Language and Culture in the Church of Viking-Age Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 42; McKee, *Commentary*, p. 3.
[172] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 35.

and that that place might have been Llancarfan or Llanilltud Fawr.[173] She offers a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, one of the manuscript's many annotators inserted a cryptogram into the upper margin of fol. 36r (see figure 88 below). Cryptograms using enciphered Greek letters were a scholarly conceit popular in ninth-century Irish circles.[174] It was decoded by Sir John Rhŷs and his daughter Olwen in the late nineteenth century and reported by Whitley Stokes.[175]

Figure 88. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42, fol. 36r. Cryptogram.



The name of the composer was revealed as *cemelliauc* or, in modern orthography, *Cyfeilliog*, quite a rare Old Welsh name. McKee points out that we know of only one 'Cyfeilliog' contemporary with the manuscript, namely the bishop of that name whom we see receiving grants in the Llandaf charters in the early tenth century and who was captured by the Vikings in Ergyng in 914, subsequently to be ransomed by Edward the Elder.[176] McKee suggests that the connection of Cyfeilliog with the area of the Usk and Wye might point to the 'original home' of the manuscript but she does not insist upon this.[177] It is entirely realistic to envisage Cyfeilliog as receiving, or indeed providing, education at Llanilltud Fawr or Llancarfan prior to his elevation to the bishopric. Besides, his sphere of operations was not

[173] McKee, *Commentary*, pp. 8, 75.
[174] For the *arcana* of Greek cryptograms see René Derolez, 'Dubthach's Cryptogram: Some Notes in connexion with Brussels MS 9565-9566' in *L'antiquité classique*, Tome 21, fasc. 2, (1952), pp. 359-375; Nora Chadwick, 'Early Culture and Learning in North Wales' in Nora K. Chadwick, Kathleen Hughes, Christopher Brooke and Kenneth Jackson (eds.), *Studies in the Early InsularChurch* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 165-77.
[175] Whitley Stokes, 'The cryptogram in the Cambridge Juvencus', *The Academy*, 42 (September 1892), p. 215.
[176] *Chronicle*, s.a. 914.
[177] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 28.

limited to Gwent and Ergyng. Llandaff charter no. 233, for example, has Cyfeilliog settling a dispute with King Brochfael at Llandaff, c. 905.[178]

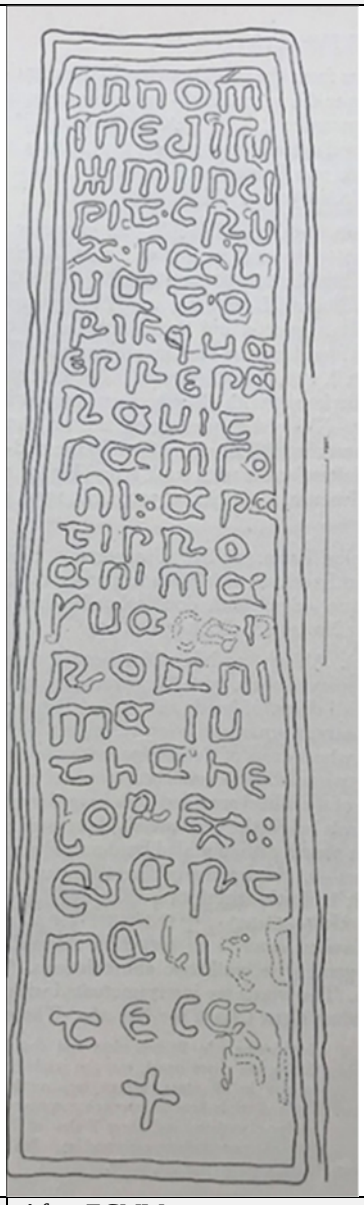
A second piece of evidence identified by McKee which may make a south-eastern origin more likely is the appearance of an Anglo-Saxon *thorn* – **þ** - in the exemplar from which the manuscript was copied. One of the glossators glosses the word *quid* in the text by writing '*interrogatiuus*' over it (thereby noting that it was part of a question) but he additionally inserted the Old Welsh gloss '*.i. papep bi*'. Whitley Stokes realised that '*papep'* actually means '*pa beth'* or 'what?' in Old Welsh and that the final, mistaken *p* must represent the copying of the Old Welsh word *beth* with the Anglo-Saxon thorn representing the *th* phoneme. This is credible because the θ sound is known to have given Welsh scribes orthographical difficulties for which use of a thorn would have been a convenient solution but only, of course, to persons sufficiently exposed to Old English to realise what it represented. McKee suggests that thorns might well have been used in Welsh houses 'close to the border' but 'close to the border' can also be read as 'open to English influence' and this was very much the case in Glamorgan from at least the second half of the ninth century, as the early Christian monuments demonstrate.

This speculation takes us to the two south-eastern monasteries cited by McKee and from them, the epigraphic scripts most relevant to CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42.

[178] Davies, *Microcosm*, pp. 182-4.

Figure 89. Llanilltud Fawr, Glam. Church of St Illtud. Cross-shaft. 223/G65 IUTHAHEL REX.





After *ECMW.*

INNOM
INEDISU
MMIINCI
PIT·CRU
X·SAL
UAT·O
RISQUA
EPREPA
RAUIT
SAMSO
NI:·APA
TIPRO
ANIMA
SUAETP
ROANIMAIU
THAHE
LOREX:·
ETART
MALI[ET]
TECANI
+

'In the name of God the Most high begins the cross of the Saviour that Abbot Samson prepared for his soul and the soul of King Iuthahel and of Artma[i]*l and Tecan'*

223/G65 IUTHAHEL is a quadrangular cross-shaft of 'Quarella' Rhaetic sandstone from the Pyle area. It bears a Latin inscription of some twenty-one or so short lines of text, ending with a small cross. It is currently displayed in the Galilee Chapel at Llanilltud Fawr and is reproduced above with a transcription and translation.

The inscription records that the cross was set up by an Abbot Samson for his soul, as well as the souls of *Iuthahel rex, Artma*[i]*l* and *Tecan*. There has been scholarly debate about

who all these *dramatis personae* were, conveniently summarised in the *Corpus* by Patrick Sims-Williams.[179] The *Iuthahel rex* of the inscription has been identified as either that *Iudhail* (or *Iuthail*,i.e. 'Ithel'), King of Gwent, who was killed by the men of Brycheiniog in 848 or, more likely, that *Iudhail* who is recorded as the father of *Fernmail* with an *obit* in the *Annales* for 775 and who appears to overlap, conveniently, with a *Samson, abbas altaris sancti Eltuti*, whom we see witnessing a charter in the *Vita Cadoci.*[180] *Tecan* (*Tecán*) is considered by Sims-Williams to be an Irish name and is perhaps that *Teican* who is the fourth clerical witness to Llandaff Charter no. 211a, dated by Wendy Davies to c. 765 but certainly of late eighth-century date.[181] For these reasons, the *Corpus* opts for a 'probable' late eighth century date for the inscription and Professor Sims-Williams has kindly communicated to the writer his view that the monument is almost certainly of that date.[182]

The set, irregular, uninflected, quadrilinear script of the inscription bears an aspectual similarity to the two Juvencus hands described above, that of the copyist and that of 'the Beginner'. Before embarking on any palaeographical examination, however, we need to consider whether it is even possible to compare this inscription to these two book-hands, with the hope of any meaningful result? The problem of relating an epigraphic script of *s.*viii^{2} to book-scripts of *s.*ix^{med} manifests itself in two aspects. In the first place, is it possible to compare the inscription and the manuscript, especially on a morphological basis, given the radically different media and writing-technologies of the two artefacts? Do the physical and executional differences render any correlations meaningless? Secondly, the two artefacts are not contemporary. The manuscript is dated 'after *c.* 850', perhaps a century or so later than 223/G65 IUTHAHEL.[183] Are the two artefacts of writing too detached in time to bear any

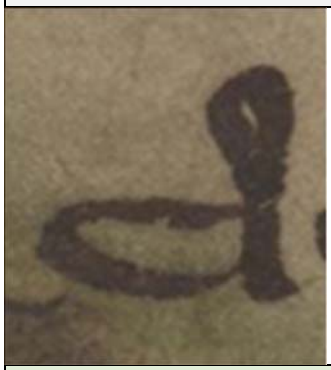
[179] *Corpus*, I, p. 381; *CIB*, pp. 277-8.
[180] *Vita Cadoci*, *VSBG*, §55, p. 126.
[181] *CIB*, p. 278; Wendy Davies, *The Llandaff Charters* (Aberystwyth, 1979), pp. 52, 118.
[182] Patrick Sims-Williams, personal comm., 19th July 2018; *idem, The Book of Llandaf as a Historical Source* (Woodbridge, 2019), p. 154.
[183] 'Cambridge Juvencus (MS Ff.4.42)', https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FF-00004-00042/6 (20 Oct. 2022).

relationship to each other, or offer correlations that might reflect the same writing-traditions at the same place?

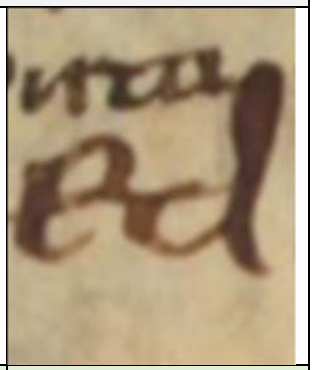
To take the second of these objections, the matter of date, first, the difference in date between the two artefacts is not fatal to a meaningful palaeographical comparison. The reason for this is that the hand of the text is extremely archaic for the mid-ninth century, meaning that it bears comparison to much earlier scripts, scripts considerably older even than the later eighth century, the date of 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. McKee points out that Núadu's hand shares many characteristics with what Julian Brown categorised as 'Phase I' Insular minuscule scripts – those eclectic, Later Irish book-scripts which Brown explained as 'undisciplined' but which Malcolm Parkes subsequently better explained as having been *a priori* unconcerned with graphical appearance.[184] Such basic scripts survived as part of Gifford Charles-Edwards's 'healthy undergrowth' of 'current monoline hands which persisted in the use of…ancient forms' and Brown himself acknowledged a 'continuous tradition of the 'Phase I' minuscule in Ireland between the second half of the seventh and the first half of the ninth century.[185]

One example suffices to demonstrate this point. In Núadu's formation of the ascender to his letterform of **d** he uses the same looped approach-stroke characteristic of cursive treatments of Roman New Common Script that we see in the very earliest Insular book-hands. Good examples appear in the hands of the Springmount Bog Tablets and a particularly close correlation is shown with TCD, MS 55, as illustrated in figure 90 opposite. Gifford Charles-Edwards

Figure 90. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42. Scribal archaisms.



TCD, MS. 55. The Ussher Gospels. Early seventh century.



CUL, MS. Ff.4.42. *c.* 850 or after.

[184] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 226; Parkes, 'Insular scribes' in *idem, Scripts, Scribes,* p. 3
[185] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog Tablets', p. 38; Brown, *A Palaeographer's View,* p. 219.

noted the identical archaic scribal treatment with the same attenuated serpentine approach-stroke to the ascender in the hand of the text of Durham, Cathedral Library, MS. A. II. 10, a fragmentary gospel-book from Lindisfarne *c.* 650. She further noted the same truncated approach-loops in the preparatory paintwork beneath the idiosyncratic lobed letterform of archaic uncial **A** of the Gn-25/13/AN26 CATAMANVS inscription from Llangadwaladr, *c.* 625, and noted that the feature was destined to survive as an archaism in later Insular book-script.[186]

This brings us back to the first objection, namely whether it is possible to expect meaningful correlations as between epigraphic and manuscript writing at all. If it is the very anachronism of the hand of the text of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 that allows a comparison with older scripts, then it is its unabashed utilitarianism that allows it to be compared with epigraphic scripts in Glamorgan at this time. This is because as well as being archaic it is a highly informal script, hardly calligraphically elevated out of the monoline New Common Script that – as demonstrated in the first part of this Chapter - came to replace Early Insular book-script as the epigraphic base-script of the early Christian monuments of Glamorgan from the ninth century onwards.

McKee tellingly describes Núadu's hand as 'Insular set minuscule, but of an unusually monumental form' and observes that the uncalligraphic use of a broadly-cut quill gives it a 'rather ugly' and 'uncouth' aspect. It is not at all a professional or skilful scribal hand. McKee describes it as 'unique' and even amongst the highly variable later 'Celtic' book-scripts it stands out for its coarseness.[187] Lindsay was similarly unimpressed, describing it as 'rude' and 'sprawling'.[188] As Brown saw it, Núadu's hand and the hand of 'the Beginner' are rare and interesting examples of 'the least calligraphically demanding script' that the novice first

[186] Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog Tablets', pp. 37-9; also Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The origin and development of insular geometric letters' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 2006), pp. 78-100. See also *Corpus*, III, p. 181.
[187] McKee, *Commentary*, pp. 9-10.
[188] *EWS*, p. 16.

learned to write with a quill on membrane, not far removed from the monoline 'basic script of instruction, made up of large and simple letterforms, innocent of stylization' (the Germans' *Schulschrift*) learned first on wax tablets.[189] This is exactly the same script that came to be used, in place of Early Insularbook-script, for the Glamorgan inscriptions, as demonstrated in the earlier part of this Chapter. Furthermore, it is axiomatic that in these informal and utilitarian scripts that the basic morphology either never changed at all, or, if it did, changed only very slowly and Chapter Two demonstrated that this principle – that of the immutability of *ductus* – applied in full to British writing.

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Palaeographical correlations

With this encouragement, we turn to the detailed palaeography of the two artefacts. 223/G65 IUTHAHEL is by some distance the most interesting of the Llanilltud Fawr inscriptions for the purpose of comparison with other forms of utilitarian writing. This is because its most notable palaeographical feature is precisely its extensive use of letterforms and textual conventions drawn from book-script. McKee describes the palaeography of 223/G65 in exactly these terms:[190]

> '…the manuscript influence seems especially pointed with the inclusion of *incipit*…and the use of interpunctuation; the lettering also incorporates several manuscript features, suggesting that the text emanated from a milieu with a working scriptorium, but in a simplified 'common hand'.'

These 'manuscript-epigraphic' connections can be listed as follows. The IUTHAHEL inscription: (1) contains the traditional *incipit* formula to mark the beginning of the substantive commemorative text; (2) is punctuated with the medial *punctus* and the triangular three-*punctus* at the end of the text; (3) exhibits a ligatured *et* compound; (4) exhibits the typical polymorphism of Glamorgan inscriptions – for example the use of the 'gated' or 'geometrical' allomorph of **M**: **I-I-I**; (5) exhibits incised borders reminiscent of wax tablets or indeed the square, frame-ruling of lower-status books such as CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 itself; (6) is of highly

[189] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 192.
[190] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 87.

irregular alignment, not unlike the irregularity that accompanies frame-ruling or unruled tablet-writing; (7) includes various letterforms (for example, the initial two **n** letterforms and the **m** letterform of *in nomine*) that show the entry-strokes rather than calligraphic wedge-serifs; (8) exhibits the usual book-script contractions – ***dī*** for the *nomen sacrum* ***dei***;[191] and (9) exhibits the ***In nomine dei summi*** invocation that Bischoff regarded as 'especially favoured by the Irish'.[192]

Other inscriptions from Glamorgan show a debt to writing on other media but 223/G65 IUTHAHEL is an advanced case. So in 223/G65 IUTHAHEL and CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 we have two rather idiosyncratic artefacts of writing, each using radically different writing-technologies but which nevertheless share closely analogous forms, conventions and status. Or, put another way, both artefacts – media and technology aside - relate unusually closely to the kind of script that would have been the basic instructional script first learned by those clerics responsible for both book- and inscription-production at somewhere like Llanilltud Fawr or Llancarfan.

Having argued that we *can* compare these two artefacts, the question arises as to *how* they should be compared. The first points of comparison between any two scripts are the basic features of aspect, alignment, *ductus* and treatment. In these terms, Núadu's hand can be described as follows: (1) the *aspect* of the hand is rounded and upright, displaying a generous lateral separation of both letters and words; (2) the *ductus* is predominantly set; (3) the *treatment* of the script is generally monoline and uninflected (I will not consider the cut and angle of the pen, given that Núadu made no use of it and its irrelevance to an uninflected epigraphic comparator-script); (4) the *alignment* of the hand is irregular, as one might expect from the use of frame-ruling, although given the absence of ruling, Núadu makes a very good fist of writing horizontally by eye, something which suggests that he was a habitual tablet-writer as indeed the epigraphic ordinator seems to have been. The epigraphic script answers

[191] Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, p. 147; W. M. Lindsay, *Contractions in Early Latin Minuscule MSS*, (Oxford, 1908), p. 4.
[192] Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 44.

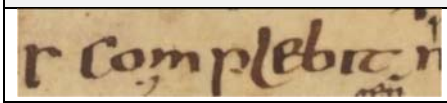
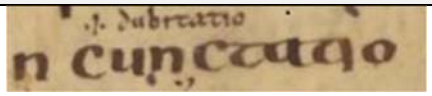
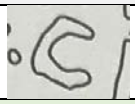
this description equally well. 223/G65 IUTHAHEL shows an upright, rounded, monoline, unserifed, set script of highly irregular aspect that sprawls laterally across the face of the stone.

Malcolm Parkes pointed out in the course of his identification of the autographs of St Boniface in glosses to the *Codex Fuldensis* that although these general features of aspect, alignment, *ductus* and treatment may lead us to suspect a connection between scripts, they do not, in themselves, provide proof. For that, one needs to look closely at the morphology and, better still, the presence of distinctive scribal habits.[193]

In this regard there are numerous close correspondences between the two hands of Núadu and 'the Beginner' and the base-script of the inscription. Where there are differences they are attributable to the different conventions of the different writing-technologies, for example: (1) attempts by the epigraphic ordinator to dignify and adorn his base-script for the purposes of a royal-cum-abbatial monument, for example with geometric capitals in typical Glamorgan style; (2) letterforms dictated by tradition, for example the mandatory epigraphic ***OC*** letterform of **a** which dropped out of scribal usage in the eighth century but which continued to be used for inscriptions with the straightening of the stem; or (3) allomorphs, that is to say, the different letterforms of New Common Script that survived side-by-side in all later Insular writing which do not represent 'differences' between scripts *per se*.

The following comparison highlights the morphological consistencies between the two artefacts, or, as Mallon termed them, the '*rapports graphiques précis*'.[194]

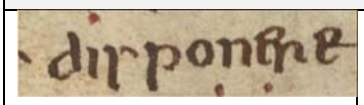
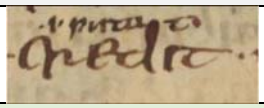
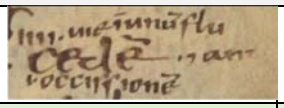
Figure 91. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of C.

		
Fol. 3r., l.6	Fol. 3r., l.17	223/G65

[193] Parkes, 'The Handwriting of St Boniface', in *idem, Scripts, Scribes*, p. 123.
[194] Mallon, *Paléographie*, p. 160.

The inscription evidences a distinct straightening of the back of the *ductus* of **c** in both *crux* and *tecani.* This epigraphic **c** is capable of being very square, given the medium and the convenience of avoiding curves generally. Núadu's **c** can also take the same straight-backed aspect even though he is also happy to use an allomorph which comprises an entirely hemispherical *ductus*: contrast, for example the noticeably square-backed **c** graph in *complebit* in Fol. 3r., l.6 with the more rounded letterforms in *cunctatio* in l.17 of fol. 3r. reproduced in figure 91 above. These two different letterforms are in fact explained by the underlying *ductus:* the square-backed letterform is a set letterform, created with a pen-lift, whereas the hemispherical glyph represents the cursive treatment of the *ductus,* dispensing with the pen-lift. The manuscript letterforms therefore represent an oscillation of set and cursive *ductus* for the same letterform but the inscription naturally uses the set letterform, avoiding the complex cutting of an even curve.

Figure 92. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of D.

			
Fol. 10r., l.20	Fol. 7r., l.24.	Fol. 7r., l.27	223/G65

The epigraphic **d** has an unclosed bow to the left and a vertical ascender with what looks like a wedge serif (Nash-Williams referred to the presence of 'forked serifs' in the inscription but the writer cannot identify any, at least from the *ECMW* drawing reproduced in the *Corpus* or from the writer's own examination of the inscription at Llanilltud Fawr).[195] Generally, Núadu uses the slope-backed letterform of **ð** derived from archaic uncials but this is by no means his invariable usage. As with the letterform of **c** above, his usage reflects different *ductus* existing together in the common graphical repertoire of New Common Script. He is happy to write both the identical letterform of **d** to that of the inscription, with a pen-lift

[195] *ECMW*, p. 144 & fig. 156.

between the bow and the ascender and a truncated serif at the top of the ascender, as well as a third, much more cursively-influenced letterform, with the entry-loop to the ascender discussed above. Graphically, the epigraphic letterform and Núadu's letterform as reproduced from fol. 7r., l. 27 above are identical.

Both manuscript and epigraphic letterforms of **L** show the commencement of the stroke in a diagonal direction at the top of the ascender only for the pen to shift more vertically in the body of the ascender before flattening out along the line of writing. This too is a fossil of the looped ascenders that we see in New Common Script and which we considered in detail in relation to the letterform of **d** above. These entry loops gave rise to the typically cursive 'tramline' ascenders in Later Insular book-script where ascenders come to comprise two parallel strokes, one upwards and one downwards, but in this case they are attenuated into a twist of the pen as it touches the writing-medium to commence the downstroke of the ascender. The manuscript letterform is quite idiosyncratic – McKee describes it as 'curved and flourishing'.[196] It consistently features an outsize *module* and an exuberant curve to the bottom of the ascender which descends well below the line of writing and sweeps to the right beneath the next letterform, for example, *templo* in l.10, fol. 6r. (see figure 93 below).

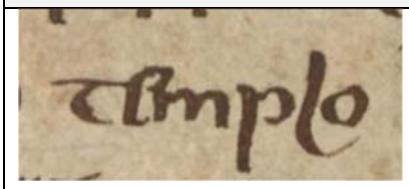
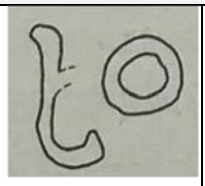
Of the three epigraphic instances of **L**, that of *iuthahelo* appears in its cursive *ductus* most reminiscent of Núadu's letterform and this is not only because the following **o** is inadequately aligned with it, but also because of the *module* of the glyph. If the **o** had been carved on the line of writing it would have overlapped with the base of the **L** and the two letters are already laterally displaced to an abnormal degree. The intention seems to have been that the **o** should sit above the termination of the foot-stroke of the **L**, which is the exact configuration of **L** plus following vowel that is such a characteristic feature of Núadu's hand. The two other epigraphic occurrences of **L** - in *salvatoris* and *artmali* - are less exaggerated, but had the inscription been written with greater regularity then these letterforms too would

[196] McKee, *Commentary,* p. 10.

have been oversize, particularly the second (the plate published in the *Corpus* as fig. G65d demonstrates this better than the line-drawing published as G65c: the *module* is quite oversize).[197] These epigraphic differences in treatment are paralleled by identical variations in Núadu's hand which exhibits both a treatment of **L** which descends as low as the bottom of his **g** as well as a more decorous letterform which barely touches the line of writing. This pattern of treatments of the same basic letterform is consistent across both the artefacts.

That this consistent pattern may point to some sort of connection is made more likely if one considers that the oversize *module* of **L** is idiosyncratic in both the later epigraphic scripts from Glamorgan and the Welsh manuscripts. The only parallel that the writer can identify seems to be the letterform of **L** that appears in the name *CELEN* from the Old Welsh inscription on the early ninth-century pillar 287/MR25 from St Cadfan's, Tywyn, (see figure 93 below).[198]

Figure 93. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of L.

		
Fol. 6r. l.10.	223/G65	Tywyn, Church of St Cadfan. Cross-carved stone with Old Welsh inscription. 287/MR25. *s.*vii – ix.

None of the ninth-century book-hands thought to be 'Welsh' show any similar letterform. It is an archaism. The marginal glosses on fol. 7v of Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica MS Vat. Lat. 3226, the *s.*v *Codex Bembinus*, show the same oversize letterform of **L** where the foot is below the base line.[199] Bischoff, in commenting on the archaic uncial script of of Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, P. S. I. 1291 and London, British Museum, Papyrus

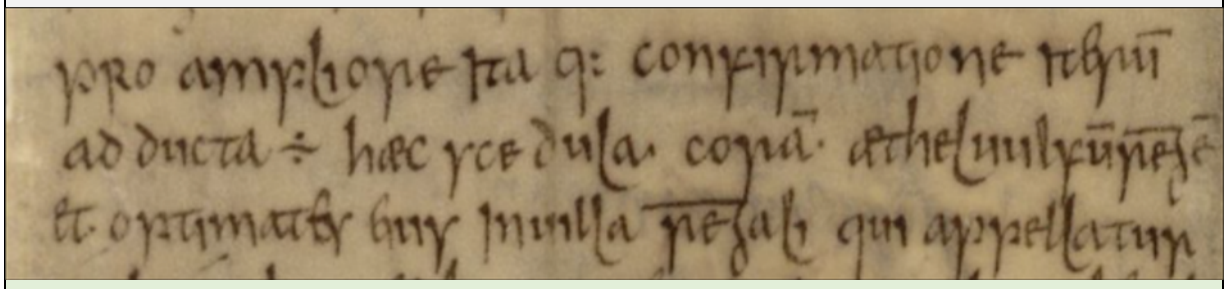
[197] *Corpus*, I, p. 379.
[198] *ECMW*, p. 287 & fig. 188; *Corpus, III*, p. 430. See also 'St Cadfan's Tywyn', http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/43861/details/st-cadfans-church-tywyntowyn (27 Sept. 2018).
[199] 'Manuscript - Vat.lat.3226', https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3226 (6th Jul. 2018).

1532 (Pap. Oxy. 668), the *Epitome of Livy* fragment of *s*.iii[1] from Oxyrhynchus, noted that 'l often swings under the line' and that this letterform was probably a borrowing from a 'minuscule cursive of whose style we have no witness'.[200] Jean Mallon noted and described the same ancient letterform as follows: [201]

> '…[the first stroke of the form] sometimes descends obliquely from the right to the left, followed by a very long second stroke, emphasising in some manner and embracing the glyphs that follow…'

The best contemporary parallel that the writer has been able to find is in some of the ninth-century Wessex hands described by Brown as Southumbrian 'Type B' Phase 1 minuscule and persuasively argued by Julia Crick to have formed a distinctive 'West Saxon' script-type from at least the time of Boniface. One of the examples cited by her is an endorsement confirming an agreement at Wilton in 839 added to the dorse of BL, Cotton Augustus ii. 20.[202]

Figure 94. London, British Library, Cotton MS Augustus ii. 20.



The West Saxon script-type. Confirmation of an agreement at Kingston, Surrey, between Archbishop Ceolnoth of Canterbury and Kings Ecgberht and Æthelwulf, 839.

© British Library. Reproduced by kind permission.

This hand shares a number of points of contact with Núadu's hand, aspectual and morphological, including the identical letterform of **L**, a round-backed, smallish version of the archaic uncial letterform of **ð** and an aspiration to formality. This raises the possibility that some of the 'Irishness' traditionally seen in Núadu's hand might in fact reflect the writing-

[200] Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 72; Ammirato, *Sul libro*, p. 45 & Tavv. XXX-XXXI.
[201] Mallon, *Paléographie*, p. 129.
[202] 'Cotton MS Augustus II 20', http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Augustus_II_20 (11 May 2022); Julia Crick, 'The Case for a West Saxon Minuscule', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1997), pp. 63–79.

traditions of Wales and the British-influenced West Country, rather than Ireland directly. The West Saxon hand itself has much 'Irishness' to it and Crick noted close analogues in the Books of Armagh and Mulling.[203] These West Saxon parallels support Helen McKee's suggestion that Núadu's hand need not necessarily have been learned in Ireland itself: plenty of his letterforms and usages appear to have been part of the graphical resources of ninth-century Southumbria.

It is worth pursuing this line of argument just a little further because it may place the rather odd palaeographical phenomenon represented by the main hand of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 into a more intelligible context. Núadu's book-hand, the epigraphic script of 223/G65 IUTHAHEL and, it seems, Crick's 'West Saxon minuscule' share a letterform that is archaic, rare (at least in a Welsh context and to the extent of the surviving evidence) and which derives from the earliest Christian book-hand that we define by comparison with Late Antique *scholia* like those of the *Codex Bembinus.* What might this tell us about CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and any potential connection with Wales generally or south Wales in particular?

It is notorious that single letterforms can be argued to show almost anything, and in the following discussion one must keep at the front of one's mind Dumville's warnings about 'misplaced calligraphic determinism'[204] However, at a high level and with due circumspection, the correlation does suggest at least a common writing-tradition. This might seem too obvious a suggestion to be of interest but it must be remembered that later tradition was united in seeing Llanilltud Fawr's great sixth-century heyday of learning at broadly the same time that Early Insular book-script, the Insular equivalent of the *scholia* of the *Codex Bembinus* (for example), was typifying out of the set fourth-century treatment of New Common Script. The sweeping letterform of **L** below the line appears in these contemporary Continental 'half uncial' hands, for example as a very occasional letterform in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Basilicanus D. 182 (fols. 13–27, 34–288, the 'Basilican Hilary', written probably at Cagliari

[203] Crick, 'The Case for a West Saxon Minuscule', p. 64.
[204] Dumville *A Palaeographer's Review,* I, p. 3, citing W. O' Sullivan, 'Insular calligraphy: current state and problems', *Peritia,* 4 (1985), p. 351 and *idem,* 'The Lindisfarne *Scriptorium*: for and against', *Peritia,* 8 (1994), p. 86.

by North African exiles in the school of Fulgentius of Ruspe and Fulgentius Ferrandus, *c.*509); more systematically in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, L 89 (a fragment of parchment dated by Lowe as '*IV vel V*' (301-500), from Egypt) where '**L** sweeps below the line'; in Bodl MS. Lat. Class. e. 20 (P) (a fifth-century papyrus fragment of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinarium* from Oxyrhynchus); and in Paris, Université de Paris IV - Sorbonne, Institut de Papyrologie 2140 (a fifth- century papyrus *Glossarium Latino-Graecum,* also from Egypt) in which the **L** 'extends horizontally below the line'.[205]

Figure 95. Late Antique treatment of the letterform of L

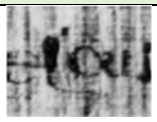
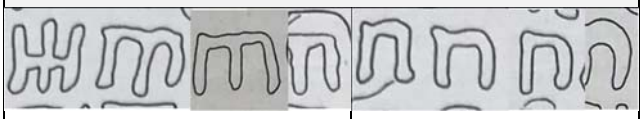
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. Class. e. 20 (P).	**Paris, Sorbonne, Institut de Papyrologie I 8 *recto* (Inv. Sorb. 2140).**
	
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Figure 95 opposite shows a couple of examples of this treatment from the fifth century which represent what David Ganz, citing a letter of Traube of 1901, referred to as 'the normative role of half-uncial letterforms in the insular world'.[206]

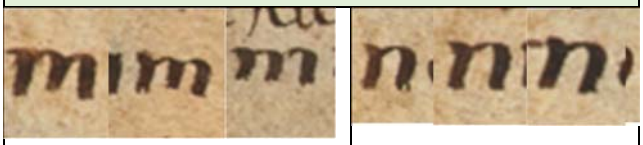
No firm conclusion is of course possible, the history of a single *ductus* being too small a foundation upon which to erect it, but the following conjectures may be offered: (1) this morphological archaism can be traced back to the graphical process of the typification of Early Insular book-script, an argument supported by the fact that on the Continent it clearly came from the analogous Continental process; and (2) as a centre which could have preserved Late Antique archaisms as part of its writing-traditions and which itself may even have played a part in the typification of Early Insular book-script as a likely centre of sixth-century learning, Llanilltud Fawr is likely to be one of the very few, perhaps the only western British centre of learning with probable continuity from Late Antique Britain to the Conquest.

[205] *CLA*, x, 1532, TM64633; *CLA*, ii, 246, TM62693; *CLA*, v, 699, TM64220.
[206] David Ganz, 'Tino Licht, *Halbunziale Schriftkultur*', p. 312. For a contemporary (*c.* 650-700) description of these letterforms, see R. M. A. Marshall, 'Studies on the "Ars Grammatici Sergi(li)i" with an edition', *Journal of Medieval Latin,* 20 (2010), pp. 167-231.

Figure 96. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterforms of M and N.



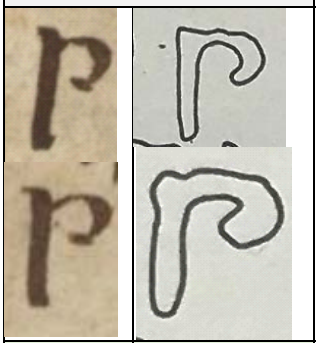
223/G65



Fol. 17v.

The manuscript and epigraphic letterforms of **m** and **n** are the same. Where the inscription bends the second minim of **n** out of the vertical, so does the scribal hand as an aberration (see the two left-most reproductions in figure 96 opposite. The fine, intrusive, letterform of the 'gated' geometric capital **M** in the inscription is a relic of the Glamorgan epigraphic tradition.

Figure 97. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of P.

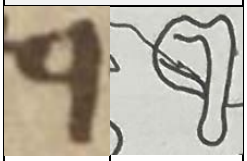


Fol. 6r | 223/G65

The manuscript and epigraphic letterforms of **p** are identical. The first **p** in the inscription's *preparauit,* as well as the subsequent **p** letterforms in *apatis* and *pro* hint at a 'horn' at the top of the descender, identical with Núadu's letterform.

The letterforms of **q** are also strikingly similar. In particular, the epigraphic version seems to make some effort to replicate the inflections of the manuscript letterform by flattening and thinning the top-stroke or 'lid' of the *ductus.* This epigraphic letterform seems to hint that the exemplar for the inscription might have been written with inflections, in which case it is unlikely to have been written on a wax tablet or chalked or crayoned.

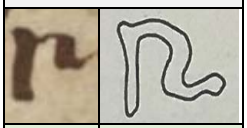
Figure 98. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of Q.



Fol. 6r | 223/G65

The two letterforms of **R** are also identical. Both letterforms are the 'intermediate shepherd's crook' letterform, showing a pronounced connecting stroke and, interestingly, a noticeably round-topped limb which lacks the 'angular top almost invariable in Insular minuscule', for example in the hands of the fragment of Welsh *computus*, now Cambridge, University Library, MS. add. 4543 and the various hands of CCCC, MS 153.[207] As with the letterforms of **L** and **Q**, it is possible to argue that this correlation is idiosyncratic to these two artefacts. Other hands ascribed to Welsh scribes show a letterform akin to Núadu's, with an open bow and a foot, for example the calligraphic rounded hand of the scribe of the copy of Boethius' translation of Porphyrius' *Isagoge*¸ now Leyden, University Library, MS. Vossianus Q 2, or that of the Oxford Ovid, Bodl, MS. Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47. The **r** of the late hand of Llanbadarn Fawr displays a letterform like a square **n** with the first of the minimum strokes having a long descender, but the *ductus* of this letterform is far more decorous, calligraphic and angular than either Núadu's or the inscription's. Núadu's letterform is akin to some of the letterforms in the Bodl MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37-47, but nothing like so exact a match as his letterform shares with the letterforms of the inscription.

Figure 99. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of R.



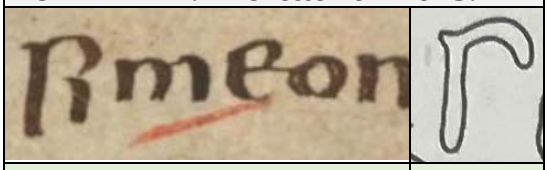
Fol. 6v.	223/G65

As with the letterform of **L** above, these letterforms are ancient. Bischoff provides illustrations of various instances including the script of the *Epitome of Livy* which feature this letterform of 'shepherd's crook' **R**.[208] Furthermore, the idiosyncracy of these two letterforms of **R** is highlighted by the great extent to which they contrast with other epigraphic letterforms of the same letterform appearing in the Glamorgan inscriptions. They seem to represent a micro-tradition of their own within the more general Glamorgan usage. The late ninth century 231/G78 ENNIAUN inscription from Margam exhibits polymorphism comprising three **r** allomorphs (in *crux* and *guorgoret*). The second of these three **r** letterforms is a square-ish

[207] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 10.
[208] Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 74.

letterform which may be an epigraphic rendering of the intermediate letterform used by Núadu and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL but it might also be a clumsy attempt to replicate the archaic uncial **R** allomorph of Early Insular book-script. The first and third letterforms are however the entirely different 'sprawling' cursive letterforms taken from Later British book-script.[209] All the **r** letterforms of the tenth century 233/G81 GRUTNE inscription at Margam are of the same sort, namely sprawling quadrilinear letterforms with a similar highly angular, not to say jagged, *ductus,* as is the letterform of 234/G79 CONBELIN.[210] 256/G6 GALCUN alone shows the 'shepherd's crook' letterform along with a sprawling letterform.[211]

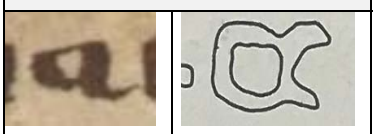
Figure 100. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The letterform of S.



Fol. 6v.	223/G65

The letterforms of s-longa are also identical as can be seen in figure 100 opposite. The ascenders sometimes descend beneath the base line and the top stroke shows a short, vestigial, entry-stroke. Once more, the letterform is old and the correspondence quite striking, particularly as here, too, the ordinator appears to have provided the inscriber with an inflected exemplar. The bow of the epigraphic letterform thickens out quite noticeably towards the end of the stroke, reflecting the scribe's turn of the nib in the manuscript version.

Figure 101. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The epigraphic form of A.



Fol. 6v	223/G65

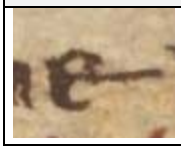
CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL.

Dissimilar Forms

The inscription uses the diagnostic Insular ***OC*** or ***CC*** letterform for **a** but with the straightened back-shaft (see figure 101 opposite). As we have seen, this letterform is common in the Glamorgan epigraphy.

[209] *Corpus*, I, p. 408.
[210] *Corpus*, I, p. 422.
[211] *Corpus*, I, pp. 268-270.

Figure 102. Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The epigraphic letterform of E.



Fol. 10r.



223/G65

The inscription uses an archaic uncial letterform of **E** with a curved back (see figure 102 opposite). The manuscript uses a letterform of the usual Insular 'high' **e** with a curved stem and a high lobe to the right, in many cases with an otiose medial exit stroke even where there is no current connection-stroke or ligature.

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Ligatures

The *ampersand* **&** and ligatured *ex* monograph of the inscription are derived from tablet- or manuscript-writing. The *ex* of *rex* in the inscription is ligatured and bears clear resemblance to the *ex* in the manuscript. The upper lobe of the archaic uncial epigraphic letterform of **E** is not entirely closed, i.e. it is a bow but not a lobe, but this is a quirk of the different writing-technologies. The tall Insular letterform of **e** was suitable for making ligatures from the extended *sagitta* and is an obligatory ligature in the fourth-century Romano-British scripts. This cursive habit took root in manuscript- and tablet-writing where it was easy to execute with pen and stylus but it was inconvenient and unnecessary to replicate in the more physically difficult task of inscribing on stone. Hence, the fact that the epigraphic **e** is not closed at the top into a lobe does not necessarily denote a different script-morphology to that of the manuscript.

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. Punctuation and Latinity

The inscription features punctuation, as noted by Nash-Williams.[212] These comprise: (1) the single *punctus* which represents both the *subdistinctio* (i.e. the comma) or the *media distinctio* (i.e. the colon)[213]; and (2) the idiosyncratic Insular triangular triple *punctus* signifying the final break (the *periodus* or the modern full stop) representing the *distinctio* itself.[214] The graphic convention of punctuation represented by *puncti* was no doubt adopted because it was

[212] *ECMW*, No. 233, p. 144 & fig. 156.
[213] M. B. Parkes, 'Punctuation, or Pause and Effect' in J. J. Murphy (ed.), *Medieval Eloquence* (Berkeley, 1978), p. 11 & pl. 57.
[214] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 9; Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 169; Parkes, 'Insular scribes', p. 8; *idem*, 'Pause and Effect', pp. 127-142.

epigraphically convenient – that is, because the picked *punctus* would have been easier to replicate on stone than the curved manuscript *positura*. Parkes points out that over time the *positura* came to be written currently to resemble a large comma and this would naturally mitigate against its epigraphic use: if the inscriptions could avoid curved strokes, they did so.[215]

The punctuation of MS. Ff. 4. 42 generally comprises two medial *puncti* ⁘ at the end of the lines of text with the triangular triple-*punctus* marking more substantial text-breaks. As with his morphology, Núadu seems to be heir to archaic practice in the matter of punctuation. A seventh-century fragment of an Irish commentary on Amos (now St Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. 342*bis*) uses a similar graded system of *punctus*.[216] The small plate of Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS C. 5. inf., the 'Bangor Antiphonary' of *c.* 680-692, reproduced by Lowe in the *CLA* features analogous instances of the triangular triple-*punctus* and one example of the medial double-*punctus* in a system that he described as 'erratic'[217].

The use of punctuation in the 223/G65 IUTHAHEL inscription reflects the same conventions but the positioning of the punctuation is erratic. There is no syntactical reason for the *subdistinctio* (if that is what it is) inserted between the nominative *crux* and the genitive *saluatoris* and the same mark between *samsoni* and *apati* similarly makes no sense. The puzzle might be resolved were some of the picked *interpuncti* not punctuation marks at all but merely indications of word-separation. However even if that is the case they are still used apparently incorrectly – in one case separating the stem of a noun from its inflection. The only explanation the writer has been able to identify for a system of punctuation that ignores the integrity of discrete words, other than simple incompetence, is Malcolm Parkes's analysis of early Irish attempts to punctuate the vernacular, where instead of basing their practice on the morphological criteria of the traditional grammarians, as they did with Latin, the Irish scribes instead combined and divided words around a chief stress.[218] But that is for the vernacular, not

[215] Parkes, 'Pause and Effect', p. 25.
[216] Parkes, 'Pause and Effect', p. 9.
[217] *CLA*, iii, 311.
[218] Parkes, 'Pause and Effect', p. 24.

Latin. Similar mispunctuation appears in other Welsh inscriptions and the answer seems simply to be that standards of punctuation varied hand-in-hand with standards of Latinity in Welsh monasteries.[219] Thomas Charles-Edwards has analysed the Latin of the 223/G65 IUTHAHEL inscription and points out that is of extremely poor quality.[220] We can hardly therefore expect any more adept application of punctuation.

Poor Latinity and erratic punctuation set up another correlation between the inscription and the work of Núadu. Núadu's Latin was also poor. Helen McKee observes that his word-division is poor, he omits some of the words that he is copying from his exemplar entirely and misunderstands others.[221] He also fails to spot, let alone correct, instances where his exemplar was evidently wrong. He was evidently copying mechanically and with limited understanding of the text in front of him. Nor was he the only contributor of blunders. McKee offers a long list of 'howlers' from the other scribes who worked on the manuscript. On fol. 3r. l.9, for example, the glossator identified as 'Scribe E' misquoted John the Baptist's exhortation '*poenitentiam agite'* as '*patientiam agite'* – 'be patient!' instead of 'repent!'. He not only mangled a very familiar Gospel text but obviously lacked the basic theology to spot that entry into the Kingdom requires repentance rather than just patience.[222]

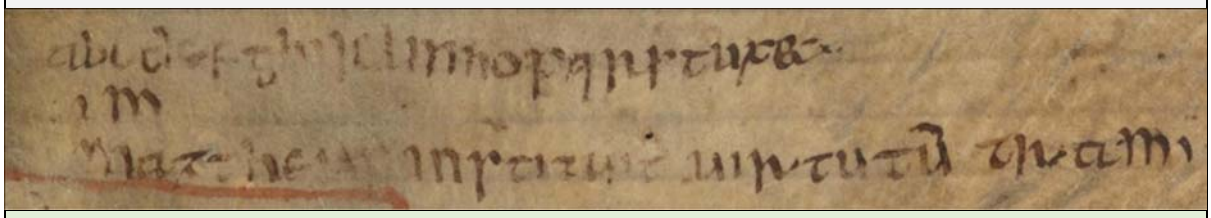
Similar carelessness is observable in Llanilltud Fawr inscriptions contemporary with the manuscript – the 220/G63 HOUELT inscription is in better Latin than 223/G65 IUTHAHEL but it still manages to omit the Second Person in its invocation of the Trinity.[223] The inscriptions from Llanilltud Fawr therefore certainly reflect the highly variable intellectual

[219] 382/P97, for example, inserts an *interpunctus* between **H** and **ED** in the name of Bishop Abraham's son *HED**,*** *sic* **H·ED**; see *Corpus*, II, p. 440. Dubious syllabification seems to travel with low scribal standards: Helen McKee has noted similar 'syllabification…distinguished by its illogicality' in the text of Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. th. f. 67, a possible Breton gospel-book of *s.*viii^{ex} – *s.*ix^{in}; Helen Simpson McKee, 'Breton Manuscripts of Biblical and Hiberno-Latin Texts' in T. O'Loughlin (ed.), *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout, Brepols, 1999), p. 279. The best comment is that of Mark Stansbury: 'Manuscript punctuation? Totally irrational – often, indeed, found in several conflicting layers…; Mark Stansbury, *Iona Scribe*s, p. 2.
[220] *WAB*, p. 626.
[221] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 12.
[222] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 70.
[223] *WAB*, p. 631.

standards evident amongst the contributors to the manuscript. In this regard it may well also be significant that quite a high proportion of the non-exegetical glosses added to the manuscript comprise grammatical and syntactical help or construe-assistance for the reader, as compared to the Carolingian tradition of primarily lexical glosses. *Lemmata* which are in no sense difficult or abstruse receive copious glossing of quite a rudimentary level.[224]

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 and 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. The Pen Trials

Figure 103. Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ff. 4. 42, fol. 1v. The pen-trials.



© CUL

The final point to note on the palaeography of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 is the pen-trial that appears on fol. 1v., executed by a scribe aptly named 'the Beginner' by McKee. The pen-trials give us an interesting glimpse of the basic scribal training that we read about in documentary sources. St Comgall had to bless a 'certain boy' at Bangor who was learning to write but so badly that 'it was scarcely possible to tell whether the hand of man or the claw of a bird had written what he wrote'.[225] Brown similarly described the Boge-Aldred mid-tenth century additions to the Durham Gospels, now Durham, Cathedral Library, MS. A. II. 17, as the work of 'a child whose control of his hand and arm muscles was still uncertain'.[226] Bischoff remarked that 'pupils of school-going age might…be employed for writing' and points to St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS. 8, a tenth-century copy of the *Book of Tobit,* as a 'trial piece' undertaken by inexpert hands.[227]

[224] McKee, *Commentary*, p. 50.
[225] *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1910), II, p. 13; Joseph Ronsley (ed.), *Myth and Reality in Irish Literature* (Ontario, 1977), p. 20.
[226] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 192; but see dissenting views in: 'Boge hand in the Durham Gospels', https://litteramepandat.wordpress.com/2013/06/25/boge-hand-in-the-durham-gospels/ (3 Jun. 2018).
[227] Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 41.

For our purposes the importance of this rudimentary hand is that it exhibits an almost perfect morphological match with the epigraphic script of 223/G65 IUTHAHEL. In particular: (i) the **d** of the pen-trial is the identical 'canonical' **d** used in the inscription and which in the hand of Núadu is used less frequently than his more prevalent curve-backed **ð** letterform; (ii) the intermediate long **r** of the pen-trials is similar in including the shortish ascender and the pronounced rotundity of the upper limb; (iii) the s-longa of the pen-trial is also identical with, in particular, the **s** of *sua* in the inscription; (iv) the **q** letterform of the pen-trial exhibits the squarish top of the **q** of the inscription with what seems to be a residual serif at the top of the ascender; and (v) the **x** letterform is also identical. If Núadu's hand exhibits material morphological similarity with the epigraphic script of 223/G65 IUTHAHEL, the hand of 'the Beginner' appears to be closer still, give or take the customary epigraphic variants. The correlation between the hand of the Beginner and the inscription of 223/G65 IUTHAHEL supports the hypothesis advanced at the beginning of this discussion, namely that the epigraphic base-script at eighth-century Llanilltud Fawr was tantamount-to-identical to the *Schulschrift* that novices were first taught to write on membrane at whatever centre produced CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42.

CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42, Llanilltud Fawr and Llancarfan

The comparison of epigraphic and manuscript writing is notoriously an area where angels fear to tread. On the one hand, the palaeographer is commanded that 'inscriptions deserve more attention than they have received from palaeographers' but on the other hand he or she is warned that the 'comparison…[is]…one of the most…delicate tasks of palaeography'.[228]. How far is it possible to push the evidence from the comparative exercise set out above?

Firstly, the three scripts discussed above – that of the copyist Núadu, 'the Beginner' and his pen-trial and the epigraphic base-script of 233/G65 IUTHAHEL - show both the

[228] Dumville *A Palaeographer's Review,* I, p. 18; Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography,* p. 44.

general similarities and at least some of the additional, more precise, morphological and scribal correlations that make a connection between them a reasonable suggestion. It is worth emphasising once more that in undertaking palaeographical comparisons although one must avoid letting 'misplaced calligraphic determinism…[make]…the morphology of a script the essential basis for its classification' in this case the morphology, combined with everything else, is persuasive. Further, we have the authority of Jean Mallon for the taking seriously of '*rapports graphiques précis, non plus entre des categories abstraites fondées à priori, mais entre des exemples concrets, individuellment désignés…'* [229]

In this regard it must be significant that many of the correlations discussed above cannot be paralleled in the inscriptions of the contemporary Margan early Christian monuments or, indeed, in other extant manuscripts with Welsh attribution. This suggests that with these three hands we are indeed looking at a localised writing-tradition. From, then, the multi-disciplinary perspective and taking into account: (1) the distribution of ecclesiastical wealth in early medieval Wales; (2) the acute paucity of centres capable of resourcing monument- and book-production over time; (3) the solid evidence for continuous learning at Llanilltud Fawr throughout the early medieval period, then such a localised writing-traditions, sustainable only at a very small number of the very highest-status centres, is exactly what one would expect to see. As we will see in the next Chapter, just such a strong, highly-localised writing-tradition has been accepted for early medieval Llanbadarn Fawr and, as I shall also argue in the next Chapter, just such a tradition may have existed at Llandeilo Fawr.

Secondly, but linked to the above, there is the question of intellectual standards over time. We know very little about the education and training of Welsh clerics in the early Middle Ages but it is highly likely that Juvencus's metrical rendition of the Gospels formed a part of the basic syllabus of core school-texts in Wales, as it did elsewhere. CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42

[229] Dumville *A Palaeographer's Review,* I, p. 3, citing W. O' Sullivan, 'Insular calligraphy: current state and problems', *Peritia,* 4 (1985), p. 351 and *idem,* 'The Lindisfarne *Scriptorium*: for and against', *Peritia,* 8 (1994), p. 86. Mallon, *Paléographie,* p. 160.

therefore points to a centre at which the syllabus was carried on and, as argued above, *c.* 850 it is very difficult to see any centre in south-east Wales other than Llanilltud Fawr being sufficiently resourced to maintain the scholarship and connections evidenced by the manuscript and its *scholia.* The reputation of Illtud's great house for learning from an early date points in the same direction. Furthermore, although fluctuation in intellectual standards was endemic at many early medieval monasteries, the patterns of decline and revival evidenced in the epigraphy of Llanilltud Fawr are mirrored in the variable accomplishments of the glossators of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42.

Thirdly, if the 'Cyfeilliog' ransomed by Edward the Elder in 914 had received an education that enabled him to dabble in Greek cryptograms, the myriad of small churches in Ergyng and Gwent evidenced in the charters seem unlikely candidates. This applies also to the likely episcopal centre at Llandogo and the monastery at Caerwent. Far more realistic is to envisage Llanilltud Fawr and latterly Llancarfan as centres of clerical training and education from which royal patronage selected suitable *magistri* for episcopal promotion. This is certainly what one sees looking backwards from the evidence of the twelfth century.

Fourthly there is the connection with Worcester, discussed in the earlier part of this Chapter. It is not inevitable that CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 travelled to Worcester from Dyfed. Worcester seems to have been involved with Welsh writing-traditions from at least the time of Bishop Waerferth, whom Asser so admired, and Asser's recuperation from illness at Caerwent suggests that the route he took between Wessex and Dyfed was the Roman coastal road through Glamorgan and onwards to Carmarthen. If this was the artery between south Wales and Wessex in the ninth century, with the adjacent monasteries as its *caravanserai,* then Llanilltud Fawr can be assumed to have been in contact with centres like Glastonbury, Gloucester and Worcester from at least the time of Alfred. Certainly, there is clear art-historical evidence from Glamorgan which shows Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian influence, perhaps even the craftsmen themselves, coming the other way.

Discussion and Conclusions

A palaeographical – including epigraphic – study of the early Christian monuments from Glamorgan shows an early medieval writing-province that was at once innately conservative but at the same time subject to a whole series of external influences. At the core of its cultural and intellectual life was the preservation of a precious fifth- and sixth-century legacy of *Romanitas.* As Wendy Davies puts it:[230]

> 'Wales has a Roman background and shared a common culture and political system with much of continental Europe at earlier stages of its history. Its early medieval development reveals a pattern of gradual devolution from late Roman society…'

This inheritance included the eclectic and multiform writing-system represented by late fourth-century Romano-British New Common Script. This developed in Glamorgan according to the exact same graphical dynamic as served to create the other post-Imperial provincial 'national hands' across early medieval Europe. The vigour and fecundity of this graphical dynamic, even within a conservative, backward-looking British culture, is clearly visible in the several phases of epigraphic script that typified and collapsed in the Glamorgan writing-province, each phase contributing further graphical resources to the repertoire of local scribes.

Provincial epigraphic *capitalis* typified in the third and fourth centuries, declined in the fifth and sixth and collapsed entirely in the first quarter of the seventh. For a period, the epigraphic base-script reflected a varied repertoire of old capitals, new geometric letterforms and letterforms drawn from everyday New Common Script. As the seventh century wore on, the Early Insular book-script that had typified out of New Common Script in the fifth century gradually typified across-media into an elegant, regular epigraphic script, the script of 259/G89TOME and 260/G1 GELUGUIN.

Through the ninth and tenth centuries this version of Early Insular book-script in turn decayed in epigraphic usage, just as it fell out of use as the preferred script for *de luxe* manuscripts. It collapsed into a less calligraphically accomplished set version of New Common

[230] Davies, *Microcosm*, p. 160.

Script, with much more in common with the contemporary *scrittura usuale* or everyday tablet-writing *'del popolo'* than the grand display-scripts of the seventh- and eighth-century Gospel books. Even on a grand, royal, high-cross at the greatest Glamorgan monastery at Llanilltud Fawr an inscriber could replicate the wooden frames and binding-straps of a writing-tablet in the inscriptions commemorating abbots and kings.[231] This constitutes a dramatic, graphic illustration, on a Glamorgan level, of the operation of the core dynamic of the graphical process – the preponderant vigour, energy and influence of the everyday writing which perpetually challenges typified, brittle, canonical scripts, eventually to undermine and replace them.

The sunset of the local epigraphic script of Glamorgan in the eleventh century coincided with increased responses to English influence. We see hints of connections with Glastonbury, Winchester and in particular Worcester. Instead, therefore, of following contemporary Irish practice (and, for that matter, the epigraphic practice of the Irish-dominated writing-province of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog) and adapting contemporary quadrilinear Later Welsh book-script into a calligraphic epigraphic base-script, individual ordinators in Glamorgan instead devised monumental scripts with an aspect and morphology drawn from Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and inscriptions. We see this in the eleventh-century 236/G84 ILQUICI and, more so, the 237/G85 ILCI inscription from Cwrt-y-Defaid. This was despite the fact that the cluster of heavily Irish-influenced early Christian monuments from Baglan and Cwrt-Uchaf show that the Glamorgan writing-province in the ninth century was wholly familiar with the standard epigraphic usage of the major Irish centres, in particular Clonmacnois and the Irish midlands, and that 'doing things the Irish way' in terms of epigraphy was an option open to the local ordinators at all times.

Furthermore, it is now clear that there was also a substantial but elusive connection between south Wales and northern France from very early in the ninth century: as I will discuss

[231] Gifford Charles-Edwards notes that 222/G66 from Llanilltud Fawr shows three inscriptions presented in 'double-panel' form one of which has two ties linking the panels: 'This has nothing to do with a simplified rendering of manuscript cords, but, rather, shows the two leather thongs that link paired tablets, as we know from the Springmount Bog set, whose thongs have survived'; *Corpus*, I, pp. 387-7.

further in the next Chapter, more manuscripts of possible Welsh origin passed through Fleury into the hands of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century antiquarians like Bongars and Vossius than survive in Wales itself. Given this, the decision to eschew Caroline minuscule, particularly given its enthusiastic adoption by reformers in neighbouring Wessex, may have been a conscious and deliberate one in nearby Glamorgan. The poetry – in particular the *Armes Prydain* – as well the sharp Welsh response to Bede's criticisms of the supposedly non-evangelising Britons – show that political feelings and a sharpening sense of national identity may have lain behind the choice to preserve their inherited writing-system. The British tonsure and paschal *computus* were famously defended in the seventh century on the basis of tradition: it seems that graphical choices within the Glamorgan writing-province, particularly from the early tenth century as relatively benevolent relations with Alfredian Wessex gave way to a more exploitative clientship with Mercia, may have had a similar sentiment behind them.[232]

The early Christian monuments of Glamorgan do not only show the essential validity of the palaeographical typology of the Italian and French schools. Considered iconographically and in a multi-disciplinary context, they shed light upon the unknown early medieval ecclesiastical landscape of Glamorgan. The early Christian monuments were high-status objects designed for specific purposes. They reflect the genuine piety of medieval Wales but it is also absolutely clear that they relate intimately to the kin-based structures of power and exploitation that dominated early medieval society in an indivisible ecclesiastical/political continuum. In some cases the early Christian monuments are clearly sepulchral, showing the location of high-status burial-places if not actual churches and their developed graveyards. Some may have marked the extent of the ecclesiastical *noddfa,* in some cases a surprisingly extensive area. Some may have marked the inner, sacralised zone within the curvilinear zoning of early medieval ecclesiastical *llanau.* In other cases they are deeds of title, demarcating the interests of those who commissioned them.

[232] D. P. Kirby disagreed with Sir John Lloyd's idea that the Welsh admired the West Saxons; see D. Kirby, 'Hywel Dda: anglophile?', *Welsh History Review,* 8 (1976), pp. 1-13.

They evidence an early medieval landscape structured according to the elite interests vested in it – such as the prebendary entitlements of the *clas* of Cadog catalogued in the *Vita Cadoci,* or the superior tenancy of a secular or ecclesiastical kindred over time, the kind of interests that Illtud's relations were so terrified to lose when the precociously holy Samson arrived at Llanilltud Fawr. Many of the monuments seem designed to anchor the *braint* or entitlement of the kindred into the actual soil itself and in the act of commemorating the dead and petitioning for the good of their souls, also make clear their perpetual rights in their land.

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Chapter Four. The writing-province of early medieval Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, *c.* 400 – 1100

Introduction and research aims

This Chapter Four considers the writing-traditions of early medieval Deheubarth and Brycheiniog as a combined writing-province, with three aims in mind.

Firstly, I will show how in the earliest post-Roman phase of this south-western writing-tradition writing operated as a powerful graphical symbol of ethnicity, status and aspiration. It was pressed into service as a means of social and political aggrandisement by the different factions that competed within Deheubarth and Brycheiniog *c.* 400-600. These conflicts find reflection in the early Christian monuments of the period in ogam, Latin and eventually both scripts combined.

Secondly I will show how the integration of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog into the Irish Sea culture-province opened the region to cultural and intellectual influences, particularly from the ninth century onwards, that profoundly influenced the evolution of the graphical process in a way quite different to that which occurred in south-east Wales.

Thirdly, I will suggest that it was in Deheubarth and in response to Continental influence that the 'Protean variety' represented by the radically different aspects of Later Welsh book-script typified themselves, from *c.* 850 onwards, into the eleventh-century flat-topped house-script written at Llanbadarn Fawr, the closest early medieval Wales can offer to a genuine canonical 'house-script'.

Part One. The graphical process in the writing-province of early medieval Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, *c.* 400-1100

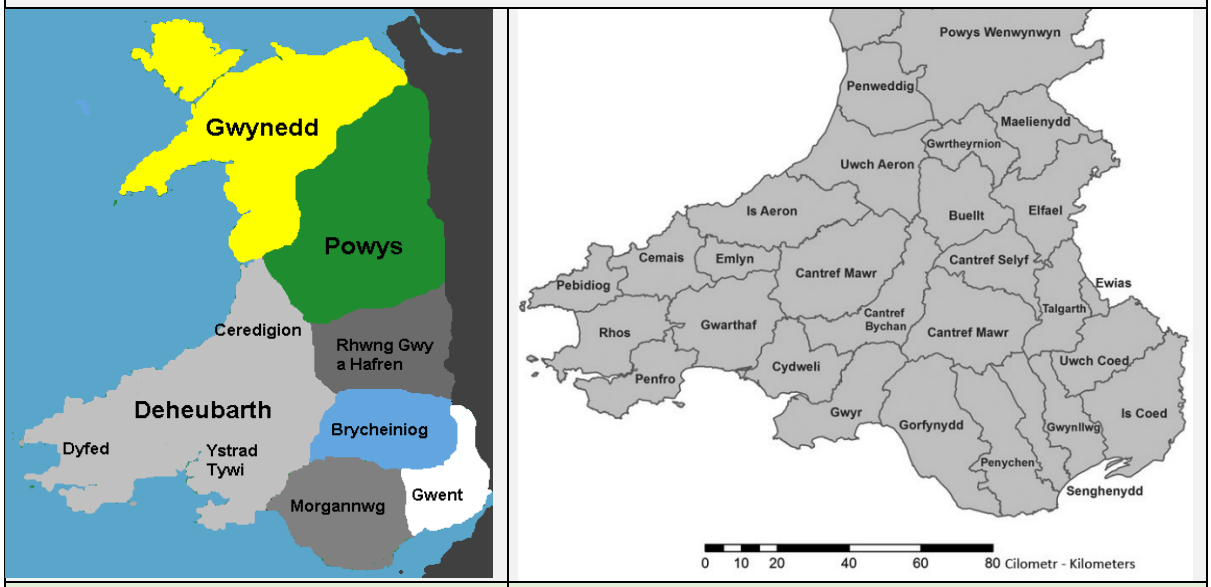
Background

Geography and history

Like Glamorgan, the history and culture of the mutable early medieval polities that together comprised Deheubarth and the shadowy separate kingdom of Brycheiniog were

conditioned by a range of very different geographical contrasts.[1] Figure 104 below shows these two regions: Deheubarth, comprising the three separate regions of Dyfed, Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi and Brycheiniog, east of the Tywi and stretching across the mountainous interior towards the border with Ewias and Gwent.

Figure 104. The early medieval kingdoms and *cantrefi* of west and south Wales.



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Geography exposed Deheubarth to more complex international influences than was the case for south-east Wales, embedded as it had been in the highly Romanised Severn-Cotswolds region and closer to England. Deheubarth and Brycheiniog had also, of course, been part of the Roman diocese but their geography orientated them towards the west and the sea.[2] This orientation represents the core historiographical difference between the early medieval writing

[1] 'Deheubarth' means 'the right-hand part', i.e. 'the south' of Wales. 'Deheubarth was in origin a geographical description rather than a political designation; it referred to the whole of south Wales from Cardigan Bay to the Wye'; R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest* (Oxford, 1987), p. 217. Later, it continued to be used as an overarching if less geographically extensive designation for the originally separate western kingdoms of Ceredigion, Dyfed and Ystrad Tywi. Of these polities, Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi may have been combined into a putative kingdom of *Seisyllwg* by Seisyll ap Clydog, king of Ceredigion, extending his dominion south to the Tywi valley, *c*. 730. Later, in 904, Seisyllwg was absorbed with Dyfed into an actual kingdom of *Deheubarth* under Hywel Dda. References to 'kingdoms' should however be read subject to Davies's cautionary comment that the fluid nature of the 'political geography of power' in early medieval Wales meant that 'kingdoms' 'expanded, contracted, fragmented and even disappeared, as military fortunes ebbed and flowed'; R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063-1415*, History of Wales II (Oxford, 1987), p. 59.

[2] For the connections between the littoral areas around the Irish Sea, see L. Alcock, 'Was there an Irish Sea Culture Province in the Dark Ages?' in D. Moore (ed.), *The Irish Sea Province in Archaeology and History* (Cardiff, 1970), pp. 55-65 and Julia M. H. Smith, 'Writing in Britain and Ireland', pp. 38-40, for a description of 'western', 'eastern' and 'central' 'cultural provinces' in the early medieval British Isles.

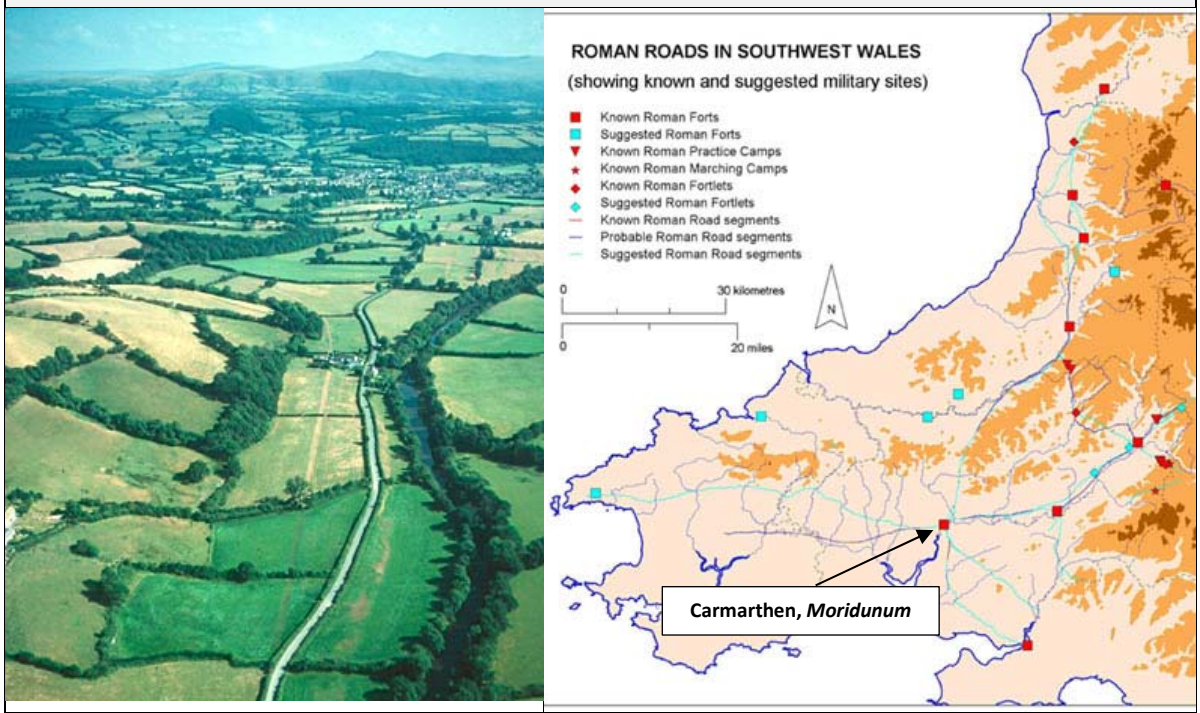
provinces of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog on the one hand and the south-east on the other.[3] The influence of geography also operated at a local level. The northernmost kingdom of Ceredigion has at its back the great glaciated massif of the Cambrian mountains, difficult to traverse even on today's modern roads.[4] It has therefore always been forced to face the western sea, and, just beyond the horizon, Ireland.[5] In the extreme west of Deheubarth the *cantrefi* of Cemais, Pebidiog, Rhos, Penfro and Gwarthaf, approximately modern Pembrokeshire, served as the highway to Ireland. The traditional embarkation place for Ireland was Whitesands Bay near St Davids; in Welsh, *Porth Mawr*, 'the Great Port'.[6] As Giraldus noted, 'In clear weather the mountains of Ireland can be seen from St David's. The Irish Sea can be crossed in one short day'.[7] Not far inland, travellers enjoyed the amenity of the Roman road to the old *civitas*-capital of the Demetae at *Moridunum*, modern Carmarthen, which archaeology now shows to have extended much further into Pembrokeshire than previously thought.[8] In addition to this important land-route were the important sea-routes into Carmarthen and Swansea Bays and the

[3] Thomas Charles-Edwards similarly notes that '…Dyfed…may because of its Irish connections, be untypical of the rest of Wales'; *idem*, 'The Seven Bishop-Houses', p. 262.
[4] 'From most vantage points the eye beholds level horizons and gains an impression of a stepped landform, from sea-level to the hilltops of central Wales'; D. Q. Bowen, 'The Land of Cardiganshire' in J. L. Davies and D. Kirby (eds.), *Cardiganshire County History Volume 1. From the Earliest Times to the Coming of the Normans* (Cardiff, 1994), p. 3.
[5] As E. G. Bowen colourfully described it '…a great Celtic thalassocracy reaching from Iceland to Spain and united under a single cultural stimulus…the Emerald Isle shone like a beacon in the darkness of contemporary Europe'; E. G. Bowen, *Seaways and Settlements in the Celtic Lands* (Cardiff, 1969), p. 91. Bowen saw St David's Head as a departure and arrival point for Howth Head as well as for the shorter crossing to Wexford, *ibid.*, p. 83 & fig. 35. Proinsias Mac Cana put it more prosaically, 'Obviously the major factor in shaping the historical relations between Ireland and Wales is the geographical one, the fact that they face each other across the Irish Sea'; Mac Cana, 'Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages: an overview' in K. Jankulak and J. M. Wooding (eds.), *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2007), p. 17. Kirby comments that 'Ceredigion's maritime character exposed it to seaborne influences, particularly Irish in the fifth and sixth centuries and Scandinavian in the age of the Vikings'; D. Kirby, 'The Political Development of Ceredigion, *c.* 400-1081' in Davies and Kirby (eds.), *County History*, p. 319.
[6] 'A good share of the commercial traffic across Britain to the Continent must have passed by the doors of St David's': C. H. Slover, 'Early Literary Channels between Ireland and Wales', *University of Texas Bulletin Studies in English*, 7 (1927), p. 8.
[7] Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Kambriae*, II, 1, vi, p. 109.
[8] T. James, 'A Roman road west of Carmarthen', *Archaeology in Wales*, 30 (1990), pp. 55-6. Christopher J. Arnold and Jeffrey L. Davies, *Roman and Early Medieval Wales* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 60-1 & pls. 7a & 7b, print excellent photographs of the road as excavated at Pwll-y-Hwyaid Farm, Whitland. For the archaeology see: 'Roman Road West of Carmarthen -Via Julia', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/114111 (21 Jul. 2022). For Roman Carmarthen, see J. L. Davies, 'The Roman Period' in Davies and Kirby (eds.), *County History*, pp. 275-6.

upper Bristol Channel, the powerful winds and tides of which famously washed three oarless Irish *peregrini* up at Alfred's feet in 891.[9]

Stretching north-east from Carmarthen itself lay another, third, distinct region, Ystrad Tywi, through which ran the fertile river valley of the Tywi. North-east up the Tywi Valley ran a Roman military highway, linking Carmarthen with up-country forts at Llandeilo and Llandovery. At Llandovery the road appears to have forked westwards to Pumsaint and the fort at Llanio, or *Bremia*, in the direction of Ceredigion, and eastwards, over the mountains, to Brecon and the upper Usk Valley, the area that was to become the post-Roman upland kingdom of Brycheiniog.[10] Figure 105 below shows (left) the Roman road between Llandovery and Pumsaint as a yellow parch-mark in the centre of the landscape and (right) the network of Roman roads in Deheubarth.

Figure 105. The Roman roads of south-west Wales.



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[9] *Chronicle, s.a.* 891. For an interesting perspective on the Bristol Channel as a highway for commerce in the fifth to seventh centuries see Nancy Hollinrake, 'Dark Age Traffic on the Bristol Channel, UK: A Hypothesis', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 36:2 (2007), pp. 336-343.
[10] Arnold and Davies, *Roman and Early Medieval Wales*, p. 16 & fig. 2.2C.

In cultural terms, the enduring influence of Ireland was amplified by the relative lack of Romanization, which has been described as a 'veneer'.[11] *Romanitas* has usually been seen as concentrated at Carmarthen and affecting only small numbers of 'urban and rural elites'.[12] In the countryside villas certainly existed but in general they seem to have been smallish farmhouse-style affairs, nothing like the magnificent quasi-palaces of the Severn-Cotswolds. This is notwithstanding the recent discovery of a fabulous cut-glass Roman bowl at Abermagwr, Ceredigion, at a villa that the excavator otherwise described as 'a comparatively rustic building, with clay floors and open fireplaces'.[13] In terms of its Romanisation, then, Deheubarth seems comparable with Cornwall, where 'evidence from the excavated settlements reflects strong continuities between the Iron and the Roman period'.[14] CADW and the Dyfed Archaeological Trust summarise the current understanding as follows:[15]

> 'There is very little known evidence for Romanised settlement in southwest Wales. The only villa known is at Llys Brychan in Carmarthenshire, and a second has recently been discovered near Trawscoed Roman fort in Ceredigion [i.e. Abermagwr]. Other possible villa sites in west Wales are probably better classified as Romanised farmsteads.'

There is, accordingly, little evidence for post-Roman 'continuity' in the sense of the persistence of Roman culture. The fact that an early medieval church, later the medieval priory church of St John and St Teulyddog, was sited within the Roman walls of Carmarthen above a Roman cemetery suggests that a post-Roman *civitas*-bishopric of the Demetae may have

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[11] G. Williams, 'Recent work on rural settlement in south-west Wales' in B. C. Burham and J. L. Davies (eds.), *Conquest, Co-Existence and Change, Recent Work in Roman Wales*, Trivium, 25 (Lampeter, 1991). As J. L. Davies puts it, 'In south-west Wales as a whole the Roman impact on native society and economy does not appear to have been great'; Davies, 'The Roman Period', p. 293.
[12] *Corpus*, II, pp. 4-5. For a summary archaeological assessment of Carmarthen see 'Carmarthen Roman Town (Moridunum)', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/94432/ (21 Jul. 2022).
[13] 'CBHC / RCAHMW > News > Abermagwr', https://rcahmw.gov.uk/abermagwr-the-remote-welsh-roman-villa-which-produced-a-unique-cut-glass-bowl-and-early-evidence-for-the-slaters-craft-in-wales/ (20 Oct. 2022).
[14] G. Williams and H. Mytum, 'Llawhaden, Dyfed. Excavations on a Group of Small Defended Enclosures, 1980-4' in K. Blockley (ed.), *British Archaeological Report*, British Series, 275 (Oxford, 1998). For Cornwall see Sam Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape. The countryside in early medieval Cornwall, Devon and Wessex* (Exeter, 2006), p. 72. Ken Dark also compares the area west of Carmarthen to Dumnonia west of the Exe, both areas being 'outside the villa landscape'; K. Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 152, 184.
[15] 'Upper Newton Roman Villa, Wolfscastle', https://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/wp/discovery/projects/upper-newton-roman-villa-wolfscastle/ (20 Oct. 2022).

survived at Carmarthen in the fifth century.[16] Otherwise, the most plentiful archaeological evidence relating to the local elite, clerical or secular, is represented by native-style hill-forts.[17] As Ken Dark puts it:[18]

> 'Just as in Dumnonia…the local Romano-British elite seem to have remained in control in the fifth and sixth centuries, based on hill-forts which had – in many cases – been their fourth-century centres'.

The distant travails of the Roman diocesan administration are therefore likely to have meant far less to the fourth- and fifth-century inhabitants of Deheubarth than events closer to home. The dominant external cultural, ethnic and political influence at work in the region from at least the late fourth century was not that of Rome, but of Ireland and the Irish, or *Scotti*.[19] Deheubarth seems to have experienced considerable Irish settlement from at least the time of the 'barbarian conspiracy' of 367 when, as Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, the *Scotti*

[16] T. A. James, 'Excavations at the Augustinian Priory of St John and St Teulyddog, Carmarthen, 1979', *AC*, 134 (1985), pp. 120-6; Davies and Kirby, *County History*, pp. 111-116 & pls. III – X; also *ibid.*, 'Appendix 1: Gazetteer of Hillforts and Enclosures', pp. 239 *et ff.*

[17] For Coygan see G. J. Wainwright, *Coygan Camp: A Prehistoric, Romano-British and Dark Age Settlement in Carmarthenshire*, Cambrian Archaeological Association (1967); for Carew see E. Campbell, 'Carew Castle', *Archaeology in Wales*, 30 (1990), p. 69; for Castell Henllys see H. Mytum, 'Castell Henllys', *Archaeology in Wales*, 38 (1999), p. 124 and also 'Castell Henllys Hillfort', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/94989/ (20 Oct. 2022); for Gateholm see J. L. Davies, D. B. Hague and A. H. A Hogg, 'The hut-settlement on Gateholm, Pembrokeshire', *AC*, 120 (1971), pp. 102-10. Recent LIDAR air-surveys of the islands off the Pembrokeshire coast have also revealed potential Viking-age structures on the island of Grassholm, see 'Grassholm Island Settlement', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/404206/ (20 Oct. 2022). For Brawdy see K. Dark, *Brawdy Hill-fort. Excavation interim report* (Unpublished report, 1990, lodged with the Dyfed Archaeological Trust). Toby Driver and the *RCAHMW* conducted further geophysical surveys of this site in 2017; 'Brawdy Promontory Fort', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/305322/ (20 Oct. 2022). For Tenby see 'Tenby Town', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33213?term=Tenby (20 Oct. 2022) where the site is described as a 'Viking fishing village'. Better evidence for the early medieval *llys* at Tenby is literary, in the poem *Etmic Dinbych* from the *Book of Taliesin;* see Paul Russell, 'Adu6yn gaer yssyd: an Early Welsh Poem Revisited', *Celtica*, 29 (2017), pp. 6-37 and K. Dark, 'Etmic Dinbych: a ninth-century literary analogy for sixth-century Tintagel', *CMCS*, 80 (2020).

[18] Dark, *Britain and the End*, p. 185.

[19] Thomas Charles-Edwards notes, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 159, that this term has no native equivalent and is first attested in Latin writers during the late Empire, see: Strabo, *Geography*, ed. and tr. F. Lasserre, *Strabon: Géographie*, Budé, ii (Paris, 1966), iv, 5, 4, p. 168; Didorus Siculus, *Didori Bibliotheca Historica*, ed. F. Vogel, (repr. Stuttgart, 1964), v, 32, ii, p. 45; Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, ed. Parroni, *Pomponii Melae de Chorographia Libri Tres* (Rome, 1984), III, 6, p. 164 and C. Iulius Solinus, *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1895), 22, 2-3, p. 100.

collaborated with the Picts and Saxons (and, on one occasion, with the obsure *Attacotti*) in attacking the diocese.[20]

Deheubarth was however not the only destination for itinerant *Scotti.* Irish settlement also occurred in Dál Riata, Man, Gwynedd, Brycheiniog, Gower, Cydweli and in the Dumnonian peninsula from the late fourth century onwards. However in Wales those Irish who embedded themselves most permanently did so in Deheubarth and Brycheiniog: from the sixth century (at least) until the ninth, Dyfed was ruled by a dynasty with Irish ancestry.[21] In these areas survive a remarkable cluster of early Christian monuments inscribed in ogam, or both Latin and ogam, which provide striking graphical evidence for these movements of people. They record not only high-status persons with Irish names but the presence of spoken Irish.[22] Irish place-names have also been detected in the landscape, such as *feidir, meidir* ('lane, track', cognate with Irish *bóthar*), in north Dyfed (although much of Melville Richards' work on these place-names has been challenged by Iwan Wmffre) and dedications to Irish saints, such as Brigit, are numerous.[23]

The traditional historiography of the advent of the Irish in Deheubarth relies upon an Old Irish narrative work generally titled by modern scholars *The Expulsion of the Déisi* (the extant manuscripts provide different Old Irish titles susceptible to different translations).[24] The

[20] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae,* ed. W. Seyfarth (2 vols., Leipzig, 1978), xx, I, p. 1. For accounts of early Irish contact in west Wales see Proinsias MacCana, 'Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages: an overview', in Jankulak and Wooding (eds.), *Ireland and Wales,* pp. 17-45; also Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* pp. 158-172 and *WAB,* pp. 174-181. For the reverse influence, i.e. how the British nexus influenced Ireland itself, including the facilitation of the conversion of Ireland and arguments for consequential societal change, see H. Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland* (London, 1991), esp. chaps. 2 and 8.

[21] Davies, 'The Roman Period', pp. 284-6. For helpful summaries of the later historiography of Irish ethnic consciousness and influence in Deheubarth and Brycheiniog see Philip Rance, 'Attacotti, Déisi and Magnus Maximus: The Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain', *Britannia,* 32 (2001), p. 252 & n. 58; also Mark Redknap's commentary on the strong Irish influence at work in Brycheiniog in Lane and Redknap, *Llangorse Crannog,* pp. 406-8.

[22] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* p. 163.

[23] Melville Richards, 'The Irish settlements in south-west Wales – a topographical approach', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* 90 (1960), pp. 133-52; K. Dark, *Discovery by Design* (Oxford, 1994), chapter 2; E. Hamp, 'Vortiporis protectoris', *Studia Celtica,* 30 (1996), p. 293. For the place-names see Melville Richards, 'Welsh *meid(i)r, moydir,* Irish *bother* "lane road"', *Lochlann: a Review of Celtic Studies,* 2 (1962), pp. 28-33; for contrasting views see I. Wmffre, 'Post-Roman Irish settlement in Wales: new insights from a recent study of Cardiganshire place-names' in Jankulak and Wooding (eds.), *Ireland and Wales,* pp. 46-61.

[24] *Taired na nDésse,* ed. and tr. K. Meyer, 'The expulsion of the Déssi', *Y Cymmrodor,* 14 (1901), pp. 101-35. For a discussion of the surviving MSS see T. Ó Cathasaigh, 'The Déissi and Dyfed', *Éigse,* 20 (1984), pp. 1-33.

oldest surviving recension is of eighth-century date and describes the expulsion of a people called the *Déisi* from the great royal centre of Tara, Co. Meath.[25] After leaving Tara the *Déisi* are recorded as settling in the east of Munster, approximately the modern counties of Waterford and Tipperary.[26] Some of them are also recorded as continuing over the sea to *'Demed'* ('Dyfed'), led by one *Eochaid Allmuir* ('*Eochaid* across the sea' or '*Eochaid* foreigner'), whose pedigree repeats some of the names in a separate but clearly related tenth-century Dyfed pedigree preserved in BL, MS Harley 3859.

The connection with Deheubarth is regarded as plausible, given the overlap in the genealogies, and it may in fact have been the Welsh of Dyfed who supplied genealogical information back to Ireland in the ninth century.[27] In another text, the *Sanas Cormaic,* a glossary of Old Irish written *c.* 900, the King of Cashel, Cormac mac Cuilennáin, noted that there had been a time when the Irish had dwelt on both sides of the sea and had enjoyed great power over the British.[28] Recent scholarship suggests that *The Expulsion of the Déisi*, or at least some of it, represents a foundation-myth invented by a later, powerful, sub-kingdom of *Déisi Muman* ('the *Déisi* of Munster') for the purpose of devising a respectable origin leading back to Tara and hiding the fact that they had in fact been a subservient people – an *aithechthúath* or 'less successful tribal group reduced in the political struggle to the status of a rent-paying people' - based in Munster from the beginning.[29] Rance points out that one way to threaten the legitimacy of a dynasty in early Ireland was to portray its members as *anfleithi* or 'non-lords'.[30] If the Irish people that settled in Deheubarth in the fourth and fifth centuries

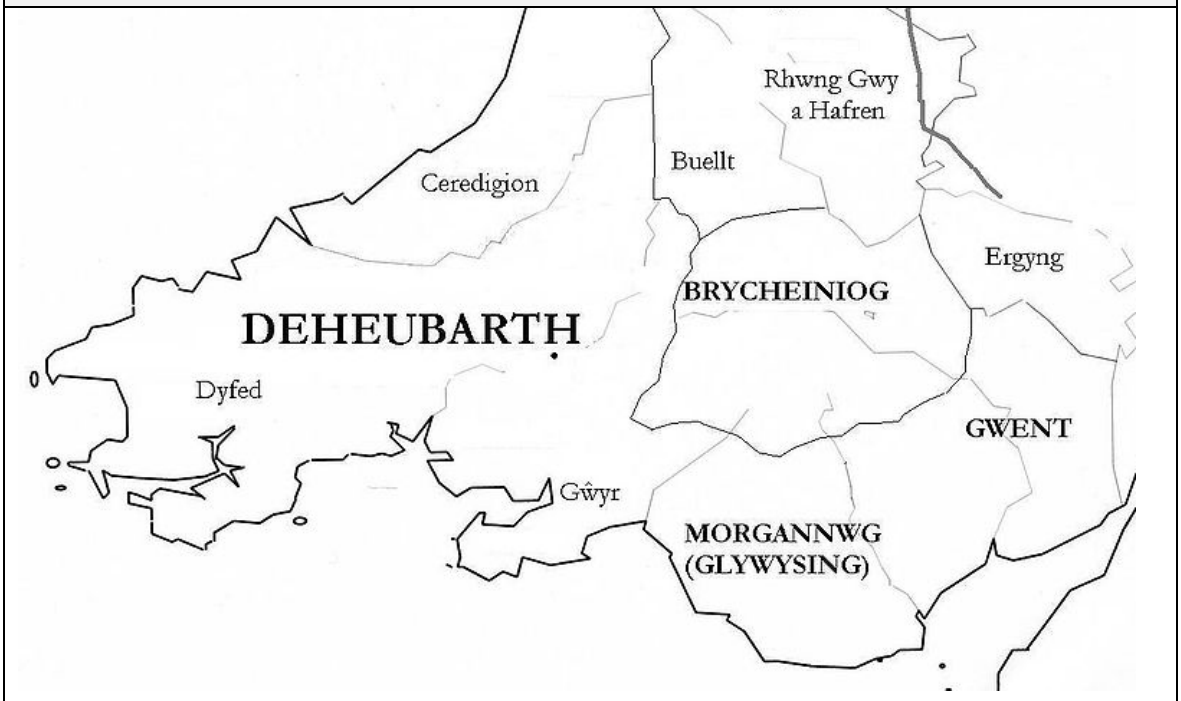
[25] The term *Déisi* is somewhat unusual to denote an Irish tribe in that it derives from the Old Irish '*déis'*, meaning 'client(s)' or 'vassalry': this distinguishes it from other Irish ethnonyms that derive from ancestors' personal names; David Thornton, *Kings, Chronologies, and Genealogies: Studies in the Political History of Early Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Oxford, 2003), p. 121.
[26] In contrast with north Wales, where place names point to immigrants from Leinster; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 159; for the original work see J. Lloyd-Jones, *Enwau Lleodd Sir Gaernarfon* (Cardiff, 1928), pp. 4-5.
[27] Charles-Edwards comments that the tradition of the migration of the *Déisi Muman* is 'old but muddled', noting that the *Historia Brittonum* places the Uí Líatháin from eastern Co. Cork in Dyfed and that the *Sanas Cormaic* says nothing of the *Déisi*; *idem, Early Christian Ireland,* p. 163.
[28] Kuno Meyer (ed.), 'Sanas Cormaic: an Old Irish Glossary' in *Anecdota from Irish MSS*, IV (1912), p. 75.
[29] D. Ó Corráin, 'On the "Aithechthúatha" tracts', *Éigse,* 19 (1982), pt. 1, pp. 159-66.
[30] Rance, 'Irish Federates', p. 264.

inherited something of a social inferiority complex derived from their relatively low status in the all-important hierarchy of Irish Iron Age society, then, as we will see, that would explain a great deal about their enthusiastic appropriation of the highest-status accoutrement of *Romanitas*, namely the grand memorial inscription carved on stone. As Thomas Charles-Edwards notes:[31]

> '...the post-Roman popularity of commemorative monuments on stone is associated with an Irish presence. In Dyfed…even pure ogham inscriptions are preserved, as in the Isle of Man'.

The geographical focus of early medieval Brycheiniog, the other 'Irish' kingdom, lay in the upper reaches of the Usk valley along the Roman road as it ran north and west from Abergavenny, past Llangorse Lake to the fort at Brecon and then on to Llandovery and the upper Tywi Valley. The heart of the kingdom was the relatively lower-lying basin between the Brecon Beacons to the south and the Black Mountains and the Epynt to the east and north, with the rest of the kingdom extending over the uplands northwards and southwards.

Figure 106. The kingdom of Brycheiniog



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[31] *WAB*, p. 56.

The history of the early medieval kingdom of Brycheiniog is obscure. A later origin-myth involves the marriage of a Welsh princess to an Irish king to produce the eponymous *Brychan* (thus *'Brycheiniog'* 'the territory of Brychan') but this evidence is hardly historical.[32] Better evidence is that the genealogy of the rulers of Brycheiniog suggests a descent from the rulers of Dyfed.[33] A post-Roman origin for the polity involving the Irish is feasible: Ken Dark saw no Romano-British predecessor *civitas* and notes that *Brychan* is an Irish personal name. He suggests that Brycheiniog might have been the creation of Irish adventurers from farther west, moving inland up the Tywi Valley along the Roman road.[34] Charles Thomas similarly envisaged Irish settlement in Brycheiniog as a 'conscious decision' that was more than simply a progressive encroachment onto the next adjacent territory, proposing 'several score Demetian *nobiliores* arriving in the Usk valley around 500'.[35] Thomas Charles-Edwards considers that the kingdom broke away from the post-Roman Silurian polity as a result of just such Irish settlement and, in the field of linguistics, Patrick Sims-Williams has shown that the early kingdom was indeed a land of three languages.[36]

The later history of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog from the ninth to the twelfth centuries is the same story of Irish influence. But what, in concrete terms, did this interaction mean? The sources point to traders, political exiles, military allies, plunderers and clerics all travelling between Ireland and Wales.[37] As well as Irishmen in Britain there were British in Ireland. Two churches in particular seem to have retained an 'enduring British element' into the ninth century. One was 'Durrow of the Britons' in southern Brega and the other 'Gallen of the Britons' in Co. Offaly, close to Clonmacnois, whose patron saint appears to have been one *Mo*

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[32] As detailed in the *De Situ Brecheniauc, VSBG*, pp. 313-5; for the genealogy see *MWG*, §§1-3, pp. 339-340. Sims-Williams notes that the orthography of the personal names and glosses in *De Situ* are pre-1150 and appear to incorporate the dynastic memory of the pre-Norman kingdom which may have been preserved at the royal crannog on Llangorse Lake; see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The provenance of the Llywarch Hen poems: a case for Llan-gors, Brycheiniog', *CMCS*, 26 (1993) pp. 27-63; Lane and Redknap, *Llangorse Crannog*, p. 408.
[33] A. Woolf, 'The expulsion of the Irish from Dyfed' in Jankulak and Wooding (eds.), *Ireland and Wales*, pp. 102-115; Kari Maund, *The Welsh Kings. Warriors, Warlords and Princes* (Stroud, 2006), p. 43.
[34] Dark, Britain and the End, p. 91.
[35] Charles Thomas, *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak?* (Cardiff, 1994), pp. 114-6, 127.
[36] *WAB*, p. 20; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The five languages of Wales in the pre-Norman inscriptions', *CMCS*, 44 (2002), pp. 1-36.
[37] Mac Cana, 'Ireland and Wales', p. 22; Charles-Edwards, 'Britons in Ireland', pp. 15-26.

Chonóc, later identified with St Cynog, a legendary son of Brychan Brycheiniog.[38] The Welsh played significant roles within the Irish church. The *Annals of Ulster, s.a.* 864, record the death of 'Aedgein the Briton, bishop of Cell Dara [Kildare], scribe, anchorite and an elder' at the venerable age of 116.[39] David Dumville also sees 'an interesting intellectual commerce between south-west Wales and the west midlands of Ireland in the mid-tenth century'.[40] These links were still strong in the time of Sulien who is recorded as travelling to Ireland before 1059, remaining there to study for thirteen years before returning to St David's as bishop.[41] D. Simon Evans described this regional orientation as follows:[42]

> 'Here we find ourselves within an 'Irish-Sea Province', which served as background and also as stimulant to intercourse and communication, commercial, political, ecclesiastical, artistic and literary'.

The epigraphic evidence bears eloquent testimony to all of this. The presence of numerous ogam-inscribed early Christian monuments provides the most important evidence for Irish settlement in western Britain. The later early Christian monuments from the ninth to eleventh centuries also show a much greater debt to Irish epigraphic usage than is the case for south-east Wales, throwing the different cultural orientation of the two writing-provinces into relief.[43] The epigraphy not only shows two separate phases of Irish influence – we might call them the 'early ogam phase' and the 'later Clonmacnois phase' - but it also points to shifting geographical connections. In the earlier period, the epigraphic continuity between Brycheiniog, Deheubarth and Ireland seems to have been with the ancestral lands of the *Déisi* but from the

[38] 'Durrow' or *Dairmag* of the Britons is recorded in the *Annals of Ulster, s.a.* 836, as having been attacked by heathens from southern Brega; *Galinne* of the Britons is recorded as having been burned, 'with all its dwelling places and oratory', by Feidlimid mac Cremthainn, king of Munster, in 823; see '*The Annals of Ulster.* Documents of Ireland Corpus of Electronic Texts', https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100001A/index.html (22 Jul. 2022).
[39] *Annals of Ulster*, s. a. 864.
[40] Kathryn Grabowski and D. N. Dumville, Chronicles and annals of medieval Ireland and Wales: The Clonmacnoise-group texts (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 225-6.
[41] Michael Lapidge, 'The Welsh-Latin poetry of Sulien's family', *Studia Celtica*, 8–9 (1973–1974), pp. 71, 84-7. Mac Cana suggests that Sulien lived at Clonmacnois or one of the other midland monasteries, *idem*, 'Ireland and Wales', p. 32.
[42] D. Simon Evans, 'Contact or Impact', p. 146.
[43] As noted by Nancy Edwards in *Corpus*, II, p. 35. For the ogam alphabet see Damian McManus, *A Guide to Ogam*, Maynooth Monographs, 4 (Maynooth, 1991), esp. pp. 44-9; for the concentration of ogams in Dyfed and Brycheiniog see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Some Problems in Deciphering the Early Ogam Alphabet', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 91 (1993), pp. 133-80.

ninth century cultural and intellectual connections reorientated themselves further north, to Leinster and the great monastic centres along the Shannon.

I have set out this historical and ethnographic background in some detail because it is fundamental to the arguments advanced in this Chapter that the writing-province of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog developed differently to that of the south-east. The south-east was also, of course, fully exposed to Irish influence throughout the early Middle Ages. There survive from Glamorgan some early Christian monuments executed in pure Irish style with high-quality Irish iconography and book-script. But in Glamorgan, Irish influence in epigraphic practice is exceptional, Continental influence non-existent and Anglo-Scandinavian influence much stronger than in Deheubarth and Brycheiniog.

Epigraphic scripts c. 400-800

Given that Deheubarth inherited much less *Romanitas* than south-east of Wales, the earliest inscriptions come as something of a surprise. Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS is an imposing inscription recovered from a now-unknown location at the little hamlet of Maesllanwrthwl, near Crugybar, close to the road between the Roman forts at Llandovery and Pumsaint in northern Carmarthenshire.[44] The date of the monument has been subject to discussion: Nash-Williams suggested *c.* 550 on the basis that 'Bishop Paulinus' was a contemporary of St David and present at the synod of Llanddewibrefi (in this he followed Westwood); Kenneth Jackson suggested early- to mid-sixth century but the *Corpus* offers a fifth-century date, following Tedeschi who proposed an early date (fifth century) on palaeographical and typological grounds, citing with approval similar inscriptions from Tripolitania and the Ovidian overtones of the inscription.[45] Tedeschi's contextual arguments have much force and a fifth-century date seems considerably more persuasive than a mid-sixth. Figure 107 overleaf shows the location, the inscription and a transcription.

[44] *Corpus*, II, pp. 208-211. For the *Coflein* record and map, see 'Paulinus Stone at Cae Polion near Maes Llanwrthwl', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/420739/ (20 Oct. 2022).
[45] *ECMW*, no. 139, p. 107; *LHEB*, p. 118; *Corpus*, II, p. 211; *CL*, pp. 118-9.

Figure 107. Pant-y-Polion, Maes Llanwrthwl, Cynwyl Gaeo, Carms. Incomplete Roman-letter inscribed stone. Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS.





SERVATVR FIDAEI
PATRIEQVE SEMPER
AMATOR
HIC PAVLIN-
VS IACIT CVLTOR PIENTI-
SIMVS AEQVI

(For translation see text below)





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Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS is a remarkable inscription. It is executed horizontally using fine epigraphic capitals and shows a grand late-Roman monumental aspect. Nancy Edwards notes that 'The even layout of the inscription is unusual…the lettering appears almost elegant, which might imply an awareness of Roman monumental inscriptions'.[46] The epigraphic script shows diagnostically Romano-British idiosyncrasies which Tedeschi lists as follows: (i) the right-hand diagonal of the letterform of **A** protruding above the apex of the *ductus*, a letterform borrowed from late-Roman *capitalis actuaria* or rustic capitals (this can be seen in the **A** of the first word, *SERVATUR*); (ii) an idiosyncratic *ductus* of **F** formed by a tall **P** topped with an oblique 'lid' (see the letterform in the *FIDAEI*), a letterform absent from Continental inscriptions but which also appears in Gso-17/431/P15 DOB[-]TVCI from St Clydai's church in north Pembrokeshire near Nevern;[47] (iii) the foot-stroke of **L** slopes downwards (see the letterform of **L** in the word *PAVLIN*-); (iv) a letterform of **Q** with the 'tail' protruding to the right and folding downwards (see *PATRIEQ*); (v) **R** with an 'open eye' where the lobe fails to touch the vertical stem (the best example is the letterform in the *OR* of *CVLTOR*); and (vi) **R** with the final diagonal stroke raised above the line (also in *PATRIEQ*).[48]

The obvious explanation of this inscription is that it commemorates an educated member of the fifth-century local British elite. A good palaeographic parallel might be Gn-30/32/AN45 SATURNINVS, a similar early inscription in grand provincial epigraphic *capitalis* from Llansadwrn, Anglesey.[49] Like Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS, this inscription

[46] *Corpus*, II, p. 209.
[47] A somewhat similar form, albeit with the headstroke lower than the lobe, appears in an *abcdarium* in P. Antin I, fr. 1 (*CLA*, *Suppl.* 1705) of 350-449, where it is described by Serena Ammirati as *semionciale*; see Ammirati, *Sul libro*, p. 60 & Tav. XLIII; 'TM 64602 / LDAB 5832', https://www.trismegistos.org/text/64602 (8 Dec. 2022).
[48] *CL*, pp. 117-9.
[49] *Corpus*, III, pp. 206-9. Gn-30/32/AN45 SATURNINVS is also the subject of date-controversy: earlier authorities proposing *c.* 525-537 have been challenged by Tedeschi who proposes mid-sixth century; *CIL*, pp. 210-11.

also commemorates a post-Roman worthy with a good late Latin name, probably the *Sadwrn* after whom the church at Llansadwrn is named.[50]

It is not only the fine epigraphic script and resounding personal name of Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS that proclaims *Romanitas*. The text of the inscription is one of only two surviving inscriptions from Wales written in hexameters. David Howlett transcribes and translates them as follows:[51]

SERVATUR FIDAEI PATRIEQVE SEMPER AMATOR
HIC PAULINUS IACIT CVLTOR PIENTISIMUS AEQVI

'A lover always of faith and fatherland is saved;
Here Paulinus lies, most pious cultivator of the just'.

Howlett refuted both Macalister's suggestion that the hexameters were 'crude' and Nash-Williams's that they were 'barbarous'. He detected echoes of Lucan and Ovid and commented that the verses are '…by the standards of epigraphic calligraphy, grammar, syntax, prosody and mathematical composition…competent, certainly not barbarous'.[52] As well as echoes of the classical poets they also show an early use of phraseology that was to become formulaic in later Insular Latin panegyric and Patrick Sims-Williams notes numerous later Insular echoes.[53] Nash-Williams dismissed them as part of the repertoire of 'stock expressions' used for metrical epitaphs in the fifth and sixth centuries in Gaul and elsewhere, circulated in manuals prepared for the use of lapidaries.[54] A better explanation, more consistent with Tedeschi's fifth-century date, is that aristocratic fifth-century Britons with names like Paulinus

[50] Another fine, extended horizontal inscription is Gn-6/33/AN46 BIVATISVS from Llantrisant, Anglesey; see *Corpus*, III, pp. 210-216: perhaps the finest of all are Gn-2/77/CN2 VERACIVS and Gn-1/78/CN3 SENACVS from Aberdaron, Caerns., from the first half of the sixth century, see *Corpus*, III, pp. 241-6. Palaeographically, Gn-13/271/MR2 AETERN- from Barmouth shows identical ligatures including E+R reversed ligatures: it is tempting to see this inscription as being by the same hand as the PAVLINVS inscription; see *Corpus*, III, p. 375 & esp. fig. MR2.2.
[51] D. R. Howlett, *Cambro-Latin Compositions: Their Competence and Craftsmanship* (Dublin, 1998), p. 19.
[52] Howlett, *Cambro-Latin Compositions*, p. 20; *ECMW*, pp. 8, 109 & n. 2.
[53] Patrick Sims-Williams, 'William of Malmesbury and *La silloge epigrafica di Cambridge*' in *Britain and Early Christian Europe* (Aldershot, 1995), X, p. 32 & notes 114 & 115.
[54] *ECMW*, p. 8 & n. 5; *ibid*, p. 109 & n. 2.

and Saturninus still 'appreciated memorial stones echoing the clichés of Continental panegyric'.[55]

The inscription confirms the importance of Michael Lapidge's suggestion that Gildas's rhetoric points to a British audience at least as late as *c.* 540, that retained considerable taste and education.[56] This was certainly the case in contemporary Gaul where analogous 'literary' epitaphs were noted at Vienne by Edmond Le Blant as long ago 1856. As he put it, they 'proceeded more from literary works than the true epigraphic style' but this, in fact, supports Lapidge's point, because 'true epigraphic style' to Le Blant meant the later, terse *Hic iacit*-style inscriptions and 'literary works' meant the poetics of the earlier extended Latinate inscriptions.[57]

One would, however, miss much of the significance of Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS by interpreting it as the isolated whim of a member of a dwindling band of Romanised British grandees. Like the glass drinking-bowl from Abermagwr, Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS seems highly incongruous in its out-of-the-way backwater in northern Carmarthenshire, otherwise characterised by humble farm-like villas and hillforts.[58] Unlike prestige objects such as the drinking-bowl, however, it has long been recognised that the further west one travels the greater the number and quality of early Christian monuments. The reason for this is that the post-Roman epigraphic tradition in western Britain was an infinitely more complex phenomenon than merely a way of commemorating the dead. Rather, it sat at the heart of, and became a

[55] Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Gildas and Vernacular Poetry' in Lapidge and Dumville (eds.), *Gildas: New Approaches*, p. 171. Sims-Williams cites with approval Saunders Lewis's assumption that late-Antique Latin poetry continued unbroken in Britain, see Saunders Lewis, 'The tradition of Taliesin', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion* (1968), pp. 293-8.
[56] Lapidge, 'Gildas's Education' in Lapidge and Dumville (eds.), *Gildas: New Approaches*, p. 29.
[57] Edmond Frédéric Le Blant, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes De La Gaule Antérieures Au VIIIe Siècle* (Paris 1856), Préface, pp. vii-viii.
[58] Although inscribed building stones have been recovered from the Roman fort at Llanio, usually identified as the *Bremia* of the Ravenna Cosmography, near Llanddewibrefi; see Davies and Kirby, *County History*, p. 237 & pl. XI.

potent weapon in, an exceptionally complex period of political, social and ethnic collision. Martin Carver describes this as follows:[59]

> 'Confidence in the idea that monuments had a meaning beyond some vague celebration of an individual or propitiation of an unseen omnipotence…is an accepted feature of the historic period…for every monument we need to seek both the impetus and the motive…political meaning is most likely to be embedded in…objects of high investment and public access…In our period the prominent candidates are burial mounds, jewellery, churches, illuminated manuscripts and sculpture'.

Consistent with this interpretation, Iwan Wmffre has suggested that all Irish settlement in Deheubarth was high-status:[60]

> '…the nature of the Irish implantation in the fourth-sixth centuries may have been an aristocratic domination of Brittonic populations to which was probably added local pockets of scattered colonies of Irish-speakers, rather than a wholesale settlement…'

If Wmffre is correct then it is open to us to interpret early, high-status monuments like Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS using Carver's model. The conflict likely to have arisen between incoming Irish seeking to elevate their social status and a native Romano-British elite equally concerned not to cede social primacy seems to have been reflected in the commission of grandiose symbols of *Romanitas* designed to proclaim the cultural superiority of the incumbent elite. Nor is Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS an isolated example. It forms part of a group of early Christian monuments - numbering about dozen or so – that Charles Thomas described as the 'Extended Latinate' group. Their distribution is, roughly, on or west of a line drawn from Plymouth to Edinburgh. They typically feature horizontal inscriptions executed in good epigraphic *capitalis* with few, if any, intrusive letterforms from New Common Script.[61] Like the contemporary Vienne inscriptions noted by Le Blant, they are lengthier and more poetic than the later more formulaic inscriptions.

Charles Thomas (by 1994, one senses, against his better judgment) entertained a 'loose acceptance that the special characteristics of these EL memorials…ought to be attributed to

[59] Martin Carver, 'Why that? Why there? Why then? The Politics of Early Medieval Monumentality' in Helena Hamerow and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain. Essays in honour of Rosemary Cramp* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 1-2, 8.
[60] Wmffre, 'Irish settlement', p. 61.
[61] Thomas, *Mute Stones*, pp. 200-5 & fig. 12.4.

Gaulish influence'.[62] We might better follow Carver in seeing them as proclamations of status by British grandees in response to the challenges of immigration, raiding and instability caused by the influx of Irish-speakers:[63]

> 'monuments have a political meaning, and the choice of monument reflects a political agenda…early medieval investments…prestige artefacts, can be used to write political as well as cultural history, and…paint a picture of confronted polities pursuing different agendas during the fifth to eighth centuries'.

Indeed, some scholars see the western post-Roman British polities themselves as a response to Irish settlement, for example 'Ceredigion…one of these kingdoms, a Brythonic or Brittonic spearhead against Goidelic intrusion'.[64] D. Simon Evans described this encounter between Irish and British as 'one of the most important features of political life in Wales in the sixth century' and suggested that it can be detected in the hagiographical tale of St David's conflict with the local chieftain Boia, whom Rhygyfarch describes as *Scottus.*[65] In short, the palaeography, typology and literary mode of Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS are, taken together, a powerful statement of the Christianity, *Romanitas,* social prestige and hereditary rights of the native British elite.

However the western epigraphy also shows that the newcomers understood this power of writing. From the fifth and sixth centuries there survives an equally grand second phase of early Christian monuments, featuring Irish names and ogam script. 300/P5 NETTASAGRI, pictured in figure 108 overleaf, is a striking example. It is an imposing pyramidal stone from St David's church at Bridell, north Pembrokeshire, a small hamlet just north of the Preseli hills.[66]

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[62] By 1994 Thomas was beginning to wonder why Nash-Williams had 'avoided the question of how a fashion centred around Lyon and Vienne – both some way from Gaul's Atlantic coast – should appear in the Bristol Channel and Irish Sea regions'; Thomas, *Mute Stones,* pp. 202-3.
[63] Carver, 'Early Medieval Monumentality', pp. 4-5. In a highly insightful 2004 paper John Pearce similarly notes that in Roman Britain documents had massive significance for both literate and illiterate and had enabled 'forms of domination…[which] had an impact across the population as a whole', see Pearce, 'Archaeology, writing tablets and literacy', p. 44.
[64] Kirby 'The Political Development of Ceredigion', p. 321.
[65] G. H. Doble, *Lives of the Welsh saints,* ed. D. Simon Evans, 4th edn., (Cardiff, 2013), p. 17.
[66] *Corpus*, II, pp. 290-3; see also 'Bridell 1, Inscribed Stone, St David's Church, Bridell', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/304080/ (20 Oct. 2022) for photographs reflecting the grandeur of the monument.

Figure 108. Bridell, Pembs. Ogam-inscribed pyramidal stone. 300/P5 NETTASAGRI.







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The monument is over seven feet high and bears the ogam inscription *Nettasagri maqi mucoi Briaci* or 'of Nettasagri, son of the kindred of Briaci'. 'Son of the kindred' formulae are commoner in Ireland than in Wales and this is the only surviving Welsh instance.[67] Charles Thomas opted for a very early date for the stone, *c.* 420-30; Nancy Edwards opts for a less prescriptive date of 'fifth century'.[68] Palaeographically, the ogam-strokes are beautifully executed. They are of consistent *module* in that the short vowel-strokes and long consonant-strokes are carefully differentiated and consistent in size within each letter-group. The stroke-clusters representing each letterform are well-spaced, both internally and as regards the next cluster. The three lines of writing (the angle of the stone is the middle line) are respected, giving an even alignment and regular aspect to the inscription. The inscription extends most of the way up the stone and uses the breadth of the chamfered edge of the stone to good effect. This ogam is an imposing display-script, the effect of which is magnified by the imposing dimensions of the monument itself. In the indigenised Irish monumental tradition 300/P5 NETTASAGRI with its kin-filiation is therefore every bit as grand as Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS with its fine Roman *capitalis* and pious hexameters.[69] The two monuments not only provide excellent examples of the exploitation of writing as a tool of socio-political aggrandisement by competing language-group elites in fifth century Deheubarth but they also endorse Thomas Charles-Edwards's suggestion that ogam itself was devised as a response to the Romano-British tradition of monumental inscriptions.[70]

300/P5 NETTASAGRI has, however, a further function, perhaps even more important than its proclamatory function. Mark Handley has pointed out that numerous passages in early Irish law show that ogam-inscribed stones were an important way in which land ownership might be evidenced. In the law tracts, the question 'How is truth (with regard to land ownership) to be found?' could be answered by 'ogam in stones'. Handley therefore interprets the Old Irish

[67] Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 141-65.
[68] *Corpus*, II, p. 293.
[69] As is 319/P30, another pyramidal-shaped ogams-only pillar now preserved at the Church of St Brynach, Llanfyrnach, Pembs., see *Corpus*, II, pp. 341-344.
[70] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 168.

genitive case *-igas* in which the names of commemoratees are rendered as connoting their rights in the land in which the stone sits as well as their 'ownership' of the stone itself.[71]

In this complex functionality, both Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS and 300/P5 NETTASAGRI have much more than local or even regional significance. They evidence how a whole kaleidoscope of graphical resources was taken up by social elites across Britain in response to the turbulence of the fifth and sixth centuries. In fascinating work on the magnificent Pictish symbol-stones at the royal site at Rhynie in Aberdeenshire, Meggen Gandek and Gordon Noble interpret these Pictish monuments as 'intimately connected to the new forms of power and authority that emerged in the 5th and 6th centuries…a Pictish response to broader European changes in power and identity during the transition from the Roman Empire to the early medieval period'.[72] As Noble puts it:[73]

> '…the development of the Pictish symbols…seems to coincide with the new social and political identities evident in late Roman sources…once introduced, the symbol system would have had important social consequences allowing names and perhaps lineages to be transmitted across space and time…helping to underscore inter-generational rights and wider group identities'.

Figure 109 below shows 'Rhynie 1' (the 'Craw Stane'), first recorded in the 1850s. On one face is incised the Pictish salmon-symbol above the Pictish waterbeast-symbol. In the background is the 'Tap o' Noth' hillfort with an outer rampart constructed in the fifth-sixth

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[71] *Corpus iuris Hibernici*, ed. D. A. Binchy, (7 vols., Dublin, 1978), p. 596, ll. 6 *et ff;* cited in Mark Handley, 'The Early Medieval Inscriptions of Western Britain: Function and Sociology' in J. Hill and M. Swan (eds.), *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in early medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 339-361. Handley also cites Thomas Charles-Edwards's work on boundaries in Irish law where he argues for a dual commemorative and possessive function for the ogam stones of Ireland; see T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Boundaries in Irish Law' in P. H. Sawyer (ed.), *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change* (London, 1976), p. 84.

[72] 'Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project', http://reaparch.blogspot.com/ (20 Oct. 2022); Meggen Gondek and Gordon Noble, 'Rhynie: New Perspectives on Settlement in Pictland in the 5th and 6th centuries AD and the context of Pictish Symbol Stones' in Sarah Semple, Celia Orsini and Sian Mui (eds.), *Life on the Edge: Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe* (Wendeburg, 2017), p. 9; also Gordon Noble, Martin Goldberg and Derek Hamilton, 'The development of the Pictish symbol system: inscribing identity beyond the edges of Empire', *Antiquity*, 92, 365 (2018), p. 1329. Michael Barnes notes that the runic inscriptions of the Germanic world served similar purposes; Michael Barnes, *Runes: a handbook* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 11. For Katherine Forsyth's work on how the symbols worked as 'writing', see K. Forsyth, 'Some thoughts on Pictish symbols as a formal writing system' in I. Henderson and D. Henry (eds.), *The worm, the germ and the thorn* (Brechin, 1997), pp. 5-98. Command of the graphical repertoire of Early Insular book-script executed to extremely high standards continued in Pictland into Christian times. John Higgitt notes that a later, Latin inscription from the site of the 'Pictish' monastery at Tarbat in Ross-shire is not only carved in relief but skilfully replicates Hiberno-Northumbrian display-capitals, see Higgitt, 'The Pictish Latin Inscription at Tarbat in Ross-Shire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,* 112 (1982), pp. 300-21.

[73] Noble *et al.*, 'The development of the Pictish symbol-system', p. 1345.

century.[74] The symbolic power of this spectacular conjunction of landscape and graphics in the photograph below remains impressive even today.

Figure 109. Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. Class 1 Pictish symbol stone. The 'Craw Stane'.



Image reproduced by kind permission of Douglas Griffin.

Another striking early medieval artefact shows how Gso-7/139/CM5 PAVLINVS and 300/P5 NETTASAGRI formed part of a universe of elite symbolism which extended far beyond monumental sculpture. This is a small gold bracteate, dated to *c.* 475, discovered at the village of Undley, near Lakenheath in Suffolk, the former territory of the Iceni.[75] Bracteates were personal items, rather like a small family crest or seal, engraved on a coin-like disc. They generally reflect something of the identity and status of the wearer. The Undley bracteate, only 2.3cm in diameter, features a 'dramatic miniature scene' that includes a helmeted Roman-style imperial head (but with an added beard, redolent of the Icenian *Mars Toutatis*), the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, native Celtic animal representations and a fine inscription in early Anglo-Frisian runes. The disc, much enlarged for ease of reference, is pictured against a black background in figure 110 below.

[74] See 'Rhynie, Craw Stane', https://canmore.org.uk/site/17199/rhynie-craw-stane for the monument and 'SC2938: Tap o' Noth', http://hillforts.arch.ox.ac.uk/records/SC2938.html for the hillfort (both 20 Oct. 2022).
[75] See 'bracteate pendant', https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1984-1101-1 (20 Oct. 2022).

Figure 110. Undley, Suffolk. Gold bracteate pendant.



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The Oxford archaeologist Daphne Nash-Briggs suggests that the aristocratic Icenian wearer of this bracteate, *c.* 475, wished to communicate a number of different messages. He wished to be seen as the Mars of the People from the Roman past but also as the native Icenian war-god, sanctified by Celtic iconography. The runes point to a third identity, namely his links with the Germanic clans who were then establishing themselves in Icenian territory. Here is a politically-aware aristocrat who wishes to hedge his bets by appropriating at the same time the Imperial prestige of the Roman past, his elite status within his own native Icenian polity and his insurance policy for the future, a stake in the increasingly powerful Germanic North Sea

culture-province.[76] The grand provincial Roman *capitalis*, the imposing ogam pyramid-steles, the 'graphical landscape' of the Pictish power-structures and this fascinating tiny gold disc – all combine to show how the graphical choices made by the early medieval peoples of the Atlantic Archipelago were neither random nor passive: 'They were creative and selective, not eclectic, but choosy…the choice which was actually made…had a meaning'.[77]

With this highly sophisticated use of writing-as-symbol in mind, we can return to the second phase of the epigraphy of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog with an understanding of how ethnic and political influences interacted with the internal palaeographical dynamic represented by the ongoing graphical process. As Nancy Edwards notes, this epigraphy, just like the Undley Bracteate, projects 'complex identities' within the 'complex processes of kingdom formation', illustrated by the two monuments reproduced in figure 111 overleaf, Gso-8/138/CM3 VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS and Gso-18/306/P14 ETTERNI. [78]

[76] Daphne Nash-Briggs, 'An emphatic statement: the Undley-A gold bracteate and its message in fifth-century East Anglia' in Nicholas Sekunda (ed.), *Wonders Lost and Found. A celebration of the archaeological work of Professor Michael Vickers* (Oxford, 2020), pp. 160-184.
[77] Carver 'Early Medieval Monumentality', p. 3.
[78] Gn-9/176/D1 SIMILINI from Clocaenog in Denbighshire of the late fifth or early sixth century is 'a massive quadrangular block' commemorating one *Similinus* as '*Tovisaci'*, (modern Welsh *tywysog* and Irish *taoiseach* ('leader')) in Latin and ogam; Nancy Edwards, 'Roman continuity and reinvention: the early medieval inscribed stones of north Wales' in W. J. Britnell and R. J. Silvester (eds), *Reflections on the Past. Essays in honour of Frances Lynch* (Welshpool, 2012), pp. 398, 401; also *Corpus,* III, pp. 316-9.

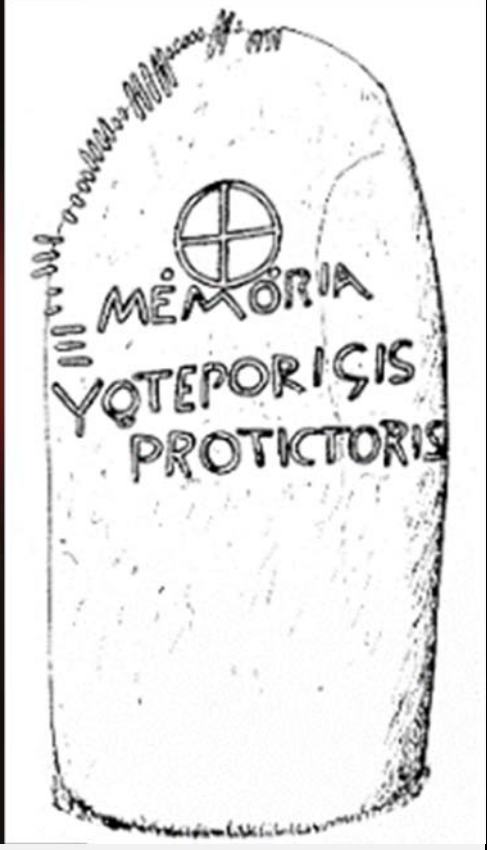
Figure 111. Assimilation of 'Irish' and Roman epigraphic traditions.

Phase 1. Horizontal Latin and vertical ogams. Castell Dwyran, Carms. St Teilo's Church. Gso-8/138/CM3 VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS.









MEMORIA VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS
'The memorial/tomb of Voteporix the Protector'

VOTECORIGAS *'of Votecorix'*

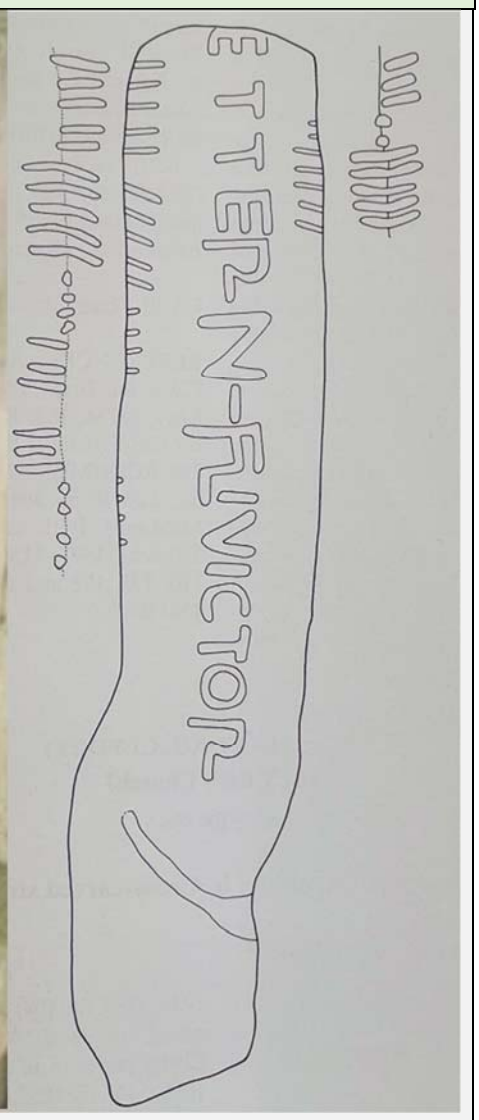
© Andrew Green. Reproduced by kind permission. Drawing after Macalister.

Phase 2. Vertical Latin and vertical ogams. Clydai, Pembs. Church of St Clydai. Gso-18/306/P14 ETTERNI.









ETTERNI FILI VICTOR *'of Etternus, son of Victor'*

ETTERN[-]/[-]TOR *'Ettern[i maqi Vic]tor'*

© Copyright John Palmer, Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0) (L); After *ECMW* (R).

Gso-8/138/CM3 VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS differs from the PAVLINVS inscription discussed above in two important respects. Firstly, there appears an ogam translation of the Latin and secondly the epigraphic *capitalis* is considerably poorer, though it remains horizontal and free of cursive intrusions. The monument is still, however, of the very highest status. It commemorates the deceased with the traditional Roman *memoria* formula, rare in Wales, and, even more remarkably, includes the grand late-Roman title *protector.*[79] Tedeschi dated it to the fifth century; Nancy Edwards acknowledged that the Latin inscription has 'no typologically late features' but opted for a late-fifth or earlier sixth-century date based on the ring-cross at the head of the inscription.[80]

Gso-18/306/P14 ETTERNI then shows the next stage in the evolution of this graphical manifesto of identity and status: Edwards reads the ogam as *Ettern[i maqi Vic]tor* ('of Etternus the son of Victor') and notes that both names are Latin. She interprets this as showing intermarriage between Irish and British and notes Kenneth Jackson's suggestion that the Irish saw it as prestigious to adopt Roman names.[81] Palaeographically, the old horizontal *ordinatio* has failed and the Latin inscription has now rotated into the vertical, in parallel with the ogam. The archaic uncial letterform of **R**, with an open, unclosed lobe and horizontal, short, foot-stroke has supplanted the old epigraphic *capitalis* letterform. The '*Fil'* of *Fili* shows the obligatory enclitic ligature of **F** + **i** with the stem of the **i** serving as the ascender of the **L**. The letterform of **I** is the idiosyncratic horizontal British letterform and the inscriber, or ordinator, or both, show difficulty in keeping the *module* of the letterforms consistent. The ogam is better-executed with consistent *module* and stroke-spacing: the quality and vigour of the ogam provides an interesting contrast to the senescent Latin *capitalis*. Like the Undley bracteate,

[79] *Protector* was a title originally given to the Imperial bodyguard: it appears on Roman gravestones; see J. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxons* (Oxford, 1982), pl. 18. Leslie Alcock suggested in 1971 that the title as used in this inscription might well be hereditary; *idem*, *Arthur's Britain* pp. 122-3. E. Hamp, 'Vorteporigis Protectoris', *Studia Celtica*, 30 (1996), p. 293, suggests that **Votepo-* means 'protecting' and that *PROTICTORIS* might therefore be an 'onomastic explanatory gloss'.
[80] Carlo Tedeschi, 'Obsevazione sulla paleografia della iscrizioni Britannichi paleocristiane', *Scrittura e Civilità*, 9 (1995), p. 115; *Corpus*, II, p. 206.
[81] *Corpus*, II, p. 318; *LHEB*, pp. 212-3.

GSO-18/306/P14 ETTERNI, as a graphical totality, projects at the same time both status and an amalgam of identities.

Epigraphic scripts c. 800-1100

As in Glamorgan, the ability to use good epigraphic *capitalis* as the local epigraphic base-script collapsed entirely in Deheubarth from around the turn of the seventh century. This led to a third phase in the graphical process featuring an eclectic epigraphic base-script in which relict letterforms from the old epigraphic *capitalis* jostled with letterforms from manuscript- and tablet-writing. Three early Christian monuments evidence this complex stage in the graphical process in Deheubarth: Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI from Cilgerran, Pembs., Gso-5/132/CD32 POTENINA from Tregaron, Ceredigion and 108/CD2 TIGE[I]R[N]- from Henfynyw, Ceredigion. Of these, Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI is illustrated and discussed below.

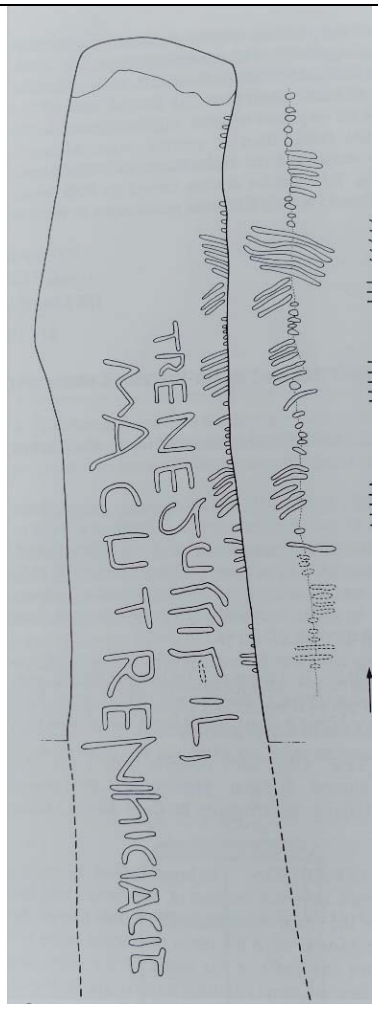
Tedeschi attributes Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI to the second half of the sixth century, based on what he called its 'proto-Insular' letterforms.[82] Nancy Edwards follows his suggestion.[83] By the time of Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI the semicursive s-longa has replaced the old capital **S** entirely and we also see letterforms of **G N H** and **U** borrowed from Early Insular book-script. The *Corpus* suggests that the letterform of **U** is squared in order to facilitate its carving but the inscription makes no attempt to square other letters. It is better explained as the square-bottomed letterform, with a residual foot to the stem, that appears in the New Common Script of the late fourth century.[84] The West Deeping Phylactery shows identical letterforms where the *ductus* is both bilinear and totally rectangular, just as it is in this inscription.

[82] *CL*, p. 129 & tav. XXXV.
[83] *Corpus*, II, p. 313. Jackson preferred a seventh-century date; *LHEB*, p. 140.
[84] *Corpus*, II, p. 313, following Gifford Charles-Edwards, 'The Epigraphy of Wales', p. 13.

Figure 112. Cilgerran, Pembs. Church of St Llawddog. Latin and ogam-inscribed stone. Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI.









TRENEGUSSI FILI MACUTRENI HIC IACIT *'of Trenegussus son of Macus-Treni, here he lies'*

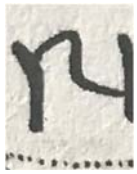
(TREN)[A]GUS[.]MAQI MAQITRENI *'of Trenagus[.] son of Macus-Treni'*

Inscription © Crown copyright *RCAHMW*. Photograph by kind permission of Glen K. Johnson.

The second letterform of **N**, in MACVTRENI, bears this out. It shows the exaggerated, long initial stroke descending well below the line of writing that we also see in the West Deeping Phylactery. In addition, the *Corpus* mentions the first instance of **R** as having an 'open loop' but Tedeschi's rubbing in fact shows *both* letterforms having the open loop characteristic of the archaic uncial letterform of ancient Roman book-script (one of the letterforms that Brown thought to be a 'peculiarity' of Insular half-uncial).[85]

These intrusions suggest that the Early Insular book-script of the south-western writing-province *c.*550 – *c.*600 may have been very little different to the set script of the West Deeping Phylactery. Figure 113 below provides some striking morphological correlations between the two scripts.[86] It may be possible to add this morphology to what the Springmount Bog tablets tell us of the Insular writing-system in the second half of the sixth century, a generation or so earlier than the first MSS of Irish origin and a full two centuries before Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1.

Figure 113. Fourth-century New Common Script in sixth-century epigraphic form.

West Deeping (Cambs.). Phylactery on lead sheet. Fourth century					
Cilgerran, Pembs. Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGVSSI. Second half of the sixth century.		 (reversed)			

Epigraphy and the Irish Sea culture-province

Up to the seventh century, then, Deheubarth seems to have shared the same Late Antique British writing-tradition that survived in the rest of south-western Britain, albeit with

[85] Brown, *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 189

[86] For the suggestion that the codicology of Early Insularbooks also owes much to Late Antique methods of book preparation, see Gameson, 'The material fabric' in *idem* (ed.), *The Book in Britain*, I, pp. 13-94.

the exception of its close engagement with Irish monumental practice as described above. However from the end of the eighth century the participation of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog in the Irish Sea culture-province caused both epigraphic and manuscript-writing in the region to develop in directions not seen in south-east Wales, thereby severing the two formerly united writing-provinces.

To take the epigraphy first, the main difference is that in the south-western writing-province the inscriptions more consistently feature the involvement of book-scribes using calligraphically-treated book-script. In Glamorgan there are a small number of epigraphic adaptations of Early Insular book-script which show similar scribal treatments (in particular Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI but also 259/G89 TOME and 260/G1 GELUGUIN). However this treatment of script declines very rapidly in the epigraphic record to the point where the Glamorgan epigraphic base-script reduces to little more than tablet-writing. The Deheubarth ordinators, in contrast, turned to a Later Welsh book-script, including Caroline-influenced letterforms, that may itself have been a local or regional development, which in a number of inscriptions is treated with considerable calligraphic care.

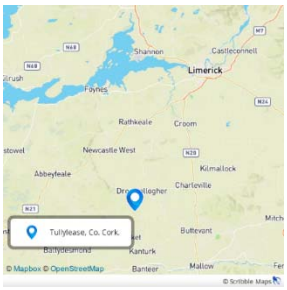
This divergence in practice is attributable to Irish influence. Although the greatest concentration of eighth century (and later) early Christian monuments in Ireland is located across the central midlands of Ireland, in particular Co. Offaly and the great centre of Clonmacnois, it is perhaps *Tulach Léis* (Tullylease) in north-west Co. Cork that provides the finest epigraphic treatments of Early Insular book-script.[87] Thirteen uninscribed carved stones of early medieval date survive at Tullylease along with five inscribed stones, a cross-slab, and numerous fragments.[88]

[87] Lionard and Henry, *Grave-Slabs,* p. 96. Tullylease is thought to have been a seventh-century foundation, associated with St Beretchert, supposedly one of the Anglo-Saxons who left Northumbria with Colmán in 664 after the Synod of Whitby; see Vera Orschel, '*Mag nEó na Sacsan*: an English colony in Ireland in the seventh and eighth centuries' *Peritia,* 15 (2001), pp. 81-107; for Tullylease in particular see Whitley Stokes, *Félire Óengusso Céli De = The Martyrology of Oengus, the Culdee,* Henry Bradshaw Society Series, V. 29 (London, 1905), p. 258; for St Beretchert see W. Reeves, 'St Beretchert of Tullylease', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology,* First Series, Vol. 6 (1858), pp. 267-275.

[88] Okasha and Forsyth, *Corpus,* p. 119. For photographs of the various stones and fragments, see 'Tullylease Church, Co. Cork', http://www.ecclesiasticalireland.org/tulleylease/index.htm (20 Oct. 2022).

Figure 114. Tullylease, Co. Cork. Inscribed grave-slab. 'Tullylease 1', BERECHTUINE.



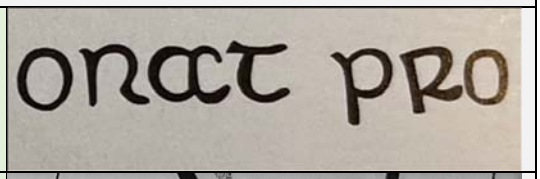
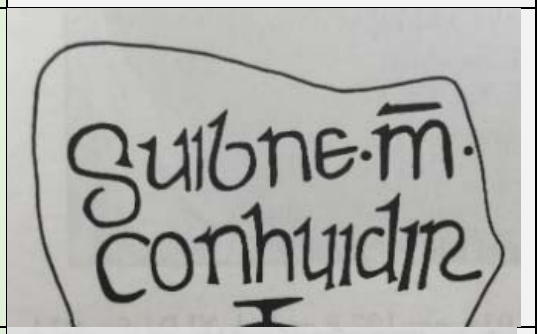




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The best of these, calligraphically-speaking, is 'Tullylease 1', a rectangular cross-slab commemorating BERECHTUINE, reproduced at figure 114 above.[89] This shows the Early Insular book-script in use at Tullylease in the middle of the eighth century for *both* manuscripts and inscriptions.

Figure 115. Tullylease and Lismore. Early Irish epigraphic scripts.

Tullylease 1. Typified Early Irish book-script. Mid-eighth century.[90]	
Tullylease 3. Fragment of cross-carved slab. Early Irish book-script but with the upright **d** with closed lobe more typical of Later Irish book-script. Mid-eighth century. [91]	
Lismore 2. Small cross-slab. Early Irish book-script with increasing quadrilinear influence, irregular alignment, inconsistent *module* and more pointed aspect. Ninth century.[92]	
Lismore 3. Small cross-slab. Hybrid Early/Later Irish book-script with pronounced pointed aspect. The upright **d** and the angular letterforms of **a** are especially typical of Later Irish book-script.[93] Ninth century.	

© After Okasha and Forsyth

[89] R. Macalister, *Corpus inscriptionum insularum celticarum* (Dublin, 1945), p. 92; I. Henderson and E. Okasha, 'The Early Christian Inscribed and Carved Stones of Tullylease, Co. Cork', *CMCS*, 24 (1992), pp. 10-12.
[90] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/stone/tulys_1.html (2 Mar. 2023).
[91] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/stone/tulys_3.html (2 Mar. 2023).
[92] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/stone/lismr_2.html (2 Mar. 2023).
[93] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/stone/lismr_3.html (2 Mar. 2023).

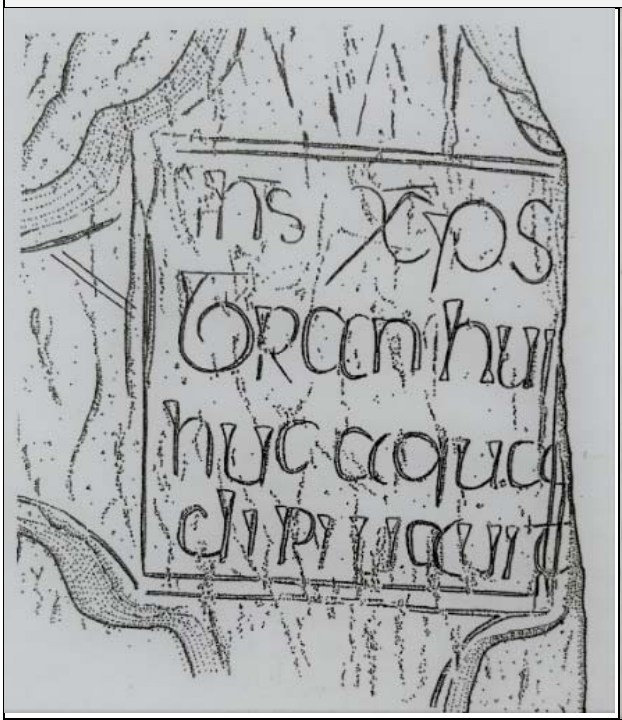
Furthermore, in Tullylease epigraphic usage we see the same development that we see in Deheubarth but not in Glamorgan: namely the use of Later Irish book-script for epigraphic purposes. Figure 115 above shows inscriptions from Tullylease and the eastern centre of Lismore, Co. Waterford.

This same epigraphic development is visible elsewhere in the Irish Sea culture-province. Frank Kermode's Manx Cross No. 169 is a fine inscribed slab found in 1948 in the churchyard of the important early medieval monastery, now the parish church, of Maughold on the north-eastern coast of the Isle of Man. It commemorates a certain BRANHUI, celebrated for having brought water to the site.[94] David Wilson ascribes the monument to the eighth century.[95] The name BRANHUI is British and shows what the published illustrations suggest to be a display-treatment of Early Insular book-script.[96] From Port-y-Vullen, very near Maughold, comes Kermode's No. 69, GURIAT.[97] Like BRANHUI, GURIAT is also a Welsh name (modern Welsh *Gwriad*) as noted by Sir John Rhys in 1895.[98] However like Deheubarth but unlike Glamorgan the GURIAT inscription shows a spiky, Later Irish book-script. GURIAT shows interesting cultural crossover in its use of the epigraphic straight-backed variant of the ***OC*** form of **A** from Early Insular book-script, causing Kermode to describe the script as 'Hiberno-British characters', but this is the only relic of that earlier script in an entirely new epigraphic base-script.[99] Drawings of these two Manx inscriptions are reproduced in figure 116 below.

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[94] 'Branhui's Cross (No. 169)', https://www.iomguide.com/crosses/maughold/no169.php (20 Oct. 2022).
[95] D. Wilson, *Manx Crosses: A handbook of stone sculpture 500-1040 in the Isle of Man* (Oxford, 2018), p. 26 & fig. 8. For many of the Manx crosses rendered in superb three-dimensional images, see 'Crosses at Maughold', https://sketchfab.com/manxnationalheritage/collections/crosses-at-maughold (20 Oct. 2022). If 'GURIAT' was the father of Merfyn Frych (*ob. c.* 844) then a very late eighth-century date is likely.
[96] For the significance of Maughold as a major early medieval ecclesiastical centre see A. M. Cubbon, 'The Early Church in the Isle of Man', in S. Pearce (ed.), *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland. Studies Presented to C. A. Ralegh Radford*, British Archaeological Reports (Oxford, 1982), pp. 257-282.
[97] Kermode, *Manx Crosses*, pp. 121-3; Wilson, *Manx Crosses*, p. 27 & fig. 10; see also 'Guriat's Cross (No. 69)', https://www.iomguide.com/crosses/maughold/no69.php and 'PRTYV/1', https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/stone/prtyv_1.html (20 Oct. 2022). The inscription is faint but can be made out using the Manx National Heritage 3D viewing tool at 'Maughold Cross Slab (Manx Cross 169)', https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/maughold-cross-slab-manx-cross-169-b0a7b53ccaca4f49b0d2fabf09297861 (22 Oct. 2022).
[98] J. Rhys, 'Note on Guriat', *Zeitschrift fur Celtische Philologie*, 1 (1897), pp. 52-3.
[99] Kermode, *Manx Crosses*, p. 121; Wilson, *Manx Crosses*, p. 26.

Figure 116. Maughold and Port-y-Vullen, Isle of Man. Crosses nos. 169 and 69.



No. 169.
© David Wilson.



No. 69. After Kermode.

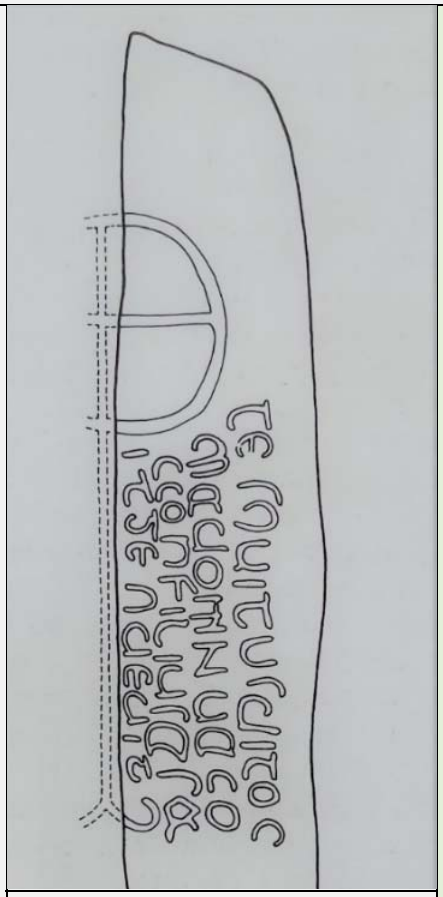
Later Welsh book-script in the epigraphy of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog

The use of Later Insular book-script for inscriptions finds reflection in four early Christian monuments from Deheubarth: 124/CD20 MADOMNUACO from Llanllŷr in the Aeron valley, inland from Aberaeron; 120/CD13 CENLISINI, from Llanddewibrefi; 33/CD33 ENEVIRI, from Tregaron and Gso-9/164/CM30 HEVTREN, from Llanllwni, a few miles south-west of Llanybydder in northern Carmarthenshire. 124/CD20 MADOMNUACO from Llanllŷr, Llanfihangel Ystrad, in Ceredigion, is a tall, rectangular-section pillar, unfortunately now split vertically in half. It is inscribed with a narrow ring-cross and an inscription recording the grant of a *tesquitus* to one *Madomnuac* (‘*tesquitus*’ being cognate with *desertum* and hence perhaps referring to a hermitage). Nancy Edwards dates it to the late eighth or early ninth century.[100]

[100] *Corpus*, II, pp. 166-9.

Figure 117. Llanllŷr, Llanfihangel Ystrad, Ceredigion. Latin inscribed cross-carved pillar. 124/CD20 MADOMNUACO.





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Tesquitus Ditoc Madomnuaco Aon filius Asa Itgen dedit

'The tesquitus of Ditoc (which) Aon son of Asa Itgen gave to Madomnuac'

Unlike the confused and eclectic morphology of Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI that marked the collapse of the provincial Roman epigraphic tradition, the base-script of this inscription has now typified into a morphologically consistent Early Insular book-script with grand display-forms taken from manuscript-writing. These include: (i) a letter form of **M** with a semicircular first stroke and two contrasting long, straight minims, a *littera notabilior* that also features in the scribal hands of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and TCD, MS 55 (see figure 118); (iii) the 'gated' square geometrical capital

Figure 118. Manuscript *litterae notabiliores* in epigraphic usage.



TCD, MS 55. The Ussher Gospels**.** *c.* 600.	**124/CD20 MADOM NUACO.** Late eighth or early ninth century.	**CCCC, MS 153. 'Hand B'.** Late ninth century.

letterform of **M**; (d) the Insular British book-script letterform of **d** with an enlarged, rotund, unclosed lobe and severely truncated ascender; and (iv) the diagnostic ***OC*** letterform of **A**.

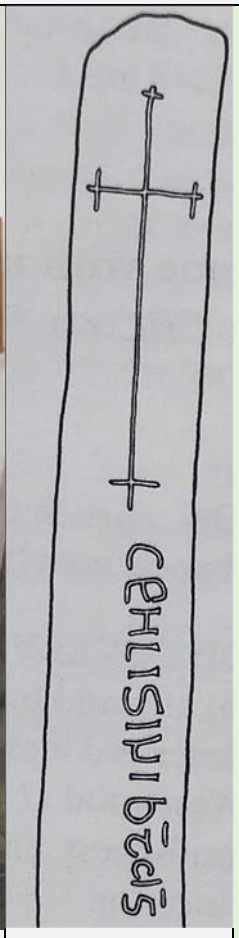
120/CD13 CENLISINI from Llanddewibrefi is an imposing monument, a tall cross-carved pillar over eight feet in height. It was recorded by Lhuyd in 1695 as standing near the door of St David's church: it now resides inside the church.[101]

Figure 119. Llanddewibrefi, Ceredigion. Church of St David. Latin inscribed cross-carved pillar. 120/CD13 CENLISINI.





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+

CENLISINI
bt̄ds̄

('Of Cenlisinus, b[enedica]t d[eu]s')

The inscription records the personal name *Cenlisinus* in the usual epigraphic genitive case followed by the contraction *bt̄ds̄* (the expansion is Nash-Williams's who rendered it 'May God bless him').[102] The epigraphic *ordinatio,* comprising an initial cross, the name of the

[101] *Corpus,* II, pp. 157-9.
[102] *ECMW,* pp. 99-100, where Nash-Williams describes the inscription as 'neatly picked in good calligraphic style'.

commemorated person and the invocation of a blessing, is typical of Irish epigraphy and Lionart and Henry note examples from Lismore, Lemanaghan and Clonmacnois.[103] Another tall, thin, rectilinear pillar of similar form survives at St David's church, 118/CD11, and Okasha and Forsyth note that tall pillars, the earliest category of early Christian monuments from Munster, seem to have derived their shape as well as their vertical inscriptions from the tall stones onto which ogam was inscribed.[104] Llanddewibrefi's history may well extend back to this period and it is possible that these tall, narrow pillars therefore represent a local Irish-Dyfed tradition.[105]

The palaeography of 120/CD13 CENLISINI is interesting because unlike the consistent use of Early Insular book-script of 124/CD20 MADOMNUACO, but rather like Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI, CENLISINI uses Early Insular book-script for the name of the commemorated but Later Welsh book-script, heavily contracted, for the invocation. The script of the invocation shows the archaic uncial letterform of **S** from ancient Roman book-script but aspectually it is clearly Later Welsh book-script, particularly in its quadrilinearity. This inscription points to the involvement of a book-scribe who was polygraphic in the sense that he could write both a display-version of Early Insular book-script in bilinear *module* with geometric capitals and a Later Welsh book-script tending to quadrilinearity.[106] In Glamorgan, at the same time and by way of contrast, Early Insular book-script was gradually degrading into nothing more than set, uninflected New Common Script.

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[103] Lionart and Henry, *Grave-Slabs*, p. 103, fig. 2, no. 5; p. 102, fig. 1, no. 3; p. 104, fig. 4, no. 3. A grave-slab at Killeany, Inis Mór, Aran (Co. Galway) reads '*Ben(dach)t Die* [Di]' or 'The blessing of God on the soul of…'; see Macalister, *CIIC,* no. 529; also J. G. Higgins, *The Early Christian Cross Slabs, Pillar Stones and Related Monuments of County Galway, Ireland,* British Archaeological Report, International Series, 375 (Oxford 1987), II, no. 19.

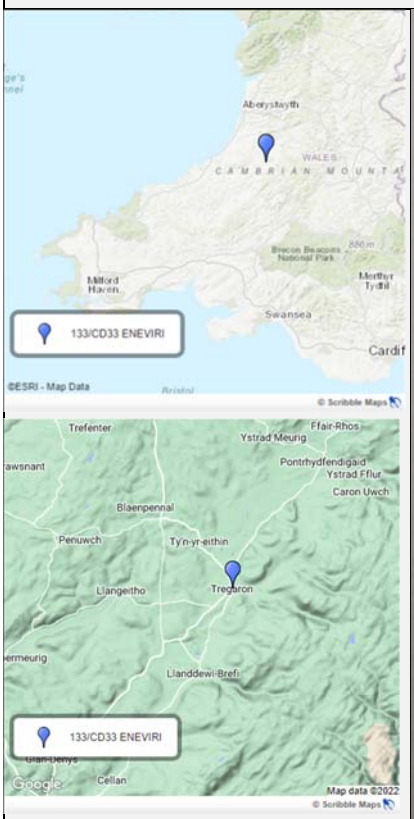
[104] Corpus, II, pp. 155-6. E. Okasha and K. Forsyth, *Early Christian Inscriptions of Munster. A corpus of the inscribed stones* (Cork, 2001), pp. 6-7

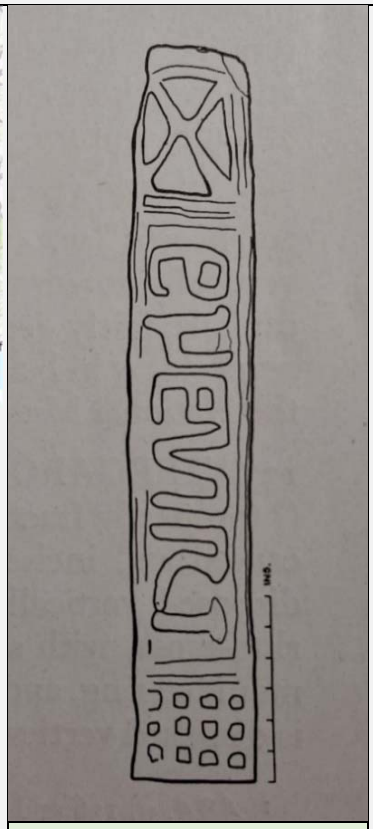
[105] Gwynfardd Brycheiniog names the place where David secured his great victory against the Pelagians as 'Brefi', the event itself being described in *Vita S. David §§* 49-53, *VSBG,* p. 164-6. The Welsh life of Dewi also names it as Llanddewibrefi, see *Buched Dewi o Lawysgrif Llanstephan 27,* ed. D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, 1965), p. 17. Elisabeth Okasha's 'Category 1' south-western British stones comprises 'pillar stones' of which six feature ogam texts, (although most of these might, in Welsh typology, be described as upright slabs), see *Corpus, South-west,* pp. 6, 19. Tedeschi describes DSD-17, the GOREVS monument from Yealmpton in Devon as 'vaguely pyramidal' and dates it to the second half of the sixth century; *CL,* pp. 284-5. Gso-33/96/CN30 VENDISETLI from Llannor, Caerns., of the later fifth or early sixth century measures 5'6" high x 9" wide; *Corpus,* III, p. 290.

[106] Thomas Charles-Edwards notes the 'high-grade book script…and the geometrical influence'; *WAB,* p. 167.

Clearly a product of the same tradition is a fragment of what was once another tall, narrow, pillar-stone, 133/CD33 ENEVIRI, from Tregaron, not far from Llanddewibrefi, in the same commote of Penardd (figure 120 below).

Figure 120. Tregaron, Ceredigion. Church of St Caron. Latin inscribed stone. 133/CD33 ENEVIRI.





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X

ENEVIRI

There is disagreement over the date of 133/CD33 ENEVIRI. Patrick Sims-Williams's linguistic analysis favours a date in the 'last third' of Nash-Williams's seventh- to ninth-century range, i.e. between 800 and 900; Kenneth Jackson however preferred a seventh- to eighth-century date. Nancy Edwards suggests that: (a) the iconography of the ring-cross (on the *recto* of the monument, not shown in figure 120 above); and (b) palaeographical similarities with 120/CD13 CENLISINI, point to a ninth-century date. Helen McKee notes that the palaeography of 133/CD33 ENEVIRI is close to that of 120/CD13 CENLISINI.[107] The letterform of closed, bilinear **E** with a noticeably squared *ductus* and the 'reversed-Y'

[107] See *Corpus*, II, p. 196, for the discussion.

letterform of **N** are the two most obvious similarities, both deriving from book-script. ENEVIRI also shows the intermediate 'shepherd's crook' letterform of dislocated **R** but with the descender shortened, so as to sit decorously on the line of writing. This suggests that the inscription was composed at a time where the typified *module* of this letterform was bilinear, which would tend towards an eighth- rather than ninth-century date.

Other features of the inscription point the same way. The final letterform of **I** features a large wedge-serif and the notable squareness of the *ductus* of the two letterforms of **E** points to the influence of geometric display-letterforms. The aspect of the ENEVIRI inscription is identical to that of the bilinear element of CENLISINI. Both are regularly aligned, with accomplished, regular letter-spacing and a consistent, bilinear *module.* The EVI ligatures in ENEVIRI are also oddly distinguished in that they look more like the monumental *nessi* ('connections') of the PAVLINVS inscription rather than 'real' ligatures or the 'biting' that comes from inadequate letter-separation.

In Glamorgan we see nothing like the executional care and calligraphic quality of these Deheubarth inscriptions. The inscriptions of even the grandest Glamorgan monuments frequently wander or straggle across the stone, run out of space, feature jumbled allomorphs of different palaeographical origins and frequently require some-or-other on-the-hoof distortion to fit the available space. 260/G1 GELUGUIN from Aberafan, for example, has as its base script the same eighth-century treatment of Early Insular book-script as these two Ceredigion monuments but it shows an *ordinatio* in which single letterforms have to be inscribed as subscripts due to inadequate planning of space. By contrast, the 133/CD33 ENEVIRI inscription, as Helen McKee describes it, shows 'An expertly carved inscription…beautifully proportioned and distinctively constructed'.[108]

As argued above, the interpretation of these Ceredigion inscriptions is that they point, like the contemporary Irish inscriptions discussed above, to book-scribes. By contrast, many

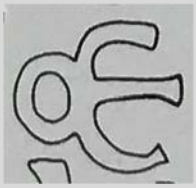
[108] McKee, *apud Corpus,* II, p. 195.

of the Glamorgan inscriptions were executed by writers capable of writing set treatments of New Common Script but untrained in the rarefied manuscript-production techniques of organising a text into a pre-prepared space with regular alignment, consistent word-spacing, line justification – and so on: in other words, tablet-writers not trained as manuscript scribes. The same can therefore be said of the Glamorgan ordinators as Gifford Charles-Edwards remarks of the hands of the Springmount Bog tablets: it is remarkable 'how ignorant of penmanship the practitioner of [epigraphic inscription] might be'.[109]

The argument that two writing-provinces evolved in early medieval Wales due to the south-east clinging to its Late Antique traditions, with the south-west being pulled into the Irish Sea culture-province is supported by some striking morphological parallels from across the Irish Sea. Tullylease 1, discussed and illustrated above, shows: (a) an idiosyncratic letterform of square bilinear **E** which also appears in 120/CD13 CENLISINI and 133/CD33 ENEVIRI; and (b) an oversized ligature of ***Æ*** which also appears in 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG], a later ninth- or early tenth-century inscription from the church at Penally, Pembs., discussed in detail below.[110] In figure 121 below, the reproductions of the letterforms of the Tullylease inscription are Okasha's:[111]

[109] Charles-Edwards, 'The Springmount Bog Tablets', pp. 30-31.
[110] *Corpus*, II, pp. 418-421; p. 293 & fig. 126 below.
[111] Okasha and Forsyth, *Corpus*, p. 120.

Figure 121. Irish and Deheubarth epigraphic book-scripts: morphological correlations.

Letterform	Tullylease 1	120/CD13 CENLISINI	133/CD33 ENEVIRI	365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG]
E				
Æ		  The ligature above is as used by Hands B (L) and D (R) of CCCC, MS 153.		

Later British book-script in epigraphic use in Deheubarth and Brycheiniog

The final series of inscriptions that shows the last phase of epigraphic writing in the writing-province of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog comprises four early Christian monuments of the ninth century or later. They are: 125/CD27 HIROIDIL, from Llanwnnws in Ystrad Meurig, north of Tregaron, of ninth-century date; 113/CD6 from Llanddewi Aber-Arth on the Ceredigion coast north of Aberaeron, of later ninth- or early tenth-century date; a Pembrokeshire outlier, 365/P84 MAELDOMNAIG from Penally, opposite Caldey Island, of the later ninth or first half of the tenth century; and 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU, from Llandyfaelog Fach just north of Brecon in the heart of Brycheiniog, perhaps of the later tenth century.

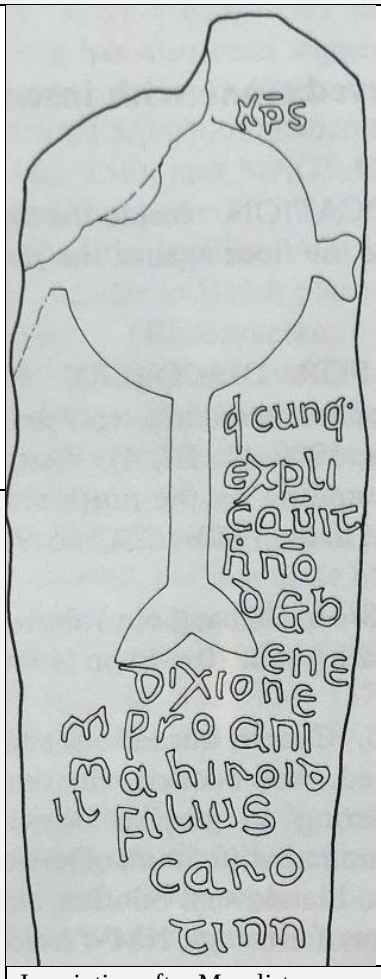
These four inscriptions reveal much more about the writing-tradition of the south-west than merely the ongoing operation of the graphical process. In the remainder of this Chapter I will make two arguments based upon their palaeography. Firstly, I will argue that they evidence the full participation of Deheubarth (and in particular Dyfed and Ceredigion) in the complex

matrix of intellectual exchange between Ireland, Wales, Brittany and northern France that burst into renewed vigour from the first quarter of the ninth century, centred in particular around the great intellectual clearing house of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire at Fleury. Secondly, I will argue that the use of Later British book-script for epigraphic purposes in Deheubarth from the ninth century allows palaeographical comparisons to be made between certain of the Deheubarth inscriptions and CCCC, MS 153, in support of M. R. James's original suspicion of a Dyfed origin for the manuscript.

Figure 122. Llanwnnws, Ceredigion. Church of St Gwnnws. Cross-carved stone with inscription.125/CD27 HIROIDIL.







Inscription after Macalister.

[IHS]

Q[U]ICUNQ[UE]
EXPLI
CAU[ER]IT
H[OC] NO[MEN]
DET B
ENE
DIXIONE
M PRO ANI
MA HIROID
IL FILIUS CARO
TINN

'Whosever shall have read this name may he give a blessing for the soul of Hiroidil son of Carotinn'

Gwnnws Isaf is a hamlet west of the B4340 as that road heads north-west out of Rhydyfelin, through Ystrad Meurig and on towards Aberystwyth. Preserved in the west porch of the church is 125/CD27, a cross-carved pillar with an inscription which asks the reader for a blessing upon the soul of *Hiroidil* the son of *Carotinn*.

The *Corpus* dates 125/CD27 HIROIDIL to the ninth century, noting that both Nash-Williams and Kenneth Jackson preferred an 'early' or 'first half' ninth-century date.[112] The typology of this monument immediately locates it within the 'Irish Sea' milieu. Although it has no perfect Irish parallels (that the writer has been able to find) the limbs of the cross reflect the basic 'expanded' Clonmacnois style.[113] The internal treatment of the four segments created within the cross-circle, however, seems to reflect a more economic Welsh practice of relief-carving in preference to the more difficult and time-consuming Irish practice of carving them hollow. The cross therefore seems to represent something of a 'poor man's version' of the grandest Irish exemplars, for example the great high cross of Muiredach at Monasterboice, Co. Louth, north of Drogheda, which shows the greatly more complex construction of four circular carved knops intruding into the empty spaces of the cross quadrants. Figure 123 below shows how the more technically difficult Irish scheme was imitated by the Welsh workmen.

Figure 123. Monasterboice, Co. Louth. High Cross of Muiredach; Llanwnnws, Ceredigion. Church of St Gwnnws. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL.



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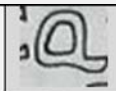
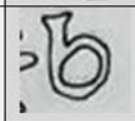
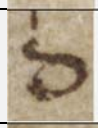
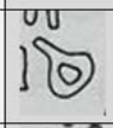
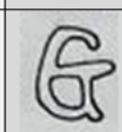
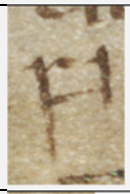
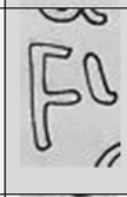
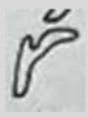
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It is 125/CD27 HIROIDIL that most strikingly reveals the fundamental break between Glamorgan and Deheubarth epigraphic practice. The base-script is a competent Later Welsh

[112] *Corpus*, II, p. 184.
[113] Lionard and Henry, *Grave-Slabs*, pp. 135, fig. 26, nos. 5 & 6 (from Clonmacnois).

book-script with extensive manuscript-abbreviations: (i) ***q^{i}cunq·*** for *q(ui)cunq(ue)*; (ii) ***explicaūit*** for *explicau(er)it*; (iii) ***ḣ*** for *h(oc)*; (iv) ***nō̄*** for *no(men)*; (v) ***d&*** for *d(et)*. All appear in CCCC, MS 153.[114] The inscription also reflects the polymorphism of Later Welsh book-script. It uses the archaic uncial letterforms of **Ꞓ** and **ȸ**; in the case of **ȸ** the ascender is now almost entirely horizontal, the letterform it typically takes in the later house-script of Llanbadarn Fawr. The manuscript origin of the base-script is emphasised where the ordinator replicates a pronounced wedge serif on the truncated ascenders of **b** and **h**. The quality of this book-script is striking and is a notably Irish-style rendition of calligraphically-treated book-script onto stone, very much in the style of the Tullylease and Lismore inscriptions cited above.

Figure 124. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and 'Chad 5', the hand of *Sulgen scholasticus.*

a			**li**		
b			**m**		
d			**n**		
e			**q[ui]**		
et			**r**		
fi			**r** (CCCC, MS 153, 'Hand C')		
hoc			**s**		

In regional terms, the ordinator of 125/CD27 HIROIDIL wrote a tantamount-to-identical Later Welsh book-script as *Sulgen scholasticus*, the scribe of the 'Chad 5' manumission endorsed in the Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1, most likely added to the manuscript early in the ninth century when it was still at Llandeilo Fawr. Figure 124 opposite offers a comparison which demonstrates an extremely close morphological match.

[114] *EWS*, p. 20.

The fact that this ‘round’ and incipient ‘flat-topped’ treatment of Later Welsh book-script is used as an epigraphic base-script in Ceredigion in the first part of the ninth century strongly suggests that it had, by that time, achieved what the Italian palaeographers see as the essential first stage in the typification of a script, namely its appeal to the tastes and expectations of the time. This is lent credence by the fact that it appears in the form of ‘Hand A’ of CCCC, MS 153 towards the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century and, further typified and calligraphically treated, as the house-script of Llanbadarn Fawr in the eleventh century.

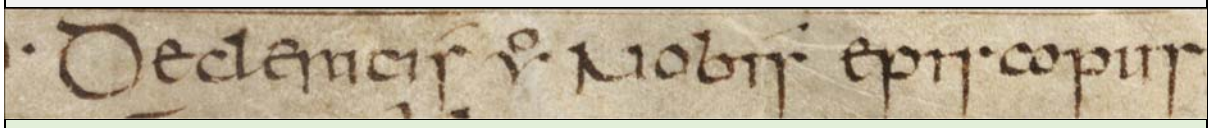
This suggestion - that a (or the?) book-script from early ninth-century Llandeilo Fawr typified into the house-script written at eleventh-century Llanbadarn Fawr - is not particularly surprising: a far more intriguing feature of the palaeography of 125/CD27 HIROIDIL, however, is that it exudes a strong whiff of Caroline book-script. In her commentary on the inscription in the *Corpus*, Helen McKee noted that the ‘curious form of r’ in the pro of line 8 indicates the influence of Caroline book-script. Figure 124 above shows that this epigraphic allomorph of **r** is indeed comparable to the letterform of ‘Hand C’ of CCCC, MS 153, the ‘Welsh-Caroline hybrid hand’. The similarity is clear, as is the marked contrast with the Insular letterform used by Sulgen, also reproduced in figure 124. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL may, therefore point towards a local writing-tradition whereby the local Later Welsh book-script was coming under Caroline influence, something reflected not only in ‘Hand C’ of CCC, MS 153 but in 125/CD27 HIROIDIL.

More persuasive than this single morphological correlation, however, is the overall aspect of the 125/CD27 HIROIDIL inscription. Unlike Sulgen’s hand, which tends to align itself along the line of legibility, both ‘Hand C’ and the inscription show greater deference to the line of writing, an important element of the Caroline aesthetic of clarity. The inscription is also notable for its fastidious, almost exaggerated letter- and word-separation, in contrast to the constant ‘biting’ visible in Sulgen’s hand. The *ductus* of the inscription also shows a much more Caroline sense of harmony in the proportion borne by the ascenders and descenders to

the lobes and limbs of the letters. In Sulgen's hand, by contrast, we see the combination of tendencies more typical of 'hanging script' or *scriptura tunsa*, namely: (a) the marked tendency to rotundity, with enlargement of the lobes; (b) severely truncated ascenders; and (c) exaggeratedly long descenders which hang not from the line of writing but from the line of legibility.

In figure 125 below I have edited the 125/CD27 HIROIDIL inscription into a continuous line of text so as to illustrate these aspectual differences between it, the hybrid Caroline-Insular 'Hand C' of CCCC, MS 153 and the hand of *Sulgen Scholasticus*.

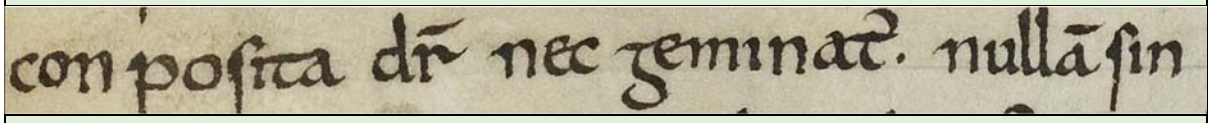
Figure 125. Ninth-century Deheubarth book-script. Continental influences.



Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 1. The 'Chad 5' memorandum of manumission. Note in particular the deference shown by *episcopus* to the line of legibility.



125/CD27 HIROIDIL. Epigraphic book-script of the ninth century (cut and pasted into the horizontal for the purpose of demonstrating the proportions and separation of letters and words).



CCCC, MS 153. The Corpus Martianus Capella, fol. 17r. 'Hand C', the Insular-Caroline hybrid hand.

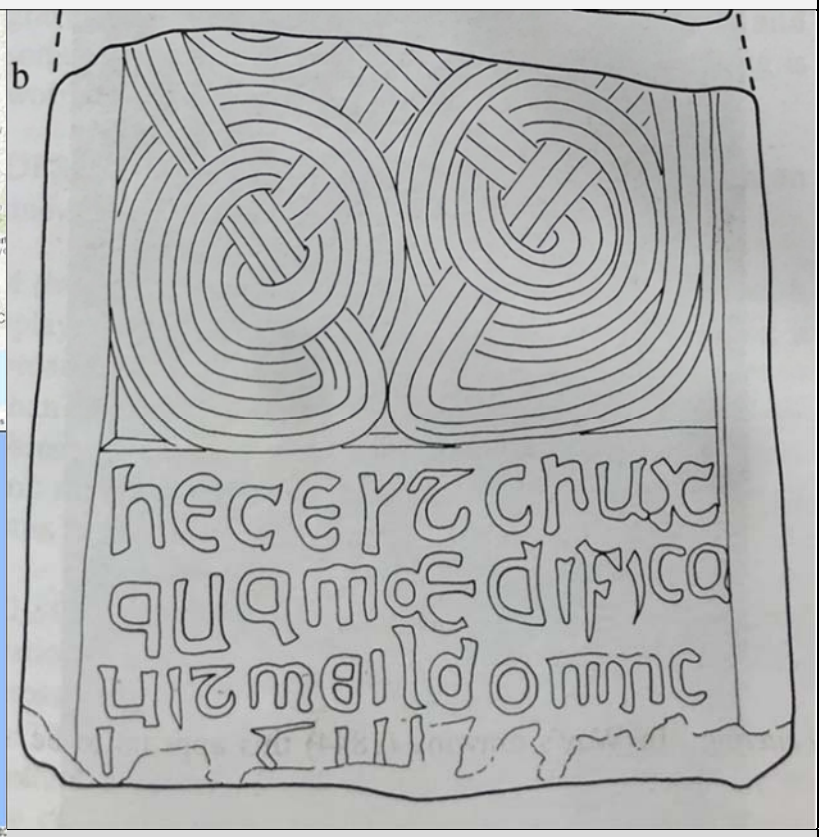
I suggest that these three hands show Caroline influence at work within the Deheubarth writing-province around the middle of the ninth century but in different form. They show, respectively, a Welshman writing a Welsh hand, a Welshman inscribing a Welsh hand with limited Caroline morphological intrusions but a very Caroline aspect, and, lastly, a Welshman trying to write a Caroline hand but unable to shake off his training and ending up with a 'hybrid'

hand. Due to lack of evidence we do not know the actual extent to which Caroline script was used in early medieval Wales, whether for books or for epigraphic writing. However the scripts illustrated above suggest that it certainly influenced the aesthetic expectations of Welsh scribes towards their inherited local scripts even if they resisted adopting it *in toto* for their texts.

360/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] is a fragmentary inscription from Penally in southern Pembrokeshire, unfortunately now lost and known only by drawings published by Way in 1844 and Westwood in 1864.[115]

Figure 126. Penally, Pembs. Church of Sts Nicholas and Teilo. Fragmentary cross-slab with inscription. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG].





HEC EST CRUX QUAM ÆDIFICAUIT MEILDOMN[AIG]

'Here is the cross which Meildomn[aig] erected…'

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[115] A. Way, 'Proceedings of the Central Committee of the British Archaeological Association', *Archaeological Journal*, 1 (1844), pp. 383-4; Westwood, 'The small cross at Penally', *AC*, Series 3, 10 (1864), pp. 328-9. Penally is less than a mile distant from the early medieval high-status settlement at Longbury Bank and 1.5 miles from Castle Hill, Tenby: the potential early medieval significance of the site is assessed at 'St Nicholas and St Teilo's Church, Penally', https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/400386/ (21 Mar. 2023).

Helen McKee is prepared to accept 'the appearance of accuracy' in Way's drawing and, by way of validation of her trust, Way's and Westwood's drawings agree.[116] The inscription is one of many which commemorate persons with Irish names and Patrick Sims-Williams renders MEILDOMN[AIG] as *Máel Domnaig*, 'servant of the church'.[117] Even given the imprecision in accurately redacting book-script onto stone of varying geological characteristics, not to mention any inexactitude in the drawings, 360/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] arguably shows the best calligraphy of any ninth-century early Christian monument from Wales. Helen McKee classed it as 'book-script, many letters with serifs…squarish book-script' and noted the presence of the ligatured **a€** discussed and illustrated in figure 121 above.

My interpretation of this inscription is that its 'rounded' and incipient flat-topped treatment of Later Welsh book-script came to be preferred in Deheubarth because it was much clearer than the 'pointed' treatment of Later Welsh book-script and, as such, responded far better to the aesthetic challenge of the Caroline script. This argument is supported by the fact that the script of 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG**]** reflects exactly that combination of graphical tendencies that Alessandro Pratesi describes as « *librarizzarla* », designed to produce *'chiarezza'* or 'clarity' through: (a) the spacing out of letters; (b) harmony of dimensions; (c) regularity of alignment; (d) care in the tracing of strokes; (e) simplicity in abbreviations; and (f) perpendicularity (as opposed to inclination) of *ductus*.

This idea that 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] shows Later Welsh book-script in the process of typification is illustrated by the two allomorphs of **i** in *ædeficauit*. The first instance, as well as the letterform of **d** that precedes it, has the cleft, or etoliated, wedge-serifs characteristic of the 'flat-topped' hand as exemplified in 'Hand A' of CCCC, MS 153, where such serifs are carefully drawn with oblique hair-strokes. However the second instance reflects very much the clawed, 'pointed' letterform of the hand of Bodl, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols 19-36,

[116] *Corpus*, II, p. 421. The author has personally checked the accuracy of some of Westwood's drawings.
[117] The letterform of the 'e' of '*Meil*' is problematic and Patrick Sims-Williams notes that it has, for linguistic reasons, usually been interpreted as an 'a'. However the two drawings seem show an archaic uncial form of € with a bar running down the front of the glyph; *Corpus*, II, pp. 420-1.

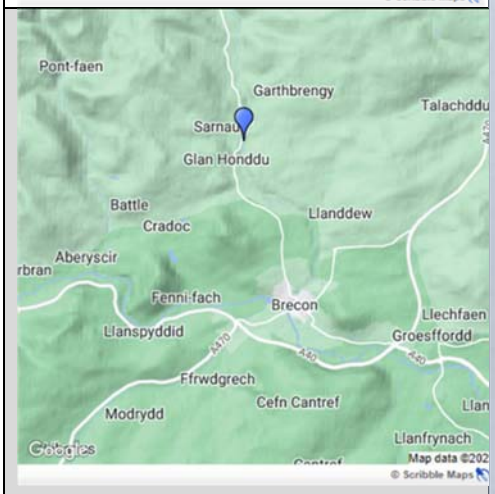
the *Liber Commonei*, as does the letterform of **f** that precedes it, both letterforms reproducing the sharply tapered descenders, broad at the top, pointed at the bottom and tending to convexity. In the same way that early medieval scribes oscillated between set and cursive treatments of the *ductus,* the ordinator of this Penally inscription oscillates (in Schiaparelli's terms), on an aesthetic and aspectual rather than morphological level, between calligraphic *treatments.*

A later inscription from the Deheubarth/Brycheiniog writing-province supports this argument in that it shows the result that might be predicted from this graphical process, namely the disappearance of the 'pointed' treatment, as the manuscript evidence also suggests. 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU is a striking carved cross-slab now preserved at the church of St Maelog, Llandyfaelog Fach, a small village on the B4520 a few miles north of Brecon. It is notable for its depiction of a full-frontal male figure holding a mace, club or spear (?) across its chest with one hand, the other hand holding the pommel of a sheathed sword or *seax*. The inscription reads +BRIAMAIL F[L]OU which Patrick Sims-Williams construes as the Old Welsh name *Briauail* (Middle Welsh *Briafael*) with the word F[L]OU uncertain. The monument is dated by Redknap and Lewis to the later tenth century, following Nash-Williams's belief that the armed figure showed Anglo-Scandinavian influence.[118] The monument is reproduced below.

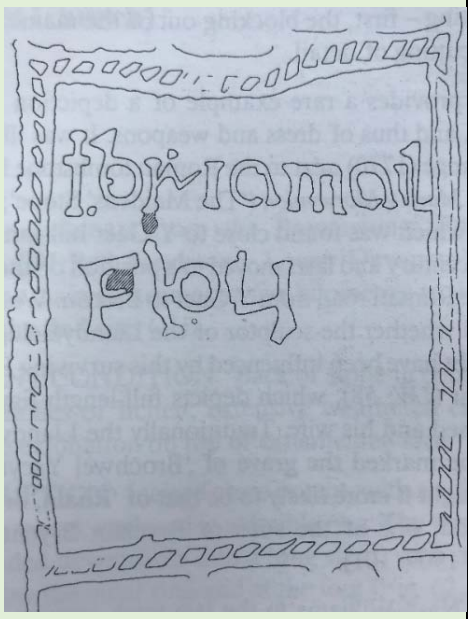
[118] *Corpus,* I, pp. 185-190.

Figure 127. Landyfaelog Fach, Brycheiniog. Church of St Maelog. Inscribed cross-slab. 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU.









+BRIAMAIL FLOU

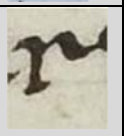
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The artwork of the cross relief-carved into this monument is pure Irish. Lionard and Henry publish both an identical and a very similar 'expansional' form from Clonmacnois, noting that although the form was relatively infrequent in Clonmacnois plentiful examples survive from Iona, Glendalough, Inishcaltra and elsewhere.[119] Okasha and Forsyth similarly record identical crosses at Inishcaltra, Scattery Island and Tuamgraney (all from Co. Clare).[120] Parallels have also been discovered at Castledermot, Co, Kildare (1967) and Knockbarron, Co.

[119] Lionard and Henry, *Early Irish Grave-slabs,* p. 135 & figs. 26.4, 5 & 6.
[120] Okasha and Forsyth, *Inscriptions of Munster,* pp. 90, 110, 114.

Offaly, (1994).[121] The border of the panel in which the inscription appears is paralleled at Clonmacnois.[122] Irish influence in Brycheiniog in the ninth and tenth centuries was strong: Llandyfaelog Fach lies only some nine miles from the exceptional Irish-style crannog at Langorse Lake, destroyed by the Mercians in 916.[123] During the excavation of the crannog remnants of a small Irish-style 'house' reliquary were recovered, described by Mark Redknap as belonging to an 'Irish milieu' and as reminding us of the 'Irish associations of the crannog'.[124] We should therefore not be surprised to see a book-scribe at work as an epigraphic ordinator and, accordingly, epigraphic pointers towards wider development in the local writing-tradition.

Figure 128. Caroline letterforms in the epigraphic Later British book-script of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog.

125/CD27 HIROIDIL	
49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU	
CCCC, MS 153, fol. 17r. Hand C.	

The resemblance of the 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU inscription to that of the 'flat-topped' hands is immediately apparent. Redknap and Lewis describe the inscription as 'half-uncial' but it may be observed that: (a) the letterform of **a** is not the diagnostic ***OC*** letterform; and(b) the letterform of **r** is quite close to the letterform of 'Hand C' of CCCC, MS 153: in fact, the letterform of 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU is closer to it than that of 125/CD27 HIROIDIL as figure 128 opposite shows.[125] Furthermore, with 49/B16 BRIAMAIL

[121] *Corpus,* I, pp. 275-7, 347-8. For these Irish parallels see C. Corlett, 'Castledermot Hogback', *Archaeology Ireland,* 13, no. 4 (1999), p. 11; J. T. Lang, 'The Castledermot Hogback', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* Vol. 101, No. 2 (1971), pp. 154-158; Caimin O'Brien, 'New Finds from County Offaly', *Archaeology Ireland,* 8, no. 1 (1994), pp. 16–17.
[122] Lionard and Henry, *Grave-slabs,* p. 124 & fig. 19.
[123] *Chronicle, s.a.* 919 (for 916).
[124] Lane and Redknap, *Llangorse Crannog,* p. 218.
[125] *Corpus* I, p. 185.

FLOU as with 125/CD27 HIROIDIL the aspect of the inscription is strongly reminiscent of the clarity and regularity of Caroline.[126]

The argument, from the epigraphy, that those treatments of Later Welsh book-script that could not rise to the aesthetic challenge of Caroline script were discarded by scribes in ninth- and tenth-century Deheubarth may be supported by a manuscript of possible Welsh origin. BnF, MS Français 2542, fols 75-84, represents the fragmentary remains of a small-format or 'pocket' (150 x 105mm) copy of Jerome's translation of the Psalter *iuxta Hebraeos*, the text being an early Irish recension of the *Hebraicum*.[127] The earliest provenance of the fragments is the collection of the historian, poet, diplomat and librarian Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553-1617): there is no indication of whence the fragments entered de Thou's collection but it is hardly a coincidence that other Celtic books became available in de Thou's lifetime as a result of the dispersal of the monastic library at Fleury in 1562. The text is described in de Thou's catalogue of 1617 as '*Psalmi character Saxonico*'.[128] Fols. 75-84 were catalogued by François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann in 1987 as *'Pays de Galles…ix^{e} s. (deuxième moitié)…'*.[129] The current BnF online catalogue, however, describes them somewhat differently as *'IX e siècle (seconde moitié) Angleterre (Pays de Galles) Écriture minuscule anglo-saxonne d'une seule main*'.[130] Avril's handwritten record card in the BnF's *Fichier des manuscrits enluminé du Départment des Manuscrits* is different again, noting the fragments as *'Angleterre*

[126] These are the same palaeographical critera that Alan Bishop used to identify 'Hand C' of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) as 'Insular Caroline'. As Nicholas Hart-Webb puts it, 'the *ductus*, and more especially the steep pen angle, remain Insular. The Caroline element lies in the proportion of the writing, in the overall uniformity of aspect, and in the appearance of individual letterforms'; Hart-Webb, 'Book Production', p. 57. One might also point out that the clarity and harmony of the 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU inscription also comes from the relationship of the text to the available writing-area: whereas the Glamorgan inscriptions are often crammed into the writing-panel, 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU leaves large areas of uninscribed space around the text. Gameson points out that this relationship is an important element of the 'aesthetic of the page'; *idem*, 'The material fabric of Early Insularbooks' in *idem* (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, I, p. 32.
[127] Martin McNamara, 'Five Irish Psalter Texts', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 109C (2009), pp. 37–104.
[128] 'Catalogues des manuscrits de J.-A. de Thous, d'Alexandre Petau et des frères Dupuy', https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10020253f?rk=64378;0 (20 Oct. 2022). On the de Thou collection see Thomas Falmagne, 'Une troisième version du catalogue des manuscrits de Jacques-Auguste de Thou retrouvée à New York', *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, n° 2 (2020), pp. 294-320.
[129] François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminé d'origine insulaire vii^{e}- xx^{e} siècle* (Paris, 1987), p. 10.
[130] 'Français 2452', https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc490206/cd0e132 (20 Oct. 2022).

(ou Irlande?) viii^e ou ix^in?' which is both a good century too early and almost certainly incorrect in its attribution to England.[131] No reasoning for these varying attributions is offered but the BnF librarians seemed to have Lindsay's work in mind.

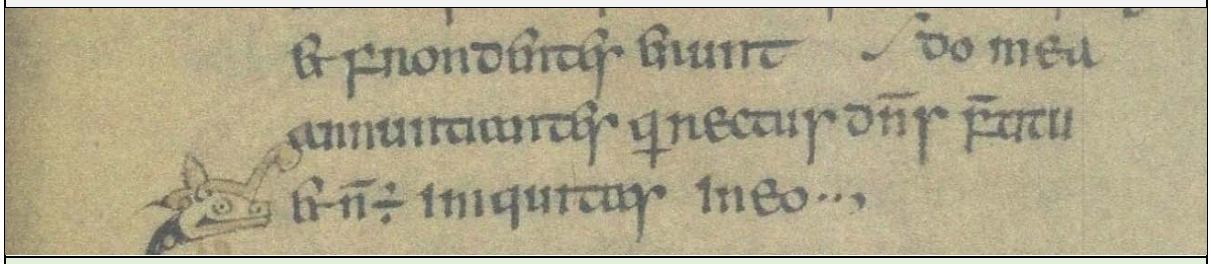
The text of these Psalter fragments was written in a single stint by a single scribe using brown ink. Each psalm commences with a major *littera notabilior* infilled with black 'wirework' interlace, spirals or integral smaller letters; some also feature coloured infill in red or ochre, and end in wedged or spatulate terminals or dog- (or beast-) heads. Smaller text-divisions commence with correspondingly smaller *litterae notabiliores.* The artistic treatment of the *litterae notabiliores* is within the Irish-Welsh tradition that appears in somewhat ossified and stylised form at Llanbadarn Fawr in the late eleventh century. The dog-head terminals are reminiscent of those of CCCC, MS 199: they extend out into space (as opposed to twisting backwards to bite onto the limbs of the *littera notabilior*) and have a curious red crest and pointed ears, the rear ear having a noticeable tuft (figures 129 and 130 below).[132] CCCC, MS 199 is a considerably more *de luxe* production than the Psalter and has a much richer palette (James identified the red pigment as vermilion) but the stylistic similarity is clear.

Figure 129. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452. Fol. 84v.	**Figure 130. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 199. Fol. 16v.**
	

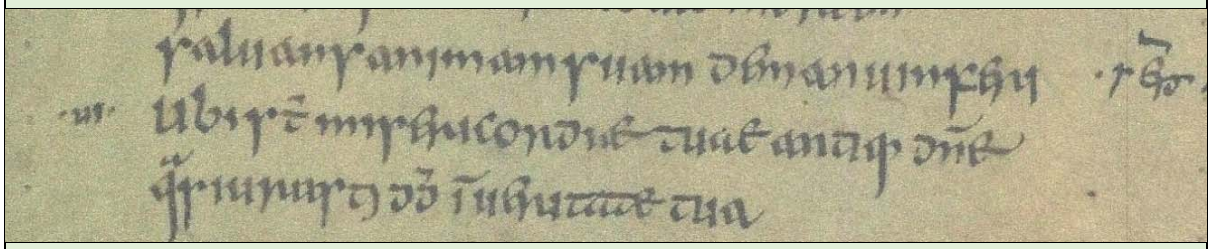
[131] 'François Avril, Fichier des manuscrits enluminés du département des Manuscrits. NAF 28635 (5)', https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100005084/f188# (20 Oct. 2022).
[132] For the art-historical parallels between tenth- and eleventh-century Insular Gospel books and in particular animal-headed terminals see Nancy Edwards, '11th Century Welsh Illuminated Manuscripts: the Nature of the Irish Connection' in Cormac Bourke (ed.), *From the Isles of the North* (Belfast, 1994), pp. 14-151.

The Psalter is written in a late ninth-century hand. The scribe was polygraphic, in that he was able to apply two different treatments to his book-script, set and semicursive, each producing a very different aspect. He is most comfortable with his more cursive and 'pointed' treatment and uses this hand when things become difficult, such as when he runs out of space at the end of his lines. However he aspires to write quite a different hand, namely a set, rather monumental script, characterised by: (a) a much 'squarer' treatment of, in particular, the minim strokes comprising the *ductus* of **m n u**; (b) a tendency to trace the entire letterform of **a** and the body of **q** as a square; and (c) more regular alignment and considerably more fastidious attention to letter and word-spacing. The more calligraphic script resembles that of Bodl, MS Auct. F. 4. 32, fols. 37–47, if not quite as delicate. It represents, perhaps, a more accomplished calligraphic rendering of 'Hand B' of CCCC, MS 153. In figure 131 below the different scribal treatments are illustrated.

Figure 131. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Français 2452. Oscillation.



Fol 84v., ll. 1-6. Set Later Welsh book-script of square aspect, tending to bilinearity. The scribe's aspirational set hand.



Fol. 82r., ll. 13-15. Semicursive Later Welsh book-script of pointed aspect, tending to quadrilinearity. The scribe's more natural hand.

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I suggest that it is possible to accept BnF, MS Français 2542, fols. 75-84 as a Deheubarth and perhaps specifically a Dyfed or even Ceredigion work, for three reasons. Firstly, the art-historical parallels discussed above. Secondly, the way in which the scribe oscillates between different treatments of Later Welsh book-script is only paralleled in the epigraphic record in the contemporary inscriptions from Deheubarth and Brycheiniog, as also described above. Thirdly, if the fragments came to de Thou from Fleury, then for reasons which I will discuss below, the connection between Wales and Fleury seems to have been something of a western, Irish Sea connection, not least because the influence of Caroline script in early medieval Welsh writing seems (so far as the scant evidence allows us to speculate) confined to the south-west.

My argument is therefore that the three inscriptions 125/CD27 HIROIDIL, 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU, together with BnF, MS Français 2542, fols. 75-84, show the Deheubarth writing-province reacting to Caroline script in the century commencing *c.*850 in a way that is unattested in the Glamorgan epigraphy and, if it is indeed a south-eastern product, CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42. From at least the middle of the ninth century scribes – and epigraphic ordinators – in the south-west began to judge their inherited hands according to the challenging aesthetic of regularity and clarity that they had encountered in the new Caroline book-script. The old, 'pointed' treatment was found wanting and declined out of use in favour of treatments which imported into inherited local scripts the merits of Caroline. This process happened relatively early in Deheubarth, early enough for it to influence English scribes in the tenth century before Caroline script took hold at the great Benedictine centres: Julia Crick, following Dumville, suggests that the '…appearance of [English square minuscule] may owe something to developments in contemporary Wales…'.[133]

[133] She also notes Michelle Brown's suggestion that the 'development of a reformed and calligraphic 'mannered minuscule' script at Canterbury in the pontificate of Archbishop Wulfstan (805-32) might reflect '…developments in the use of minuscule in the Carolingian orbit'; Michelle Brown, Crick, 'The art of writing', p. 59, citing Michelle Brown, 'House-Style in the Scriptorium: Scribal Reality and Scholarly Myth', in G. Brown and C. Karkov (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Styles* (New York, 2003), pp. 131-151.

Part Two. Deheubarth, Brycheiniog, Frankia and Ireland. The epigraphic scripts of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog and the scribal hands of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One), the *Corpus Martianus Capella*.

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One). The Corpus Martianus Capella.

In the remainder of this Chapter I will consider the complex series of scribal hands of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One), with particular reference to the developments in Later Welsh book-script argued for above. Firstly I will consider whether there are palaeographical correlations which connect the hands of the manuscript with the later epigraphic scripts discussed above, something that might support M. R. James's original suspicion of a western origin for the manuscript. Secondly I wish to consider the Continental influences visible in both the manuscript and the epigraphic scripts to ask what they tell us about the intellectual and cultural connections of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog from the ninth century onwards.

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) is a copy of the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* by the fifth-century writer Martianus Minneus Felix Capella, a work also sometimes entitled *De septem disciplinis* ('On the seven disciplines'). The text is an elaborate didactic allegory written in a mixture of prose and allusive verse, the main object of which is to structure human knowledge and learning around the seven liberal arts. The work was influential because it provided the structure for the curriculum for the entire Middle Ages: Gregory of Tours (538-594) witnesses that it had already by his time become a standard textbook and it received commentaries from scholars of the calibre of John Scotus Eriugena and Remigius of Auxerre.[134] Part One of the manuscript (the text of *De nuptiis*) was written somewhere in Wales, shortly after which it travelled to England, where much of Book III of the text (fols. 19-28 of Part One) was either supplied or replaced by an English scribe writing a 'Phase II' English

[134] James, *Catalogue*, 1, No. 153, pp. 344-6. For a general commentary see Danuta Shanzer, *A Philosophical and Literary Commentary on Martianus Capella's De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii Book One* (Berkeley, 1986). For Gregory's comment 'Our Martianus has instructed us in the seven disciplines', see Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum Decem*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, SRM i. 1 (Hanover, 1951), X. 31, p. 536.

square minuscule, possibly attributable to St Augustine's, Canterbury and possibly datable to *c.* 930.[135]

Alan Bishop argued that the old-fashioned quiring of the leaves of the interpolated English gathering comprising fols. 19-28, HFHF, was characteristic of St Augustine's in the second half of the tenth century, but Hart-Webb has countered that St Augustine's was not the only English house using old-fashioned quiring configurations in the tenth century. That said, the association of Dunstan with other Celtic manuscripts which found their way to him at Glastonbury, and his connection with St Augustine's, makes a persuasive hypothesis as to how a Welsh manuscript might have arrived at Canterbury in the first half of the tenth century.[136]

The later medieval provenance of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) is not known. It does not appear in the St Augustine's catalogue of *c.* 1400, nor is it mentioned by John Leland in the 1530s.[137] Sinéad O'Sullivan summarises the manuscript's career as follows:[138]

> 'In CCCC, MS 153, then, we have evidence for the transfer of a Welsh manuscript to Anglo-Saxon England, where it became part of a book entirely devoted to Martianus and commentaries on his text'.

Amongst numerous Latin glosses the manuscript contains some 140 or so Old Welsh glosses, first noticed by Henry Bradshaw in 1870. Bradshaw began a detailed palaeographical examination of the manuscript in October 1871, being joined by Whitley Stokes who had come from India to study the glosses, in January 1872. Bradshaw proposed a date of 'no earlier than

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[135] David N. Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script: The Mid-Century Phases', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 23 (1994), pp. 139-40.

[136] T. A. M. Bishop, 'The Corpus Martianus Capella', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* Vol. 4, No. 4 (1967), p. 71; Hart-Webb, 'Book Production', p. 59. Bishop notes that CCCC, MS 352, a ninth-century copy of Boethius's *De institutione arithmetica* from St Augustine's, Canterbury, was probably copied from a Welsh exemplar on the basis of its abbreviations, see Bishop, *Martianus Capella*, pp. 259-60 and 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 352: Boethius, De institutione arithmetica', https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/xb651hx1944 (20 Oct. 2022). The suggestion is that CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) was not the only Welsh manuscript available at St Augustine's in the tenth century. Bruce Barker-Benfield however includes CCCC, MS 153 in his list of St Augustine's manuscripts for which attribution to that house in fact remains speculative or unproven; B. C. Barker-Benfield, *St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 13 (3 vols., London, 2008), III, pp. 822-3.

[137] M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge, 1903). Leland discusses the '*veteri quodam codices'* at St Augustine's in John Leland, *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii de rebus britannicis collectanea*, ed. Thomas Hearne (6 vols., London, 1770), IV, p. 7.

[138] Mariken Teeuwen and Sinead O'Sullivan (eds.), *Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella. Ninth-Century Commentary Traditions on Martianus' 'De nuptiis''*, Context, CELAMA 12 (Turnhout, 2011) as well as the online project and bibliographies at 'Carolingian Scholarship | Glosses on Martianus Capella', http://martianus.huygens.knaw.nl/path/aim_of_the_project (20 Oct. 2022).

the ninth century' but offered no suggestion as to the origin of the manuscript. Stokes described it as 'eighth century'. M. R. James cited Bradshaw's 'ninth-century' date in the Corpus *Catalogue* of 1912 and acknowledged the work undertaken by Bradshaw and Stokes on the glosses.[139] Lindsay amended Bradshaw's date of 'ixth century' to 's. ix ex' and in 1988 Nicholas Hart-Webb (who split out Lindsay's undifferentiated list of abbreviations between the five different scribes of the text) further suggested that: (a) the contraction of *usque* to *us̄*; (b) the suspension of *tra* by two commas atop the **C**; and (c) the use of the ***OR*** monogram **OꝛC**, suggested 's.ix^{ex} or later'.[140] Daniel Huws similarly catalogues the manuscript as 's.ix/x;s.x^{1}' and the current online catalogue of the Parker Library refers to a 'late ninth-century copy'.[141] David Dumville suggested that the original Welsh membranes, i.e. Part One of the manuscript, might date from the mid-ninth century.[142]

Lindsay discussed the manuscript in his *Early Welsh Script* and cited James's speculation of a 'St Davids' origin which James had noted in his *Catalogue*, James having based his views upon: (a) the extant correspondence of Archbishop Parker with Bishop Davies of St Davids (1561-1581) in relation to the antiquities of St Davids; and (b) palaeographical similarities between the manuscript (meaning in this context the first, 'flat-topped' scribal hand) and CCCC, MS 199, Ieuan ap Sulien's copy of Augustine's *De Trinitate* of *c.* 1090, which James had no doubt had been sent to Parker by Davies.[143] Lindsay in turn had no doubt that Part One of the manuscript was Welsh. He noted the use of the abbreviation ***v́*** for *ut* as making it probable that 'the writers were Welshmen and not Englishmen'. He also agreed with James's palaeographical observations and described the hand that James had described as the

[139] Jenkinson (ed.), *Collected Papers*, pp. 281, 484; James, *Catalogue*, no. 153, pp. 344-6,; W. Stokes, 'The Old Welsh Glosses on Martianus Capella', *Beiträge Zur Vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 7 (1873), p. 385; *idem*, 'The Old Welsh Glosses on Martianus Capella', *AC*, 4th ser., 4 (1873), pp. 1–21.
[140] *EWS*, p. 22; Hart-Webb 'Book Production', p. 56. Lindsay in fact cited the same two abbreviations.
[141] Daniel Huws, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes c.800-c.1800* (3 vols., Aberystwyth, 2022), I, p. 521; 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153: The Corpus Martianus Capella', https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/wb769ft6889 (20 Oct. 2022).
[142] Dumville, *A Palaeographer's Review*, I, pp. 125-6; *idem*, 'English Square Minuscule Script: The Mid-Century Phases', p. 137 & n. 37.
[143] Huws notes that, in particular, Davies sent Parker a transcript of a now lost Latin translation of the *Brut Y Tywysogion* for the years 1070 [*recte* 1072] to 1100 because of its references to Sulien and Rhygyfarch; Huws, *Repertory*, I, pp. 114, 521.

'fine, flat-topped hand' as being the hand 'preserved in the calligraphy of St Davids as late as the end of the eleventh century' (meaning, of course, the hand of Ieuan ap Sulien).[144]

As James put it, the text and glosses of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) are written in a 'variety of very beautiful and interesting hands'.[145] The manuscript shows five scribal hands with the stints, text-divisions and collation of the gatherings summarised in table 4 below. The text-divisions refer to the page and line numbers of *De nuptiis* as edited by Adolphus Dick in 1925; the categorization of the scribal hands follows Bishop's 1967 analysis and the foliation and quire-numbering follow the pencil numbers on the manuscript itself, supplied by either Bradshaw or James.[146]

Table 4. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One). Scribal stints and codicology.

Stint No.	Fols	Textual stint (end)	Scribe	Hand (after Bishop)	Collation (after Bishop and Hart-Webb)
1	1-16r/ii/32	Beginning-90.7	**A**	'a medium-sized flat-topped Welsh minuscule'	**Fols. 1-10:** 1^{10} (2 and 9 are singletons). HFFH (?). **Fols. 11-20:** 2^{10} (9 and 10 are singletons). HFFH.
2	to 16v/ii/38	93.6	**B**	'a medium-large pointed Insular minuscule'	
3	to 17r/i/35	94.14	**C**	'a medium-small hybrid Insular-Caroline minuscule'	
4	17v/i/1 – 18v/ii/35	95.21	**D**	'a medium-large Insular minuscule almost too ugly and anomalous to be dated	
5	19-28	104.3	**N/A**	'excellent square minuscule of s.x^{med}. It is not prima facie to be taken as English'	**Fols. 21-28:** 3^{8} HFHF. The tenth-century interpolation.
6	29r/i/1 – 35r/i/38	196.10	**A**	'Scribe A, writing medium-small'	

[144] *EWS*, p. 19, citing James, *Catalogue*, no. 153, pp. 344-6. For Archbishop Parker and Bishop Davies see R. J. Flower, 'William Salesbury, Richard Davies and Archbishop Parker', *NLWJ*, 2, 1 (1941), pp. 7-14; J. E. Lloyd, 'Bishop Sulien and his family', in *op. cit.*, pp. 1-6 and G. J. Williams, 'Bishop Sulien, Bishop Richard Davies, and Archbishop Parker' in *NLWJ*, 5, 3 (1948), pp. 215-9. David Dumville noted that James 'wished' to attribute CCCC 153 (Part One) to St David's 'but there seems to be no evidence to support him', see Dumville, 'English Square minuscule: The Background', pp. 160 & n. 63.
[145] James, *Catalogue*, 1, p. 344
[146] Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, ed. Adolphus Dick (Leipzig, 1925); Bishop, 'Martianus Capella', pp. 262-4; Hart-Webb, 'Book Production', pp. 53-4.

Table 4. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One). Scribal stints and codicology.

Stint No.	Fols	Textual stint (end)	Scribe	Hand (after Bishop)	Collation (after Bishop and Hart-Webb)
7	35r/ii/1 – 62v/ii/59	484.2	**A**	'Scribe A, writing medium-small'	**Fols. 29-38:** 4^{10} HFFH. **Fols. 39-48:** 5^{10} HFHF. **Fols. 49-58:** 6^{10} HFHF. **Fols. 59-67:** 7^{9} (final folio missing/lost). HFHF.
8	63r	490.11	**E**	'a small elegant compressed Insular minuscule'	
9	63v/i/1 – 67r/ii/7	535.17	**A**	'Scribe A, writing medium-small'	
10	67r/ii/8 – 27 (end of text)	End	**E**	As above.	

Figure 132 below illustrates the five different scribal hands at junctures where their stints overlap, enabling comparison of the different hands.

Figure 132. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One). Scribes A-E.

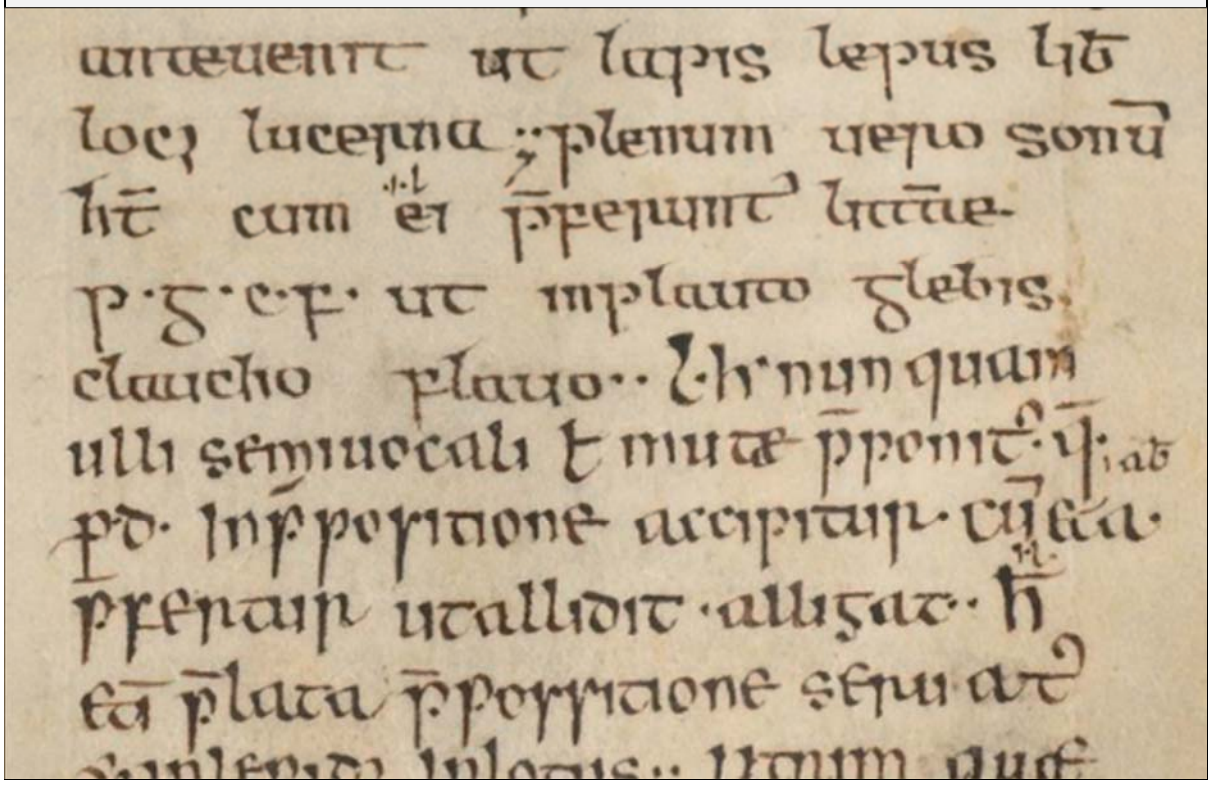
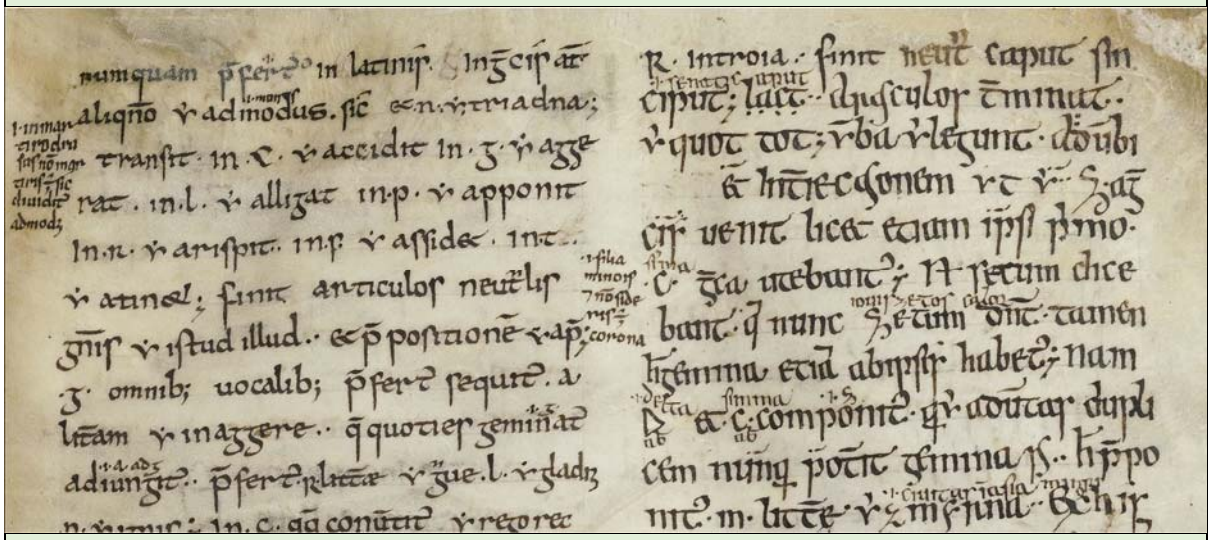
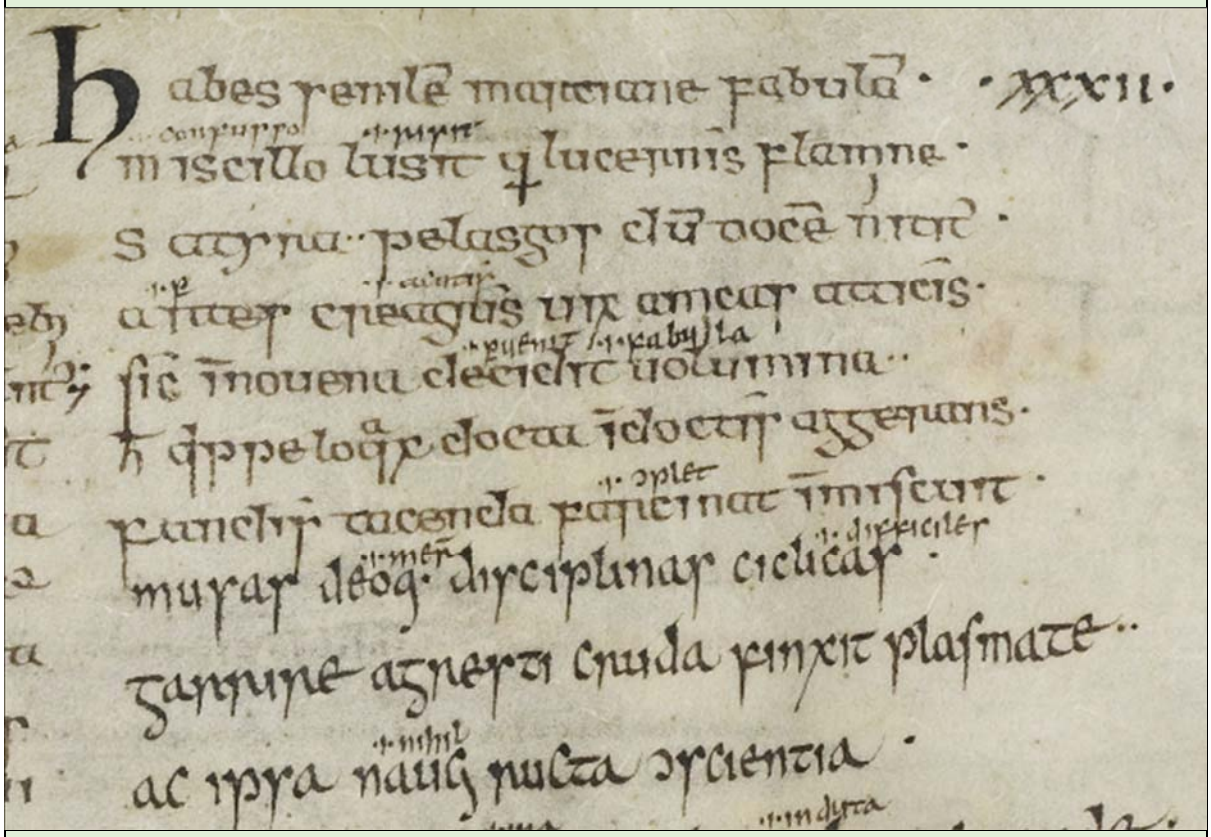


Figure 132. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Part One). Scribes A-E.

Above. Fol. 16r. Scribes A (first five lines to the double *punctus*) and B.



Above. Fol. 17r. Scribes C (left-hand column, the hybrid Welsh-Caroline hand) and D (right-hand column).



Above. Fol. 67r. Scribes A (first seven lines to *farcinat immiscuit*) and E.

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Alan Bishop revisited and amended James's (and Lindsay's) analyses of these five hands in 1967.[147] He suggested that Lindsay's omission to mention 'Hand B' was due to him not considering it to be 'Welsh', a view with which Bishop himself agreed. In 1997 Gillian Conway considered the manuscript in the context of the high intellectual standards of the *clas* at Llanbadarn Fawr and pointed out that the 'late Celtic' abbreviation-system of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) shares many idiosyncrasies with that of the later Llanbadarn Fawr manuscripts, TCD, MS 50, the Rhygyfarch Psalter and CCCC, MS 199, the *De Trinitate* discussed above, including the consistent habit of abbreviating ***ur*** with the syllable-symbol ***2*** after **m** (i.e.*'mur'*) but using the old-fashioned, large, curled apostrophe after **t** (i.e. *'tur'*). She made two suggestions in response to this, firstly agreeing with James's ascription of the manuscript to Dyfed (and more narrowly Ceredigion) and secondly agreeing with both James's and Lindsay's idea that CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and the later Llanbadarn MSS point to a 'solid local tradition' associated with Llanbadarn Fawr.[148]

In an excellent 2011 paper, Sinéad O'Sullivan commented extensively on the manuscript's glosses. She noted that: (a) the ninth-century Welsh 'experiment' with Caroline minuscule evidenced by Bishop's 'Hand C' predated the adoption of that script in England in tenth-century Benedictine contexts by some considerable time; and (b) that the glosses point to extensive 'Welsh-Continental, Welsh-English and English-Continental relations' in the ninth century. She suggested that the Welsh centre responsible for CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) was able to access up-to-date texts and glosses from the great centres of northern France in the ninth century and that the 'Caroline experiment' represented by 'Hand C' was a by-product of these

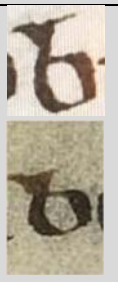
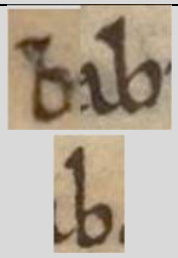
[147] Bishop, 'Martianus Capella', pp. 257-275.
[148] Gillian Conway, 'Towards a cultural context for the eleventh-century Llanbadarn manuscripts', *Ceredigion*, 13(1) (1997), pp. 13-14. Nancy Edwards concurred that TCD, MS 50 and CCCC, MS 199 '…may well draw upon a Welsh tradition of manuscript illumination as well as using…stylistic traits…from Ireland and probably Scotland'; Edwards, '11th Century Welsh Illuminated Manuscripts', p. 154.

connections.[149] The question therefore arises whether the early Christian monuments discussed above can support these arguments drawn from the manuscript?

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 125/CD27 HIROIDIL

Figure 133 below compares the script of 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands A-C of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One). Hand C, the hybrid Insular-Caroline hand, is included for two reasons. The first is to show the contrast between it and the other, purely 'Celtic' hands but also to show the similarities which link it to the other hands, in other words, to demonstrate its 'hybrid' nature.

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				The categorisation of the inscription as Later rather than Early Welsh book-script is shown by the absence of the *OC* letterform of **a**. The long tail of the stem of the letterform as used in the inscription is an idiosyncracy matched closely by Hand A, as is the flat top of the *ductus.*
				The letterform of **b** matches that of Hand A (and indeed the non-Caroline letterform written by Hand C) where the ascender is almost totally absorbed into the cleft wedge-serif. The inscriber replicates the exact calligraphy of the book-script original despite the coarseness of the stone.[150]

[149] Sinéad O'Sullivan, 'The Corpus Martianus Capella: Continental Gloss Traditions on 'De Nuptiis' in Wales and Anglo-Saxon England', *CMCS*, 62 (2011), pp. 33-56. Daniel Huws discussed the question of whether Caroline minuscule was written in Wales prior to the advent of the Normans with David Dumville; his conclusion seems to have been the same as Lindsay's, namely that Bodl., MS 572 is likely to be Cornish and that 'the nearest we have to pre-Norman Welsh Caroline is the hybrid hand, Bishop's hand C': see Huws, *Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 121 & n. 57; David Dumville, 'Palaeographical Considerations in the Dating of Early Welsh Verse', *BBCS*, 27 (1976-78), p. 248; *idem*, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 1992), p. 117 & n. 150; *idem*, 'Beowulf Come Lately: Some Notes on the Palaeography of the Nowell Codex', *Archiv für das Studien der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 255 (1988), p. 53.

[150] 'Coarse, micaceous, slightly feldspathic, quartz-cemented, well-bedded siltstone'; *Corpus*, II, p. 181.

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

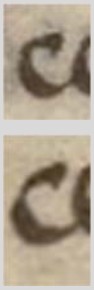
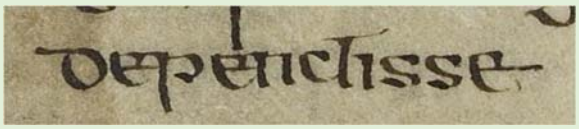
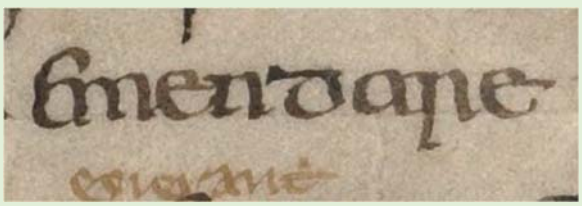
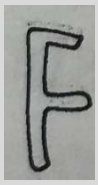
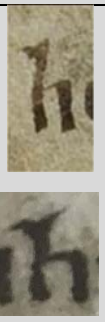
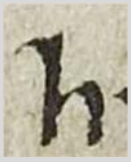
125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				Hands A and B both write a semicursive letterform of **C** with a separate, somewhat staightened, second-stroke with a pen-lift between the strokes. Given the nature of the stone it is not however suprising that this technical feature of the *ductus* of the manuscript letterforms is not replicated.
				CCCC, MS 199 in the hand of Ieuan ap Sulien retains the upright letterform of Early Insularbook-script as a *littera notabilior*. Ieuan's usage is paralled by Hand B which uses the same letterform very rarely and always at the start of his lines (e.g. fol. 16v, I, 41). The two allomorphs are shown below, from Hand A, fol. 1v., *'dependisse'*. 
				The letterform used by Hand B, with a taller and shallower *module* and an unclosed top-stroke, also appears as an allomorph and as a *littera notabilior* in CCCC, MS 199. Hand B (immediately below) sometimes writes this letterform very tall and unclosed like the inscription. 

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				The epigraphic letterform is identical to the less calligraphic and simpler usage of Sulgen, reproduced below: 
				The squareness of the epigraphic *ductus* is most redolent of the squarer *ductus* of the letterform of Hand A. Also, the epigraphic **F** sits on the line of writing to that the top of the *ductus* aligns with the line of legibility. The alignment of the word *filius* in the inscription follows the practice of Hand A.
				The longish letterform of epigraphic h is paralleled in Hand A and replicated almost exactly in Hand B.
				*'hoc'*, the Insular symbol, 'as rare in England as it is common in Ireland and Wales'.[151] The symbol is also used by Sulgen, as reproduced below. MSS from Bobbio show the dot written to the right, as in the second of Sulgen's usages, below (r.). 

[151] Notae Latinae, p. 98.

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

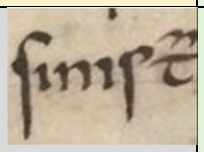
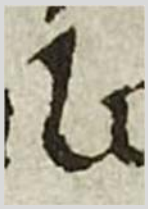
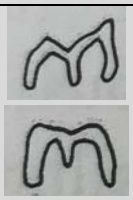
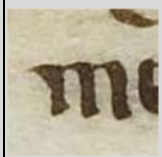
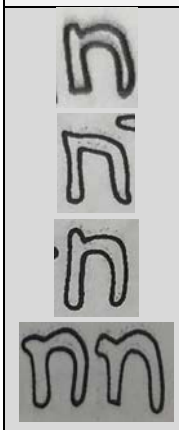
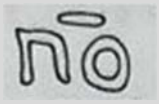
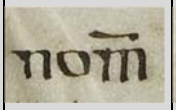
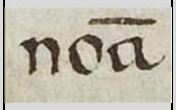
125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				The epigraphic letterforms of **i** follow the manuscript letterforms closely with a wedge-serif and a slight right-twist of broad nib at the bottom of the minim.
				The manuscript and epigraphic letterforms of **l** are very similar, particularly the two more calligraphic epigraphic examples opposite. The examples from Hand C show the scribe oscillating between a hybrid treatment (top), a more decorous Caroline treatment (middle) and a more Insular treatment (bottom).
				These letterforms show the tension between the flat-topped and pointed calligraphic treatments. The minims of Hand B are written with more slanted pen-hold to produce the typical convex and pointed minim. By contrast the *ductus* of Hand A comprises disciplined right-angles and thick minims drawn with the full width of the pen held straight to the page. The pen is turned to the right as it lifts from the page.

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				As with the letterform of **m** described above, **n** oscillates between a square, flat-topped and more pointed convex letterform.
				*'**nō**'* for *'nomen'* is 'Universal in Irish and Welsh (with Cornish) script…from as early as the time of St Molling and St Boniface' as is the *'**noa**'* for *'nomina'* of Hand B.[152] The *'**nom**'* of Hand A, however, is a Continental abbreviation using the ancient *nota* for *'men'*, of which Lindsay states: 'In home Insular script it hardly shews itself, an alien symbol, until the end of our period' (i.e. 850 and he notes its appearance in CCCC, MS 153).[153] The different symbols might suggest that: (a) the inscription was a generation or so earlier in the ninth century than the manuscript; and (b) that scribe A was in touch with Continental usage, perhaps as it appeared in Continental Irish MSS of the ninth century.[154] The same letterform appears in an interlinear gloss on *Xanthus* (Martianus's explanation of why *x* never begins Latin words but may begin Greek words) at fol. 16v, ii, 14 *'nomen fluminis'* (see below). It is likely that the gloss was copied from a Continental exemplar.

[152] *Notae Latinae*, pp. 41-2.
[153] *Notae Latinae*, pp. 331; *EWS*, p. 21.
[154] Lindsay cites various ninth-century Continental Irish MSS where the abbreviation appears; *Notae Latinae*, p. 332.

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

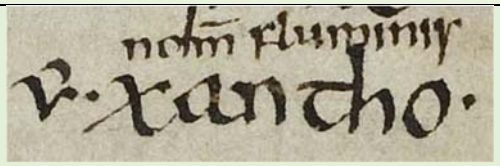
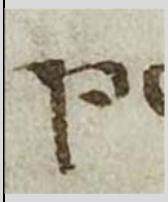
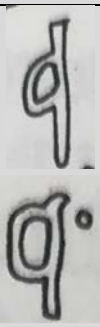
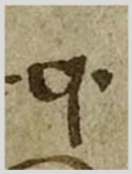
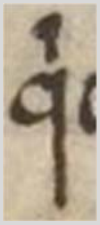
125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				
				The epigraphic **p** follows, if anything, the letterform of Hand A with a flat top to the lobe and at least in the second instance, a serif.
	 	 		Opposite, Hand B does not use the abbreviation for *'qui'* (the *'quicunque'* of the inscription), so I have included the abbreviation for *'pri'* instead to show the use of a wedge-seriffed superscript **i.** The letterform of Hand B's **q** and **I** can therefore be pictured. The epigraphic *'que'* shows the horn, or wedge-serif of the ascender of **q** from the letterform of Hand A and it locates the dot at the same height.

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

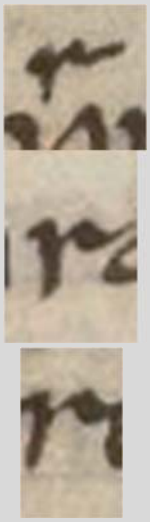
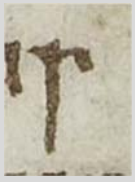
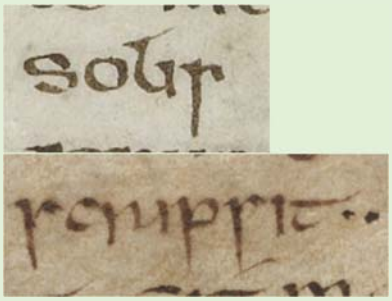
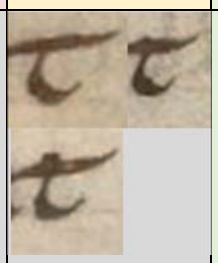
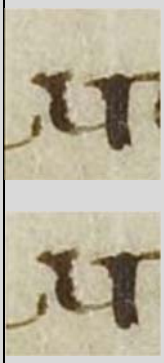
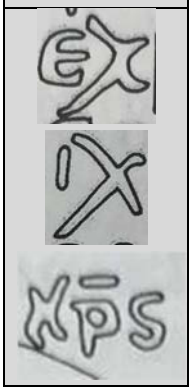
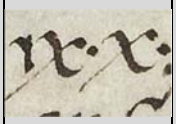
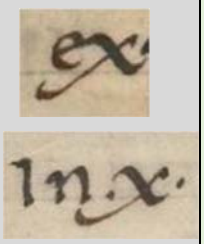
125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				The letterforms of **R** are discussed above. The resemblance between the Caroline letterform in the inscription and those of Hand C is striking.
	 	 	  	Contemporary Glamorgan inscribers experience considerable trouble with the *module* of bilinear S. However in HIROIDIL and both Hands A and B all three scribes render the flat top- and bottom-strokes and the sinuous middle-stroke perfectly. In terms of the origin of the scribal hands, their letterforms of s-longa correspond with that of Sulgen including in terms of *module* and alignment. Below shows *'solis'* from Hand A and *'scripsit'* as written by Sulgen in Chad 5. 

Figure 133. 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and Hands 'A' - 'C' of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

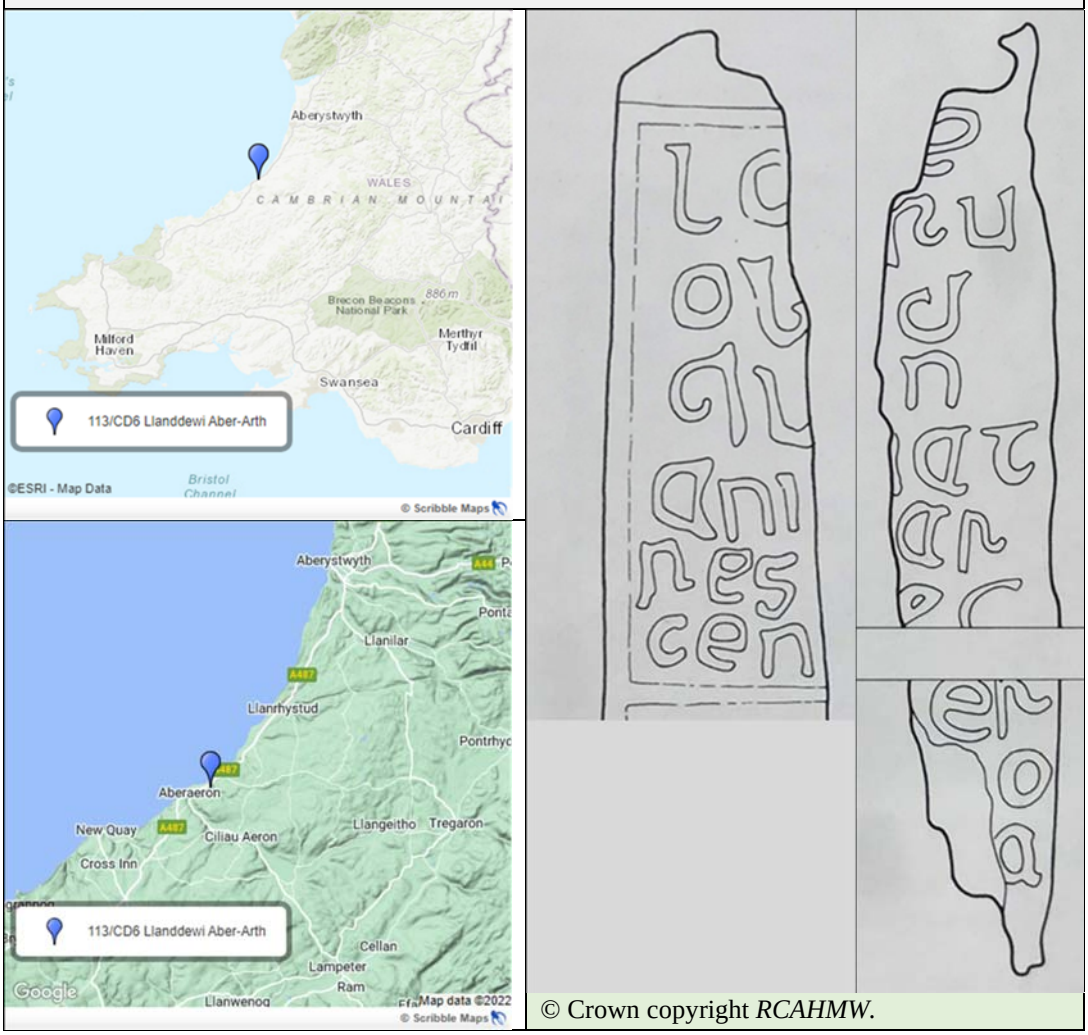
125/CD27 HIROIDIL.	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	'Hand C'	Comment
				The epigraphic script shows an instance of a quite straight-stemmed ꞇ, an archaic letterform, in addition to the rounded letterform of Hand A.
				The epigraphic letterform follows the Insular letterform of Hands A and B with pronounced wedge-serifs, parallel straight minims and a notable stub to the second minim, protruding vertically downwards or with the slightest inclination (in the case of Hand A) to the right.
				The epigraphic script follows the *ductus* of Hand A with three separate strokes, a complex glyph with which the inscriber obviously struggled, rendering the letterform better in the *'ex'* than in the *nomen sacrum*.

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 113/CD6

113/CD6 comprises some broken fragments of what seems originally to have been a large, rectilinear slab-shaft with an inscribed panel above a panel of interlace. Nancy Edwards opts for a late ninth- or early tenth-century date, making this monument broadly contemporary with CCCC, MS 153 (Part One). Helen McKee notes the script as 'a rounded version of book-

script…high-grade Insular handwriting'.[155] Figure 134 below shows the location and inscription of the fragments.

Figure 134. Llanddewi Aber-Arth, Ceredigion. Church of St David. Inscribed cross-shaft fragments. 113/CD6.



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The following table compares the script of 113/CD6 and Hands A – B of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One). I have omitted Hand C on the basis that Caroline influence is discussed in the 'comments' column below.

[155] *Corpus*, II, p. 143.

Figure 135. 113/CD6 and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

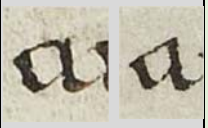
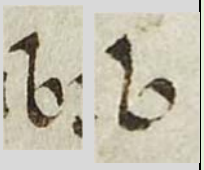
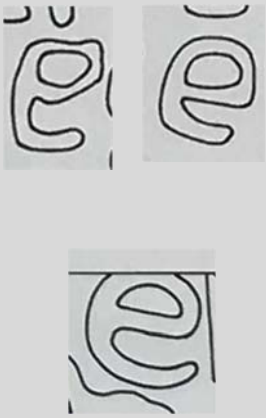
113/CD6	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
			The inscription features two instances of the epigraphic letterform of ***OC* a** with straightened stem (i.e. ***CI***) but with a third variant appearing to tend more towards the letterform of Hand B.
			The ordinator has taken pains to slope the vertical stroke backwards and add a pronounced cleft-serif.
			The letterform of **C** is cut round in the inscription as it is for 124/CD27 HIROIDIL.
			The epigraphic letterform duplicates the straight-backed letterform, as used by both Hands A and B.
			The epigraphic letterform is now the fully-closed letterform of Later Welsh book-script although it is interesting to note that there is no projection forward of the medial stroke, something which is retained even in the late eleventh-century hand of Ieuan. There are two possible explanations for the neatness with which this letterform is treated: (a) the influence of the local fully-closed, 'square' letterform of bilinear epigraphic **e** illustrated in figure 121 above; or (b) the influence of the Caroline letterform of e.

Figure 135. 113/CD6 and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

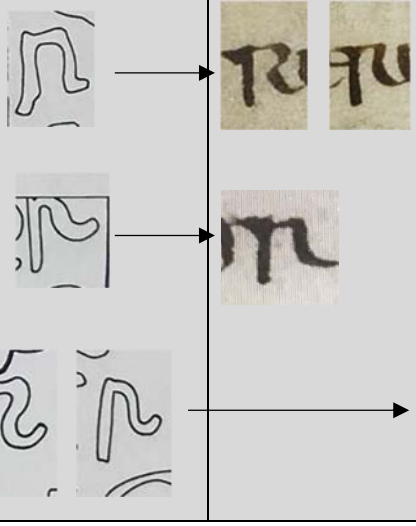
113/CD6	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
			The epigraphic letterforms of **i** follow the manuscript letterforms.
			The letterforms here are also the same save the the epigraphic wedge is somewhat flatter.
			The epigraphic **n** is written with the sqaure *ductus* of Hand A with a protruberance at the top of the first minim representing the entry-serif of the book-script.
			The epigraphic **q** shows the 'horn' or pointed apex of the ascender and the curl of the bottom of the bow back towards the stem.
			The closeness of the two manuscript hands and the HIROIDIL and 113/CD6 inscriptions is shown by the identical patterning of allomorphs of **r**. In the columns opposite I compare the four epigraphic occurrences with the manuscript letterforms. A consistent pattern of allomorphs may point to a shared writing-tradition.

Figure 135. 113/CD6 and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.			
113/CD6	**‘Hand A’**	**‘Hand B’**	**Comment**
			The epigraphic letterform is remarkably faithful to the set treatment of bilinear **S** derived from archaic uncial, showing flat head- and foot-strokes and the same *ductus* of three separate strokes.
			The same letterforms.
			The letterform of epigraphic **U** is particularly close to the letterform of Hand B: in particular, it reproduces the slightly taller second minim with its broader wedge-serif.

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG]

The following table compares the script of 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] with Hands A – B of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One).

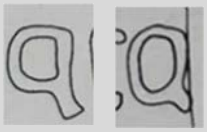
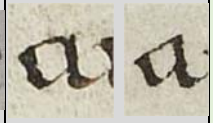
Figure 136. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.			
365/P84 MEILDOMNAIG	**‘Hand A’**	**‘Hand B’**	**Comment**
			The epigraphic letterform takes care to reproduce the long ‘tail’ of the final stroke of the manuscript letterform.

Figure 136. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

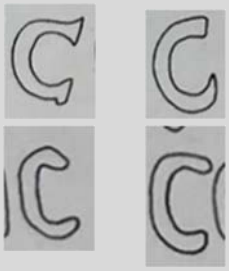
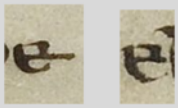
365/P84 MEILDOMNAIG	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
	See the discussion at figure 118 above for this ligature.		
			The letterforms are identical.
	 	 	The epigraphic letterform replicates the wedge and etoliated serif of the manuscript letterform as well as the proportions of the *ductus* itself.
			The letterform of **E** is the letterform with unclosed lobe used by Hand B. For the curious 'closed' *epsilon*-style letterform, see figure 121 above.
			The letterform of **i** shows, in the epigraphic usage, the two treatments, pointed and 'flat-topped' with the usual etoliated wedge-serif. This is discussed above in figure 133 above.
			All three letterforms are similar, including the motion of the nib from left to right and the broadness of the downstroke. The epigraphic serif is somewhat flatter than the book-scripts.

Figure 136. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

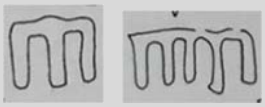
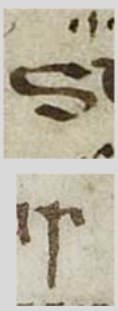
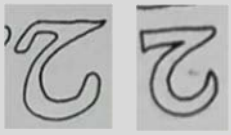
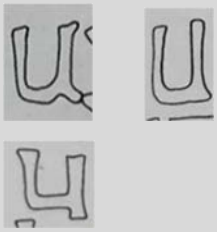
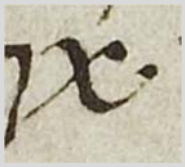
365/P84 MEILDOMNAIG	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
			The inscription follows the squarer letterform of Hand A.
See above for **m** and **n** in false connection.			
			The inscription is closest to the letterform of Hand A.
			See the discussion at figure 135 above for the discussion of this particularly fluid and mutable letterform.
			The epigraphic letterform is the semicursive s-longa. It appears to be poorly-formed although it may simply be an epigraphic rendering of the basic seriffed letterform with a straight second-stroke.

Figure 136. 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

365/P84 MEILDOMNAIG	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
			The epigraphic **C** is idiosyncratic and may be a local epigraphic variant: the identical letterform appears in Gso-16/305/P12 TRENEGUSSI (albeit in that inscription the inscriber seems to have reversed it, as per the reproduction below).  It is interesting that the TRENEGUSSI inscripion is from Cilgerran in northern Pembrokeshire, closer to Penally and 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] than it is to the Ceredigion inscriptions to the north. It is possible that this aberrant letterform became typified in the local epigraphic tradition just as, for example, the straight-backed epigraphic variant of the ***OC*** letterform of **a** became fossilised in Morgannwg epigraphic usage.
			The inscription replicates the letterforms of both book-hands.
			The epigraphic letterform tends more to bilinearity, perhaps to fit better in the horizontal *ordinatio* of the inscription and the limited space available to it in the panel of the cross-shaft.

CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU

Figure 138 below compares the palaeography of 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU to Hands A – B of CCCC, MS 153.

Figure 137. 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

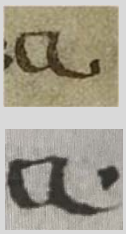
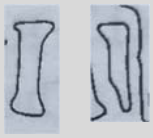
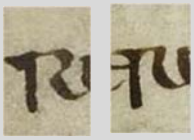
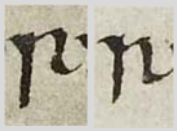
49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
			Perhaps the best explanation for the epigraphic letterform is that it is inscriber's short-cut method, perhaps responding to the challenge of cutting the extremely thin head-stroke of the book-letterform.
			This epigraphic letterform shows the letterform of Hand A. The letterform as used in CCCC, MS 199, is reproduced below: 
			This letterform is the squarer letterform of Hand A.
			These letterforms **i l** and **m** show the same palaeography as described above in relation to 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG].
			

Figure 137. 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU and the scribal hands of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153.

49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU	'Hand A'	'Hand B'	Comment
			
	 	 	The best explanation is that this represents a Caroline intrusive letterform akin to that of Hand C of the manuscript, as reproduced below, particularly noting the entry- and foot-serifs and the angles of the second horizontal stroke: 
	 	 	The same *ductus* as the book-hands.

The tables above show that the palaeography of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) correlates extremely closely to the Later Welsh book-script of the early Christian monuments of Deheubarth and Brycheiniog. The correlations between Hands A, B, 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and 113/CD6 are particularly striking. They point to a 'solid local' writing-tradition centred in Dyfed, possibly in Ceredigion, on quite a geographically localised basis, as Gillian Conway

argues.[156] 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] from Penally to the south and 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU from Brycheiniog far to the east also show many correlations to the scribal hands but they also show relatively more differences, suggesting that the 'core' writing-tradition represented by Hands A and B seems most closely reflected in the two Ceredigion inscriptions.

The suggestion that it was Ceredigion (or at least Dyfed) that lay at the heart of the ninth-century writing-province of the south-west is supported by the following observations. Firstly, 125/CD27 HIROIDIL and the 113/CD6 fragments do not seem to show any conflict between different treatments of Later Welsh book-script. They both show a settled treatment identical to Hands A and B of CCCC, MS 153. Secondly, the conflict between the 'pointed' and 'square' treatments instead appears in the Pembrokeshire and Brycheiniog outliers, 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] and 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU. This suggests that either the 'pointed' treatment of Later Welsh book-script was never written in Ceredigion – such as at Llanbadarn Fawr and/or Llanddewibrefi - or that the graphical process was so much more advanced that the 'pointed' treatment was discarded much earlier in the ninth century than was the case elsewhere. If the impact of Caroline script was felt in Ceredigion in the first half of the ninth century due to its international connections then the latter explanation seems preferable.

This is historically consistent with what we know about the cultural and intellectual exchanges of the time. Julia Smith describes in graphic terms how another Celtic region, Brittany, was affected in just such manner at the same period:[157]

> 'Continental culture and ecclesiastical influences swept into the region, and although they by no means totally eroded the traditional orientation towards Wales and Ireland, intellectual life was appreciably different by the tenth century'.

[156] Conway, 'Towards a cultural context', p. 18.
[157] Smith, *Province and empire*, p. 169.

The intellectual currents that Smith describes as sweeping across Brittany also caused waves to wash ashore in west Wales. The scribe of Hand C answers exactly to her description of similar early essays at Caroline on the part of his Breton cousins:[158]

> '…a round and often rather uneven Caroline minuscule script…many insular abbreviations together with the syntax marks and Latin orthography commonly found in early Welsh manuscripts'.

Scholarship is only now beginning to discern the outlines of how and where the intellectual and cultural networks of the Irish Sea culture-province interlinked and what people and places they connected in the ninth century. Work has focussed on the complex accretions of glosses in Latin and the vernacular and in particular the activities of Breton scribes in ninth-century Frankia. Pierre-Yves Lambert has built on the work of Léon Fleuriot (1923-1987) who published his *Dictionnaire des gloses en vieux-breton* in 1964: excellent work is also being undertaken by scholars like Immo Warntjes and Jacopo Bisagni, at Trinity College, Dublin and The National University of Ireland, Galway, respectively, where Dr Bisagni directs the 'Ireland and Carolingian Brittany: Texts and Transmission' research project which has already produced a very necessary handlist of Breton manuscripts, *c.* 780-1100.[159]

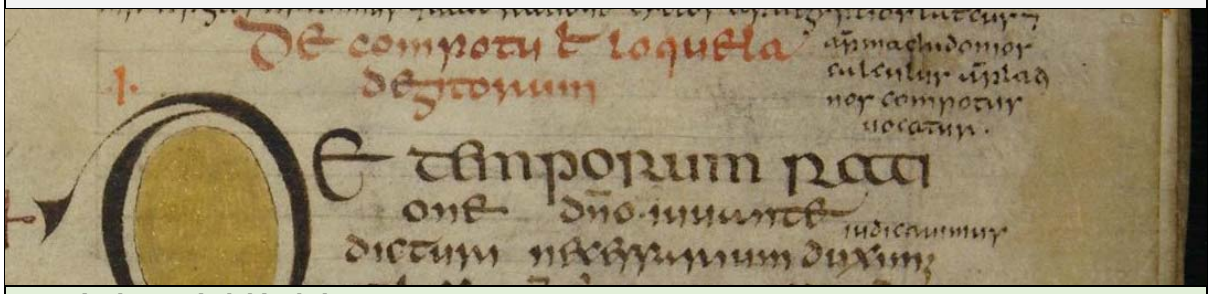
Caroline Brett, with Fiona Edmonds and Paul Russell, has consolidated and built upon this work in a 2022 volume, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, 450-1200.* Brett proposes the geographical re-casting of 'the British Isles' or 'the Insular world' as 'the Atlantic Archipelago' centred on the English Channel and the Irish Sea in order to 'avoid thinking of these islands as…a unified culture-zone over against the Continent…the Irish Sea became a highway'.[160] The connections revealed by this scholarship are complex and far-ranging and make the usual historical and palaeographical explanations of 'influence' look increasingly superficial. The question for this thesis, however, is whether any of this relatively recent scholarship is sufficiently high-resolution in its focus to render visible connections between

[158] Smith, *Province and empire*, p. 169.
[159] Dr Jacopo Bisagni, 'Ireland and Carolingian Brittany: Texts and Transmission', https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/ (20 Oct. 2022).
[160] Caroline Brett, Fiona Edmonds and Paul Russell, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, 450-1200: Contact, Myth and History* (Cambridge, 2022), pp. 4-5.

Carolingian France and Deheubarth (or even more narrowly, Dyfed or Ceredigion) from the middle of the ninth century, which is when we see the aesthetics and morphology of Caroline script first appearing in the local writing-tradition?

In this context, an important contemporary manuscript is Angers, Bibliothèque Municipale (now Angers, Médiathèque Toussaint), MS 477, a copy of Bede's *De Natura Rerum*, *De Temporum Ratione* and *De Temporibus* (chapters 1-25) and other miscellania.[161] The manuscript dates from the turn of the ninth century and was written by, probably, a Breton scribe working at a northern French centre with Celtic connections. Its later provenance is the Abbey of Saint-Aubin at Angers but in the tenth century it seems to have been at Fleury. The manuscript forms part of a complex *stemma* of texts and glossing traditions including some 450 Old Breton glosses discovered in 1959 by Fleuriot.[162] The Breton glosses draw on an older 'Continental-Celtic' tradition in that they include garbled calques of Old Irish vernacular glosses on Bede that appear in manuscripts with known Irish-Continental provenance, for example the Old Irish glosses on the Bedan *computistica* contained in Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 167, a manuscript of Reichenau provenance (illustrated in figure 138 below).[163]

Figure 138. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 167, fol. 24r.



© Badische Landesbibliothek.

[161] See 'Angers BM MS 477 (461)', https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/9, for the IrCaBriTT 'handlist' entry and 'Angers, Bibliothèque municipale, 0477 (0461) (Reproduction intégrale)', https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/mirador/index.php?manifest=https%3A%2F%2Fbvmm.irht.cnrs.fr%2Fiiif%2F1097%2Fmanifest for the digitised facsimiles (20 Oct. 2022).

[162] Léon Fleuriot, 'La découverte de nouvelles gloses en vieux-breton', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 103 (1959), pp. 186–95.

[163] 'Sammelhandschrift - Cod. Aug. perg. 167 > Beda, De temporum ratione', https://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/blbhs/content/pageview/13360, (24 Oct. 2022).

However in addition to its debt to Continental Irish scholarship, the layers of glossing in the Angers manuscript also show Welsh influence. Firstly, some of the Old Breton glosses appear to be 'Bretonised Old Welsh' as well as 'Bretonised Old Irish', suggesting that Breton scribes were aggregating Old Welsh glosses into their *scholia* along with Old Irish glosses. Secondly, on fol. 47r., there appears a Greek cryptogram identical in format to the cryptogram of *cemelliauc* or *Cyfeilliog* that appears on fol. 36r. of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42.[164] Thirdly, and perhaps most strikingly, a second scribe of the tenth century added a second layer of Old Welsh-derived glosses to the Angers manuscript, which reflects a later linguistic period of Old Welsh than the earlier, 'Bretonised' *scholia*.[165] So not only were 'traditional' Old Welsh glosses incorporated into the Angers manuscript: so too were contemporary, new ones.

In general terms, and as Julia M. H. Smith puts it, this and other manuscripts like it 'bear witness to complex and close cross-channel cultural links' which included not only the collation and redaction into Old Breton of pre-existing Old Welsh glosses that travelled with exemplars but a second quite independent stratum of tenth century and apparently original Old Welsh glosses.[166] Pierre-Yves Lambert thought that this manuscript therefore showed not only the availability of Welsh exemplar(s) with *scholia* to a Breton scribe at Fleury in the ninth century but also the actual physical presence of a Welsh glossator at Fleury in the tenth century, a scribe whose glossing idiom was contemporary 'uniformly late Old Welsh'.[167] As Jacopo Bisagni summarises it:[168]

> 'All this makes of Angers 477 an extraordinary cross-linguistic and cross-cultural 'bridge' between the insular world, Brittany and Francia…'

[164] Cf. fig. 88, p. 218 above; both are similar to the well-known 'Dubhthach's Cryptogram' in Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, MS H.J.IV.11, fol. 106v. See Pierre-Yves Lambert, 'Les commentaires celtiques à Bède le Vénérable', *Études Celtiques*, vol. 20, fasc.1 (1983), pp. 119-143.
[165] Pierre-Yves Lambert, 'Rencontres culturelles entre Irlandais et Bretons aux IXe et Xe siècles: le témoignage des gloses' in Catherine Laurent and Helen Davis (eds.), *Irlande et Bretagne: vingt siècles d'histoire* (Rennes, 1994), pp. 97-106.
[166] Smith, *Province and empire*, p. 168 & n. 84.
[167] Lambert, 'Rencontres culturelles', p. 101; Brett *et al.*, *The Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 158.
[168]Jacopo Bisagni, 'Angers, BM, MS 477 (461)', *A Descriptive Handlist of Breton Manuscripts, c. AD 780–1100*, https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/9 (20 Oct. 2022).

Nor is Angers, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 477 an isolated example of Old Welsh scholarship at the heart of the Carolingian world.[169] BnF, Lat. 10290 is a ninth-century *de luxe* copy of Priscian's *Institutiones*, probably copied in the Paris region, perhaps at Saint-Germain des Prés, with a subsequent Echternach provenance. [170] Like Angers, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 477 this manuscript also contains Old Irish glosses which Lambert considered to be 'relatively archaic…they correspond in orthography and content to the first layer of glosses from [St Gall]'. Also, like the Angers manuscript, these Old Irish glosses are augmented by a layer of Old Welsh glosses which Lambert thinks were overlaid upon or integrated into an Irish glossing tradition originating from St Gall, perhaps lifted from a glossed Welsh copy of the *Institutiones* which the Parisian scribe had to hand in the ninth century. So the Paris grammatical manuscript presents a similar scholastic stratigraphy as the Angers computistical manuscript. Northern French scribes, whether Breton or Frankish, had available both 'original' Old Irish and Old Welsh glossing traditions but also in some cases contemporary Welsh *scholia*, either from contemporary Welsh manuscripts or from actual Welsh scribes. To cite Lambert again:[171]

> *'…les deux problems posés par le manuscript d'Angers: mélange de forms vieux gallois et vieux Breton; et bretonisation des deux éléments antérieurs, vieux gallois ou vieil-irlandaise…une bretonisation succédant à une gallois-isation…'.*

We of course lack any direct references to Welsh scribes at northern French centres in the ninth century, such as the reference to the *Ioruert* who is recorded as teaching at Winchester in the tenth century, but the evidence of these glossing traditions suggests that Welsh

[169] As Bisagni notes, 'La littérature computistique irlandaise dans la Bretagne du Haut Moyen Âge : nouvelles découvertes et nouvelles perspectives', *Brittanica Monastica*, 20 (Landévennec, 2019), https://www.academia.edu/45164221/La_litt%C3%A9rature_computistique_irlandaise_dans_la_Bretagne_du_Haut_Moyen_%C3%82ge_nouvelles_d%C3%A9couvertes_et_nouvelles_perspectives (20 Oct. 2022).
[170] 'Latin 10290', https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc12418b (20 Oct. 2022). The glosses were published by Lambert in 1982; Pierre-Yves Lambert, 'Les gloses du manuscript BN Lat. 10290', *Études Celtiques*, vol. 19 (1982), pp. 72-213: for further discussion see Louis Lemoine, 'Les méthodes d'enseignement dans la Bretagne du haut Moyen Age d'après les manuscrits bretons: l'exemple du Paris, B.N. Lat. 10290', *Landevennec, aux origines de la Bretagne. XV centenaire de la Fondation de l'abbaye* (Landevennec, 1985), pp. 45-63 and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'The Old Irish and Old English Glosses in Echternach Manuscripts (with an Appendix on Old Breton Glosses)' in Michelle Camillo Ferrari, Jean Schroeder and Henri Trauffler (éds.), *Die Abtei Echternach 698-1998* (Luxembourg, 1999), p. 86
[171] Lambert, *Rencontres*, p. 102.

manuscripts and Welsh scholars were part of the Carolingian renaissance and may well have been physically present at centres like, in particular, Fleury.[172] In fact, Caroline Brett interprets the Angers manuscript in exactly this way, as a 'three-way collaboration between Irish, Welsh and Breton scholars at a Continental centre'.[173]

There is, therefore, good evidence for 'Welsh' manuscripts (and perhaps actual scholars) in northern France in the ninth or tenth century - but how and where do we connect this back to Wales itself? There is some twelfth-century evidence which, if are prepared to extrapolate backwards, may point to the Welsh nexus of this network of scholarship. Aberystwyth, NLW, MS Peniarth 540B comprises two fragmentary bifolia of Bede's *De Natura Rerum*, written in Wales probably in the first half of the twelfth century. It includes what Daniel Huws describes as 'traditional' glosses, two of which he links to the two of the manuscripts discussed above, Angers, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 477 and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Co. Aug. perg. 167. Huws suggested that Peniarth 540B 'perhaps' originated at Llanbadarn Fawr as a 'half-breed' manuscript reflecting the early twelfth-century transition between native and Norman scribal usage, but its significance for the present argument is that it shows that the ninth- and tenth-century scholarship with 'Continental-Welsh' associations discussed above was available in the native intellectual culture of early twelfth-century Ceredigion.[174] Alison Peden has also demonstrated that there existed a keen interest in science at pre-Conquest Llanbadarn Fawr.[175] We cannot, of course, use the evidence of a twelfth-century manuscript to prove that this interest also existed in Ceredigion in the ninth

[172] For *Ioruert* see n. 131, p. 201 above.
[173] Brett et al., *Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 161.
[174] 'File Peniarth MS 540', https://archives.library.wales/index.php/bedes-de-natura-rerum and (for digitised images) 'Bede's De natura rerum', https://viewer.library.wales/4398303#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&manifest=https%3A%2F%2Fdamsssl.llgc.org.uk%2Fiiif%2F2.0%2F4398303%2Fmanifest.json&xywh=-1096%2C-212%2C5582%2C4231 (20 Oct. 2022); also Daniel Huws, 'A Welsh manuscript of Bede's De natura rerum', in *idem*, *Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 104–122. It is also worth noting that the flyleaf of CCCC, MS 199 is a folio of ninth-century Caroline script which James identified as 'homilies' but which Huws identifies as 'a leaf of Smaragdus from a continental manuscript of s.ix, to be associated with an unidentifiable rebinding'; Huws, *Repository*, I, p. 522 also M. Budny, *Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge : an Illustrated Catalogue* (Kalamazoo and Cambridge, 1997), pp. 748-9.
[175] Alison Peden, 'Science and philosophy in Wales at the time of the Norman conquest: a Macrobius manuscript from Llanbadarn', *CMCS*, 2 (Winter, 1981), pp. 21–45.

century, or that it was Ceredigion in particular that was 'the' centre of correspondence with ninth-century Fleury. However the epigraphy discussed above does at least show: (a) that Ceredigion ordinators were responding to Caroline script relatively early in the ninth century; and (b) that that influence can only have resulted from some fairly swift and efficient means of cultural exchange between Ceredigion and northern France. Perhaps another piece of the jigsaw is the known fact that advanced Insular *computistica* was of interest to ninth-century Caroline scholars and that the Welsh were in receipt of sophisticated Irish texts on the subject from at least the late eighth century.[176] In other words, those parts of Wales that were in receipt of Irish *computistica* in the early ninth century (and Deheubarth is closest to Ireland) would have had something of value to scholars in northern France.

There are also, of course, glosses present in CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) and the Latin glosses to the Welsh part of the manuscript have been identified by Sinéad O'Sullivan as forming the oldest gloss tradition on the *De nuptiis*. This is often attributed to the Irish bishop *Dunchad* who taught at Reims but sometimes to the later Carolingian scholar Martin Hibernensis or Martin of Laon, although O'Sullivan cautions against the notion of any single 'author' sitting behind the tradition. These glosses – O'Sullivan names them collectively the 'Oldest Gloss Tradition' or the 'OGT' – correlate with glosses on the *De nuptiis* found in manuscripts from the area of Fleury – Tours – Auxerre of the ninth century. Two manuscripts in particular carry glosses that bear close comparison with those of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One), including unique and variant readings. These are Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Voss. Lat.

[176] Jacopo Bisagni points to Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Reg. Lat. 123, a collection of *computistica* copied at the great Catalan house of Santa Maria de Ripoll in 1055. It contains not only extracts from Bede, Isidore and other *auctores* but three Irish computistical tracts composed at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century, texts which otherwise only survive individually in Continental manuscripts of the ninth century. Bisagni describes these Irish texts as containing 'a vast collection of extremely rare technical concepts', the imprint of which in other texts allows them to be related back to these early Irish treatises'. The link between this manuscript and Wales is that Bodl., MS Auct F. 4. 32, fols. 22r.–v., of *c.* 817-835 contains a short computistical tract, *De abortiua luna*, which derives from the Irish *De ratione computandi*, one of the three advanced treatises in the Catalan manuscript; for the MS see 'Reg.lat.123', http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guii/console?service=present&term=@5Reg.lat.123_ms&item=1&add=0&search=1&filter=&relation=3&operator=&attribute=3040 (20 Oct. 2022) as well as Bisagni, 'La littérature computistique', p. 10.

F. 48 and Orléans, Bibliothèque municipal, 191. The Leiden manuscript has a likely Auxerre provenance but the Orléans manuscript is a Fleury book. [177]

The Welsh scribes of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) therefore had available to them a northern French glossing tradition that would have been, *c.* 850, relatively recent: the Leiden manuscript from Auxerre is dated to the second quarter of the ninth century. O'Sullivan notes that these correlations 'provide evidence for the spread of the earliest tradition of scholarly commentary on Martianus to Wales…also clues as to the possible origin of the exemplar used by the Welsh manuscripts'.[178] So as well as Welsh scholarship being available at Fleury, Continental scholarship was also coming the other way, and arriving at whatever centre copied CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) in the first half of the ninth century.[179]

Furthermore, the Continental Latin glosses to CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) were copied together with the Old Welsh glosses as, in the words of O'Sullivan, 'part of the same scholarly exercise'. In other words, both the Continental Latin and vernacular glosses were in the exemplar of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One). What is interesting about these Latin and Welsh glosses is that they are frequently upgraded into a short commentary (as opposed to the usual solitary lexical or grammatical glosses). The example that O'Sullivan gives appears on fol. 4v. i, l.16 of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) where the *lemma 'celebrat'* is glossed with the Old Welsh '*irguir hunnid, ·i· Mercurius'* ('that man, i.e. Mercury'). Caroline Brett sees in this Welsh scholars as members of the academic diaspora at Fleury in the mid-ninth century who were

[177] O'Sullivan, 'Martianus Capella', p. 34.
[178] O'Sullivan, 'Martianus Capella', p. 46.
[179] French influence in western Wales may have been historically underestimated in general terms. Julia Crick notes that Bodl, MS Lat. th. c. 3, ff. 1-2 and CUL, MS Ee. 2. 4 (a fragmentary copy of Smaragdus's *Commentary on the Rule of St Benedict*, dated by Bishop 'probably' to *s.*x^{med}) 'offers intriguing testimony…indicates a 'western British, presumably Welsh context…contact with continental Benedictinism…and a hybrid script which clearly bears the mark of Caroline influence'; *idem,* 'The art of writing', pp. 65-6. Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan notes that 'The absorption of foreign influences…whether intellectual, literary, or, indeed, in the visual arts, can be observed [in Wales] even before the eleventh century…the post-Romantic idea of a purely "Celtic", inward-looking society insulated from outside influences bears little resemblance to reality. Belonging as it did to Western Christendom, Wales had long had access to wider European intellectual tradition…' and cites Marged Haycock's demonstration of secular elements of Continental origin in Early Welsh poetry; Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'Crossing the borders: literary borrowing in medieval Wales and England' in Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (eds.), *Authority and subjugation in writing of medieval Wales* (London, 2008), p. 161, 159–173, citing Marged Haycock, "Some talk of Alexander and some of Hercules': three early medieval poems from the Book of Taliesin, *CMCS,* 13 (Summer, 1987), pp. 7–38.

adding these kinds of helpful Old Welsh glosses to recondite Latin words, something which naturally made the glosses valuable to those back home and resulted in their swift and early journey back to Wales.[180]

It is of course impossible to prove, but clerics travelling back-and-forth to northern France from at least the early ninth century would provide a credible explanation not only for the apparently contemporary Welsh scholarship evidenced in the northern French MSS, but also for the Continental scholarship present in south-western Wales, not to mention the unique and highly localised impact that Caroline script had in Ceredigion. [181]

Discussion and Conclusions

The evidence provided by the early medieval writing-provinces of south-east and south-west Wales analysed in Chapters Three and Four offers up a number of conclusions. Some of these are relatively solid and attract a degree of confidence. This is the case where the evidence is palaeographical and takes the form of precise correlations in morphology, abbreviation, calligraphy, aspect, *module* and other significant script-features.

With this methodology in mind, the first piece of *terra firma* is the striking correlation between the epigraphic scripts of Deheubarth (and in particular Ceredigion) with the following book-scripts, taken in roughly chronological order: (i) the hand of Sulgen *Scholasticus* as evidenced by the Chad 5 memorandum (Llandeilo Fawr, *s.*ix^{1} (first third)); (ii) Hands A and B of CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) (*s.*ix^{ex}); (iii) the hand of the text of Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 219 (Part Four) (*s.*ix^{ex}-*s.*x^{in})); (iv) CCCC, MS 199 (Llanbadarn Fawr, 1085-1091); (v) TCD, MS 50 (Llanbadarn Fawr, 1079-1081); and (vi) London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1230 (*s.*xi^{2}). The palaeographical analyses in Chapter Four show that the following epigraphic scripts were part of this same graphical process: (i) 120/CD13 CENLISINI (Llanddewibrefi,

[180] Brett et al., *The Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 161.
[181] In this regard, however, it should be noted that David Dumville has challenged the idea of Welsh clerics physically present in France:'It has been disputed whether [they] showed the presence of Welsh ecclesiastics in Brittany or the use of Welsh exemplars or both…it is becoming apparent from Professor Lambert's work that exemplars are the most likely explanation'; David N. Dumville, 'Writers, scribes and readers in Brittany, AD 800-1100' in Helen Fulton (ed.), *Medieval Celtic literature and society* (Dublin, 2005), p. 56.

Ceredigion, the quadrilinear invocation, late eighth or early ninth century); (ii) 125/CD27 HIROIDIL (Llanwnnws, Ceredigion, early or first half of the ninth century); (iii) 365/P84 MEILDOMN[AIG] (Penally, Pembs., ninth century); and (iv) 49/B16 BRIAMAIL FLOU (Llandyfaelog Fach, Brycheiniog, later tenth century).

Little, if any, of this palaeography appears in any of the Glamorgan early Christian inscriptions. The correlations offered in Chapter Three between the epigraphic base-script of Llanilltud Fawr and certain of the hands of CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 are entirely different. All this suggests that there existed a distinct south-western writing-tradition within early medieval Deheubarth. In addition, where a provenance for one of the scripts listed above does occasionally loom out of the darkness it is indeed south-western: Llandeilo Fawr for the Chad 5 memorandum; Llanbadarn Fawr for TCD, MS 50 and CCCC, MS 199 and Llanddewi Aber-Arth and Llanwnnws in Ceredigion for the early Christian inscriptions that show the greatest scribal influence and most closely reflect the palaeography of these MSS.

Furthermore, if we can link Deheubarth or even more narrowly, Dyfed or Ceredigion, with Fleury, on the basis of the arguments made in Chapter Four above, then that might make as south-western origin more likely for the Welsh manuscripts that survived in northern France, for example the logical fragments of Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 219 (Part Four) with a Fleury provenance. These fragments show a similar palaeography to Hand A of CCCC, MS 153 and the suggestion is that they, too, were part of the nexus between Dyfed and northern France and in particular Fleury.

The powerful influence of Caroline script did not cause the Deheubarth scribes to abandon their local inherited scripts *in toto,* as their Breton cousins had done. However their eyes opened by the exquisite clarity of the new script, the south-western scribes set themselves the task of appropriating its graphical virtues into their inherited scripts. Caroline therefore provided a demanding aesthetic yardstick against which the ‘Protean variety’ of treatments that

were applied to Later Welsh book-script by the early ninth century came to be judged.[182] It seems to have stimulated and accelerated the process that we call « *librarizzarla* » and, rather like eighteenth-century Palladian architects happy to rip out unfashionable Gothic tracery, the south-western scribes shunned the 'pointed' treatment of Later Welsh book-script and set about the process of working up the raw material represented by the hand of Chad 5 into the 'fine, flat-topped' treatment represented by Hand A of CCCC, MS 153.

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[182] Southern Italy also resisted the Caroline: 'It was just south of Rome and west of the Abruzzi that the reform wave broke and receded' - just as it did on the shores of the Irish Sea; Loew, *The Beneventan Script*, p. 47.

General Conclusion

The last generation of scholarship has reached a general consensus that the end of Roman rule over the island of Britain did not, as some earlier scholars had asserted, lead to a loss of the knowledge needed to form letters on a piece of parchment in the peripheral regions of the Roman province. In western Britain, remote from the upheavals associated with the emergence of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the south-eastern third of the island, literacy skills had no need to be re-introduced from the Continent as historians of the first half (two-thirds??) of the twentieth century had argued. Building on this consensus, this thesis has undertaken a detailed investigation of the implications for our understanding of how writing evolved in western Britain. It argues that the early medieval 'Insular writing system' owes even more to Romano-British antecedents than has hitherto been realised, and traces the evolution of script through to c. 900, with a particular focus on Wales.

One area in need of attention is to relate the increasingly plentiful and diverse discoveries of Romano-British New Common Script not only to the earliest phases of Insular writing but also to contemporary Continental writing. The research aims in this context are not confined to understanding the role played by Late Antique Britain in the development of the Insular writing-system. Recent work on artefacts like the Pictish symbol-stones, the Undley Bracteate and the Staffordshire strip, demonstrates the need to understand how the British Isles – the 'Atlantic Archipelago' of Britain and Ireland - developed as a writing-province on a European level, entering into its own palaeographical trajectory after the dissolution of the graphical unity of the Empire to develop a rich, diverse and multi-functional graphical culture of which writing was only an element.[183]

As the methodological backbone of my research, I have argued that a 'catholic' palaeographical approach which takes in all artefacts of writing, regardless of status, medium

[183] David Ganz, 'The Text of the Inscription' in https://finds.org.uk/staffshoardsymposium/papers/davidganz (accessed May 25th 2019); also Elizabeth Okasaha, 'The Staffordshire Hoard Inscription' in https://finds.org.uk/staffshoardsymposium/papers/elisabethokasha (accessed May 25th 2019).

and function, and considers them as emanations of Roman writing, is the most suitable approach for the very diverse surviving examples of early medieval Insular writing. Not least, it is this 'catholicity' that best mitigates the ever-present risk in early medieval studies of 'littering the field with improbable theories and misleading speculations', something which I hope I have avoided in this thesis.[184]

In my Chapter One I have collated some 29 examples of New Common Script from the later third century to the very end of the fourth century, the threshold of the early medieval writing-province. This writing shows that the whole range, diversity and complexity of the 'New' Roman system was fully experienced in Roman Britain. This body of writing provides a distinctive and relatively unexplored perspective not only on the history of the subsequent Insular writing-province but also on the understanding and interpretation of this British writing at the most minute and fundamental palaeographical level.

Having adopted this perspective, I argue that much of the development of what we think of as early medieval writing – what we call the 'Insular writing-system' - occurred in Roman Britain. In historical terms, the palaeography of the Romano-British writing of the third and fourth centuries from Bath, Uley and elsewhere suggests that the Insular writing-system was neither a monastic nor even an early medieval invention. Even in its developed form of two predominant script-treatments – a set Early Insular book-script tending to bilinearity and a either a set or semicursive Later Insular book-script tending to quadrilinearity– it is (as Maffei argued) the fundamentally Late Antique bifurcation of New Common Script that Eusebius described as having been written in Origen's scribal office.

In this light, it is of course to be expected that the morphology of the diverse graphical repertoire of New Common Script would continue in use in Late Antique Britain after *c.* 400. This is, after all, Wanley's fundamental insight, namely '…that the English-Saxons, the Welsh

[184] Gameson, 'The study of Early Insularbooks' in *idem* (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* I, p. 719.

and the Irish had their Letters from one Common Foundation, that is from the Romans…'[185] However what is remarkable is that the totality of Late Antique writing that we now possess, Romano-British epigraphic writing, the inscriptions of the early Christian monuments and the earliest Irish book-scripts, shows that that morphology evolved very little during the period *c.* 400-600. This fact supports two further conclusions: first, it provides striking Insular confirmation of Jean Mallon's cardinal principle of the immutability of the *ductus* and second, it confirms that the polymorphic graphical repertoire of the Insular writing-system was not the result of erratic post-Roman scribal borrowing from manuscript exemplars, whether indigenous or imported, but simply the Insular realisation of the complex graphical consequences that flowed from the Empire-wide change from the 'Old' to the 'New' writing-system from *c.* 240 onwards.

Moreover, I have argued that the early Middle Ages inherited much more from Roman Britain than just 'their Letters' (in the morphological sense of the forms of the *ductus* of New Common Script). The Romano-British evidence shows that fourth-century British scribes also understood and were capable of implementing the common, Empire-wide stylized graphical conventions that were deemed appropriate for texts of different purposes and status. To demonstrate this, I have provided Continental correlations to argue that *Tabellae Sulis* No. 94 shows the scribal treatment and resulting aspect appropriate to legal texts. I have further argued that clear historical evidence for the survival of the Roman legal system in fifth- and sixth-century Britain suggests that modes and aspects of utilitarian literacy may have survived long enough to provide the 'germs' of much later early medieval script-treatments.

This argument cannot be pushed too far, but at the most basic level Romano-British scribes do seem to have implemented scribal treatments which lend themselves uncannily and coincidentally to the same range of adjectives that scholars like Bradshaw, Lindsay and James applied to much later early medieval British writing- 'pointed', 'square', 'embryonic flat-

[185] Heyworth (ed.), *Letters of Humfrey Wanley*, Appendix, p. 469.

topped' and so on. I have provided palaeographical comparisons in support of this argument using Romano-British evidence and if Late Antique Britain had only left us some of its manuscripts or papyri to work on, like the ancient *History of St Alban* or the pagan *'aliis vero libris…in quibus commenta diaboli continebatur'* discovered by the twelfth-century monks of St Albans, then it might have been possible to advance this line of argument in more confident terms.[186]

In addition to *ductus,* morphology, scribal treatments and aspects, the scribes of Roman Britain also seem to have bequeathed to the early Middle Ages those graphical techniques of text-organisation which in this thesis I have described using a simplified adaptation of Malcolm Parkes's term *'ordinatio'*. Although the fully-developed system of Insular abbreviations was a later development, Late Antique British scribes show advanced letter- and word-separation, the use of *litterae notabiliores,* the text-structuring conventions that we call *diminuendo* and *ceann fo éite,* 'head under wing', the ability to organise text into columns, *per cola et commata* and the use of contractions and suspensions, for, in particular the *nomina sacra.* Much, then, of what Parkes described as the 'grammar of legibility' employed by early medieval scribes can be seen in the text-organisation of Late Antique Britain.

It no longer seems tenable, therefore, to assume that the only text-convention employed in Roman Britain was that of *scriptio continua,* something which was edited into discrete words by the Irish once they had digested the precepts of the grammarians. The near-Eastern papyri show that advanced text-structuring techniques were developed by the military-administrative scribes responsible for the voluminous utilitarian documentation, often bilingual in Greek and Latin, by which the Roman military juggernaut was organised. That late Roman Britain was thoroughly permeated by this kind of structured, organised utilitarian literacy for some three centuries is demonstrated by the Vindolanda tablets from the turn of the second century as well as, for the later period, the fragments of brick recovered from a bath-house at the fort at

[186] *Gesta abbatum monasterii sancti Albani,* ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1867), I, pp. 26-7.

Binchester (*Vinovia*), Co. Durham, which have a neat, four-column roster or check-list of workmen scratched out on them.[187] From a historical perspective, the enormous wealth evidenced by some of the Severn-Cotswold villas, such as Chedworth, suggests that economically-focussed literacy necessary for the conduct of business, the management of finance and the administration of land, would have been widespread in Late Antique Britain.

Even the calligraphic working-up of Early Insular book-script into the prestige display-script of the great Insular gospel books may have occurred earlier rather than later. The Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI inscription from St Fagan's near Cardiff shows a fine, bilinear display-treatment of Early Insular book-script. The scribal treatment of Gse-7/214/G119 VENDVMAGLI is much closer to the later seventh-century Hiberno-Northumbrian display-scripts than are the hands of Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 12 R 33 or TCD, MS 55. The inscription is very likely of the late sixth or early seventh century and it suggests that a fully-developed calligraphic, wedge-serifed, bilinear display-version of Early Insular book-script was available for manuscript use in south-east Wales with a *terminus ante quem* of *c.* 600. Unless the dating of the VENDVMAGLI inscription is very awry (and Patrick Sims-Williams comments that 'a date later than the early seventh century is linguistically uncomfortable') the script strongly suggests that this most magnificent of Insular script-treatments was the product of Late Antique Britain and the church of Gildas, rather than the invention of the Hibernicising culture of seventh-century Northumbria.[188]

For the later period after *c.* 600, a catholic and Roman-orientated approach to British writing enables new perspectives to be proposed, even in relation to relatively well-studied early medieval British writing.

As the indistinct fifth- and sixth-century Celtic polities of western Britain shrank back into what would become Wales, Cumbria, *Allt Glud*, Man and Cornwall, and intellectual leadership passed from the British church to Ireland, two quite distinct writing-provinces emerged in south

[187] See Table 1 above.
[188] *Corpus*, I, p. 499.

Wales. In the intensively Romanised south-east the writing-tradition retains what becomes an increasingly archaic Romano-British flavour. Roman provincial *capitalis* yielded as the epigraphic base-script to first an eclectic base-script and then to an epigraphic iteration of Early Insular book-script. Over the centuries, this epigraphic base-script entered into a long, slow decline to a point where it became indistinguishable from the set, simple, uninflected scripts of instruction written on tablets, save that it remained peppered with relict letterforms carried along as the jetsam of earlier, superseded, epigraphic usage. Neither the influence of Ireland throughout the history of this south-eastern writing-province, nor strong Anglo-Scandinavian influence after the ninth century, was enough to divert this essentially Late Antique 'graphical process' or palaeographical trajectory.

In the south-west, in contrast, the gravitational pull of the dynamic Irish Sea culture-province of which Deheubarth and Brycheiniog were a part, resulted in three quite different developments. Firstly, the south-west saw a much greater collision and amalgamation of the ogam and Latin epigraphic conventions than did the south-east, despite Glamorgan having some extremely fine ogam inscriptions. Secondly, the south-west followed Irish epigraphic usage in the use of manuscript-versions of Later Insular book-script for inscriptions much more frequently than was the case in the south-east, where the fine Later Welsh (or Irish) book-script of 191/G4 BRANCU is an isolated aberration. Thirdly, Deheubarth seems to have participated in the Carolingian renaissance of the ninth century to a much greater extent than the south-east, as suggested by the impact of Caroline book-script upon the Deheubarth and Brycheiniog inscriptions and by CCCC, MS 153 (Part One), which I suggest, on the basis of palaeographical correlations with western epigraphic scripts, to be a Dyfed manuscript.

I further argue that although the south-western writing-province resisted the wholesale adoption of Caroline book-script, it was nevertheless the challenge of the supremely legible aesthetic of Caroline that prompted the 'weeding out' of those inherited local scribal treatments that were most antithetical to it, in particular the 'pointed' treatment of Later British book-script with its tendency to biting, lateral compression, sub- and supra-script letters. In its place

evolved the ‘square’ and ‘flat-topped’ treatments which attempted to import into their scribal tradition some of the virtues of Caroline and which eventually typified into the eleventh-century house-script of the family of Sulien at Llanbadarn Fawr. Whether this script – the hand of Ieuan and Rhygyfarch - was written elsewhere in Wales is impossible to determine, due to the lack of evidence. It may however be significant that almost no evidence of it appears in the Glamorgan epigraphy: English parallels suggest that Caroline influence upon native scripts was indeed capable of working at a local level and if we see no evidence of Caroline in the Glamorgan epigraphy (and we do not) then we may be safe to take that appearance at face value.

As Westwood intended with his publication of the *Lapidarium Walliae,* I have tried to connect examples of epigraphic writing with examples of book-script. Having taken care to establish that it is both possible and meaningful, on a conceptual level, to compare epigraphic- and manuscript-writing, I have argued for the association of: (a) CUL, MS Ff. 4. 42 with the ‘south-eastern’ writing-tradition; and (b) CCCC, MS 153 (Part One) with the ‘south-western’ tradition. Any narrower geographical suggestions are speculative, but there are (with due circumspection) arguments in favour of Llanilltud Fawr, specifically, and Dyfed or perhaps Ceredigion, more generally, as possible centres of origin for these two manuscripts, respectively.

However there is no reason why further work on epigraphic writing should be restricted to the evidence of ‘*Walliae*’ and it is in fact important that it should not be. In this thesis (and as a counterbalance to my arguments that early medieval writing-traditions could be extremely locally-founded) I have also tried to contextualise the epigraphy of south Wales not only in its ‘Irish Sea’ cultural milieu but within an artistic and graphical culture extending across the entire Atlantic Archipelago of Britain and Ireland. I have offered parallels with epigraphic writing not only from neighbouring Ireland but also from the Isle of Man, Cornwall, Scotland and East Anglia and not only in Roman script but in ogam, Pictish pictographs and early Frisian runes. This wide perspective produces at the same time stark contrasts and striking correlations, all of

which deserve further study as reflections of how different early medieval Insular societies exploited the graphical resources available to them in response to the turbulence and uncertainty of the times.

All of this is, of course, subject to the caveat that the surviving evidence upon which it is based is certain to be a tiny fraction of what once existed. Returning to Wales, Daniel Huws speculates that 'fewer than one in a hundred medieval manuscripts in Latin have survived'.[189] This grievous deficiency I have tried to mitigate, so far as it can ever be, by the use of a broad swathe of multi-disciplinary evidence including, crucially, the witness of epigraphic writing. This approach should be pursued further. It is capable of shedding further light upon local and regional writing-traditions as well as the complex secular and ecclesiastical functions that writing, as an iconography of power as well as a mode of communication, fulfilled in the early medieval Atlantic Archipelago.

Further, and following the 'socio-political' approach of scholars like Alessandro Pratesi and Armando Petrucci, the role of mission and theological controversy in the development of the Insular writing-system *c.* 400 – 600, offers itself for further study as part of the literary and historical rediscovery of the Late Antique British church known to Germanus, Patrick and Gildas. The Late Antique writing analysed in this thesis suggests that the role of utilitarian literacy and the effect of textual status and function upon early medieval Insular writing is also an area that would reward further work.

In the Introduction to this thesis I remarked upon Henry Bradshaw's invitation to students of writing to strike out on their own 'voyage of discovery'. My interpretation of early medieval British writing hardly amounts to a 'voyage' on the scale of Bradshaw's epic scholarship, but I hope that it adds up to at least a hoisting of the sails, in relatively uncharted waters, where there remains much to be discovered.

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[189] Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 3.

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