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Approaching the Pictish Language: Historiography, Early Evidence and the Question of Pritenic

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The question of ‘the Pictish language’ has been discussed for over four hundred years, and for well over two centuries it has been the subject of ceaseless and often heated debate. The main disagreement focusing on its linguistic categorisation - whether it was Celtic, Germanic (using modern terminology) or whether it belonged to some more exotic language group such as Basque. If it was Celtic then was it Brittonic or Goidelic? The answer to such questions was of some importance in ascertaining to whom the Scottish past belonged. Was it to immigrant Irish, conquering Germanic peoples or native Britons? The twentieth century saw the normalising of the view that it was closely related to Brittonic with some erudite scholars maintaining that another, non-Celtic language, was also spoken in Pictland. The debate subsequently shifted to focusing on just how close was the relationship between Pictish and Neo-Brittonic. Was Pictish simply a northerly dialect variant of the latter or was it indeed a more distinct and perhaps conservative form, evolving independently in an area outwith Roman power and linguistic influence? Recently, as the field of Pictish studies was subjected to both linguistic and historical scrutiny, discussions have become significantly more sophisticated, but the core question remains, as to whether Pictish distinctiveness merits the label ‘dialect’ or ‘language’, as the Venerable Bede himself stated. This thesis will investigate this core issue by providing an overview of previous thinking and scrutinising the evidence for early divergence. It is intended as groundwork for much needed further studies into this field.

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Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Linguistic Practices

It has been decided to employ the International Phonetic Alphabet to represent realisations of names and phonemes. This was not a decision taken lightly as a broad consensus has been reached on how to represent the evolving phonemes of Brittonic. However this work engages with a great number of different systems used to represent a number of languages including Proto-Celtic, Old Gaelic and various secondary studies which attest their own particular idiosyncrasies. The interpretation of IPA symbols is unambiguous and can be accessed online on the website of the International Phonetic Association (<http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/>) or in their handbook (Pullum & Ladusaw 1999).

When referencing items in other linguistic studies which employ distinct phonetic notations such as the *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, (Matasović 2009), *Brittonic Language in the Old North* ‘BLITON’ (James 2012) or *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World* (Mallory & Adams 2006) original forms have been maintained in order to enable easy access to entries in these works. These contain descriptions of their own notational conventions. When difficulties arise these are discussed in the footnotes.

Other conventions are:

- N - any nasal: /n/, /m/.
- R - any resonant: /l/, /m/, /n/, /r/.
- V - any vowel.
- T - any dental : /d/, /ð/, /t/, /θ/.

Written forms are noted in italics, while phonemic realisations follow the convention of being noted between forward slashes e.g. /ɣ/. Vowel length is

marked by a colon rather than a macron above the vowel i.e. /a:/ for Jackson's \bar{a} .

Abbreviations & Acronyms

Source Abbreviations

Primary Sources

AC	<i>Annales Cambriae</i> . See Morris (1980).
AT	<i>The Annals of Tigernach</i> . See Stokes (1895 & 1896 & 1896).
AU	<i>The Annals of Ulster</i> . See Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill (1993). http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msrawlb489
DBG	<i>Commentarii de Bello Gallico</i> , Julius Caesar. See Edwards (1917).
DEB	<i>De Excidio Britanniae</i> , Bede. See Winterbottom (1978).
DLV	<i>The Durham Liber Vitae</i> . See Hodgson-Hinde (1968). http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Domitian_A_VII
HB	<i>Historia Brittonum</i> . See Morris (1980).
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> , Bede. See Colgrave & Mynors (1991).
LL	<i>Liber Landavensis</i> , ‘The Book of Llandaf’. See Evans (1893).
PKL	Pictish king-lists. See Anderson (1973, 235-91). See also Calise (2002, Appendix III, 165-67).
SB	<i>Series Breuior</i> (shorter version) of the PKL. A following letter indicates the particular manuscript (see PKL).
SL	Any <i>Series Longior</i> (longer version) of the PKL. A following letter indicates the particular manuscript (see PKL).
SL1	<i>Series Longior</i> , ‘Popleton’ manuscript version of the PKL. See Anderson (1973, 245-49).
SL2 H	<i>Series Longior</i> , <i>Lebor Bretnach</i> version of the PKL. See van Hamel (1932, 82-87).
VC	<i>Vita Sancti Columbae</i> , Adomnán. See Anderson & Anderson (1961). For the earliest manuscript copy (the <i>Schaffhausen Manuscript</i>) see the on-line digitised version: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/sbs/Shelfmark/20/0

Secondary Sources

I employ acronyms for a small number of dictionary-like sources which may be referred to often in this work. This is far less cumbersome than employing the Harvard referencing style otherwise used.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| AMR | <i>Archif Melville Richards</i> (an on-line database of Welsh place-name attestations):
http://www.e-gymraeg.co.uk/enwaulleoedd/amr/ |
| BLITON | <i>Brittonic Language in the Old North - A Guide to the Place-Name Evidence</i> . See James (2012) &
http://www.spns.org.uk/bliton/list.html |
| CPNRB | <i>The Celtic Personal Names of Roman Britain</i> (online database): Paul Russell & Alex Mullen:
http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/ |
| eDIL | <i>Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language</i> (a digital edition of the complete contents of the Royal Irish Academy's <i>Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials</i>):
http://edil.qub.ac.uk/dictionary/search.php |
| GPC | <i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> (1950-2002). A Dictionary of the Welsh Language (Cardiff, University of Wales Press). Available on-line:
http://www.geiriadur.ac.uk/ |
| GPC II | <i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> second edition (2003-). |
| GBGG | <i>Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg</i> (a dictionary of early Welsh poetry). See Lloyd-Jones (1931-63). |
| IEED | An online database which represents the updated text of J. Pokorny's <i>Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> . This was compiled by DNGHU, the Indo-European Association who were also responsible for publishing <i>A Grammar of Modern Indo-European</i> (Quiles & López-Mencheró, 2011).
http://dnghu.org/indoeuropean.html |
| LEIA | <i>Lexique Etymologique de l'Irlandais Ancien</i> (an etymological dictionary of Old Irish). See Vendryes (et al.; 1981+). |

PIE	Proto-Indo-European. Forms are noted as in the wordlist (pp. 466-522) of <i>The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World</i> (Mallory & Adams 2006).
Pok	<i>Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> . See Pokorny 1959 (2 vols). Also available on-line: http://indo-european.info/pokorny-etymological-dictionary/whnjs.htm
SBG	<i>An Stòr-dàta Briathrachais Gàidhlig</i> (an online Gaelic dictionary developed at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. http://www2.smo.uhi.ac.uk/gaidhlig/faclair/sbg/

General Abbreviations

BCE	Before the Common Era
CE	Common Era. Unless required this is left unmarked.
et al.	<i>et alia</i> ‘and others’.
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> ‘in the same place’.
loc. cit.	<i>loco citato</i> ‘in the place cited’
passim	here and there, everywhere
PN(N)	place-name(s).
s.v.	<i>sub verbo</i> ‘under the word’.
s.n.	<i>sub nomine</i> ‘under the name’.
v.l.	<i>variae lectiones</i> ‘variant readings’.
vel sim.	<i>vel similia</i> ‘or similar’.

Linguistic Abbreviations

Languages

Bret	Breton
Britt	Brittonic (c.50 BCE - mid 6 th century)
Corn	Cornish
Eng	English
Gael	Scottish Gaelic
Gk	Greek
Goid	Goidelic

Ir	Irish
Lat	Latin
Neo-Britt	Neo-Brittonic (i.e. after c. 550)
non-IE	non-Indo-European
OE	Old English
OFr	Old French
OGael	Old Gaelic / Old Irish
ON	Old Norse
PIE	Proto-Indo-European (see also <i>Pok</i> above)
PrClt	Proto-Celtic
VL	Vulgar Latin
W	Welsh
WCB	Welsh, Cornish and Breton

‘Mid’ & ‘Mod’ (*Middle* & *Modern*) are prefixed to language abbreviations e.g. MidW = Middle Welsh, and ‘O’ (*Old*) similarly.

General Linguistic Abbreviations

dat.	dative
ed.	editor
gen.	genitive
nom.	nominative
pl.	plural
sg.	singular
pres.	present tense
vs	versus
masc.	masculine
fem.	feminine

County & Regional Abbreviations

Scotland

ABD	Aberdeenshire	KNR	Kinross-shire
ANG	Angus	LAN	Lanarkshire
ARG	Argyll	MLO	Midlothian
BNF	Banffshire	MOR	Morayshire
BWK	Berwickshire	NAI	Nairnshire
CAI	Caithness	ORK	Orkney
CLA	Clackmannanshire	PER	Perthshire
DNB	Dunbartonshire	ROS	Ross and Cromarty
ELO	East Lothian	SHE	Shetland
FIF	Fife	STL	Stirlingshire
INV	Inverness-shire	SUT	Sutherland
KCD	Kincardineshire	WLO	West Lothian

Wales

AGL	Anglesey	FLI	Flintshire
BRE	Breconshire	MER	Meirionydd
CRD	Cardiganshire	MON	Monmouthshire
CVN	Caernarvonshire	MTG	Montgomeryshire
DEN	Denbighshire	RAD	Radnorshire
GLA	Glamorgan		

England

CHE	Cheshire	NTB	Northumberland
COR	Cornwall	SAL	Shropshire
CMB	Cumberland	SOM	Somerset
HRT	Hertfordshire	WML	Westmoreland
NOT	Nottinghamshire		

Terminology

A brief word is required on the terminology used in this study:

Calidonia

This is employed for the area north of the Forth-Clyde divide during the Roman period. It should not be assumed that this indicates that the area was linguistically homogenous or politically unified. It is simply a convenient shorthand for a geographical area, which avoids having to repeatedly use more lengthy and cumbersome phrases. It is also the term advocated by the *New Edinburgh History of Scotland* series. Here I employ the divergent spelling *Calidonia* (as opposed to the more usual *Caledonia*) as it is likely that this best reflects the etymology (see Chapter 2).

Pictland

This is employed for the same area, excluding Argyll for which there is robust evidence of a Gaelic presence in the early medieval period (the kingdom of Dál Riata¹). It also excludes the estuary of the Clyde, Lennox and probably Stirlingshire which gravitated to Brittonic political control.² Whether or not the whole population of ‘Pictland’ considered themselves Picts in the post-Roman period is uncertain. We have little information which would inform us of such issues, in particular regarding the northern and western coasts of Scotland and the islands. The distribution of Pictish carved stones may be an indicator of engagement with more centralised Pictish power and identity. These are concentrated in the eastern lowlands south of the Mounth and around the Moray Firth, on Orkney and Shetland, with smaller numbers in Skye (See Fraser 2008, 11 for a map). The survival of important ethnonyms such as *Cailden* (< *Calidones*) in Dunkeld, Schiehallion & Rohallion³ and importantly the Northumbrian term *Werteras* (see below) in Anglo-Saxon and *Fortrenn* (etc.) in

¹ See Woolf (2006(b)).

² See Clancy (2006(b)).

³ See below at 2.3.5.

Goidelic sources, and annalistic references to northern and southern Picts may suggest more diverse senses of identity.⁴

Pritenic

This was the term coined by Jackson in 1955 for what he saw as the Roman-period ancestor of Pictish. Pritenic was to Pictish as Brittonic was to Welsh, Cornish and Breton. Whether this is a valid term will be investigated in Chapter 3.

Werteras

The usual modern term for the powerful northern kingdom in the vicinity of Inverness is ‘Fortriu’, e.g. Woolf (2007) or Clarkson (2012). This form is a modern reconstruction reflecting the hypothetical OGael nom. sg. for a word that occurs only in the genitive or dative cases in early Irish sources as ‘Fortrenn’ and ‘Fortrinn’ respectively.⁵ ‘Fortriu’ would seem, originally at least, to have referred to a single individual comparable to terms such as Englishman or *W Cymro* (Welshman). The Pictish forms would be derived from /wer-tu(:)r-jō:/ and /wer-tu(:)r-jones/, and could be compared to *CALEDO* and *Calidones* (see 2.3.18. & 2.3.5.). It is only the latter that is attested, as *Uerturiones*.

Broun (1998), reversing his previous stance (1997),⁶ demonstrated that the singular ‘Fortriu’ was understood by early-medieval Gaels to refer to a kingdom, even though this is not actually attested. Based on this he argued that this was a legitimate form and that it should be employed once again, replacing *Fortrenn* or *Fortrinn*. How a nom. sg. form would become employed for a kingdom is uncertain. Koch (2006(p)), suggested that *Ériu* (Modlr *Éire* ‘Ireland’), which is also a nom. sg. form of an *n*-stems was named after an eponymous ancestor. Such issues raise certain questions regarding which form to use in this thesis.

⁴ See Woolf (2007, 9-13) and Fraser (2009, 46-7) for an overview of such issues.

⁵ For discussions see Diack (1920, 122), Watson (1926, 68-9), O’Rahilly (1946, 463-4) and Koch (1983, 223 fn 1). For a detailed assessment of the attestations see Broun (1998), who adds several forms not discussed by previous authorities.

⁶ See Broun (1998) for this.

Fortuitously, Woolf (2006(a)) demonstrated that there was in fact an English reflex of the group-name, ‘Werteras’ (etc.). As this study is written in English it makes some sense to employ a term which had currency in Old English. It is also likely that this form is phonetically closer to the Pictish realisation which I would speculatively reconstruct as /wer-tu:r/ or /wur-tu:r/ (or similar!). It is also the form used by Fraser (2009).⁷

Pictish

Scepticism regarding the validity of this term has been raised various times,⁸ in particular in regards to a possibly intimately close relationship with Brittonic. It cannot, of course, be legitimately assumed that the Pictish language was coeval or co-extensive with the continually evolving and shifting power of Picts. We have little or no evidence for spoken Pictish in most of the north, the west and the islands and we must remain open as to which language or languages were spoken there in the pre-Norse period (c. 800). This shift in ethnicity and language effectively effaced most earlier place-names, and in the west the later shift to Gaelic ensured that little from the earlier period survived. The historian James Fraser (see Chapter 1) has raised the possibility that when Bede used the term Pictish he may simply have been referring to whatever dialect the dominant Werteras used.

The term ‘Pictish’ is therefore employed with some trepidation, and here it will be used as a convenient cover-term for the dialects of P-Celtic⁹ north of the Forth. The use of such a denominator admittedly runs the risk of conditioning perceptions. It would be safe to assume that Pictish would have attested the usual range of features pertaining to languages in similar situations, such as temporal, social and geographical variation. With these caveats in mind let us now turn to the issues outlined above.

⁷ See p. 50 for a brief discussion.

⁸ See Chapter 1.

⁹ I am uncomfortable even with the term *P-Celtic* as this includes ‘Gaulish’ as well as Lepontic. There are also many questions regarding how to classify early Celtic languages. Schrijver has recently (2014, Chapter 8 ‘The Origin of Irish’, 72-87) gone as far as suggesting that Irish was simply derived from first-century Brittonic.

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Introduction

General

Bede, in the early eighth century, classified Pictish as one of the five languages of Britain, contrasting it with Brittonic, Irish, Old English and Latin (the language of the church; HE I.1).

Haec in praesenti iuxta numerum librorum quibus lex diuina scripta est, quinque gentium linguis unam eandemque summam ueritatis et uerae sublimitatis scientiam scrutatur et confitetur, Anglorum uidelicet Brettonum Scottorum Pictorum et Latinorum. (Colgrave & Mynors, 2001, 16)

At the present time, there are five languages in Britain, just as the divine law is written in five books, all devoted to seeking out and setting forth one and the same kind of wisdom, namely the knowledge of sublime truth and true sublimity. These are the English, British, Irish, Pictish, as well as the Latin languages. (ibid. 17)

There is, however, a current scholarly consensus that the immediately pre-Gaelic language, well-attested in eastern Pictland, was in many respects closely related to Neo-Brittonic (Old Welsh, Cornish, Breton and Cumbric).¹⁰ Thus, the unambiguous assertion of an erudite and informed witness, made when Pictish was very much alive, appears to conflict with modern specialist interpretations of the evidence. In his impactful 1955 chapter, ‘The Pictish Language’, the Celtic scholar Kenneth Jackson coined the term ‘Pritenic’ for the supposed early ancestor of this spoken form, which he suspected was diverging from Brittonic early in the Roman period. The divergent features he, and subsequently others, noted were few, and others were trivial. There are therefore significant issues with the two terms ‘Pictish’ and ‘Pritenic,’ and whether or not these represent valid or even useful linguistic concepts is uncertain and is the core issue that will be explored in this thesis. It is only the features which argued for early, pre-Neo-Brittonic divergence that will be probed here, not trivial issues of phonetic divergence.¹¹

¹⁰ E.g. Jackson (1955), Nicolaisen (1976), Taylor (2011), James (2013), Charles-Edwards (2013, 89-94). But see Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion.

¹¹ For example whether or not Pictish spirantised voiceless stops after liquids (i.e. Pictish **gart* vs Brittonic *garth*; Jackson 1955, 164) will not be discussed as this is fairly trivial as a sound-

As will be discussed in detail in the opening chapter, many scholars argued that there was indeed a somewhat distinct Celtic language in the north, one that perhaps started diverging from Brittonic (or Gallo-Brittonic) as early as the immediate pre-Roman period.¹² Others perceived it as little more than a dialect variant of its more southerly neighbour, Brittonic.¹³ There have also been numerous more exotic proposals including the views that Pictish was Gaelic, Frisian or Basque. From the outset it must be stressed that Bede's stated Pictish-British frontier (the route of the long-abandoned Antonine Wall) is first and foremost a political boundary perhaps only firmly established during his own lifetime.¹⁴ Whether or not it corresponded to any earlier post-Roman political, ethnic or linguistic frontier is uncertain. However, this divide is often back-projected into the distant past, on little more than Bede's authority.¹⁵

Since the sixteenth century (see 1.3) it has been recognised that there is significant onomastic evidence that the historically attested Picts, both of the Roman and Early Medieval periods, spoke a language which shared much in terms of lexicon and phonetics with Brittonic.¹⁶ In later periods Pictish personal names and Brittonic-looking lexical items in Gaelic started to bolster this view. However the restricted and patchy nature of the evidence means that a conflicting range of views can be legitimately developed. Recently Alex Woolf (2013(d)) has, due to the paucity and problems of interpretation of the sources, gone so far as to label the quest for the Pictish language as perhaps 'ill-conceived'.

There are numerous significant challenges to interpreting the surviving evidence, which does amount to a few hundred distinct items, primarily place- and personal names. It is not yet possible to provide a close estimate of how many items could be considered as valid evidence as much painstaking work remains

change and is a late development in Brittonic, c.550-600 (Jackson 1955, §149, 570-2). Much the same can be said for voiceless fricatives arising from voiceless geminates (ibid, §145, 565-70) e.g. **pett* vs *W peth*.

¹² E.g. Jackson (1955) and Koch (1983).

¹³ E.g. Watson (1926).

¹⁴ See Fraser (2009) in particular Chapter 8 (200-28), and also Fraser (2011).

¹⁵ For a summary of early archaeological and political issues see Fraser (2009), Chapter 1 (15-42) and Chapter 2 (43-67).

¹⁶ See Chapter 1.

to be undertaken. It is often difficult to establish to what extent a toponym may be Pictish and one often has to grapple with highly corrupt forms which could also be interpreted as Gaelic or at least highly gaelicised.¹⁷ Similarly, it is uncertain which personal names provide useable evidence for the language as many may be fictitious or too garbled to be of linguistic value. For example, there is a historical individual noted as *Bargoit* (father of *Uurad*, c. 839-42) in SL1, whose name appears as *Batot*, *Bacoc*, *Barot* (etc.) in the shorter versions of the PKL.¹⁸

Perhaps the main difficulty which faces investigators is that the material is overwhelmingly lexical and largely restricted to place- and personal names, and a handful of adoptions into Gaelic. This, alone, cannot provide the evidence necessary to investigate syntax,¹⁹ morphology or even the lexicon in any detail. On the whole such items do not point to a spoken form that was dramatically distinct from Brittonic, but such seductively similar correspondences can be misleading. Were the evidence greater, in the form of long texts, one might indeed encounter substantial divergences. Another major challenge is that all the evidence, apart perhaps from inscriptions, has been mediated by at least one language, meaning that establishing a native Pictish realisation is problematic and can seldom be achieved with confidence. Pictish place-names were, on the whole, first mediated by Gaelic for an unknown number of centuries before being modified by Scots/English and only later recorded. To compound matters we also have some twenty fairly lengthy *ogham* inscriptions from Pictland which generally continue to resist fully satisfactory interpretation by means of Brittonic, or any other language for that matter. Yet another issue is whether all the inhabitants of the extensive territories conventionally ascribed

¹⁷ For a discussion of such difficulties see Taylor (2011).

¹⁸ What the base form was I can only guess. Underlying all treatments of personal names in this thesis is a lengthy but incomplete study of 'Pictish' personal names. I have a lengthy but inconclusive discussion regarding this name-form and make no claims to having provided a satisfactory interpretation. In fact I remain flummoxed by the conflicting variants. The discussion focuses on the previous comments of Stokes (1892, 394) who compared it to W *barcut* 'a kite', Jackson (1955, 144) who classed it as 'not clearly Celtic at all... quite possibly therefore pre-Celtic'. There are a great many issues to be discussed here, in particular in relation to attempting to establish the original manuscript form (if this is recoverable). On top of this there are numerous issues regarding the phonetic value of the graphemes. Comparisons can be drawn with a great number of items attested in Celtic languages (e.g. **bar-*, **barg-*, *bac-*, **bar-*, /-ɔ:d/, /-od/ etc.) but I would not at present feel confident with prioritising one vaguely plausible proposal over another.

¹⁹ For a brief discussion of similarities between Gaelic and Brittonic syntax see Green (1983).

to Pictland, from Shetland to Skye to Fife, spoke one vaguely homogenous language, or a number of evolving and distinct variants. Would St Columba's *Virolecus* of Urquhart in the sixth century, king 'Uurad son of Bargoit'²⁰ of the ninth, **NEHHTON**²¹ of the Lunnasting *ogham* inscription in Shetland (8th-9th century), and a Pict living by 'Brenturk' ('Boar-hill'; today Burnturk) in Fife all have spoken a form that could be classified as one language, or even distinct stages of one evolving form?

We cannot establish whether the change from the attested early Celtic to the later, apparently neo-Celtic language, was a gradual or incremental process or a more abrupt language shift. Our sources of evidence are diverse in nature, in geographical origin and also in time and it cannot (as has often been done) be assumed that they all reflect a snapshot or even a series of views of a unified language. As will be seen it is certain that we are indeed not comparing like with like, in many instances. At one extreme we may have some conservative sixth-century names (e.g. *Virolecus*²²) preserved in the Life of Columba itself composed at Iona.²³ On the other hand some place-names may well attest tenth or eleventh-century Pictish pronunciations at the point when they entered the Gaelic language. Equally the Pictish king-lists may, like the Book of Llandaf (see Davies 1978 & 1979), attest a palimpsest of realisations from different periods as well as late modifications and errors of varying types.

Added to this is the issue that our best evidence has a marked southerly bias, in that the Pictish king-lists may have been composed or at least transcribed in Abernethy in southern Perthshire (cf. Anderson 1949, 35²⁴), and that the only area which benefits from a thorough toponymic investigation is Fife.²⁵ Both these

²⁰ It is forms from SL1 which are taken as reference forms in this thesis (as with Calise, 2002). This is not to claim that they are necessarily the best witnesses to an original form, despite the fact that it is this version of the PKL which has least suffered the ravages of Gaelic scribes.

²¹ Following established convention *ogham* inscriptions are noted in bold capitals. Forms are from a list provided of longer inscriptions provided by Katherine Forsyth in 2012, based on her doctoral thesis (Harvard, 1996).

²² Presumably from /wiro-/ 'man', with the same element possibly attested in later guise as *Uurad* (< /wu(:)r/ ?). Alternatively this could represent /wi:ro-/ 'truth'.

²³ See Fraser (2003) for a discussion of the background and sources for this text.

²⁴ This possibility is predicated on the fact that SL versions contain an account of the foundation of the Pictish monastery at Abernethy in southern Perthshire. This is, of course, far from conclusive evidence of the location of where such lists were maintained and updated.

²⁵ See Taylor with Márkus (2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2012).

important sources of information relate to areas which are worryingly close to polities conventionally understood as Brittonic-speaking (Gododdin & Strathclyde). Numerous other issues can be raised but these will be discussed in greater detail in the relevant sections below.

While this field is marked by numerous pitfalls and challenges there is also a steadily growing body of evidence which continues to be researched and discussed, meaning that progress is steadily being made. The study of Pictish will be greatly facilitated when all the place-names of Pictland have been investigated on a par with the place-names of Fife series, and when such evidence has been subjected to further intense and specialist linguistic scrutiny. This series brought a significant number of new items to light and also, by providing early forms, enabled the modification of various earlier proposals. It is difficult to gauge how much more toponymic evidence will be uncovered by future studies, given that scholars such as W. J. Watson (1904 & 1926), W. F. H. Nicolaisen (1976) and Simon Taylor (2011 etc.) have already discussed many hundreds of items. Nevertheless, the time is ripe for earlier proposals to be investigated with the benefit of significant advances in our understanding of Celtic historical linguistics, new onomastic research and fresh thinking in the field of the early medieval history of northern Britain.²⁶ To achieve the above aims this thesis will be divided into three chapters:

Chapter 1 - Historiography

This will provide a critical historiography of views on the Pictish language, from the earliest informed comments to works published in the months immediately prior to presenting this thesis. In tandem will be discussions of the publication of primary sources and the evolution of the disciplines necessary to interpret them.²⁷ The aim is to enable the linguistic evidence to be re-approached objectively with an understanding of the context in which earlier proposals were made.

²⁶ In particular Fraser (2009).

²⁷ This is only an overview and represents a distilled version of a far more detailed investigation. I intend to publish this larger study in the near future.

Chapter 2 - The Early Evidence

This chapter will survey the early (i.e. Roman period) evidence for language north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus - the boundary noted by Bede and also the route of the Antonine Wall which, in some brief periods, represented the northern frontier of Roman power. Whether or not this line was of any linguistic significance in this early period will be one of the key issues investigated.

The evidence will be scrutinised for any issues of consequence, in particular the supposed survival of a non-Indo-European language in Pictland. This, in itself, is an important issue and it has also lent weight to the argument that the *ogham* inscriptions may also have been composed in such a form (e.g. Jackson 1955). It will also be investigated for any features which would indicate whether items could be classified as Goidelic or Brittonic, keeping an eye on the question of whether this 'language' (Jackson's *Pritenic*) is necessarily ancestral to later Pictish. It will examine this evidence in the context of contemporary thinking on the diversification of Proto-Celtic. This chapter will also engage with various issues which are of some importance to this later evidence.

Chapter 3 - Pritenic

This chapter comprises nine sections, each of which engages with an issue which have been identified as indicating that Pictish and Brittonic were diverging prior to the emergence of Neo-Brittonic. The combined impact of these proposals (most summarised in Forsyth 2006(a)), would, if demonstrated to be robust, probably require the classification of Pictish as a distinct language. They would also provide evidence for an early bifurcation between the two and thus validate the term 'Pritenic'.²⁸

Background Research

This study does not provide a detailed scrutiny of each and every item which has a claim on the 'Pictish' label. Such a project is outwith the scope of this thesis

²⁸ If Early Medieval Pictish simply represents the northerly expansion of Neo-Brittonic (perhaps as late as the sixth or seventh century) then the earlier language could have been distinct from Brittonic thus justifying the term 'Pritenic'. It is uncertain to what extent the Roman period language of the north is ancestral to Early Medieval Pictish.

but it is a promising field whose full investigation would throw significant further light on the Pictish language. Underlying this study is such a detailed and lengthy (although provisional) consideration of the available evidence - toponymy, personal names, inscriptional evidence and influence on Gaelic. When such items contribute to issues investigated here they are discussed in detail. Every effort has been made to ensure that no items which could provide relevant additional information have been overlooked.

The interim conclusion is that 'Pictish', though probably distinct from Neo-Brittonic, shares a great deal with it. My suspicion is that it may have avoided some (perhaps many) of the Latin influences which resulted in the evolution of archaic Welsh, Cornish, Breton and Cumbric. This is broadly the conclusion arrived at by most of the specialised scholars noted above, albeit on questionable linguistic proposals. Whether or not the deciding isoglosses ran along the political boundary is debatable (see also James 2013 *passim*). It is therefore the proposals for early and significant divergence from Brittonic that are investigated here.

It must be stressed again that this thesis does not attempt to investigate or outline the phonology of Pictish i.e. the apparently neo-Brittonic language of the Early Medieval Pictish kingdoms. The not insignificant corpus of evidence seems to be more than adequate to demonstrate that its phonological system differed little from Common Archaic Neo-Brittonic. Somewhere in the surviving evidence almost every phoneme is attested, even though extreme caution is required due to the lack of direct witnesses to the language. Heavily mediated forms may obscure the original realisations. I would concur with Jackson (1955) on most points of difference e.g. the non-affrication of geminates as in **pett* (< **pettja*;) and probably the non-affrication of stops after liquids. In any case providing an overview of Pictish phonology would probably be a fairly dull affair, with lengthy and often inconclusive discussions where much would rest on three millimetres of fifteenth-century ink, or the vagaries or quirks of scribes whose familiarity with Pictish was limited or non-existent. The field would gain little from this approach as the conclusions would simply confirm what we know already - Pictish was similar to Neo-Brittonic. A more pro-active attempt is made here, in scrutinising the evidence so far adduced for arguing that Pictish was diverging from Brittonic in, or before, the Roman period. In this thesis I will challenge

either the substance or the impact of these and argue that we cannot employ these early proposals as evidence for early divergence. This, I hope, will unshackle scholars from the restrictions of questionable hypotheses and encourage and enable fresh thinking.

The Accent

We have no good or conclusive evidence for the position of the accent in Pictish (but see below). Indeed, it has not yet been ascertained where the accent was in Northern Brittonic. This issue is one which would benefit from further research, in particular scrutinising place- and personal names for indications, such as syncope or certain vowel changes.

Given that Pictish shares much with Brittonic such as syncope²⁹, apocope³⁰ and patterns of lenition³¹ one arguable assumption is that the development mirrored Brittonic. The Brittonic model can only serve as a framework for investigation not as a primary argument. We must also bear in mind that the material conventionally considered to represent Pictish or Pritenic spans items collected from the first centuries CE to the demise of Pictish somewhere towards the 11th century. Whether or not the Pictish of the 9th century is a linear descendent of the Celtic of the 1st century is an issue that will be discussed, and questioned, in certain sections of this study. Nevertheless, an account of the current thinking on the position of the accent in Brittonic may serve as an interim working model for this thesis. This issue, however, is one which would benefit from a full investigation at some later point.

Jackson (1955, §1, 265-7) argued that the accent in Late British, before the loss of final syllables (apocope) and the separation of Welsh, Cornish and Breton, fell on the penultimate syllable. He added (ibid. 266) that, at an earlier stage in the language, the accent may have been freer, or at any rate not necessarily penultimate. He also noted examples which are consistent with an earlier British antepenultimate accent (ibid. 267). It is not easy to determine when the stress

²⁹ *Meilochon* (Bede) > *Mailcon* (SL1), *Unust* < **Ojno-gustu*..

³⁰ I see no trace of final syllables in the evidence, but it is uncertain whether they would survive in the sources we have.

³¹ The evidence is fairly limited but it would seem that voiceless stops were voiced e.g. **okelon* > *ogel*.

shifted from the initial to the penultimate syllable in the predecessor of Brittonic (Schrijver 1995, 21).³² Jackson (1955, §206-8, 682-99), then argued that the Brittonic accent shifted from the ultimate to the penultimate syllable around the 11th century. T. Arwyn Watkins (1972) adduced a number of important arguments for shifting back this date for W to at least the 9th century, but Sims-Williams (2003, 235 & 395)³³ places this in the 11th century.

The position of the stress accent in Pictish cannot be established with any confidence, as the available evidence provides no unambiguous indications of its location. All the evidence, apart perhaps from some inscriptions, has been mediated in some way through at least one language, often more. The Pictish king-lists, for example, presumably started as oral recitations only written down many centuries after the reign of the first historical individual noted.³⁴ I see nothing here that would allow us to investigate the position of the accent. Similarly place-names (apart from a scattering in Irish, Old English and Welsh documents) have been mediated by Gaelic and Scots/English, both languages with initial stress, meaning that Pictish stress-patterns in modern reflexes of Pictish items may have been modified. The polysyllabic Pictish loanwords in Gaelic (*bagaid* & *monadh*) have initial stress, as one would expect in this language, masking whatever may have been its original position. For these reasons, in order not to prejudge the conclusions the accent will not be marked in this thesis, apart from in instances where the interpretation of the evidence relies upon it.

Having said all this there is one item which may be of relevance here. This is the Gaelic word *monadh* ‘hill, rough pasture’ which is clearly adopted from a Brittonic-like language (Jackson 1983(c); Taylor 2011, 103) as it shows the development of /j/ > /ð/ which did not occur in Goidelic. This change only occurs after the accent so this indicates that the development was broadly as follows /mo'niʝo-/ > /mo'niðʝo-/ > /mo'nið/. This would suggest that, as with Brittonic, the stress lay on the penultimate at this period. However, caution is required as, ideally, confirmation from other source would be required. It should

³² For a detailed discussion see the full section (II, 16-22).

³³ For further refs to discussions of this issue see Sims-Williams (2003, 235, fn 1487).

³⁴ For an overview discussion of the PKL and further refs see Millar (1979) and Evans (2014, 19-22). See also discussions in Evans (2002, unpublished, & 2011).

also be borne in mind that the origin of such loanwords is not beyond question as they could, arguably, originate in Brittonic or in areas of Pictland which shared in this change.

Koch (see 3.4.2.1.) suggested that names similar to *ltharnan* were derived from PrClt **isarno* (through ***iharno-* > ***ijarno-* > **iðarno-*). As the change of /j/ > /ð/ occurs only immediately after a stressed syllable in Brittonic this would have required an initial stress in Roman-period ‘Pictish’. However, it is argued below that the well-attested Pictish name is derived from Latin *Aeternus*, and is therefore not relevant to this issue.

Language Contact

Introduction

As noted above, one of the main challenges of this study is the fact that the speaking of Pictish ceased about a millennium ago, meaning that pretty much all the evidence has been mediated in some way. Accurately dating the death of this language is quite impossible and all we can concretely say is that there is no evidence of it surviving as a living form when we start to get significant charter³⁵ evidence in the twelfth century.³⁶ We see no place- or personal names in forms which clearly represent unmediated Pictish while Gaelic, Scots and Norse place-names abound in what was Pictland (wherever there is written evidence). Non-Pictish personal names dominate as well.³⁷ Henry of Huntingdon (see below) noted that it was no longer spoken when he was writing c.1129, but he is merely commenting on Bede’s statement.

Also, when thinking of Pictish it is all too easy to assume a broadly homogenous, timeless, monolithic language spoken from Fife to Shetland, rather than a continuously evolving kaleidoscope of dialects, shifting and interacting with

³⁵ And this is limited mainly to the Lowlands, where English/Scots was already making inroads.

³⁶ There is a scholarly treatment of the shift from Pictish to Gaelic in Woolf (2007, 322-40). The notion of a hybrid Picto-Gaelic language called ‘Albanian’ (p.340) however far exceeds the evidence. Taylor (2008) discusses the toponymy in the region of Deer (ABD) attested in the 12th century glosses in the Book of Deer. Despite various items of Pictish origin the language of place-name coining is evidently Gaelic by this time.

³⁷ Some names, such as *Cinaed* (< *Ciniod*) may be of Pictish origin and we also have items such as *Morgainn* (cf. OW *Morcant*?) in the Book of Deer.

other languages on many social levels. These crucial issues require a brief discussion, highlighting the challenges of the sources and approaches taken to avoid simplistic interpretations of the evidence. This is only an overview, partially anecdotal, and intended only to underline the core issues which have plagued the study of the language, issues which have too often resulted in eccentric views. One risks here opening more cans or worms than can be closed in the space of an introduction, and much has to be based on analogy and our understanding of other neighbouring linguistic communities for which we have clearer evidence.

One core issue is that we cannot investigate Pictish on its own terms - we rely on Welsh, Cornish, Breton and Cumbric (etc.) to provide the investigational scaffold. The danger here is that we are viewing Pictish through these lenses, an approach which can sometimes lead to understandably blinkered views. A case in point is the Ochils, which have been interpreted as representing a cognate of *W uchel* 'high' (see 3.7.7.).

When it is decided to investigate Early Medieval Pictish in its full glory the problems of the sources will have to be dissected with far greater critical intensity than is possible here. For example, the names in the *Life of Columba* would benefit from a fresh study and a detailed stemma of the Pictish king-lists needs to be developed in order to attempt to establish, or at least advance, our understanding the original underlying forms of the personal names. Teasing the original forms out of the clutter and interference of later languages and scribal confusion would itself represent a challenging project.³⁸ The linguistic aspects of Pictish place-names also require a targeted study as soon as the toponymic survey of Scottish counties is complete - a desideratum not likely to be realised in the near future. The *ogham* inscriptions continue to be discussed and the Pictish influence on Gaelic requires a dedicated investigation. The following represents a targeted overview of the challenges of the sources focussing on issues of language contact and mediation.

³⁸ For one scholarly approach see Anderson (1973, 77-102).

Historical Linguistic Geography & Contact

Before engaging with the linguistic questions particular to each individual language and source an overview of the current thinking on the linguistic history of Celtic and Pictish in Calidonia will provide a useful backdrop to the following discussions. It will also help to clarify various issues and will draw attention to general difficulties encountered in this thesis.

The earliest historically (rather than archaeologically) attested inhabitants of Calidonia spoke some dialect or dialects of Celtic³⁹ but their names (groups, places and people) may well have been familiar to groups further south and it may be that it is they who provided some of the forms to Romans, who in turn transmitted these (in writing?) to Greeks. Modification, standardisation, misinterpretation and confusion cannot be ruled out and some names may simply be exonyms. Miscopying is certain.

During the Roman period the Celtic of the province of Britannia undergoes significant phonetic, and other, changes,⁴⁰ many due to contact with Latin.⁴¹ It is uncertain to what degree Pictish shared in many of these. We know little if anything of Pictish grammar⁴² so only certain aspects of the language can be approached. Where exactly and by whom Brittonic was spoken in this period and whether there was a sharp divide with ‘Pictish’ is largely unknown.⁴³ Common sense and analogy with known languages would suggest that the language spoken by Calgacus in the first century would have differed to that spoken by the Picts involved in the ‘Barbarian Conspiracy’ of 367, nearly three centuries later. Early Medieval Pictish seems to attest many of the changes which characterise Brittonic. For example we may actually see syncope in progress in that Bede’s *Meilochon* and the *Virilecus* of the *Life of Columba* appear to attest a

³⁹ See Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ See Jackson (1955), Sims-Williams (1990 & 2003), Schrijver (1995 & 2011) & Ternes (2011). As with all living languages a state of flux and constant change would be the norm, but it is only with the advent of Latin literacy that such changes can be easily identified and dated.

⁴¹ See Russell (2011).

⁴² At best we have one verb i.e. the **URRACT** of the Burrian *ogham* inscription, perhaps representing /wraxt/ the 3rd sg. preterite of ‘make’ (i.e. *made*). See Koch’s suggestion in Forsyth (1996).

⁴³ Schrijver (2014, II 5.3 & 5.4, 49-58) argues for two distinct Celtic dialects in Roman Britain – Lowland Brittonic in much of the south-east and east and Highland Brittonic in the west, of which Cornish, Welsh and Cumbric were the remnants.

composition vowel which is evidently lost in later forms such as *Unust* (< **Ojno-gustu*-). Did Bede, like Adomnán perhaps, have access to a conservative written form? As far as we can tell apocope also occurred suggesting a radical overhaul of the early Celtic grammatical system. There is no evidence for case endings in the surviving evidence but if some aspects continued it is uncertain how these would be modified by mediating languages.

Regarding place-name typology one sees, as in Brittonic, the emergence of loose compound names such as *Burnturk* (< **brinn-turk* ‘boar-hill’; FIF) or *Panmure* (< **pant-mō:r*, ‘big hollow’; ANG) impinging on the earlier monopoly of close compound names. However in Pictland, we have no secure examples of either the definite article or phrasal place-names as in *Traprain* just south of the Forth (< **trev-ir-brinn*⁴⁴ ‘settlement of the hill’).⁴⁵ It would appear that Pictish was sharing some significant innovations with Brittonic: for example phonetic lenition,⁴⁶ /oj/ > /u:/ (or even /ɤ:/),⁴⁷ and /a:/ > /ɔ:/⁴⁸ and /oRa/ > /aRa/ as in the name *Taran*.⁴⁹ The Afforsk *ogham* inscription attests -*NECTON*-, Bede has *Naiton*, suggesting /xt/ > /t/ which later became /θ/ as in *Abernethy* (also from **next*-). Pictish would seem to be changing in the post-Roman period. As noted by Jackson in 1955 there may be some conservative features,⁵⁰ but these require a new and detailed investigation. What is difficult to establish is to what degree these are simply analogous changes or whether later Pictish could represent a more intrusive dialect of Neo-Brittonic.

⁴⁴ I note /trev/ here rather than /tre:v/ as the issue of whether the New Quantity System operated in Northern Brittonic has yet to be explored.

⁴⁵ There is an immense amount to be said about the phonology and lexicon of Pictish but this is outwith the scope of this thesis.

⁴⁶ E.g. *Unust* < **Ojno-gustu*-.

⁴⁷ See below 3.5.

⁴⁸ For example the Gaelic word *pòr* ‘seed, crop(land)’ (etc.) is from a Pictish cognate of W *pawr*, both from /pa:r/.

⁴⁹ There are other spellings but it seems fairly safe to compare this to the Gaulish theonym *Taranis* and to contrast it with G *torann* ‘thunder’.

⁵⁰ If G the short vowels of the ‘loanwords’ *dail*, *bad* and *preas* are anything to go by then perhaps the New Quantity System did not apply in the Pictish. This would represent a major difference with Brittonic.

Irish

There are references to Rome fighting both *Picti* and *Scotti*, for example Magnus Maximus c. 384. This may have been a ‘joint operation’ perhaps similar to the *Barbarica conspiratio* of 367.⁵¹ If so, coordination would have required bilinguals. One can, in any case, assume some degree of bilingualism between settled neighbouring communities of different languages. Throughout the Early Medieval period Pictish was in intense contact with Irish-speaking groups, politically and especially religiously. The *Life of Columba* (c.700) twice states that the saint required an interpreter to communicate with Picts, which is some indication of functioning bilingualism.⁵² It is primarily from Iona that Christianity was introduced to the Picts,⁵³ and there is ample evidence of Gaelic ecclesiasts in Pictland and Pictish ecclesiasts in Gaeldom.⁵⁴ Indeed, during the seventh century, most of northern Britain and Ireland seems to have been part of the same Irish dominated ecclesiastical province. One good example of a Pict⁵⁵ who spoke Irish is the ninth-century bishop in Orkney who gave refuge to St Findan, who was fleeing his Norse captors. He is noted as having ‘acquired his education in Ireland’ and of being ‘well acquainted with the language of that country’ (Christiansen 1962, 157).

For periods Picts ruled over Dál Riata⁵⁶ and Picts also start employing the Irish *ogham* alphabet.⁵⁷ It is eventually to this language that Pictish succumbs. In the north and west the earlier language(s) are replaced by Norse.⁵⁸ Whether the Pictish of the Werteras and the southern Picts was ever spoken in these areas cannot be proved beyond reasonable doubt as the place-name evidence has,

⁵¹ See Fraser (2009, 58 & 54-8 etc.).

⁵² This could have been safely assumed in any case.

⁵³ For example it is an Irishman *Mael Ruba* who founds a monastery in *Apor Crosán* (Applecross) in 673 (AU673.5).

⁵⁴ For a discussion see Fraser (2009, Chapter 3 ‘Uinniau, ‘Ninian’ and the Early Church in Scotland’, 68-94) and *ibid.* (Chapter 4 ‘Word and Example: Columba in Northern Britain’, 94-117). See also p.197. There are numerous other relevant discussion in this study.

⁵⁵ The *Life* does not actually state his ethnicity as Pictish.

⁵⁶ See Fraser (2009, Chapter 11, ‘When Óengus took Alba’: Despot, Butcher and King’, 287-319).

⁵⁷ See Forsyth (1996) for a meticulous discussion for all inscriptions known at that time.

⁵⁸ See Taylor (2001) for a discussion and a map showing the proposed chronology of various languages.

apart from a handful of items,⁵⁹ been effaced by Norse. There would presumably have been a complex interaction between Irish and Pictish, with each in certain periods more prominent and prestigious in certain domains or areas. This must have lead, at some point, to widespread bilingualism culminating in language shift and language death. The Pictish loanwords in Gaelic⁶⁰ are ample proof of this as are other grammatical influences.⁶¹

There may even have been Gaelic settlement in southern Pictland sanctioned by the Werteras themselves.⁶² Woolf (2007, 340-2) develops one hypothesis for the switch to Gaelic whereby elites from this language group are granted lands in a Pictland weakened by Norse attacks. It is not impossible that Pictish eventually became subject to significant influence by Irish as suggested by Woolf (2007, 340), but the lack of suitable evidence means that we can only speculate on this issue. Gaelic eventually ousted Pictish in most of Pictland, but has long receded from what were the eastern Pictish-speaking lowlands.⁶³ It may be that such dialects, which are lost to us, preserved more Pictish features, but again we can only speculate. One indication of this are the Brittonic words adopted by Gaelic but attested only in place-names e.g. **cair*, **carden*, **gronn* and **pett*.⁶⁴

Brittonic

Parts of southern Pictland may have been in sustained and close contact with Brittonic during and perhaps after the Roman period. If Bede's statement on the southerly missionary activities of Ninian is to be trusted⁶⁵ Christianity may have been introduced into this area as early as the sixth century, by a Briton. This could plausibly be reflected in *eccles* names ('Christian community' or 'church', < Lat. *ecclēsia* or Brit. /egle:s/; see Taylor 2011, 88). There is also

⁵⁹ Some 'aber' names, for example Lochaber, Applecross (ROS) and Appledore on Skye (INV). Applecross could simply represent the name given by the Pictish monastic community inhabiting it. Appledore requires further investigation. Lochaber is quite secure though as it occurs in the *Life of Columba*.

⁶⁰ See Taylor (2011) for a detailed discussion of the toponymic aspects and further refs. See also Jackson (1983(c)) for Pictish words in Gaelic

⁶¹ See Green (1983).

⁶² See Broun (2005).

⁶³ See Withers (1984, Chapter 2 'Gaelic in Scotland before 1609', 16-27) for a brief overview.

⁶⁴ See Taylor's 'Category 2' (2011, 100-3).

⁶⁵ For discussions see Clancy (2001(b)) and Fraser (2009, Chapter 3, 68-93).

archaeological evidence for similarities in material culture either side of the Forth.⁶⁶ Note also the presence of ‘Picts’ (*Lliv & Bubon*) in the warband of the Gododdin in the sixth century.⁶⁷ Was the ‘Pictish’ of Fife in the post-Roman period closer to the Brittonic of Gododdin, a short boat journey over the Firth of Forth, than to that of distant Orkney or Caithness? When and why Gododdin came to speak Brittonic is uncertain. It was officially outwith direct Roman control during most of the Roman period. Are we to assume that the inhabitants of Gododdin were keeping up linguistically with their southerly Brittonic neighbours, at least by the period of the composition of the core of the Gododdin songs which appear to have been composed in Neo-Brittonic?⁶⁸ If so, why not extend this tendency for parallel linguistic updating a little to the north, into what became Pictland?

Importantly one of the most powerful Pictish kings, Bredei son of Beli (†692) whom Fraser sees as playing a key role in the establishment of a new and modified Pictish identity,⁶⁹ was the son of the king of Strathclyde. Woolf suggests that he may have been installed as a king in northern Pictland by his Northumbrian cousin Ecgfrith. Could he, and presumably a sizeable retinue and household, have been responsible for bringing Brittonic influences to the Werteras, which subsequently spread south with the ousting of the Northumbrians? However, we know little about the upbringing of this king and it is not certain that it was in a Brittonic court. Caution with such thinking must therefore prevail.

Old English (Northumbria)

From the early seventh century we have evidence for direct contact between Pictland and Northumbria, with Eanfrith the son of Aethelfrith finding refuge there c.616.⁷⁰ His son, Talorcan, became a Pictish king. Northumbrian overlordship extended to southern Pictland in the mid-seventh century only

⁶⁶ See Fraser (2009, Chapter 2, 43-68).

⁶⁷ For discussions see the indices of Williams (1938, svv *Prydein & Pryden*), Jackson (1969) and Koch (1997).

⁶⁸ Here is not the place to get engaged with the tricky issue of its ‘authenticity’ but see Padel (2013) and Koch (2013) for opposing views.

⁶⁹ See Fraser (2009, Chapter 8, 200-28).

⁷⁰ See Fraser (2009, 158) for a discussion, and refs to primary sources.

being ejected after the victory of Bredei son of Beli over his Northumbrian *fratrueis* (cousin) Ecgfrith in 685. It may have been subsequent to the siege of Edinburgh in 638 (*obsessio Eten*; AU 638.1), if this signifies the Northumbrian takeover of Gododdin.⁷¹ Not only did Northumbria impose one of its own, Trumwine,⁷² as bishop over this area but there may have also been a significant settlement in Fife in the form of Bernicians in the *Niuduera regio*.⁷³ This Anglo-Saxon presence could have lasted as long as forty-seven years, meaning that most of the population would have no recollection of being under ‘native’ rule. Bede does note the expulsion or enslavement of such Northumbrians after Nechtansmere but some degree of linguistic influence in southern Pictland has to be entertained.

Mention should also be made of Koch’s hypothesis of an Anglo-Saxon elite presence in Gododdin in the mid to late sixth-century i.e. *Uruei* son of **Uolstan* (< OE *Wolfstan*).⁷⁴ If we have Germanic warriors on the southern banks of the Forth then why not on the northern banks as well? If we accept the historicity of parts of this corpus then presumably *Uruei* and **Uolstan* would have known both *Llif* and *Bubon*, from ‘Pictland’. At the very least it indicates that there may have been individuals from both Germanic and ‘Pictish’ backgrounds active and in contact within one kingdom.

Bede noted that, by the time of the completing of his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Picts lived in peace with Northumbria. He also discusses intense contact between the two polities. For example the Pictish king Nechton son of Der-elei, engaged in correspondence (in Latin) with the Northumbrian abbot Ceolfrith. He also added that Northumbrian masons were sent north to aid Picts with the building of stone churches. This was a period of close diplomatic ties between the two kingdoms. One wonders whether such intense contact impacted upon Pictish in any way. Influence need not be as crude as calquing,

⁷¹ See Fraser (2009, 171-2).

⁷² See Fraser (2009, 213 & 255).

⁷³ See Fraser (2009, 184-5).

⁷⁴ See Koch (1997, VII, xlvii – I).

but bilingualism, especially elite bilingualism, can have subtle influences on language, accent in particular.⁷⁵

Latin (Classical & Vulgar)

Throughout the Roman period we must imagine some Picts acquiring Latin in order to engage with the Roman polity. It may be that some Roman citizens also acquired ‘Calidonian’ given the probably not uncommon presence of state *negotiatores* in the north (Fraser 2009, 33). The numerous Roman campaigns in the north, the construction of the Antonine Wall etc. would have required linguistic contact. Much of this may have been through the medium of partially romanised bilingual Britons (see 2.1). Dio Cassius describes a possibly fictitious encounter between the Calidonian leader *Argentocoxos* and the emperor Septimius Seuerus where the un-named wife of the barbarian famously ribs the Syrian empress Iulia Domna, regarding the lax sexual morals of Roman women.⁷⁶ Interpreters must have been involved in such negotiations.

The presence of Lossio Veda (see 2.2.3), who labels himself a ‘Caledo’, in third-century Roman Colchester is intriguing but we know little of why he was there. Some military role could be suspected, but various other options are also just as credible. Perhaps he was one of the interpreters who translated the jibes of Iulia Domna from Latin into ‘Calidonian’. This romanised Calidonian may also have gone as far as latinising his name (see 2.2.3.). With the collapse of Rome, the political dominance of the Latin language in Britain dissipates, perhaps only slowly.⁷⁷ ‘Calidonian’, ‘Pictish’ or whatever one chooses to label it in the post-Roman period ceased to be in contact with living, colloquial Latin but parts of ‘Pictland’ may always have maintained contact with Classical Latin through the medium of the British church. Note St Patrick’s ‘apostate Picts’ (Hood 1978, Epistola 2, 35) of the fifth century.⁷⁸ Bede in the eighth century noted Latin as unifying all four nations of this island and this would have been the language of

⁷⁵ For an in-depth treatment of the complex relationship between Northumbria and Pictland there is no substitute for reading Part 2 and Part 3 of Fraser (2009) in particular Chapter 10 ‘Nations Reformed: Northumbria and Pictavia’, pp. 264-86.

⁷⁶ See Fraser 2009, 27.

⁷⁷ There is an on-going debate regarding how long Latin survived. See Schrijver (2014, 5.2.1. – 5.4, 34-58) for a discussion and further refs. He it is proposed that spoken Latin survived for some centuries after the collapse of central Roman control.

⁷⁸ His precise dates are uncertain.

the church throughout the Pictish period. Note also that we do have a number of Latin alphabet inscriptions from Pictland (see Okasha 1995) and we now have significant archaeological evidence for manuscript production from the Pictish monastery of Portmahomack.⁷⁹ This is most likely have been to produce bibles, in Latin. There is therefore evidence for sustained contact between ‘Pictish’ and variants of Latin.

Vulgar Latin had a groundshaking impact upon Brittonic⁸⁰ and if such features could be identified in Pictish it would tell us a great deal about their interaction with their more romanised neighbours to the south. The Pictish personal name *Elpin* appears to be a borrowing from Latin *Alpīnus* and secular in origin. The name *Constantin* (et al.) borne by a late Pictish king is also Latin, but is almost certainly Christian in origin. Similarly **Edarn* is from Latin *Aeternus* (see below). It is also uncertain how Latin literacy reached Picts. Was it by means of the Ionian church, Northumbria or was there already an existing literary tradition in the south, derived from Britons? The orthography of most of the names in the *Poppleton Manuscript* version of the PKL (SL1) is usually assumed to be Pictish and similar to Brittonic, but they could also simply reflect an orthography based on Latin phonetics. Note that Koch (1997, 136) and others have proposed that <o> for Brittonic /ɥ:/, could be a particular northerly feature common to both Northern Brittonic and Pictish.⁸¹

Other Social Aspects of Multilingualism

While most of the discussion above has focussed on elite bilingualism other sections of society would have been bilingual (or multilingual) in various contexts. The endemic slavery of the period should not be overlooked as a factor in language change.⁸² This was by no means restricted to lower social classes. The multilingual Patrick⁸³ in his *Confessio* relates that he and his father’s

⁷⁹ See Forsyth (1998), Carver (2004, 23) & Carver & Spall (2004).

⁸⁰ See Jackson (1953 passim) and Russell (2011).

⁸¹ See also below, 3.5.

⁸² For one relevant discussion see Padel (2009). See also Woolf (2007, 19-21 & 55-56). There are also a number of discussion in Fraser (2009) too numerous to note here, but see the index.

⁸³ His *floruit* is hotly debated but somewhere around the 5th century is probable. See Koch (2006(n)).

servants *cum tot milia hominum* ('with so many thousands')⁸⁴ were taken from Britain into captivity in Ireland. He further notes that the worst slavery is among the apostate Picts (*Epistola* 15). Note 'apostate'. If some Picts had already adopted Christianity one wonders about the linguistic capacities of the missionaries and the presence of Latin Bibles, liturgy and Latin literacy. Returning to slavery, Woolf (2003, 19) notes that 'slaves will have, for the most part, come into households as older children or young adults', an age which at which new language acquisition is often imperfect. He also notes (*ibid.* 20) that most slaves would have been closely integrated, and living with, the families that owned them. Note also the enslaving of St Findan and his transportation to Orkney, referred to above.⁸⁵

There are countless other contexts in which bilingualism and language contact would or could have occurred - exile, diplomacy, warband service, trade, intermarriage, seasonal labour, fosterage, itinerant craftsmen, pilgrimage etc. all of which could contribute to language change.⁸⁶ For some of these we have direct evidence, but for others we can only hypothesise given that this is such an evidence-poor period. For exile we can note Eanfrith⁸⁷ who fled Northumbria c.616 as a youngster finding refuge in Pictland, for some sixteen years. We can safely assume that he spoke 'Pictish' and presumably Old English as well, as he returned to his kingdom at the slaying of Eadwine, who had been responsible for his father's death. For service in foreign warbands we can note *Llif son of Cian* and *Bubon* in the *Gododdin* from the north. For 'diplomatic' contact one may note the Irish tale of *Conall Corc and the Corco Luigde*, probably composed before 750 (Hull 1947, 892). Conall is sent to Scotland, to the king of the Pictish people, unbeknownst to him to be put to death. Interestingly he has information to his detriment written on his shield in the *ogham* script in covert - which no-one understood except the writer and the king of the Pictish people (*ibid.* 894).

⁸⁴ See Hood (1978, 23 & 41).

⁸⁵ Christiansen's (1962) translation of the *Life of Findan* is also available on-line at CELT <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T201041.html>.

⁸⁶ Bilingualism in early and medieval Celtic-speaking societies has received comparatively little attention. There are exceedingly thoughtful discussions of bilingualism and Rome in Adams (2003) in particular 1.1 (1-14). For language change see 4.I-IV (417-430). For discussions of Celtic see 2.IV 'Celtic (Gaulish)', 184-99 and 7 'Bilingualism at La Graufesanche', 687-724. See also Adams (2007, IX, 577-623) for a discussion of Celtic and Latin in Britain.

⁸⁷ Little concrete is known of this individual but see Fraser (2009, *passim*) for discussions.

The presence of Picts in the *Durham Liber Vitae* is further evidence of Pictish ecclesiastical or diplomatic contact with Northumbria.

Rather than an isolated Pictland bounded by a linguistic iron curtain, inward-looking and conservative we are faced with peoples in intense and sustained contact with neighbouring groups on various levels and in numerous contexts. Bearing such issues in mind may help to avoid coming to simplistic, and often misleading, conclusions regarding Pictish.

Manuscript Sources

A good part of our evidence for the Pictish language occurs in medieval or early-medieval manuscripts such as the *Life of Columba*, the writings of Bede, Irish Annals and the *Durham Liber Vitae*. One source, the Pictish king-lists, probably represents material initially recorded by Picts themselves. A number of these are also discussed in greater detail in section 3 of this thesis, closer to the specific pieces of evidence they provide. Roman-period sources are discussed in the introduction to the second section. This section will provide an overview of issues relevant to Early Medieval Pictish, the significant evidence for which begins with the *Life of Columba* (c. 700) and Bede (731). There are also incidental references, in Irish sources (annals in particular), in the *Annales Cambriae* (c.829) and in the *Durham Liber Vitae* (9th century core) for example. The two latter sources are discussed in Section 3 as they provide only a handful of relevant items.

Bede's work is that of one author and the Moore Manuscript may represent a copy of an original. The *Life of Columba* is a far more complex text and the Pictish king-lists present numerous challenges. There are many challenges regarding how to extract useable linguistic evidence from such medieval manuscripts copied by scribes of uncertain linguistic backgrounds.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ For a highly informative of such challenges see Russell (2012) who scrutinised a number of diverse early medieval texts investigating them for evidence of multilingualism in monastic contexts.

Life of Columba

This lengthy work of hagiography was composed at Iona c.700 by Adomnán, the ninth abbot of Iona, about a century after the death of the saint. The earliest surviving witness was composed in the early eighth century and may well be a copy of the original. It was written by Dorbbéne and is now held in the town library at Schaffhausen in Switzerland.⁸⁹ There are also other copies which attest important, and indeed useful, variants indicating that not even the *Schaffhausen Manuscript* is a faithful witness to the original.⁹⁰ Adomnán was drawing not only on oral traditions available locally at Iona, but also on an earlier and briefer text ascribed to Cumméne Find († 669), the seventh abbot, and known as the *Liber de virtutibus sancti Columbae*.⁹¹ There is therefore well over a century between the events portrayed in the text and the earliest copy and, as Irish was undergoing significant changes at this period,⁹² this is an issue which causes some difficulties. We cannot be sure if relevant forms represent early realisations from Columba's lifetime, forms in the intermediate life, or the pronunciation, or misinterpretation of Dorbbéne himself. Forms from various historical and linguistic levels may well be attested here. There are also a few issues in regards of Vulgar Latin⁹³ orthographic confusions which impinge on the reliable interpretation of some Pictish forms (see 3.5.2).

The small number of 'Pictish' items in this life would represent the earliest manuscript attestations of the language. Anderson (1961, 157-61) discussed both Pictish and Brittonic items under the section title 'British Names'. The author admits to significant gaelicisation in many names, I suspect even more. For example *Airchartdan* (G *Urchardan*, Urquhart) and *Emchat(h)* attest Gaelic spirantisation, while the personal-name *Artbranan* could be either OGael or Pictish. A similar inconsistency to *Emchat(h)* is attested with *Miat(h)i*. *Virolec* does seem to attest a cognate of W *llech* 'flat stone, slab'.⁹⁴ The first element could be either /wiro-/ 'man' or /wi:ro-/ 'truth' but of the greatest interest is

⁸⁹ http://www.vanhamel.nl/wiki/Schaffhausen,_Stadtbibliothek,_MS_Generalia_1

⁹⁰ For discussions see Anderson (1961, 3-29), Fraser (2003) and Stansbury (2003-2004).

⁹¹ See Fraser (2003).

⁹² See McCone (1996, passim).

⁹³ For a discussion of the Hiberno-Latin of this text see Picard (1982).

⁹⁴ Cf. *lic(c)o-*, *-a* in Gaulish personal names (Delamarre 2007, 224).

that the composition vowel seems to be preserved here, in stark contrast to all the other items. The spelling of Celtic names in this life is an issue which requires a dedicated study. The items relevant to the issues engaged with in this thesis are discussed in detail below (*Broichan* 3.5.2 & *Crogreth* 3.7.8). While these may very well represent reflexes of Pictish items they seem to have been gaelicised, and Hiberno-Latin was not an ideal medium for representing Pictish phonology (as pronounced by Gaels).

Bede

Bede completed this work in 731 and the earliest surviving manuscript is the ‘Moore Bede’, which can be securely dated to the eighth century. Contrasting with the hagiographical *Life of Columba* this is primarily a historical study, much being based on the author’s own experiences, reliable older witnesses or, in some cases earlier texts. This does not mean that it is automatically less problematic and more reliable and individual texts require customised approaches. Bredei son of Beli’s robust reestablishment of Pictish independence occurred when Bede was a teenager and during his later years Pictland was in close and peaceful contact with Northumbria. Indeed, some royal correspondence between Bede’s monastery and the Pictish king Nechton son of Der-elei is preserved as ‘Ceolfrith’s Letter’ in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, demonstrating direct contact. However, both kingdoms were heavily indebted to Gaels for their literacy and this language must have served as a lingua franca in northern ecclesiastical contexts for a considerable time.

There are a small number of interesting Pictish items in this text, *Meilochon* (see 3.2.5) which is partially gaelicised i.e. *-chon* rather than an expected Pictish *-con*. The first element is puzzling. It represents a form of neo-Brittonic /mayl/ ‘lord’, which conflicts with the form of the same element as attested in the Welsh name *Brocmail*. This form, however, may be based on a Welsh manuscript.⁹⁵ Intriguingly, *Meilochon* seems to preserve a composition vowel (cf. *Virolec* above), a feature which is absent from all other attestations of this item, e.g. *Mailcon* (SL1).

⁹⁵ See Koch (2013, 109).

Bede also has variant forms of ‘Nechton’ - *Naiton* and *Naitan* for ‘Nechton son of Der-ilei’. The former seems to correspond to the native form as it parallels **NEHHTON**s of the Lunnasting *ogham* inscription and **-NECTON-** of Afforsk. *Naitan* may have been influenced by Irish *Nechtán*. The *-ai-* is, in any case, slightly curious as one may have expected *-ei-* from **Next-*. Further research is required into such issues but it seems reasonable to suppose that *Meilochon* was derived from an early, gaelicised and presumably written, source.⁹⁶ All this demonstrates that even the evidence of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* for the Pictish language cannot be taken at face value, as there are significant issues of linguistic mediation. We would appear to have a speaker of Northumbrian Old English writing Pictish forms provided by speakers of Old Gaelic in Latin. Note that Bede uses *G Brude* not the Pictish *Bredei*.

Ogham⁹⁷

The 35 or so Scottish *ogham* inscriptions probably span a period from the 7th to the 10th century but they are notoriously challenging to date. From the start it must be stressed that they are not a common feature in the Pictish landscape, occurring only sporadically in both time and place. However, we have little idea of how common they were on perishable materials. These do continue to resist complete and fully satisfactory interpretation, and it was these challenging epigraphic sources of information which spurred Rhys’ short-lived but elaborate view that Pictish was Basque (see 1.7). It was also the core element that encouraged the Celticist Kenneth Jackson (see 1.9) and others to take a similar non-Indo-European stance. Along with the symbol stones these are one of the main reasons that Picts are perceived as exotic.

However, these brief inscriptions are often approached with insufficient awareness of the numerous and multi-faceted challenges they pose, and they may be viewed by some with inflated expectations of interpretability. The view that they should be interpretable is largely generated by comparison with their closest comparanda - Irish *ogham*s and early medieval British Latin inscriptions, which are generally readily interpreted. One wonders whether people

⁹⁶ It seems curious that *Naiton* has *ai* for /ej/ while *Meilo-* has *ei* for /aj/.

⁹⁷ This section can only serve as a very brief and selective overview of difficulties with *ogham*. For a far more detailed discussions see Forsyth (1996).

subconsciously compare these with Egyptian hieroglyphs or Hittite or Babylonian cuneiform which can be interpreted, largely due to the existence of immense corpora of attestations.

Irish *ogham*s are (generally but not exclusively) comprehensible because they can be interpreted by reference to a language which is very well attested, albeit in a slightly later period. The Latin inscriptions of the Britons, despite errors, inconsistencies and conflation of formulae⁹⁸ (etc.) are intelligible because they can be investigated by means of Latin. This is not the case with Pictish, the evidence for which is sketchy at best. Had we lengthy Pictish texts from different periods and different areas the *ogham*s would almost certainly pose much less of a headache. But it is uncertain to what extent Picts were literate in their own language.⁹⁹

Seven of the longer inscriptions contain variants of **MAQQ** ‘son of’¹⁰⁰ suggesting that what we should seek either side are personal names. With both Irish and Welsh we have a significant corpus of many, many hundreds of personal names which enable us to investigate and interpret such items. With Pictish we have at best fifty different names attested in later manuscripts and a great many of them are garbled. Thus, in contrast to the other inscriptions of this island we lack the relevant guide. It is much like trying to construct an elaborate Airfix model airplane from bits of disparate models picked up at a jumble sale but without either the instruction fold-out or even the picture on the box.

We must remember also that the corpus of *ogham* inscriptions is small, comprising only some twenty inscriptions long enough to be of any linguistic value. They occur from Fife in the south to Shetland in the north meaning that a number could represent the pronunciation of wildly distinct dialects. The distance of the most northerly (Lunnasting) to the most southerly (Scoonie) is more or less the distance from Anglesey to Brest in northern Brittany.

⁹⁸ See Adams (2007, 616-20) for a discussion of such issues in regards of the Latin inscriptions of the Britons. See also Schrijver (2014, 5.2, 34-48) for

⁹⁹ For a brief discussion arguing for Pictish-language literacy see Koch (200).

¹⁰⁰ Forsyth (2012) suggests that the *Q-flesc*, which would be redundant in Pictish, might be employed for /p/.

One of the core issues is that this alphabet was borrowed from the Irish. This orthographic system was developed for the Irish of about 400 or perhaps a little earlier. It was inspired by and partially modelled upon the Latin alphabet. It became increasingly unsuitable for representing the much changed language which evolved in the following centuries.¹⁰¹ By the time it was adopted by Picts it was already outmoded and inefficient as a means of graphically representing even Irish. It is therefore most uncertain which phonetic value to ascribe to each individual *flesc* (letter) in the Pictish inscriptions. There are various difficulties also in interpreting why some letters are doubled e.g. **MAQQoiTALLUORRH NxHHTVROBBACCxNNEVV** (Formaston).¹⁰² Some employ *forfeda* (the ‘additional’ letters of the Irish alphabet)¹⁰³ and are therefore later, showing that innovations from Ireland were being incorporated. The treatment and representations of *PrCl* /xt/ are of importance here because there are numerous ways of noting it graphically:¹⁰⁴

CT Burrian **URRACT** for /wrax^t/ (‘made’, ModW *gwnaeth*).

CT Afforsk **NECTON** presumably ‘Nechton’ (W *Neithon*)

HHT Lunnasting **NEHHTONs** as above

Such variation demonstrates that the inscriptions do not represent one uniform and standardised language or orthographic system.¹⁰⁵

Added to this what are we to make of Bede’s *Naiton* (HE V.21) and *Naitanus* in the address of Ceolfrith’s letter?¹⁰⁶ Lunnasting may be a fairly late inscription and yet it seems to be linguistically conservative in this respect possibly post-dating Bede. Moreover, we may have a further development to /θ/ if the river-name Ythan (ABD) is from /jextona:/ and Abernethy (both of them) from /next-/

¹⁰¹ See McManus (1997, Chapter 3 & passim).

¹⁰² For discussions see Harvey (1987) and Adams (2006).

¹⁰³ See Sims-Williams (1992).

¹⁰⁴ For detailed discussions see Forsyth (1996)

¹⁰⁵ There are also a number of variations of the name ‘Edarnon’.

¹⁰⁶ See Jackson (1955, 145).

‘to wash’.¹⁰⁷ We seem to have an evolving Pictish language, as one would expect, and representing this in a foreign alphabet would have posed many challenges. One could imagine the issues raised had the Welsh of Anglesey in 1050 been written by means of Old English and the later Welsh of Carleon (at the other end of the country) in 1350 similarly represented by contemporaneous Medieval English.

We know next to nothing about the linguistic environment in which most of these texts were composed. Are they transliterations of Latin alphabet forms? To what extent were literate Pictish or Irish scribes involved as orthographers? What are we to make of the problematic doubling of consonants? In which language were they thinking when they composed these and what sort of literary models did they have access to? Were the orthographers monoglot Picts or monoglot Gaels, or bilinguals or laymen or ecclesiasts, all with their own visions of how one should apply *ogham* to Pictish?

Some are mere graffiti, others are monumental which brings us to issues of register, social gradience and linguistic and orthographic competency. It is sometimes noted that items such as :HCCVVEVV: (Lunnasting) cannot be Celtic and is thus evidence for non-Indo-European. More realistic would be to state that, as it stands it can hardly represent any living language indicating that what we may be missing in such instances is the orthographic key. The body of evidence is not at present large enough to investigate how Picts were choosing to write their own language over the centuries. One might, in this context consider the constructed word *ghoti* (an alternative form of the word ‘fish’) used to demonstrate the irregularities of English spelling, where *gh* represents the sound of *tough*, *o* as in *women* and *ti* as in *nation* i.e. *fish*. Additionally, few show unambiguous word-spacing, some are broken, worn (etc.).¹⁰⁸

If one takes an informed and pragmatic approach to this limited corpus (if ‘corpus’ is the right word for this disparate collection) then consistency and easy intelligibility should not be assumed. The state of affairs we encounter may well reflect the complex geographical, social, literary and diachronic linguistic

¹⁰⁷ See Jackson (1980, 164).

¹⁰⁸ Consider for example the following: TISSSENTxNNSSISAKWROPLE.

variation one would expect of inscriptions in a partially attested language - rather than an innately exotic form. We may simply lack the key or keys. Despite such difficulties these inscriptions are being subjected to increasingly sophisticated approaches¹⁰⁹ and they should not be viewed as eccentric or bizarre, but rather as the normal and expected outcome of the socio-linguistic situation sketched above.

Latin Alphabet Inscriptions

There are also some eight Latin alphabet inscriptions¹¹⁰ which may be of some relevance but these are also generally brief, fragmented or largely indecipherable. Most, if not all, are in Latin itself. The inscription on the St Ninian's Isle sword chape (late 8th century?) appears to attest a Pictish personal name *Resad* (cf. *W Rhys*, + *-ad?*). The inscription on the St Vigean's cross-slab (mid-ninth century) attests two three names, *Drosten* and *Forcus* seem to attest Irish forms while one segment may represent a Pictish name *Uoret*.¹¹¹ There is also the quite unintelligible Newton stone, which could be an antiquarian forgery.¹¹²

Medieval Sources

When we arrive at the Middle Ages, when Pictish is possibly long dead, our manuscript sources improve, or at least provide increased numbers of relevant items, and significant amounts of evidence becomes available. Sadly, it has almost all been modified by languages other than Pictish. For example we have names of people and places which are Pictish in origin in the Book of Deer¹¹³ (12th century glosses in a 10th century gospel book). These however have presumably sojourned in Gaelic for a century or two. The 'Pictish' names in *Canu Aneirin* (*Llif*, *Cian*¹¹⁴ and *Bubon*) have presumably been mediated by Brittonic. Here I will

¹⁰⁹ For example Forsyth (2011).

¹¹⁰ See Okasha (1985).

¹¹¹ See Clancy (forthcoming) for a discussion which, despite intense scrutiny, raises more questions than it resolves.

¹¹² For an image, a brief discussion and further refs see Fraser (2008, 34, entry 38.2).

¹¹³ See Jackson (1972) and Forsyth (2008).

¹¹⁴ See Clancy (2013, 158) for the suggestion that he may have been a Gael.

discuss only the Irish Annals and the Pictish king-lists, leaving other briefer texts to be discussed when relevant.

Irish Annals

A significant number of Pictish personal and place-names occur in Irish Annals, and in a smaller number of other Irish sources. The most useful texts are the late-fifteenth-century Annals of Ulster, the mid-fourteenth-century Annals of Tigernach and the mid-seventeenth-century *Chronicum Scotorum*. While such texts are comparatively late it has been established that most of the Scottish record derives from an ‘Iona Chronicle’ kept at this monastery from the late sixth century to 740.¹¹⁵

The difficulty with such texts is that Irish speakers (or scribes) tend to replace Pictish names with cognate Irish forms or adapt them in other ways. For example Pictish *Unust* and *Uurgust* are almost always transcribed as *Oengus* and *Fergus* or *Forgus* (vel sim.), thus bleaching them of their linguistic value. Pictish *Bredei* appears as *Brude*, masking the underlying form. Pictish names often appear with different spellings, even within the same source e.g. *mc Accidain* (AU 649.4) but *mc Aciṭaen* (AU 686.2), probably due to selective modification. With other names, such as the presumably Pictish *Corindu* (AU 669.2) or *Biceot m. Moneit* (729.2), it is difficult to access whatever may have been the original form.

The Pictish King-lists

One of the most important sources for the Pictish language are the Pictish king-lists, or rather it is the least gaelicised of these, the *Poppleton Manuscript*, which is of pivotal value. Sadly, we do not know where this was originally produced, by whom or to what extent ideological issues have impacted upon it. These king-lists are found in two versions, a shorter one *Series Breuior* found in Scottish sources of the fourteenth century or later and the longer version, *Series Longior*.¹¹⁶ It is likely that they derive from a common source in the Pictish

¹¹⁵ See Evans (2014, 14-19).

¹¹⁶ For a number of these versions see Anderson (1973, Chapter 2 ‘The Regnal Lists’, 43-102). For the *Lebor Bretnach* version see Van Hamel, 1932) and for an extremely useful chapter which attests many more, with a table comparing name forms see Calise (2002, Chapter 3 ‘Pictish and Scottish Regnal Lists’, 147-69).

period written soon after 836, but that the list was created much earlier than that, with an ancestor version probably compiled by the reign of Gartnait son of Donuel (c.656-653) at the latest.¹¹⁷ The longer version may have been compiled at the monastery at Abernethy in Perthshire, as within it is embedded the foundation account of this institution. This monastery Perthshire is within a day's ride from Brittonic lands, and we know nothing of literacy there when this list may have been compiled in the 9th century.

The mid-fourteenth-century Poppleton manuscript has escaped much, but not all, of the gaelicisation which characterises other versions. Name forms such as *Drest* (G. *Drust*) and *Bredei* (G *Brude*) do demonstrate resistance to full gaelicisation but retrospectively inserted sections purporting to represent events and individuals earlier than the sixth century (e.g. the opening *Cruithne filius Emge* (sic) section) were inserted from a document composed in a Gaelic milieu. Forms such as *Cruithne* (the Gaelic for 'Pict') and 'da Drest' ('two Drests' in Gaelic) mean that we cannot rely on this as a securely accurate witness to Pictish orthography and phonology. Also, given that the text was composed in a Pictish milieu in the ninth century it is difficult to know to what extent names purportedly of kings in the sixth would have been modified. It may not therefore be a contemporary witness to early Pictish. One could compare with the Book of Llandaf which contains some truly early (6th century?) items and many which are witness to 12th century Welsh. Additionally all the manuscripts are at several removes from the Pictish original and attests a number of questionable forms, for example *Muircholaich* SL1, for *Uiurtolic* in SL2.

Of some importance is the fact that it is only in recent decades that the composition of these lists has been studied critically.¹¹⁸ On several occasions the names in this list have been approached uncritically and taken as accurate witnesses to Pictish. Much of the early sections are now understood to represent later retrospective additions, made by Gaelic scribes working with Pictish material that they understood imperfectly. Some names may have been inserted

¹¹⁷ See Evans (2014, 19-22) for a discussion.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Anderson (1973), Miller (1979), Evans (2002 & 2014).

deliberately for ideological reasons,¹¹⁹ or simply to fill out presumed gaps e.g. the perplexing ‘list of thirty Brudes’.

Thus, even in 1983, Jackson (1983(a), 224) held out that names such as *Bliesblituth* and *Canutulachama* represented ‘non-Celtic Pictish’. These are pseudo-historical names borne by kings that have reign-lengths as implausible as one hundred years. Additionally if we compare SL2 versions we see *Blieberlith* and *Canatulacma*. Miscopying and modifications by Gaelic scribes is highly likely. Stokes (1892, 397) considered the latter name to be derived from *Canu* (cf. *Cano*) followed by the epithet ‘*tulahama*, of which *Tulaaman* may be a derivative’ (cf. OGael *tulach* ‘hillock’). He noted other instances of the insertion of *h* or *ch* between vowels: *Catohic*, *fahel*, *Tarachin*. He also compared this (ibid. 415) with *Tula Aman* attested in AU 686.1. Such names are to be treated with extreme caution as evidence for Pictish. Centuries of confusion by scribes unfamiliar with the language is a more credible explanation of these forms than resorting to the survival of a non-Indo-European language into the Early Medieval Period.

Contact Influence upon Gaelic

The final significant source of information which I will discuss is the impact Pictish had on Gaelic. This is an understudied field, and one which calls for a dedicated and specialist treatment. At some point between (presumably) the seventh and the eleventh centuries Picts abandoned Pictish and adopted Gaelic. In doing so they preserved some aspects of their original language. We have little idea of how this happened, whether it was gradual or abrupt or whether it occurred early in some areas or whether it was a geographically smooth process with mass language switch in a matter of a few generations.

Whether or not there is any phonological influence on Gaelic has not been investigated. There may have been some modifications to the verbal system (Green 1983) but there are a number of words current in Scottish Gaelic which lack a Goidelic etymology and which have plausible and usually convincing

¹¹⁹ See Fraser (2009) where there are numerous relevant discussions of the king-lists. See the index s.v. ‘Pictland – king-list of’, p.431.

origins in a language very similar to Brittonic.¹²⁰ The most likely trajectory seems to be that these are indeed lexical items of Pictish origin, but we cannot fully rule out an origin in Brittonic, or in dialects of Pictish which were perhaps not so different. We do not know when these became current in Gaelic. Were they adopted into Gaelic during Pictish overlordship of Dál Riata or perhaps by a Gaelic elite settled in Pictland in the early eighth century? On the other hand did they only enter Gaelic during its final days? If they are early borrowings then they could represent Pictish phonology at a stage some three centuries earlier than some place-names.

The items usually cited as loanwords are *bad* ‘cluster’ (Bret *bod*), *bagaid* ‘cluster, troop’ (W *bagad*), *dail* ‘field, meadow’¹²¹ (W *dôl*), *díleab* ‘legacy’,¹²² *monadh* ‘mountain, moor’ (W *mynydd*) *pòr* ‘grain, crops’ (W *pawr*), *pett* ‘land-holding’ (W *peth*) *preas* ‘bush, thicket’ (W *prys(g)*). There are a number of other words which may have influenced Gaelic usage (e.g. *beinn* ‘mountain’) and others which, while adopted, survived in toponymy alone e.g. **cair* ‘defended site’ (W *caer*), **carden* also ‘defended site’ (W *cardden*) and **gron* ‘bog’.¹²³ A number of the loanwords do have a fiscal flavour to them and it may be possible that many were loaned as a package in some administrative context.

Treatment of Onomastics

Our most copious, and perhaps important, source of evidence for Early Medieval Pictish, and also Roman-period Celtic in Calidonia, is onomastic and largely toponymic.

Personal Names

Certain aspects of the personal name evidence have been discussed above but here is a suitable place to draw attention to a few additional issues. The main concern with Pictish is that names we employ as keystones in arguments could be borrowed. Personal can be highly mobile. In the king-lists we do have the

¹²⁰ See Jackson (1983(b)) for a brief discussion and further refs.

¹²¹ Note however that MacBain (1911) saw this as a loan from Norse *dalr* ‘dale’.

¹²² As far as I’m aware this item has no surviving cognate in Brittonic, but it is presumably derived from PIE **leik^w* ‘to leave’, meaning ‘that which is left (bequeathed?)’.

¹²³ See Taylor (2011) for a detailed discussion.

Briton *Beli*, as the patronym of *Bredei*. There is also the Northumbrian *Enfret* (Eanfrith, son of king Aethelfrith). Loaned from Latin we have *Elpin* and **Edarn*. We cannot exclude the possibility that other names may similarly be of non-Pictish origin. The Irish *Drust* appears as *Drest* in SL, so why do names in *-gust* not appear as *-gest*? Borrowing would be one option. What are we to make of the name *Bredei* born by the son of the king of Strathclyde but which otherwise seems so typically Pictish? His name is also borne by the *Brude* supposedly encountered by Columba in 565, but if Columba's activities were in the region of the Tay as suggested by the *Amra Choluimb Chille*¹²⁴ then the northern anchor of this name is dislodged.

We must also remember that the kingdoms made familiar to us in the limited surviving sources, such as Gododdin and Strathclyde were not geographically fixed entities. Territorial and dynastic flux is the more normal state of affairs. The attested territorial mutability of Bernicia, Northumbria, Gwynedd and the Werteras are good examples. Fraser (2009, 135) has suggested that certain dynasties in the early seventh century may have laid claim to both Clyde Rock and Strathearn. The notion of an even vaguely stable boundary between Britons and Picts starts to break down as does the notion that personal names should be territorially restricted. The whole notion of a Pictish name is based on flimsy assumptions and geographical voids in the evidence. We cannot tell whether such characteristically Pictish names as *Bredei* or *Ciniod* or *Talorg* (*Talarg?* *Talorc?*) were equally common in Gododdin, or Elfed or pre-Anglo-Saxon Mercia for that matter.

In contrast to place-names we seldom have reflexes of personal-names, denying us the means to refine our understanding of the pronunciations. We do not know whether Pictish scribes had an established Pictish orthography or whether they were simply employing their Latin as a model. One means of accounting for the apparent change of *Oniust* to *Unuist* (see 3.5) is that the scribe of the first attestation was employing a northern Brittonic system with *o* for /ɛ:/ while the second employed a more Latinate orthography. Perhaps this was due to a weakening in Pictish scribal system (due to gaelicisation?), but we lack the material to investigate this any further. Which phoneme is indicated by the final

¹²⁴ See Fraser (2009, 99).

consonant of *Ciniod*? Is it /d/ or /ð/? What of *Talorcen* and *Talorgen* (SL1)? In early Brittonic orthography /k/, /g/, /x/ and /ɣ/ would all be possible realisations. Gaelic *Cinaed* seems to be partial adaptation of Pictish *Ciniod*,¹²⁵ but otherwise we have to attempt to interpret the bare written forms we have in the king-lists.

Place-names

The Roman-period evidence is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

There is no general overview of the Pictish place-name evidence in this thesis as it is limited to examining the question of Pritenic.¹²⁶ However, as place-names feature heavily in Chapter 3 a brief discussion is required. There follows below a synopsis of the major issues encountered in this study and how they impact upon our understanding of Pictish.

In contrast to personal names place-names tend to stay put, and they are therefore generally a fair indicator of where Pictish was spoken at some point. However place-names can also be transferred, a brief reference to Dunedin (New Zealand) and Perth (Australia) should, though anachronistic and imperfect analogies, be enough to illustrate this much discussed point.

Toponymic studies have made dramatic advances recently with the work of Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus whose painstaking study of the place-names of Fife provides robust evidence for the study of Pictish. However, this is the only relevant Scottish county which has been investigated in adequate depth. For Pictish place-names we are still heavily reliant on the works of W. J. Watson (1904 & 1926) and to a lesser extent W. F. H. Nicolaisen (1976 etc.). There is undoubtedly a significant corpus of Pictish place-names which have not yet been discussed, meaning that many conclusions on the language can only be provisional. New material or fresh thinking could quite radically modify proposals as they often hang on quite slender threads.

¹²⁵ I am unsure as to how to interpret *Cin-*. I have wondered whether *-iod* could represent /jɛ:ð/ 'lord' which is quite common in Brittonic personal names such as *Maredudd* and *Ithel* (+ *hael* 'generous').

¹²⁶ Nevertheless, underlying this thesis is a thorough overview of all the toponymic evidence and there much to be discussed. I intend to publish on several issues in the near future.

One of the foremost issues is how to define Pictland geographically. As noted above it is most uncertain whether or not there was ever a sharp divide between Pictish and Brittonic. There are large areas bordering regions ruled by Britons, whose linguistic affinity cannot be securely established. What of areas such as Clackmannanshire, Stirlingshire, Strathearn for example? The toponymic element **lannerc* ‘open ground’¹²⁷ is only attested in southerly areas, with no attestations in Fife or north of the Tay. It is therefore questionable whether this and similar geographically restricted items can be employed as evidence for Pictish. Pictish place-names extend from Skye to Easter Ross and southwards to Fife, and with such a broad area whose history is imperfectly understood one must always remain alert to the possibility of significant dialectal differences. It is hazardous to come to general conclusions based on limited and localised evidence.

Only a severely restricted number of place-names occur in early sources contemporaneous with living Pictish. Irish Annals and the *Life of Columba* seem to gaelicise names. The *Lin Garan* ‘Crane Lake’ of the *Historia Brittonum* (Morris 1980, §57, 77) may have been provided by northern Britons and may reflect their form rather than the authentic Pictish name for ‘Nechtansmere’. The victorious king, *Bredei*, was himself the son of a Brittonic king. We are thus overwhelmingly reliant on toponymic attestations which post-date living Pictish.

Apart from the limited number of items attested in the sources discussed above place-name attestations begin in earnest in charters in the twelfth century. However, it is common that relevant items may not be attested until the thirteenth or fourteenth century or even much later. By such times they have sojourned in Gaelic for some centuries and then often in Scots/English, before being noted by scribes of varying and often unknown origin. Ambiguities of orthography abound. Names may sometimes be accurately copied from older documents or may represent contemporaneous pronunciations, all causing a great many problems of interpretation. Mediation by Gaelic could mask certain features. For example had Pictish **pert* ‘copse, wood’ become /perθ/ as in Brittonic it is likely that Gaelic, which had not spirantised voiceless stops after liquids, would have pronounced it as **pert* - in effect reversing the process.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ See Taylor (2011, 88) and McNiven (2011, 254).

¹²⁸ This may explain Partick in Glasgow.

Most attestations of this element have a final stop e.g. *Pert̪* (former parish; ANG) but note the town name *Perth̪*.¹²⁹

Names of importance (defended or royal sites, major rivers, monasteries etc.) would have been familiar to external groups from an early period and therefore could reflect early realisations, which later evolved in Pictish. *Urquhart* (*Airchartdan*) is attested in the *Life of Columba* and *Applecross* in Irish Annals for example (see 3.1). Such names can, in effect, fossilise phonology. As Gaelic expanded in later centuries these forms could oust the Pictish form. The same could be envisaged for English/Scots, meaning that such items are not necessarily a reliable guide to late Pictish phonology. The place-name *Inverness* is, in some respects, a better witness to medieval Gaelic than the modern Gaelic *Inbhir Nis*, (pronounced / ɪnɪrɪ'niʃ/). Various other modifications, by analogy, can also be made by successor languages e.g. *W Conwy* > English *Conway*. Some names may have been coined in Gaelic but using words adopted from Pictish (see Taylor (2011, 100-3), as with *pett*, for example. Had this been borrowed early into Gaelic there is no reason why it could not have evolved later to /peθ/, as in Brittonic.

It is place-names that largely form the basis for establishing the presence of Pictish in an area. For example the most northerly robustly Pictish name (apart from Orkney)¹³⁰ is the *Peffer River* (ROS). There is no difficulty in interpreting this as corresponding to Welsh *pefr* 'bright', especially as it occurs in other river-names in the north (Watson 1926, 452). However, we do not know when this name was first applied to this river. It could have been as late as the final generations which spoke Pictish in the region which could have been in the tenth century. Names do not necessarily establish the long presence of a language. *Peffer* alone does not establish that Pictish was spoken here in the seventh century. We may, in Pictland, be looking at Pictish names coined and adopted over many centuries, much as in Wales. *Tintern* (MON) may have been borrowed into English as early as the twelfth century, if not before (see Owen & Morgan 2007, 460) while there are many place-names in the north and west of Wales that are only now acquiring English realisations. Modern English pronunciations

¹²⁹ For further attestations see Taylor (2011,93).

¹³⁰ It is attested in Classical sources so it may have little bearing on Early Medieval Pictish.

which are rapidly replacing Welsh realisations represent a palimpsest of forms. We must, presumably, envisage a similar situation in Pictland.

Conclusion

These are our sources, and from these and comparison with Brittonic and to a lesser extent the more distantly related Goidelic and earlier Celtic must we attempt to reconstruct what we can of the Pictish lexicon and phonology. It is difficult to know how the diverse sources relate to each other, geographically and especially temporally. A place-name in a charter could represent Pictish as it was when it entered Gaelic, in 550 or in 1050. A personal name in an Irish manuscript may be garbled, conservative or represent the realisation when the entry was made. A Pictish personal name in the PKL may represent the realisation of 550 while another that of 900. Similarly *ogham* inscriptions were probably carved over a number of centuries. We may very well, in many instances, not be comparing like with like.

At the outset it must be emphasised that this thesis does not attempt to fully survey all that can be adduced about the language or languages of the Picts. The aim of this study is to ‘clear the table’ (as it were) so that much needed follow-up studies can start afresh, hopefully unimpeded by dubious proposals and viewpoints developed in contexts which did not benefit from recent research and insights. The overarching theme to be aware of is that the evidence has been mediated by several languages, each with its own peculiarities, in various media and that attempting to strip away those grimy films is fraught with difficulties.

1. Historiography

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a chronological outline of evolving views on the Pictish language, from the earliest surviving statements to comments published shortly before the presentation of this thesis. These cover an array of proposals ranging from categorising Pictish as Gaelic, Germanic, Basque, non-Indo-European, Gaulish, a dialect of Brittonic to arguing that attempts to classify it are futile and ill-conceived. While this chapter will focus on the work of linguists and historians there will also be an overview of less specialised but nonetheless influential proposals. The quality of such discussions varies greatly, from the very infrequent informed, objective, considered and dedicated linguistic investigations to works which are largely derivative, agenda-driven or confused. The historical context of comments will be explored as will their impact upon later scholarship. Core issues are how perceptions of the Pictish language relate to contemporaneous historical thinking and how they evolved in regard to the changing understanding of Celtic languages. In tandem will be discussions of when and how relevant primary sources became available, how they impacted on theories and how the development of various disciplines enabled the interpretation of this material. The aim is to enable the highly problematic but not insignificant corpus of evidence to be approached with access to the context in which linguistic proposals were developed.

1.2 The Earliest Notions

No classical sources note linguistic differences between any of the inhabitants of Britannia comparable to Caesar's explicit statement about the three distinct languages of Gaul: those of *Gallia Belgica*, *Gallia Aquitania* and *Gallia Celtica* (DBG 1, I). Dramatic dialectal or even linguistic variation may have existed but it was evidently not an issue of great interest to the limited number of Roman or Greek commentators. In the late first century Tacitus, in his biography of his father-in-law (the Roman general Agricola), simply calls all the inhabitants of the island *Britanni*, including groups located in *Calidonia* (Ogilvie & Richmond 1967, §27.30, 109). When comparing Gauls to southerly, Belgic Britons he noted that their languages differ little, *sermo haud multum diversus* (ibid. §11, 3,

100). This is the closest we have to a direct comment, and it could be interpreted as indicating that Calidonians spoke something rather similar to Gauls. Given the great number of both Gauls and Britons which served under Agricola¹³¹ it is not easy to entirely dismiss Tacitus' statements, but such limited and bare comments provide insufficient evidence to develop any meaningful theories on the dialect position of Celtic in northern Britain. There is no hint at the presence of an ethnically distinct non-Celtic group. In addition, in chapter 11, Tacitus noted that the large limbs and red hair of the Calidonians clearly pointed to a Germanic origin, an influential comment which we will encounter various times in the following discussion. He also provided a number of relevant place-, group and personal names, but unfortunately the surviving manuscripts are late and the forms are probably corrupt meaning that some are of very limited linguistic value (see Chapter 2).

For the next relevant and contemporaneous comment we have to leap forward some six centuries, over a period of tumultuous social, religious, cultural and linguistic change to Adomnán's *Life of Columba* (the *Vita Columbae* written c. 700).¹³² Gildas, earlier in the first half of the sixth century¹³³, despite classifying Picts as a distinct people, like the *Scoti* (DEB 14, 19.1, 21.1) made no overt reference to language. Adomnán, however, noted that Columba required an interpreter on two occasions while on missions in Pictland c. 565+ (VC 35a, 275 & 78a, 397). This in itself, while a good indicator of perceived mutual non-intelligibility, does not demonstrate the Brittonicness or even Celticity of this alien idiom, simply that it was understood as having been incomprehensible to a speaker of Donegal Old Gaelic. Neither does it offer incontestable proof that there was one homogenous Pictish language in the period described in this work. No use of interpreter is noted in various other instances of communication with Picts. While the term Picts is used various times in this text it does not, in contrast to Bede, explicitly note a Pictish language. Some later commentators, such as Fraser (1927, 18), made the claim that the speech of such Pictish individuals could simply have been a distinct dialect of Goidelic, a claim rejected by Jackson and others. Adomnán also noted various place- and personal

¹³¹ See Fraser (2008, 66) & Ogilvie & Richmond (1967, 251).

¹³² Attested in a slightly later copy. See O'Loughlin (2006) and Clancy (2006(a)).

¹³³ c.480-550, Halsall (2013, 53-57).

names in Pictland, most being apparently gaelicised while a small number display some features indicative of an origin in Brittonic / Pictish¹³⁴ (Anderson & Anderson 1961, 157-61). It was only in 1857 that William Reeves published Dorbbéne's text (the 'A text': the *Schaffhausen Manuscript*, c. 700),¹³⁵ other available versions being somewhat less reliable witnesses to the original.¹³⁶

The next piece of evidence is Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, (Ecclesiastical History of the English People) completed in 731, but attested only in later copies, the earliest dated to the mid 8th century (the 'Moore Bede'; Colgrave & Mynors 1991, xliii-xliv). He twice stated that Pictish was one of the four spoken languages of Britain (HE I.1 & III.6¹³⁷) along with Brittonic, Irish and English. Latin, as a fifth (religious) language united them. Most interpret these statements literally, while it could be suggested that Bede may, for political motivations, be exaggerating the difference between Pictish and Brittonic. His disdain for Britons and respect for Picts is well-known, an issue which is investigated in some detail by Stancliffe (2007). She explains that while the kingdom of Northumbria was, during Bede's latter years, at peace with both Picts and Irish there was a very real anxiety regarding a potential (Northern) Brittonic political resurgence and possible religious dominance. Additionally, the first reference was made while noting the fortuitous numerical correspondence with the five books of the Pentateuch, and this has been seen as motivation to envisage five languages. This seems an exaggerated claim. It is also difficult to access and assess Bede's familiarity with Pictish and Brittonic even though there were close and direct relations between the Northumbrian and Pictish churches in this period (HE V.21). It should also be noted that Bede states (HE I.1) that 'to

¹³⁴ E.g. *Airchartdan* (cf. MidW *cardden* 'defended enclosure', *Aporcrosan* (cf. ModW *aber*) & *Tarain* (W *Taran*, attesting Britt /oRa/ > /aRa/). For a discussion of *cardden* see GPC, Taylor (2011) and Breeze 1999. For the ensuing debate between Nicolaisen and Breeze see James (2009).

¹³⁵ See Anderson & Anderson (1961, 3), and also <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/sbs/Shelfmark/20/0>

¹³⁶ For a discussion of the textual variants see Anderson & Anderson (1961, 3-11). It should be noted that the 'B texts' (which also derive from an manuscript ancestral to A) preserve some archaic spellings of Irish names and are therefore of considerable textual value in spite of their late date (ibid. 5).

¹³⁷ 'id est Brettonum Pictorum Scottorum et Anglorum, diuisae sunt, in dicione accepit' (Colgrave & Mynors, 230).

begin with the inhabitants of this island were all Britons'¹³⁸ and presents us with an origin myth which viewed Picts as later immigrants from Scythia.¹³⁹

Bede also provided some Pictish personal names and unambiguously stated that *Peanfahel* was the Pictish form of the place-name Kinneil meaning 'Wall's End' - referring to the Antonine Wall. This perplexing, debated and seemingly hybrid form still resists a fully satisfactory interpretation (e.g. Jackson 1955, 143) and has caused much confusion as the first element evidently corresponds to Brittonic **penn* 'head, end' and the second implies G *fáil* 'fence, hedge' (gen. sg. of *fál*). As we will see much thinking was pinned on this place-name.

Bede also stated that the southern boundary of Pictland followed the Forth-Clyde isthmus (HE I, 2), an important statement which contributed significantly to the idea of there being a clear geographical, political and linguistic divide between Picts and Britons. We now know that this is at best a convenient but imprecise generalisation, and there is no way of knowing whether it represented any significant ethnic frontier in earlier periods, even though it is often assumed that it did. Importantly, it is in his work that we first encounter the Pictish origin legend which saw them as originating in Scythia (Scandinavia/Eastern Europe).¹⁴⁰ It was this statement, sometimes coupled with Tacitus' comment on the physical similarity with Germans, which encouraged later views that they were an immigrant Germanic people. Copies of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* were widely available throughout the medieval period, and it is this significant work that largely ensured a continuing awareness of the existence of a Pictish language until the curiosity of Renaissance scholars was stimulated over eight centuries later.

There are a number of references to Picts ('Prydyn', vel sim.) in Medieval Welsh sources (see GPC) such as *Llyfr Taliesin* (Williams 1960, 91) but no overt mention of a distinct Pictish language. There are also references in *Llyfr Aneirin* to an

¹³⁸ 'In primis autem insula Brettones solum'.

¹³⁹ Colgrave and Mynors (1991, 17, fn 3) note that Bede is 'supposed to be confusing Scythia and Scandia, the Latin form of the Old English name for the southern part of the Scandinavian peninsula (modern Skåney) which was *Scedenig* or *Scedenland*'. See also Fraser (2011).

¹⁴⁰ See McCone (2008) for a discussion.

*alltut marchauc*¹⁴¹ a ‘foreign horseman’ named ‘Lliv(yeu) son of Cian’ (both bearing apparently Brythonic names), from *tra Bannauc*¹⁴² to the north of Gododdin. One should also bear in mind that the unrelated name-form *Cían* ‘long, enduring’ (eDIL; LEIA C-94) occurs as an OGael personal name. There is also a *Bubon* who is noted as originating from beyond *Merin lodeo* ‘the Firth of Forth’ (see Williams 1936, 339 & Koch 1997, 136). There is an ongoing disagreement as to whether this preserves authentic sixth-century material composed in the kingdom of Gododdin, centred on the Edinburgh region.¹⁴³ Interestingly he is not named as a Pict but this area, by Bede’s time over a century later, was understood as politically Pictish. Interestingly neither *Lliv* nor *Bubon* is portrayed as particularly exotic, and the former’s name ‘Saw son of Hound’ (upon which a pun is made in the song) is perfectly intelligible as Welsh.¹⁴⁴ The only indication of general Pictish distinctiveness occurs in the phrase *gynt... a Phryden* ‘heathen tribes of Pictland’ (Koch 1997, lxii). The patronymic ‘Cian’ probably represents a Neo-Brittonic re-formation (< *ci* ‘hound’ + the suffix *-an*¹⁴⁵), older forms would have attested the compositional equivalent *Con-* (vel sim., < **kuno-*).¹⁴⁶ At face value all this could be interpreted as suggesting linguistic proximity but the attestation in a medieval Welsh manuscript whose content is of debated historicity demands a cautious approach.

The *Historia Brittonum* (c.829; I §7) repeats the same four *gentes* of the island as Bede, as does Cormac mac Cuilennáin (†908), bishop and king of *Caisel Muman* (Russell 2006, 1559). The latter refers specifically to a *bérlla Cruithneach*, ‘Pictish language’, in his glossary *Sanas Chormaic*¹⁴⁷ when noting

¹⁴¹ See Williams (1938, 140) & Koch (1997, 167).

¹⁴² Probably the hilly massif between the Forth and the Clyde where the Bannock Burn rises. See Jackson (1969, 5-6 & 78-79) for a discussion and further refs. Alex Woolf (pers. comm.) favours Cairn Bannoch by Lochnagar on the boundary of ANG and ABD.

¹⁴³ See Woolf (2013), in particular the chapter by Padel, for the argument that much of this corpus is a later composition. For a view that there is an authentic early core see Koch (2013, 1-17).

¹⁴⁴ Compare *Lliv* with the earlier Celtic name *Lima* from Austria. See Delamarre (2007, 117 & 224) for a discussion but note that he derives this name and others from **lema* ‘elm’. The interpretation ‘saw’ for some of these items is attractive.

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion of this suffix and further refs. see Sims-Williams (2003, 158-61).

¹⁴⁶ See Koch (1997, 167) for a brief discussion. For other attestations of this name see Bartrum (1993, 127).

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/search.php?sText=cartait>

the Pictish word *ca(r)taid*, a ‘Pictish brooch’.¹⁴⁸ No further references were made to the language while it was still spoken.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (†1154/55), in his highly influential pseudo-historical *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c.1139), made much of Picts,¹⁴⁹ thus bringing the name and reputation to the forefront of medieval European consciousness, but he made no allusions to their language. The only direct reference to the death of Pictish is a comment by the Anglo-Norman historian Henry of Huntingdon in his *Historia Anglorum* (c.1129; Greenaway 1996, I.8, 24-25). He noted that it was no longer spoken in his time, but he was simply qualifying Bede’s statement, and it is unlikely that he had any first-hand information on Pictish apart from a vague idea that there was no room in contemporary Scotland for it.

Numerous later medieval writers or chroniclers such as John of Fordoun (†c.1363), Andrew Wyntoun (c.1350-c.1422), Walter Bower (1385-1449) and John Major (c.1467-1550) allude to Picts in their works but provide no independent or informative views on the language. They generally followed Bede in portraying them as a ‘Scythian’ people. The following writers make increasing use of printed classical sources in their works but, similarly, show no interest in the language: Hector Boece (c. 1465-1536), Polydore Virgil ‘The Father of English History’ (c. 1470-1555), John Lesley (1527-1596) and the Welsh cartographer and historian Humphrey Llwyd (1527-1568).¹⁵⁰ One important occurrence was the copying of a largely ungaelicised version of the Pictish king-lists on the order of Roger of Poppleton, a Carmelite friar, about 1360. We will encounter the evidence provided by this document the *Poppleton Manuscript* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms Latin 4126)¹⁵¹ various times in the course of this study.

¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of this item see Etchingham & Swift (2004) in particular pp. 38-44, and fn 33. For a dedicated etymological discussion see Isaac (2005(b)).

¹⁴⁹ See Thorpe (1966, 354) for further details.

¹⁵⁰ These works have been thoroughly investigated for comments on the language.

¹⁵¹ For a detailed discussion of this manuscript see Anderson (1949) in particular pp. 35-7.

1.3 Pictish Reborn - The Humanist Scholars

From the late sixteenth century onwards informed Renaissance scholars and a medley of antiquarians and historians engaged in some detail, often vociferously, with the particulars of the language and the linguistic geography of Pictland. The Renaissance rediscovery of the Classical past, Humanist inquisitiveness and the printing of the works of authors such as Ptolemy, Caesar, Strabo and Tacitus, provided scholars from this period onwards with the intellectual motivation and the raw materials for investigating in some detail the early history and linguistic situation of northern Britain.

The scholarly discussion of Pictish starts with George Buchanan (1506-1582) in his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582), a weighty history of Scotland written in imposing Latin. Buchanan was a widely-travelled, influential, highly erudite, multi-lingual Scottish humanist and polymath. He was the first to note in print the presence of a 'Celtic' language in Calidonia, a conclusion aided by his familiarity with Gaelic (Abbott 2006), which provided him with a direct involvement with a Celtic language which various later commentators lacked. Much of his life was spent travelling and lecturing in France, Portugal, England and Italy, and this hands-on involvement with language variation engendered an even-handed, practical and perceptive approach to the early linguistic history of northern Britain.

His massive study, innovatively critical and investigative, set out to justify the deposition of Mary Queen of Scots and thus did not endear itself to some later commentators, a major contributing factor in their lack of reference to it.¹⁵² Indeed, his books were almost immediately recalled because James VI objected to the description of his mother, and were not reprinted in Edinburgh until 1700 and never in England (James 1999, 40). An anonymous English translation was printed ten years earlier in 1690, testimony to enduring interest in this study and of the growing demand for works in vernacular languages. Buchanan had access to printed material which, a century or two earlier, would only have been available in select monasteries and private collections. He referred to the evidence of Ptolemy's *Geography*, the *Antonine Itinerary*, Tacitus' *Agricola*,

¹⁵² For a detailed discussion see Ferguson (1998, Chapter 5, 79-97).

other Classical authors and also Gildas and Bede, marking a major shift in the approach to Pictish.

Buchanan argued for the existence of a common Celtic language (albeit with three dialects) which was spoken in Gaul, Britain and parts of Spain and Germany (II, 22) from which Gaelic, Brittonic and Pictish were all descended. He stated that both Pictish and Brittonic were derived from Gaulish, with Pictish originating in a Celtic-speaking part of *Germania* (II, 20). In this he was following Bede in looking for an origin in *Scythia*. He used 'Gaulish' (*Galli* etc.) for what we would now term Celtic, while Celtic (e.g. II, 26) is reserved for the language of *Gallia Celtica*, one of the three parts of Gaul famously referred to by Caesar (DBG I,1). He noted that the Picts were more direct descendants of the Gauls, but saw both the Britons and Scots (via the Gaels) as descended from them as well (II, 14). Chalmers (1807) interpreted this as a reaction to the slightly earlier writings of the Welshman, Humphrey Llwyd (spelt *Lud-* in *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, whom Buchanan repeatedly savaged with unabated vitriol. Chalmers saw Buchanan as wishing to distance the Picts from the Welsh and make them an independent group, not simply an offshoot of the ancient Britons. Medieval Scots, who shunned union with England, had good reasons for not wishing those they perceived as their ancestors to be considered little more than second-rate Welsh, remembering of course that there was an implicit Welsh badge to the Tudor dynasty. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Brutus* legend portrayed the Britons' historical right to govern the island as having been transferred to the English, with the Normans subsequently inheriting it. This was ultimately relayed to the Welsh-derived Tudors, a view that Llwyd had expounded in his *Cronica Walliae a Rege Cadwalader ad annum 1294* (1559). Consequently, portraying the Picts as Welsh ran the danger of giving fodder to English claims of suzerainty. A distinct origin was crucial to substantiate claims for the validity of Scottish independence, and it also corresponded to Bede's stated place of Pictish origin.

His great innovation was to investigate both ancient and contemporary place-names and to compare them with Gaelic and Welsh words. For example, he correctly interpreted *Aremorica* as a compound of *ar/are* 'upon' (I, 12) and *mori* 'sea'.¹⁵³ He considered areas to the south of the Forth-Clyde divide as having

¹⁵³ For the etymology see Falileyev (2010, 54).

been Pictish, Lothian supposedly named from *Lothus*, King of the Picts (I, 17) and noted that rivers named *Avon* corresponded to Welsh *afon* ‘river’. *Aberbrothock* (Arbroath, ANG), *Aberdone*, *Aberdene* (Aberdeen, ABD; I, 24) were correctly equated with Brythonic *aber*¹⁵⁴ ‘estuary’ and Ptolemy’s ‘Scottish’ *Cornavii* with Cornwall. He paid particular attention to common Celtic place-name elements for example *briga*¹⁵⁵ (II, 32) which he interpreted as ‘city’, and *dunum*¹⁵⁶ which he correctly equated with Gaelic *dún* (I, 33). Additionally, he recognised the change in place-name formation where *dún* came to be used as the first element of phrasal place-names rather than as the second (generic) element of close compounds e.g. **(Lugu-)dunon > Dùn (Breatann)*. Unsurprisingly, progress in Celtic linguistics allows the modification of a number of his proposals, such as the interpretation of *Magus* (plain)¹⁵⁷ as ‘house, city’ (II, 37). Nevertheless this marked the beginning of an objective and informed approach to Celtic linguistics and the language of the Picts.

He also argued (I, 20) that Bede’s statement regarding the distinctiveness of Brittonic and Pictish referred to mere dialectal differences. However, he refuted any Pictish influence on Scottish Gaelic and also the survival of Pictish place-names (I, 22), which is curious considering the examples above. The debated meaning of the term *Pict* (II, 19) was discussed, including both the Latin interpretation and similar group names on the Continent (*Pictones* & *Pictavi*). He both reiterated and lambasted Llwyd’s statement on the derivation of *Prydain/Britannia* from *W pryd* ‘appearance’¹⁵⁸ (I, 3), which is cognate with OW *Prydyn* ‘Picts’. His achievement in pioneering a methodological and evidence-based approach was not recognised until recently but it is difficult to gauge his influence as his work was suppressed, and subsequent authors seldom acknowledge their debt him. The scene, however, was set that the Picts were perhaps not so distinct linguistically from Britons.

The next scholar to comment on the language was the English historian William Camden (1551-1623). His *magnum opus*, *Britannia*, a county-by-county

¹⁵⁴ See James (2012).

¹⁵⁵ See Falileyev (2010, 11, s.v. *brig-*).

¹⁵⁶ See Falileyev (2010, 18, s.v. *dūno-*).

¹⁵⁷ See Falileyev (2010, 23, s.v. *magos*).

¹⁵⁸ Koch (2003, 48) has proposed a relationship with *W prydidd* ‘poet’ i.e. ‘maker’.

description of Great Britain and Ireland, was published in 1586, only four years after Buchanan's work. It received immediate recognition and was reprinted in 1590, 1594, 1600 and 1607, these successive reprints being testimony to both the reverence in which it was held and its popularity. An English translation of this Latin work was published by Philemon Holland in 1610.¹⁵⁹ Camden's emphasis on primary materials and philological information marks his divergence from the rhetorical historical writing characteristic of the Middle-Ages and early Renaissance (Herendeen 2008). According to the antiquary and biographer John Aubrey (1626-1697) Camden taught himself Welsh and employed a Welsh servant to improve his acquaintance with the language (Barber 1982, 60). This is of core importance as he correctly equated various Gaulish items with their Welsh cognates, an approach which seems similar to, though independent from, Buchanan.

A whole chapter was devoted to Picts, demonstrating how large they were starting to figure in the perceived past of these islands. In the chapter *Britaine* he engaged in detail with etymologising Celtic place-names and attested words, but numerous proposals were quite wide of the mark. For example, he equated *Deu(caledonians)*¹⁶⁰ with both *dee* 'black' (for *W du*) and *W deheu* 'right', and also derived the group-name *Vecturions* (recte *Uerturiones*)¹⁶¹ from *W chwithic* 'left'. However, he significantly advanced our approach to and understanding of Celtic languages by correctly interpreting many early items:

<i>Allobroges</i>	<i>allan + bro</i>	out + region
<i>bardi</i>	<i>bardd</i>	bard / poet
<i>Div(onia)</i>	<i>Dyw</i>	god
<i>Taranis</i>	<i>Taran</i>	thunder
<i>trimarcia</i>	<i>tri + march</i>	three + horse
<i>pempedula</i>	<i>pypm + deilen</i>	five + leaf
<i>betulla</i>	<i>bedw</i>	birch
<i>Uxello (dunum)</i>	<i>uchel</i>	high

¹⁵⁹ Available online at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/cambrit/>

¹⁶⁰ The precise meaning of *Deu-* in this context is still uncertain. See Rivet & Smith (1979, 338, s.n. *Dicaledones*).

¹⁶¹ See Chapter 2.

Contradicting both Bede's statement and Buchanan's view, that the Picts were intruders, he stated that 'the ancient Gauls and our Britans [including those of the very north] used one and the selfe same language, then the very truth will of force drive us to confesse that they had also the same beginning'.¹⁶² In effect he recognised that Bede's Scythian-derived Picts were based on an origin myth.

According to Cosmo Innes (1860, 80) and Sharpe (2008, 149), Camden commented on the Pictish regnal list contained in the Poppleton Manuscript which was then in the collection of Cecil, Lord Burleigh. I have yet to find such references; they certainly do not occur in the chapter *Picti*. This manuscript is of core importance to our understanding of the Pictish language because it contains a significant number of Pictish royal names which bear a striking resemblance to Brittonic forms. Other recensions of this list have been much more heavily gaelicised.

Camden seemingly arrived at his conclusions on Pictish quite independently from Buchanan. He did mention his predecessor's work in the chapter *Scoti* but his chapter on *Picti* contains no material evidently derived from *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*. The view that the Picts were rather Welsh would have been politically attractive to the reigning Tudor monarch, Elizabeth I, and this may go part of the way to explaining his distinct thinking. The fact that both he and Buchanan seem to be in general accord on the Brittonic linguistic identity of the Picts suggests that this may well have already been an accepted norm amongst scholars in Britain, and it is this view that is repeated by Aubrey in 1687.¹⁶³

It is notable that the identification of Pictish as 'Celtic' was made by two scholars with direct familiarity with Celtic languages. Sadly Camden did not discuss the evidence of Ptolemy or show any understanding of Gaelic, and Buchanan only minimally investigated Welsh. One wonders whether the looming debate might have been forestalled had the knowledge and the findings of these two titans been combined. However, the view that the Picts spoke 'Celtic' or even Welsh was not challenged in writing for a century, and in the meantime all was quiet on the Pictish front.

¹⁶² From Philemon Holland's translation.

¹⁶³ *Villare Anglicanum*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Aubrey 5; quoted from Parsons & Sims-Williams 2000, ix).

1.4 The Battle Begins

For the next commentary we depart from the tail-end of the Middle Ages, move forward a century and enter the new world of the Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason and science, a world where the phenomenal growth in printing made possible the rapid distribution of knowledge and ideas. Literacy was on the increase as was publication in vernacular languages, all nourishing the eager minds of this 'Curious Age'.¹⁶⁴ In this period we encounter the development of a new ethnic philosophy, that of Anglo-Saxonism,¹⁶⁵ which saw all things Germanic as superior, with Celts relegated to an inferior position. In reaction, there evolved growth of interest in all things Celtic, reaching one of its apogees in the writings of Macpherson. In Scotland the ethno-linguistic affiliations of the Picts became one of the major aspects of this conflict.

Diverging from the earlier consensus we find the Picts portrayed as Germanic in *A Description of the Isles of Orkney* (1693, Chap. XI, 79-80) by James Wallace (1642-1688). He was the Church of Scotland minister of Kirkwall in Orkney and one of the main informants of the physician, geographer and historian Sir Robert Sibbald (Withers 2006), who we will encounter below. The evidence he employed were verses by the Roman poet Claudian, Tacitus' claim that the inhabitants of northern 'Scotland' were of Germanic origin and the contemporary Germanic language of the Orkneys - items whose evidence Buchanan had already dismissed. In the *History of the Picts* (1706),¹⁶⁶ attributed to Henry Maule¹⁶⁷ we encounter the confident claim that the languages of the Picts and Britons 'differed not' (1706, 17), but this lightweight work is only Buchanan at second remove.

In 1706 the Breton priest Paul-Yves Pezron (1639-1706) published his influential *Antiquité de la nation et de la langue des Celtes, autrement appelléz Gaulois*. While his understanding of early languages is rooted in Biblical and Ancient Greek narratives he made a significant contribution by being the first to employ

¹⁶⁴ The term Edward Lhuyd uses in his preface to *Archaeologia Britannica* (1707).

¹⁶⁵ One of the pioneers being Richard Verstegan [formerly Rowlands] (1548x50–1640).

¹⁶⁶ Reprinted in 1808.

¹⁶⁷ See the 'Advertisement' in the introduction where it is noted that some consider the author to be Sir James Balfour.

the term, *Celtique*, for Gaulish, Breton and Welsh and giving the ‘Celts’ their ‘début on the world stage of the Age of Reason’ (Ferguson 1998, 197). Importantly his work excited Edward Lhuyd who was to provide a much more objective and scholarly investigation into the field.

With the publication of *Archaeologia Britannica* in 1707 the relationship of the Celtic languages to each other was demonstrated in significant detail by Edward Lhuyd (c. 1660-1709). He was a native Welsh-speaker and an imposing linguist with a direct and in-depth acquaintance with various Celtic languages acquired on numerous tours in Wales, Brittany and the Highlands and through ceaseless correspondence with informants.¹⁶⁸ He was also second keeper of the Ashmolean museum at Oxford and one of the pioneers of the comparative method in historical linguistics, which placed the study of Celtic languages on an increasingly secure foundation (Roberts 2004). The *Archaeologia Britannica* is a compilation of Celtic grammars, stories, and word-lists which provided researchers with a significant body of materials which they could employ to investigate the meagre, but growing, remains of Pictish. Ritson, for example, employed Lhuyd’s word-lists (1828, 123, fn). Lhuyd made various direct comment on Pictish, for example when qualifying the Irish name ‘Kruithneax’ he noted ‘that a Pict was no other than an extra-provincial, Brythyn [*or Britan*’]’ (1707, 20). He recognised that Irish term *Kruithneax* and Welsh *Brythyn* were cognate,¹⁶⁹ but his list of phonetic correspondences between Goidelic and Brittonic is hit and miss at best (ibid. 19-40). He considered that Pictish was close to Welsh, but apart from a reference to Bede’s *Peanfahel* he adduced extremely little concrete evidence.

A short-lived notion is that what we now know to be Old Welsh poetry may have been Pictish. In a letter Lhuyd wrote about to Henry Rowlands (author of *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*) about 1701, referring to the poems in the Juvenius manuscript,¹⁷⁰ he noted ‘I am at a loss to know the British of what country it was for it seems so different from ours, that I should rather suspect it either for the

¹⁶⁸ See Roberts (2004 or 2006) for an overview.

¹⁶⁹ It is actually *W Prydain* which is cognate, while *Brython* is a borrowing from Latin *Brittones* which is from Celtic. See Koch (2006(c)).

¹⁷⁰ Juvenius: Codex Cantabrigiensis Ff.4.42.

language of the Picts, or that of the *Strathclwyd*¹⁷¹ Britons' (printed posthumously; Rowlands 1766, 310-311). He posited a similar view in the *Archaeologia Britannica*: 'The Cambridge Juvenius is also undoubtedly either a Cumbrian or a Pictish Manuscript. For the Hand is perfectly Scottish' (1707, 226).¹⁷² This notion was later applied to the *Gododdin* poems by Evan Evans (Ieuan Fardd; 1731-1788) in the first known translation of this work. He printed ten stanzas with a Latin translation in his book *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards* published in 1764 (69). This is a good indication that some Welsh scholars considered that the language of the Picts was very close to Old Welsh, but they made no observations on the particulars of such assumed similarities. Ritson, perceptive and critical as always, rightly proposed that 'it seems much more likely that both these items are in the dialect of the Cumbrian, or, 'Strat Cluyd Britons' (1794, 13). Apart from Rhys, over a century later, this was the only time that Welsh antiquarians, historians or linguists showed any significant interest in the Pictish language.

In 1710 Sir Robert Sibbald (1641-1722) published *The History, Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross* where he echoed Wallace's view that the Picts were Goths (Germans), clearly unaware of Lhuyd's recently published work despite having corresponded with him. Wallace was one of his informants and it seems likely that both had reached similar conclusions on much the same grounds, or perhaps even together. In Chapter V, which is dedicated to discussing the language of the Picts, he proclaimed their Germanic origin, on the basis that Tacitus had noted a Germanic origin for the Calidones and that Bede had stated that they were from Scythia. He claimed that Buchanan supported this view (1710, 10), while Buchanan actually claimed that the Picts originated from a Celtic-speaking area of Germany, not that the Picts spoke German. The engagement with previous linguistic arguments is minimal, confused and contradictory and he ignored Buchanan and Camden's etymologies. For example, he noted that Maule had analysed the name of the Calidonian chieftain *Argentocoxus* as containing *coch* 'red', but made no mention that this is a Welsh word. Similarly he claimed that *Ross* is Gothish for peninsula (ibid. 1 &

¹⁷¹ Here the Scottish area name 'Strathclyde' has been partially welshified, by replacing the river-name with the similar (but not cognate) river-name *Clwyd*, of north-east Wales. For *Clwyd* see Owen & Morgan (2007, 89), and for *Clyde* see below 2.4.3.

¹⁷² See Sharpe (2008, 163-65) for a discussion.

14) while it is simply a Gaelic, or perhaps Pictish, word. These Gothish-speaking Picts, he argued, once possessed the lands from eastern Scotland to the Humber (ibid. 15) and entered Britain only after the Roman wars, hence Tacitus' ignorance of them, a view probably derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth (HRB IV. 17). However, the southern 'Britains', he believed, spoke Celtic. There is here none of the malice or anti-Gaelic sentiment which was to permeate later discussions of Pictish, and one can understand the basic logic of asking from where came the contemporary vernacular language of eastern Scotland and the northern isles.

A major step forward was taken with the works of Father Thomas Innes (1662-1744) a Scottish Roman Catholic priest and historian whose scholarly competence and rigorous research was recognised in his lifetime. He was the author of the *Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of the Northern Parts of Britain* (1729) which included excerpts from many ancient manuscripts and made such primary sources readily available. It seems that he was the first to make use of Irish material such as the *Annals of Tigernach* and the *Annals of Ulster* in approaching Pictish history. He also printed, for the first time, the names of Pictish kings preserved in the *Poppleton Manuscript*¹⁷³ (1729, 134-39), an important addition to the available evidence as these attest forms that are significantly less gaelicised than in other manuscripts. However, he made no comments on their distinctive orthography. He saw Pictish as a less Latinised form of British (ibid. 72-74), the first time that a reason was proposed for why Bede would classify it as a different language.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century the consensus was that the Pictish language was a form of Brittonic, perhaps less Romanised, a view acceptable to a Scot with Gaelic affiliations, an Englishman and a Welshman. The three dissenting voices who favour a Germanic origin are those of Lowlanders with no familiarity with Celtic languages, one (Wallace) making no secret of his disdain for Gaelic.

¹⁷³ This text was transcribed by Innes in the Colbert library in Paris, having been bought for the Marquis de Seignelay, son of King Louis XIV's finance minister (Sharpe 2008, 150).

1.5 The Battle over the Ghosts of the Picts

In the late eighteenth century the conflict over the Picts and their language grew more virulent, driven by political, religious and ethnic prejudices and factionalism. This century saw not only the union of the parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707 but also the violent defeat of Jacobitism in 1746 and the attendant suppression of Gaelic identity. The later horrors of the Highland Clearances and famine were to contribute to the contempt felt by many towards all things Gaelic. As we enter more deeply into the Enlightenment little credence was given to early origin myths, and a new critical approach, based on evidence and reason, emerged. The Picts were sometimes pressed into service to validate the personal and political agendas, or bias, of involved parties. Some Scots-speaking Lowlanders were placed in a quandary; just how Celtic should they consider themselves? Buying in to a Gaelic past would involve equating themselves with tribal, highland barbarians who were moreover descended from immigrant Irish, whose adherence to Catholicism in recent centuries evoked alarm. Imagining themselves as immigrant Saxons involved the danger of delegitimizing their claim, as first holders, to occupy and rule the land. Finding the means to portray Lowlanders as indigenous, in particular if this could trump Gaelic claims to the linguistically anglicised east, had great appeal. The Picts, details of whose language and culture were gradually emerging from the murky past, were becoming objects of increasing interest. They had left very little in terms of concrete evidence of their identity and they were ‘convenient blank sheets on which almost any tale could be written’ (Ferguson 1998, 185).

In 1768 a radical new hypothesis surfaced, that Pictish was a dialect of Gaelic. This was sketchily argued by John Macpherson in his most important work, the posthumous *Critical dissertations on the origin, antiquities, language, government, manners, and religion of the ancient Caledonians, their posterity the Picts, and the British and Irish Scots*. He was a native Gaelic-speaker, Church of Scotland minister and antiquary born in 1713 at Swordale on the Isle of Skye. While avoiding direct involvement he witnessed some of the most turbulent years of post-medieval Gaeldom and his views must be seen in this context (deGategno 2004). He correctly interpreted Camden’s view that British and Pictish were essentially rather similar, but like some previous commentators misinterpreted Buchanan’s view, claiming that ‘the Scotch and Pictish languages

were essentially the same' (1768, 52). As evidence that Pictish was Gaelic he noted the preponderance of Gaelic place-names in eastern Scotland i.e. Pictland. In itself this is an important observation in that it demonstrated that Gaelic preceded English in most of the Lowlands. He believed that ancient peoples such as the *Biscayans* (Basques) or *Armoricans* (Bretons) were tenacious of their languages and, therefore, that an early shift from Brittonic to Gaelic would have been improbable. Gaelic should, consequently, be indigenous. He admitted that *aber* was a Brittonic word but argued that it must have existed in Gaelic as well, as proven by the name Lochaber (ibid. 60). Bede's Brittonic-looking *penuahel* (sic.) was explained as a mistake, in that Bede accidentally provided the Brittonic rather than the Pictish form. He claimed that both the Scots and the Picts were the genuine descendants of the Calidonians, who all spoke Gaelic (ibid. 62). His views can largely be seen as reactionary, and understandably defensive, given the political situation of the time. Some further indication of his political outlook may be the fact that his son and the renowned James Macpherson, of Ossianic fame, were friends.

Into this budding dispute stepped John Pinkerton (1758-1826) a Lowland poet and historian. He was a fervent advocate of the Germanic supremacist theory and promoted this view forcefully in his publications, wishing to purge his country of all Celtic elements. In two of his major works the *Dissertation on the Origins and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* (1787, 340-70) and the *Enquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the reign of Malcolm III* (1789)¹⁷⁴ he further developed the theory that the 'Piks' were of the race of ancient Goths. Scots, he argued, was a pure descendant of the Picto-Gothic language, and, moreover, the Gaels, or Highlanders, were a degenerate impostor race (1794, 349). He devoted a whole twenty-eight page chapter to dismantling previous views that equated Pictish with Welsh. In order to advance his theories he embarked on comparing Celtic and Germanic philology, attempting to show that Scotland's Celtic place-names were in fact of Germanic origin. Contradicting Camden he proposed for instance that *aber* came from the German *über* 'over' and meant a town *beyond* a river, and likewise, that the Gaelic word *inbhir*, the equivalent of *aber*, was a borrowing from Danish. Bede's Pictish place-name *Peanvahel* was explained as broad Gothic, *Paena*, 'to extend', *Ihre* and *Vahel*

¹⁷⁴ Quotes are from the 1794 reprint.

‘the extent of the wall’ (ibid. 358). He argued that the Celts were the original inhabitants of the country, before they were expelled to Ireland by the *Cymraeg* (sic) or British and that Gothic-speaking Picts subsequently invaded from Scandinavia. This explained the preponderance of Celtic names in Pictland. Unsurprisingly he was unable to muster any evidence from early sources to support his bigotry. As noted by Ferguson this became ‘a favourite argument of the anti-Celticists, whose brilliant intellects enabled them to accomplish the wondrous feat of demonstrating the inferiority of the Celtic languages whilst mercifully remaining undefiled by any knowledge of them’ (1998, 254). As with the later Basque hypothesis a red herring entered the discussion and, despite being repeatedly thrown out, its odour proved more difficult to shift.

Malcolm Laing (1762-1818), historian and advocate of Orkney, is best known for his intense criticism of Macpherson’s Ossianic poems but he made a significant contribution to the study of Scottish history in completing Robert Henry’s six volume *History of Great Britain* (1771-93) after the latter’s death.¹⁷⁵ Here, he arrived at the view that Gaelic was the direct descendent of the language of the Calidonians, reasoning that as Calidonia had never been conquered by the Romans the language of the Highlands must have been indigenous (Henry 1789, 465). At the close of the eighteenth century we have the Picts portrayed by various parties as Welsh/Brittonic, Germanic and also Gaelic. As we shall see the latter view was to resurface numerous times, most often from the pens of Gaels who were trying to counteract Lowland claims that they were post-Germanic immigrants to Scotland.

Pinkerton’s biased views were soon flatly refuted by the exceptional English antiquarian and scholar Joseph Ritson (1752-1803). In an unusual, but not untypical, authorial decision he prefaced his *Scotish Songs* of 1794¹⁷⁶ with a *Historical Essay* which was little more than an attack on Pinkerton’s opinions, which he ascribed to madness (Barczewski 2004). Pinkerton repaid this and previous favours in kind in his review of *Scotish Songs* for the *Critical Review* (1795). Ritson mustered much evidence to substantiate his argument such as ‘manifestly Celtic’ names amongst the Picts such as *Ungust*, *Elpin*, *Canul*,

¹⁷⁵ It is Laing who completed Chapters 5 & 7 (Henderson 2004).

¹⁷⁶ References here are to the 1869 edition. I have been unable to obtain a copy of the original.

Kenneth and *Uven*. Calidonians, he argued, were of the same race as the Britons ‘children, in a word, of that immense family of Celts’ which poured out of Gaul. ‘Their language’, he continued, ‘varied by dialect, and corrupted by the influx of foreign words, is still spoken in Wales, in Ireland, in the Highlands or mountainous parts of Scotland, in the Hebrides or Western Isles, in the Isle of Man, in Armorica or Basse-Bretagne’ (ibid. 11-12).

Ritson was dedicated to the point of obsession, meticulous and responsible for a remarkably broad and detailed output, before drunkenness and insanity overtook him (Barczewski 2004). As an Englishman, he was less personally implicated in the argument regarding the language and ethnicity of the Picts. In *The Annals of the Caledonians, Picts and Scots*, published posthumously in 1828, he demolished the fancies of previous commentators such as Pinkerton. This work was an imposing collation of primary sources, both in the original languages and with translations where necessary, for example Ptolemy’s *Geography* (still a particularly corrupt version), Bede, Adomnán’s *Life of Columba*, the Annals of both Ulster and Tigernach, English annals and the *Poppleton Manuscript* king-lists. He concluded that place-names containing *aber* and *pit*, which he saw as attested only in Pictland, indicated closeness to Welsh (1828, 124). Bede’s *Peanfahel* was seen as indicating ‘some analogy between the British language and that of the Picts, each being a branch from the Celtic stem...’ (ibid. 123). However, as he considered the Picts to be incomers post-dating the attested presence of the Calidonians, he conceded that the above items could be linguistic leftovers of this earlier Celtic language. He also recorded about 60 Pictish personal names many of which he identified as Celtic while most remained unexplained (ibid. 124). However, his work and achievements were overlooked by later scholars, being largely eclipsed by Skene.

Ritson was not the only scholar to savage Pinkerton. He was equalled in his criticism by Alexander Murray (1775-1813), professor of oriental languages at Edinburgh University. In a lecture delivered to the *Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* in 1806 this formidable linguist,¹⁷⁷ while attacking Pinkerton’s flawed methodology (1822, 148), arrived at the same conclusion, that the Picts were a

¹⁷⁷ His great and pioneering work, the *History of the European languages, or, Researches into the affinities of the Teutonic, Greek, Celtic, Slavonic, and Indian nations*, was edited by Dr Scott and published, with a life by Sir H. W. Moncreiff, in two volumes in 1823 (Bayne 2004).

Germanic people, from Denmark. The Pictish language, he claimed, was fundamentally similar to the languages of Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. His argument was that the Picts were a Scandinavian nation ‘which invaded the north of Britain before the time of the Romans and continued as a separate and principal power in the island till the middle of the ninth century’ (ibid. 139). This Germanic Pictish language was replaced by Scots which ‘originated from the Saxon language of the north of England’ (ibid. 147). It is worth bearing in mind that this was a period when it was held in some circles that the Belgae, Caesar’s contemporaries, of south-eastern Britain spoke a Germanic language. The resulting article, published posthumously in 1822, was cogently argued and very aware of the damaging impact of bias on the field. However, the only hard linguistic evidence he mustered was that Pictish personal names such as *Brudi*, *Hungust*, *Elfin*, *Vergust*, *Drust*, *Kiniod*, *Uven*, *Eogan* and *Domnald* were Scandinavian. *Brudi* was seen as the Danish form of *Frodi* ‘the wise’, *Kiniod* as *Canute* and *Domnald* a corrupt form of Danish *Domanwald* ‘powerful in judgement’ (1822, 140). The emergence of historical linguistics as a discipline soon demonstrated that this great scholar was, using his own words, as guilty as Pinkerton of ‘incorrect philologising’ and insufficient knowledge of Celtic languages to ‘warrant his particular conclusions’ (ibid.). Murray’s historical arguments were thoroughly demolished by Jamieson (1822) who read a paper to the *Society* in 1817. Both proposal and critique were published in the same volume. Jamieson, however, did not contradict the view that the Picts spoke a Germanic language, disagreeing with the arguments, not the conclusion.

Between 1807 and 1824 George Chalmers (c. 1742-1825), antiquary and political writer, published what he considered his major work, *Caledonia*, a comprehensive study of Scottish history and antiquities. He originally intended six volumes but only three were published before his death. Despite labouring on this project and conducting exhaustive research it was, for many years, regarded as dated and erroneous. William Ferguson (1998, 277), however, considered it a major breakthrough which seriously challenged the influential but wholly inaccurate views of John Pinkerton and Malcolm Laing, who held that the Picts were Germanic and Gaelic respectively. Chalmers, in the first volume, based his opinion that Pictish was ‘Cambro-British’ on onomastics (e.g. *aber*, *pit*, *lan* and *strath*) and outmoded views on race. Most of his etymologies of place and

personal names were fanciful, but a portion holds true and still constitutes the core argument for allying Pictish to Brittonic. He concluded that ‘the Picts were certainly Caledonians, that the Caledonians were Britons, and that the Britons were Gauls’.¹⁷⁸ However, he considered the Northern Britons to be Picts and therefore specimens of early ‘Welsh’ poetry associated with them were considered to be Pictish - an idea first mooted by Edward Lhuyd (see above). Presumably this would have enhanced the early literary pedigree of ‘Scotland’, the full text of *Y Gododdin* only being published a few years earlier in 1801 by Owen Jones in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*. As the Welsh were already voicing their perceived ownership of part of the ‘Scottish’ past this could be seen as a counterclaim. One may compare this with Jackson’s labelling of the *Gododdin* as the ‘The Oldest Scottish Poem’.¹⁷⁹

Despite good, and repeated, arguments for the Brittonic character of Pictish eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antiquarians continued to squabble over its linguistic affiliations. It was often the case that non-specialist writers gave similar weight to prejudiced or ill-conceived opinions as to informed investigations. This issue was beautifully parodied in Walter Scott’s novel *The Antiquary* (1816, 73):

...Why, man, there was once a people called the Piks-”
 “More properly *Picts*,” interrupted the baronet.
 “I say the *Pikar, Pihar, Piochtar, Piaghter, or Peughtar*,
 “vociferated Oldbuck;¹⁸⁰ “they spoke a Gothic dialect -”
 “Genuine Celtic,” again asseverated the knight,¹⁸¹
 “Gothic, Gothic; I’ll go to death upon it,” counter-asseverated the squire.
 “Why, gentlemen, “said Lovel, “I conceive that is a dispute which may be easily settled by philologists, if there are any remains of the language.”
 “There is but one word,” said the baronet, “but, in spite of Mr Oldbuck’s pertinacity, it is decisive of the question.”
 “Yes, in my favour,” said Oldbuck; “Mr. Lovel, you shall be judge — I have the learned Pinkerton on my side.”
 “I, on mine, the indefatigable and erudite Chalmers.”
 “Gordon¹⁸² comes into my opinion.”

¹⁷⁸ Published in 1807 but this quotation is from the 1887 edition (199, fn (a)).

¹⁷⁹ The rubric he gave to his 1969 translation.

¹⁸⁰ The ‘antiquary’ of Scott’s novel. Portrayed as a pro-Gothic and anti-Celtic Whig.

¹⁸¹ Sir Arthur Wardour, portrayed as a champion of the Celts, a Tory and former Jacobite.

“Sir Robert Sibbald holds mine.”
 “Innes¹⁸³ is with me!” vociferated Oldbuck.
 “Ritson has no doubt!” shouted the Baronet.

It is worth reading the rest of this rare window onto the Pictish debate, which includes a discussion of Bede’s *Peanfahel*. It demonstrates not only how heated discussions could become but also that it was often attachment to an individual historian or viewpoint, rather than engagement with the evidence, that drove beliefs. Scott expressed his own personal view in his *History of Scotland Vol. I*:

There can be little doubt that, though descendants of the ancient British Caledonians, and therefore Celts by origin, the Picts were mingled with settlers from the north, of Gothic name, descent and language. (1830, 7)

The Scots dialects of the north and east were indeed evidence of germanicisation, but we now know that this was due to processes which occurred concurrent with or after the demise of Pictish.¹⁸⁴ Scott, and others, simply placed this some centuries too early.

From the early nineteenth century a profusion of overviews of Scottish history were published, by authors who were driven by the energy of the Scottish Enlightenment and a wish to exalt the antiquity and pedigree of the ‘Scottish Nation’. Formulating some view on the language or ethnicity of the Picts was required, but few engaged directly with the crucial onomastic evidence. Macintosh in his *History of Scotland* noted that ‘it is generally admitted, as the most simple and rational opinion that the Picts were the genuine descendants of the aboriginal Celts or Caledonians’ (1822, 22), a fairly atypical approach. The Brittonicness of Pictish was reiterated in 1833 by James Logan (1797-1872), a writer on Scottish-Gaelic culture from Aberdeen (1833, 59). Interestingly, this pro-Gaelic Lowlander was quite comfortable with seeing his native Scots as a post-Pictish arrival. However, a major shift was in the offing.

¹⁸² Alexander Gordon (c.1692–1754?). His cultural aim was to ensure that ‘Antiquity and Learning may flourish in the Island, to the total Extirpation of *Gothicism*, Ignorance and a bad Taste’ (*Itinerarium septentrionale*, 1726, preface; Brown 2004). I have yet to locate a clear statement of his viewpoint in this work.

¹⁸³ Thomas Innes (1662–1744), see above. Not to be confused with Cosmo Innes (1798–1874).

¹⁸⁴ See Taylor (2001, 479-80) for a brief discussion of the chronological history of languages in Scotland.

1.6 The Shadow of Skene

Dominating much of nineteenth-century Scottish historical writing was the towering figure of the historian William Forbes Skene (1809-1892). He energetically advanced and developed the vague proposal that Pictish was early Gaelic. In his landmark first work, *Highlanders of Scotland* (1837), he marshalled some now discredited proofs for this view.¹⁸⁵ The first was that the Welsh Triads mention *Gwyddyl Ffichti*,¹⁸⁶ confidently interpreted as ‘Gaelic Picts’, which supposedly demonstrated that both were the same people. He also asserted that the *Life of Columba* contained a diagnostically Gaelic name in Skye, *Dobur*, without considering the possibility that this was simply the form current in the Gaelic-speaking milieu of Iona. He brushed aside the objection that the saint required an interpreter on the island by arguing that this referred to the interpretation of the word of God, *Verbum Dei*, i.e. the Bible. A reading of the whole sentence does not support this view. Welsh-looking *Aber*, *For*, *Pit*, *Lan* and *Strath*,¹⁸⁷ previously used to argue for the presence of a Brittonic language in eastern Scotland were reclassified as Gaelic. He was partially correct as only *Aber* and *Pit* would now be generally considered of Pictish origin.¹⁸⁸ As noted by Macbain, in his article ‘Mr Skene VERSUS Dr Skene’ (1897) the view that Pictish was Gaelic became accepted as a matter of course. According to Macbain, Skene thought that the southern Picts spoke something ‘between Cumric and Gaelic’.¹⁸⁹ The view that the northern and southern Picts spoke different languages was gaining ground as was the concept of a hybrid language.

Skene’s aim was to elevate the position of Gaelic, a language with which he had a good familiarity and significant empathy,¹⁹⁰ and one whose speakers were

¹⁸⁵ See Chapter IV, in particular pp. 67-78.

¹⁸⁶ For a discussion of this term see Bromwich (1961, 36, fn b., 87).

¹⁸⁷ Corresponding to *W aber* ‘estuary’, *peth* ‘thing, part of’, *llan* ‘enclosure, church’ and *ystad* ‘flat valley’. I am unsure what *For* refers to here as Skene (1837, 1848) provides no details. It is not one of the words noted by Chalmers as Brittonic. Perhaps it refers to lenited forms of G *pòr* ‘cropland, grain’.

¹⁸⁸ See Taylor (2011) for discussions of these items.

¹⁸⁹ I have yet to locate this phrase in *Highlanders of Scotland*, or elsewhere.

¹⁹⁰ He was educated at the high school of Edinburgh, and there began on his own account to study Gaelic, of which he had some opportunity of learning the rudiments through his maternal relationship with MacDonell of Glengarry, but still more through his being boarded for a time at Laggan, Inverness-shire, with the parish minister (Mackay 2004). He was also involved in the administration of Highland famine relief (Sellar 2001).

undergoing horrifying persecution during his lifetime. To underline his view he titled Chapter 4 (44 - 57) 'The Northern Picts called themselves Gaels, spoke the Gaelic language, and were the real ancestors of the modern Highlanders.' This viewpoint was immediately slated in the *Dublin University Magazine* (June, 1837)¹⁹¹ with particular attention being paid to the failings of Skene's linguistic arguments. In the October edition of this monthly Skene published a lengthy and detailed reply (1837, 430-47) which was printed alongside a running commentary by the Irish poet and antiquarian Samuel Ferguson. Skene maintained his view that the Picts spoke a language 'of which the Scottish Gaelic... is a descendent' (ibid. 440) and defended his proofs: *Gwyddyl Ffichti* and *Dobur*. Ferguson's commentary noted the valid objection that the Triads were pseudo-historical. He also commented that *Dobur* occurred in Brittonic, citing the place-name 'Dover' (ibid. 443). Skene reasserted that *aber* was Gaelic, which was demonstrated to be false by Ferguson (ibid. 445) who concluded his demolition of the young Skene's arguments with a list of eight points (ibid. 446) which demonstrated the distinctiveness of Pictish from Gaelic:

1. Columba's use of an interpreter.
2. Bede's statement that Pictish was a distinct language.
3. The inclusion of a Pictish word in *Cormac's Glossary*.
4. The distinct 'Brittonic' forms for Peneltun (i.e. *Kinneil*, WLO) in the *Historia Brittonum*.
5. Servanus' action (in Jocelyn's *Life of St Kentigern*¹⁹²) at Culross among the Picts where he addresses the young Kentigern in Irish, distinguishing it from the local spoken form (which is assumed to be Pictish).
6. Henry of Huntingdon's statement on the demise of the language.
7. The supposedly distinct place-names shared by eastern Scotland and Pictish (*Cruithni*) areas of Ireland (although supported by no examples).
8. The distinctly 'Welsh' toponymy of Pictland (again no examples were given).

¹⁹¹ Apparently anonymously.

¹⁹² For this incident see Forbes (1874, 41).

The above points are, on the whole, fairly robust indicators of the linguistic distinctiveness of Pictish and Gaelic, but this brief and well-argued contribution apparently went unnoticed.

Skene modified his views some decades later, as the intervening period saw dramatic advances in the fields of comparative and Celtic linguistics. He was operating very much in the tradition of pro-Gaelic commentators of the previous century, who argued that the Gaels were the descendants of the Calidonians who preserved the ancient language of Scotland. Such motives, of course, reflect not the objective results of enquiry into the evidence but a fraught endeavour to counteract the Saxonist claim that the Gaels were incomers. The problem with Skene's arguments, especially with his early work, is that his command of Celtic languages was limited and his conclusions sweeping.

The Irish bishop William Reeves (1815-1892), in his scholarly edition of the *Life of Saint Columba* (1857, 62, fn e) noted that the 'Pictish language was undoubtedly a Celtic dialect, but more nearly allied to the British or Welsh than the Gaelic. Of this the eastern topography of Scotland is satisfactory evidence'. This eastern distribution however left large tracts of the north and west unassigned linguistically, and it is in these areas that many commentators placed other languages. He also noted 'four recorded Pictish words': *cartoit* (*Cormac's Glossary*), *Pean fahel*¹⁹³ (Bede) and *Scollofthes*. This may be the first time that the short-lived red-herring *Scollofthes* entered the debate. It was Reginald of Durham (†c. 1190) who noted it as a Pictish word but he was referring to the unrelated 'Gallividian Picts' (of Galloway).¹⁹⁴ This large and learned work brought the writings of Adomnán to a wider public and clarified the text which had long been confused with a 12th century *Life*. This is a text composed when Pictish was very much alive and is therefore a very rare, but deeply problematic, contemporary witness (see Chapter 3).

Admitting his ignorance of linguistic matters Cosmo Innes (1798-1874), antiquary and advocate, claimed in *Scotland in the Middle Ages* (1860, 85) that 'beyond

¹⁹³ I.e. *Pean* was seen as meaning 'head' and *fahel* was interpreted as Pictish for 'wall'.

¹⁹⁴ For a discussion of the development of the notion that there were 'Picts' in Galloway see Woolf (2010) in particular pp.275-6. See also Oram (1993). It results from an imperfect understanding of Picts in the Norman period when they had, as a distinct ethnic identity, disappeared.

the Grampians, the native peoples preserve their native language' (ibid. 42). This view is a reflection of Skene's opinion. William Robertson (1815-1874) in *Scotland under her Early Kings* (1862) did not engage with general linguistic issues apart from discussing a number of etymologies. He did consider both Gaelic and Welsh as possible coiners of the name Caithness (Vol. I, 33) demonstrating that he accepted the possible Brittonic grouping of Pictish. He also noted that *Caith(ness)* could be derived from 'Lappish', an important foretaste of views that would hold that Pictish was not Indo-European.

Up to this point arguments had, to a good degree, reached a dead-end and had started to turn in circles. Antiquarians simply disagreed on the interpretation of identical or similar items. Not only was the corpus of evidence extremely limited but it was possible to interpret it in numerous ways in the absence of any sound or established methodological approach. This situation was transformed in the middle of the nineteenth century with the development of historical linguistics as a discipline. Jacob Grimm, and others, pioneered the scientific investigation of language, developing the *Comparative Method*. Of great importance to this field was the chapter on the major sound-shift now known as Grimm's Law, in *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* 'History of the German Language' (1848). Celtic historical linguistics was subsequently set on a firm basis by the German scholar Johan Kaspar Zeuss (1806-1856) with the monumental *Grammatica Celtica* (1853). This heralded in a fresh, objective and informed approach to the study of Celtic languages meaning that scholars started to analyse the Pictish material while seeking diagnostic features which would more soundly demonstrate its relationship with other Celtic languages.

At this point we can now return to the more mature Skene, whose most focussed comments on the Pictish language appeared in three articles in the Welsh periodical *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, published in 1865. According to Robertson (1869) this material was also delivered as a lecture to the *Royal Society of Edinburgh* in April, 1868.¹⁹⁵ It was one of the earliest attempts to draw together the different strands of evidence and interpret them using the emerging discipline of historical linguistics. For example he was the first to equate *Ochil*

¹⁹⁵ His dating is slightly ambiguous and despite searching I have not been able to locate the original text.

with *W uchel* ‘high’¹⁹⁶ He was also the first to suggest the equivalent usage of *ur-* in the Pictish king-lists to its apparent Welsh cognate *gu(o)r-* in the *Harleian Genealogies* of Northern Brittonic rulers (Bartrum 1966, 9). Both would appear to correspond to Brythonic /wor/ (> *war) ‘upon’, in the sense of ‘following’. Skene claimed that Pictish appeared to ‘occupy a place between Kymric and Gaelic; leaning to the one in some of its phonetic laws, and to the other in others’ (1865(b), 300) and he argued that there was no Kymric language north of the Forth (1865(c), 343). One quotation will suffice to illustrate his rather confused understanding of Celtic languages and linguistics:

We find in the topography of the north-east of Scotland traces of an older and of a more recent form of Gaelic: the one preferring labials and dentals, and the other gutturals; the one hardening the consonants into tenues, the other softening them by aspiration: the one having Abers and Invers, and the other having Invers alone: the one a low Gaelic dialect, the other a high Gaelic dialect: the one, I conceive, the language of the Picts, the other that of the Scots. (ibid.)

He arrived at these conclusions without providing etymologies for the place-names used as evidence, and his attempts to identify cognates between Welsh and Gaelic words (ibid. 29) did not withstand the test of time. He was evidently aware of the burgeoning discipline of historical linguistics but had not mastered the required tools.

Skene’s massive *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots* was published in 1867. While he did not discuss the Pictish language directly in this volume it contained, in a clear format, all the known early and medieval texts relating to Pictish history. This provided easy access to the material required to investigate the Pictish language. He also dedicated a chapter¹⁹⁷ to the language in *The Four Ancient Books of Wales* (1868). The content was much the same as his 1865 articles, with many paragraphs simply reworked or expanded. Here he argued that the Picts extended over part of the north of Ireland and spoke a form of Gaelic,¹⁹⁸ a notion

¹⁹⁶ But see below at 3.7.4. for a new proposal regarding the etymology of Ochil.

¹⁹⁷ Chapter VIII ‘The Celtic Dialects and the Probable Character of the Pictish Language’ (120-140). See also Chapter IX ‘The Celtic Topography of Scotland, and the Dialectic Differences Indicated by It’ (141-161).

¹⁹⁸ See Woolf (2012) for how the Gaelic *Cruithin* of northern Ireland were conflated with the *Cruithin* (Picts) of Scotland.

derived from the Goidelic usage of *Cruithneach* for groups located in northern Ireland and also for Picts. At some later point, between the Tay and the Forth speakers of a low Gaelic dialect came into contact with a 'low Cymric dialect'. These two forms resembled each other and subsequently merged forming what became known to Bede as the Pictish language (1868, 140). High Pictish Gaelic would therefore have been limited to Argyll and Northern Ireland.

By the publication of *Celtic Scotland* in 1876 he had adduced further 'proofs' of the Gaelic identity of the Picts. Underlining the importance of this issue to the author and to the intended public was the fact that thirty-one pages of the first volume of this work were dedicated to it. He expanded on the use of an interpreter by Columba and noted that it was required due to the dialectal differences of the speakers' rustic patois (1876, 200). Columba apparently required no interpreter elsewhere and Skene concluded that 'the difference between Pictish and Irish may not have been greater than that between Breton, Cornish and Welsh'. He then, recognising the progress made since Pinkerton in the field of linguistics, proceeded to investigate Pictish tribal and personal names. While quite unable to provide any etymologies he ascribed each one to either Gaelic or Welsh (or Cornish) based simply on the initial letters. He reasoned that the earliest part of the king-lists was purely Irish or Gaelic, as he was unfamiliar with issues such as scribal interference or retrospective insertion. The Cornish influence in Pictland was ascribed to the *Damnonii* of the Forth-Clyde area whom he saw as of the same race as the *Damnonii* of Cornwall (sic). Surprisingly he made no similar reference to the *Cornovii* of the north-east. This issue was to reappear with scholars such as Childe who saw this as an indication of invasion from the south-west of the island. Skene then ventured (*ibid.* 215) that river or island names could be recognised as Basque, the first time that this language entered the discussion. Pictish place-name elements that had been proposed as Brittonic were dismissed as being Gaelic (*ibid.* 225). His conclusions were ideologically motivated and O'Rahilly lambasted his prejudice against the 'barbarous Irish colonists' and his 'Scottish-Gaelic-owes-nothing-to-Ireland theory' which engendered in his fellow-country-men a kind of patriotic Pictomania (1946, 379. fn 4). However, as the towering figure of the century his views were often taken as authoritative.

It is a Gaelic Pictish view that carried the field, for example in Macarthur's *History of Scotland*¹⁹⁹ (1879, 3) and as this was an 'Historical Course for Schools' it is little surprise that such ideas were widely accepted many decades later. In Lang's *History of Scotland* (1890, 11) it was Skene's scenario that was repeated. *Bygone Scotland: Historical and Social* (Maxwell, 1894, 29), noted that Pictish 'was a dialect of Celtic, afterwards coalescing with, or being absorbed in the Gaelic of the Scots'. The last reference to the term Gothic was in Burton's *History of Scotland* (1897, 188 & 189 & 195), the author being the historiographer-royal for Scotland. While the Gothic viewpoint faded non-IE entered the discussion, due largely to the realisation that 'Celts' could not have been the first inhabitants of Scotland, coupled with the fact that some pieces of evidence (*ogham* inscriptions primarily) could not be easily interpreted as Celtic.

'On the Kymric Element in the Celtic Topography of Scotland' (McLauchlan, 1868), a short and carefully worded article, drew attention to various rather Welsh looking items in Scottish place-names. Most were spurious, but the author was the first to note the presence of *Calder* (< *caled* + *dwfr* 'hard' (?) + 'water') river-names in Pictland (1868, 320), and that both Lomond in Fife and Dunbartonshire could be explained by the Welsh word for 'beacon' (i.e. *llumon*) with which he compared *Plinlumon* i.e. *Pumlumon* (CRD; *ibid.* 321). This was an early example of the crucial role that scholarly approaches to place-names studies were to play in investigating the Pictish language. This article irritated James Robertson, who forcefully argued in the *Gaelic Topography of Scotland* (1869) that the only proof for 'Kymric' to the north of the kingdom of Strathclyde was the 'prefix aber' (Chapter III, 47-100). *Aber*, he noted, had numerous good Gaelic etymologies e.g. from *ath* and *bior* 'the water ford' or perhaps a derivative of *ab* also meaning 'water' (1869, 55). The second half of the nineteenth century, while evidencing an incipient interest in the crucial fields of historical linguistics and place-names, continued to witness significant disagreement regarding the language of the Picts. However, changes were afoot.

¹⁹⁹ Margaret Macarthur was the first woman to comment on Pictish.

1.7 Evidence and Philology - Slow and Faltering Progress

The decades after 1880 saw further advancements in Celtic linguistics and also the publishing of various important sources. For example, Holder's three-volume collection of Celtic vocabulary and place-names *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*²⁰⁰ (1896-13) gathered together all the known attestations of words and names in early Celtic languages. This comprehensive collation is still of great value and it provided the means to objectively investigate Proto-Celtic and the early toponymy of northern Britain. Of similar impact was Holger Pedersen's grammar of Celtic, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* (1909) updated and translated with Henry Lewis in 1937, and published in English as *A Concise Comparative Celtic Grammar*. In 1883 Müller published his meticulous edition of Ptolemy's second-century *Geographia*, which provided scholars with a few dozen early names from Calidonia along with their manuscript variants. In 1884 the *ogham* inscriptions of Scotland entered the debate with the first printed discussion, three articles by James Carnegie (1827-1905), published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities of Scotland*, Vols. 17 (1883-84), 18 (1883-84) & 19 (1885-86). Additionally the *Colchester Inscription* was discovered in an archaeological excavation in 1891 (Collingwood & Wright 1965, 63). This is a smallish bronze plaque containing the names *LOSSIO VEDA* 'nepos' of *VEPOGENI* (gen.) who defined himself as a *CALEDO*, a Calidonian. Most importantly, place-name studies made immense progress, providing researchers with copious toponymic evidence.

John Rhŷs (1840-1915), a native Welsh speaker and first Jesus professor of Celtic at Oxford, argued for the survival of a 'Non-Aryan' Pictish in all four editions of *Celtic Britain* (1882-1904). He saw *Picti* as a Roman term for various northerly groups 'Brythons and Goidels... as well as the non-Celtic natives to whom the term probably applied most strictly at all times' (ibid. 160). Brythonic, in his opinion was a late (Roman period?) infiltrator into southern Pictland which displaced the Goidels who had themselves displaced aboriginal Picts whom he equated with the *Vernicomes* (i.e. *Venicones*) of Ptolemy. To these non-Celts he ascribed the area of the 'twin Esks', i.e. Angus (ibid. 162).²⁰¹ In an elaborately

²⁰⁰ Now available on-line: <http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10930327.html>

²⁰¹ It is worth reading this chapter, in particular pp. 160-62 to see how elaborate scenarios of shifting ethnicities could be conjured up from limited evidence.

argued, and now infamously discredited, article ‘The Inscriptions and Language of the Northern Picts’, he set out his argument for non-Indo-European Pictish. His sophisticated but over-ingenious reasoning postulated a possible ‘Ibero-Pictish’ race inhabiting the area from Scotland to Spain, the northern Picts being ‘the last and least Aryanised representatives of the aborigines’ (1892, 305). This Basque-related language, he argued, furnished the Gaels with their definite article, and the *Mabinogi* with a sentence of Pictish, *gwngwch uiwch uordwyt tylllyon* (ibid. 315).²⁰² This sentence provided the scholar G.F. Scott-Elliot²⁰³ with his primary evidence for his understanding of the Pictish language in his fantastic and fabulously elaborate depiction of Pictish daily life - an imaginative approach to history very much in tune with Lethbridge. Not only is Branwen, of the second branch of the *Mabinogi* considered to be a Pictish princess but the language was noted as supposedly ‘allied to Basque’ (1909, 96). One wonders how such ebullient and readable works impacted on public perceptions, especially considering the credentials of the writer.

Rhys reconstructed a Pictish genitive suffix, the verb ‘to be’ and various other grammatical features. The evidence rested on an inventive transcription, translation and interpretation of about twenty-two mainly *ogham* inscriptions from Pictland and some lexical items. His non-IE stance was facilitated by the lack of Celtic place-names in the north and a growing conviction that the Picts were exotic. In 1899, in response to an attack by Alexander Macbain, Rhys bluntly admitted the failure of his Basque hypothesis, while still maintaining that Pictish was non-Aryan though subjected to significant Brythonic influence before succumbing to Gaelic (1898-99).

In a less extreme form Rhys maintained the view that the Picts preserved ‘non Aryan’ cultural practices and borrowed names from Celts throughout the six impressions²⁰⁴ of *The Welsh People* (Rhys & Brynmor-Jones, 1923). The argument was primarily based on an in-depth discussion of matriliney, on accepting that the *Mabinogi* represented historical personages and customs and that the personal name *Veda* of the Colchester inscription was not Celtic. Demonstrably Celtic

²⁰² For an informed interpretation see Williams (1930, 207-8) and for a summary of later views see Thomson (1961, 36-37, I. 371-2).

²⁰³ M.A. (Cantab.), B.Sc. (Edin), F.R.G.S., F.L.S. etc.

²⁰⁴ Editions in 1900 (x2), 1902, 1906, 1909 and final (sixth) impression in 1923.

items such as *Vepogeni*, of the same inscription, were explained away as borrowings (ibid. 63). Despite calling the lengthy second chapter '*The Pictish Question*' the issue of language was scarcely touched upon. A brief section in Chapter 1 recognised the 'scantiness of the remains of the Pictish language' (ibid. 15) concluding that the inability of specialists in Celtic to interpret the *ogham* inscriptions justified the view that 'the theory of non-Aryan origin of the Pictish language holds the field at present' (ibid. 16). The contribution of this work to the mystification of the Picts, written by a scholar of his standing, and reprinted six times between 1900 and 1923, cannot be ignored. It did, however provide the general public with transliterations of *ogham* and other inscriptions.²⁰⁵

In 1890 Whitley Stokes (1830-1909), an Irish Celtic scholar and philologist, judged that 'the Picts were Celts, but more nearly allied to the Cymry than to the Gael' (1890, 392). This conclusion was reached in 'Pictish Names and Other Words', a section of a lengthy article entitled 'On the Linguistic Value of the Irish Annals' (*Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1890). It was based on a thorough philological investigation of 'Pictish' personal names and lexical items in Irish Annals and other sources. He also included many items which had no real claim to be called Pictish, such as individuals belonging to the Irish *Cruithne*. Many items were fanciful or highly corrupt, names such as *Canutulachama* and *Bliesblituth* from an unhistorical section of the King-lists. As will be seen, these two (probably unhistorical) names influenced the views of many scholars. Stokes integrated the early toponymic evidence into this discussion and researched both Welsh and Breton names for parallels. For instance, he made use of the *Liber Landavensis* (Rees, 1840)²⁰⁶ and studies of Breton by Loth. He was also the first to make competent use of the emerging discipline of Proto-Indo-European studies, benefitting from access to recently published Irish grammars and dictionaries and in particular the *Grammatica Celtica* of Zeuss. Additionally, he had a good familiarity with Sanskrit, comparative philology and Continental

²⁰⁵ '[T]hey occupy 17 stones, yielding in all about 22 inscriptions or fragments of inscriptions, of which 19 are in Ogam and only 3 in other letters' (1923 304).

²⁰⁶ It was not until 1893 (Rhys & Evans) that a superior edition was available.

Celtic²⁰⁷ which marked him off from all contemporary scholars engaging with this field. He provided general conclusions to this seminal work which was basically an alphabetic list of items, but he did not attempt to outline particular features of the language. His conclusion was that much regarding Pictish was still obscure but that the vocabulary was Indo-European and especially Celtic and that its phonetics ‘so far as we can ascertain them resemble those of Welsh rather than of Irish’ (ibid. 416-17). Two years later Stokes reprinted this article in a German periodical but with ‘additions and corrections’ where he stated his agreement with the views of Macbain²⁰⁸ and Professor Windisch that the Picts were closely related to the ‘Cymry’. Ernst Windisch (1844-1918) was a German professor specialising in Sanskrit and one of the pioneers of the study of Old Gaelic (Knott 1919, 264-67). His view on the close relationship of Pictish to ‘Cymric’ was summed up under the heading *Keltische Sprache* in a German encyclopaedia.²⁰⁹ As one can see Pictish was now being studied by various highly qualified linguists, which brings us to our next commentator.

In 1885 Alexander Macbain (1855-1907) a native Gaelic-speaker, historian, lexicographer, editor and leading member of the Gaelic intelligentsia, published his study *Celtic Mythology and Religion*. In this work he gave Rhys’s opinion his support (1885, 26) noting that Pictish names were not of Aryan or Celtic type. Seven years later he performed a complete volte-face. In his 1892 article, ‘Ptolemy’s Geography of Scotland’, he demolished Rhys’s non-Indo-European argument. This was the first carefully researched investigation of Ptolemy’s evidence for the place-names of Scotland, and their overwhelming Celticity was demonstrated. This evidence, corroborated by that of the early historic writers and modern place-names, he argued, pointed to a language ‘allied to the Cymric branch of the Celtic race’. He adduced two main arguments that Pictish was P-Celtic, as opposed to Goidelic. Firstly the *p* of ‘Epidii’, a tribe located in Kintyre, and secondly he stressed that early names such as *Devana*, *Tava*, *Alaûna* etc. had parallels in southern Britain and Gaul and were not attested in Ireland. As Jackson later noted (1955, 132) Macbain’s claim ‘that despite the cranky

²⁰⁷ Probably received from Rudolf Thomas Siegfried, a philologist from Tübingen, who became assistant librarian at Trinity College in 1855 and, in 1858, its first professor of Sanskrit (Ó Muraíle 2004). See also Fomin (2011) & Blom (2011).

²⁰⁸ I have yet to identify which publication he is referring to here.

²⁰⁹ *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste in alphabetischer Folge* (1884, Vol. H-N, 136-37).

theories and objections of certain people, the Pictish question is settled' was overly optimistic. Macbain deliberately evaded discussing the *ogham* inscriptions, meaning that there was little overlap between the evidence he employed and that of Rhys, neither did he engage with the evidence of the king-lists. This article marked the beginnings of more in-depth approaches to the etymology of the early evidence. He was also responsible for the Chambers Encyclopaedia²¹⁰ entry on Picts where, for the first time, there was a brief synopsis of important phonetic features:

Minor points in the phonetics of the Pictish names are the preservation of *st* and *nt* as in Cymric; Elphin for Alpin or Albin, Bridei for Brude, where *u*, as in Welsh changes to *i*; the Cymric forms of the prefix *ur* or *wr* for Gaelic *for* or *fer* ... The *sp* of Spey and Spean is evidence of non-Gaelic origin.' (1902, 169)

In *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (1911, iii), his crowning achievement, his stemma presented Pictish, along with Gallo-Brittonic and Gaulish, as an independent branch of P-Celtic. However, his statement that Pictish may possibly have been spoken in northern England (ibid.)²¹¹ is puzzling. Macbain was the true pioneer of Celtic historical linguistics in Scotland. His lucid comments on Pictish were derived not only from a thorough understanding of Indo-European linguistics but also good familiarity with Welsh, perhaps gained during his brief stint working for the Ordnance Survey in that country (Meek 2001, 25). Another debt owed to him is that W. J. Watson was one of his numerous protégés (Black 2004).

1892 saw the publication of the first broad investigation into Scottish toponymy, the *Place-Names of Scotland* by James B. Johnston (1861-1953), a church minister who later joined the staff of the Oxford *New English Dictionary* and then the *Scottish National Dictionary*. After admitting, in the introduction, the limitations of his own knowledge and understanding, he noted that the 'difference between Erse and Pictish must have been small' (1892. xxiii). In this he was following Skene who saw the northern Picts as Gaelic-speaking while

²¹⁰ I have been unable to access the 1860-68, 1874, 1888-1892, 1895 or 1901 editions so this information may have been available some years prior to the 1902 edition of Vol. VII to which I have consulted.

²¹¹ Thomas Clancy (pers. comm.) wonders whether this could be due to the Pictish personal names in the *Durham Liber Vitae*.

Brittonic was the language of the south. His approach was dated, revolving around antiquated ideas of race and phrenology (ibid. xx) and his etymologies were very often wide of the mark. The lengthy introduction²¹² to the second edition of 1903 contained minor additions. For example, he refuted Stoke's (1890) claims that Pictish was Brythonic (ibid. xxx). He again claimed that Pictish was little different to 'Erse' but then stated that medieval Pictish must have 'stood nearer Welsh, Breton, and Cornish than to Erse or Manx' (ibid. xxvii). By the 1934 edition, due to direct contact with Macbain (1934, viii), and having read the *History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (Watson 1926) he had modified his opinion. However, his view was that Picts had emerged speaking Gaelic from Ireland, landed in Galloway where they were 'swamped' by British speech, and subsequently carried this language to much of Scotland (1934, 7). This edition was reprinted in 1970 and while it does have numerous early forms the sources are not noted rendering this of extremely limited value.

The perspective of Gaelic-speakers can be seen in a lecture given in Stirling in 1903, subsequently published as a pamphlet: *Celtic Dialects: Gaelic Brythonic, Pictish and Some Stirlingshire Place-names*. The author, T.D. MacDonald, was a native Gaelic-speaker and secretary of *An Comunn Gàidhealach* (1907-11; Thomson 1983, 169). He concluded that 'Pictish was Gaelic, strongly influenced by the Brythonic... a distinct dialect, but not a language', and would have been intelligible to Columba (ibid. 46). Again, one encounters an understandable Gaelic anxiety at being portrayed as an immigrant people.

In *Keltic Researches* (1904), Edward Nicholson (1849-1912) a classical scholar and head of the Bodleian Librarian at Oxford (Clapinson 2004) declared Pictish to be a 'language virtually identical with Irish, differing from that far less than the dialects of some English counties differ from each other' (1904, III). The author admitted his linguistic shortcomings referring to his 'slightness of acquaintance' with 'Keltic' languages. For example, he declared the Celtic tribes of England to have spoken Irish. O'Rahilly wryly commented 'Nicholson's work is an amazing example of what industry divorced from judgement and unhampered by accurate linguistic knowledge can lead to' (1946, 380). It is a Gaelic-Pictish view that we

²¹² Chapter I, 'Celtic Names', xxi-lvii.

encounter in *A Student's History of Scotland* (1904, 16) by David Watson of Oriel College, Oxford.

At the turn of the nineteenth century most saw Pictish as Brittonic, but the debate continued. The recently published *ogham* inscriptions had contributed to the small but growing corpus of evidence, and the understanding of Celtic linguistics was evolving rapidly. Scholars still had little in terms of good and geographically fixed evidence (i.e. place-names) to engage with, but this was soon to change.

1.8 The Bright Light of Toponymy

In 1904 W.J. Watson (1865-1948), native Gaelic-speaker and later professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh (Thomson 2004), published the benchmark *Place-names of Ross and Cromarty*, one of the first scholarly studies of toponymy. His background in Classics had provided him with a firm understanding of philology, and the informed and insightful discussions in this work provided ample evidence of the affiliation of Pictish to Brittonic. In a short item on Highland place-names, published in the *Celtic Review* in the following year, he anticipated the key role place-names would play in investigating Pictish:

The Pictish element in our Highland place-names is much stronger and more widespread than is generally supposed. It is really only beginning to be investigated, and it is to be hoped that ere long we shall be able to speak more definitely about its representation in Gaelic. There are abundant remains of it awaiting discussion.' (1904-05, 28)

In these two works Watson drew attention to unquestionably Welsh-looking elements in Scottish toponymy, such as *pawr* 'cropland', *pefr* 'shining', *peth* 'portion', and from this point on the widespread presence of a Brittonic language in Pictland at some time immediately anterior to the speaking of Gaelic, could not be reasonably denied. He noted (ibid. xlvii) that *pett* had been borrowed into Gaelic, a crucial point not fully appreciated by many later commentators. In 1904 in a damning but gracious review of the new and enlarged edition of Johnston's *Place Names of Scotland* he noted that even the language of *North Pictland* was *Cumric* (1904(b), 33-34). Importantly, this toponymic study also argued for the survival of a less civilised pre-Celtic

language in the north. Part of the reasoning was the supposedly non-IE practice of matriliney²¹³ referred to by Bede (HE I1). He suggested that in ‘very remote places such as Lewis this non-Celtic element would naturally be strongest, and, indeed, is probably still recognisable’ (ibid. xiii-xiv). This was an important continuation of the view that some parts of Pictland were not Pictish-speaking and was to be echoed in numerous later works. Watson was also fairly generous in his ascription of Pictish origin to various place-names for which he saw no evident Goidelic explanation. His expert opinion was reflected for example by Scott in *The Pictish Nation* (1918, 15) and by MacDonald (1924) in ‘The Picts: Their Original Position in Scotland’,²¹⁴ items otherwise of limited academic value.

The steadily growing body of evidence for P-Celtic in Pictland did not put a stop to statements such as ‘we cannot tell where these Picts came from or even what language they spoke’ from *A Short History of Scotland* (Brown 1908, 25).²¹⁵ It was often the case that the works of linguists and toponymists did not impact significantly on the view of others.²¹⁶ Watson’s opinion was mirrored by the Breton linguist and historian Joseph Loth (1847-1934) who, in an article published in 1911 in the *Revue Celtique*, noted the following ‘...d’après les noms de lieux il paraît certain que le picte est un langage celtique plus apparenté au brittonique qu’au gaélique...’²¹⁷ (1911, 408). According to O’Rahilly (1946, 357, fn 4) he intended to discuss the language in an article he did not live to write. It also accords with Morris-Jones’ unambiguous statement that the ‘Picts were Britons, as shown by the fact that $p < q$ ’ abounds in Pictish names’ (1913, 5). Sir John Morris-Jones (1864-1929) was the first professor of Welsh at the newly-chartered University of Wales, Bangor (1893) and the author of *A Welsh Grammar* (1913). This seminal study of Welsh historical linguistics, a pre-cursor to *Language and History in Early Britain* (Jackson 1953), furnished

²¹³ For this ongoing and impactful debate see Miller (1982), Woolf (1998) and Evans (2011).

²¹⁴ Initially read as a paper read to the Gaelic society of Inverness (14th April, 1921).

²¹⁵ P. Hume Brown was the *Fraser Professor of Ancient (Scottish) History and Palaeography* University of Edinburgh and *Historiographer-Royal for Scotland*.

²¹⁶ For a discussion of this issue see Woolf (2009).

²¹⁷ ‘According to place-names it seems certain that Pictish is a Celtic language closer to Brittonic than to Gaelic’.

researchers into P-Celtic with a state-of-the art investigation into the relationship between Welsh and its Proto-Indo-European ancestor.

In 1908 the German Celticist Heinrich Zimmer (1851-1910) defined the Picts as the 'pre-Aryan (pre-Celtic) population of Britain and Ireland', in a chapter discussing 'Pictish Matriarchy'. He added that 'on British soil they had been subdued and Celticized in the last quarter of the first century of our era, with the exception of the independent tribes of Caledonia' (1908, 9). He saw the southern Picts as having been 'Welshified', and labelled many king-names as *Iro-Celtic* or *Brito-Celtic*, corresponding to the northern and southern Picts respectively. Some names, he claimed, were certainly non-Celtic but bore the imprint of the two languages noted above, although examples were lacking. Robert S. Rait, later Sir, and principal of the University of Glasgow (Abbott 2004) in his *History of Scotland* claimed that the *Caledonians* had in recent years been generally regarded as Goidels (1914, 11) and it was the same Gaelic view that was promoted by Charles Sanford Terry in his *History of Scotland* (1920, 10). Mackenzie's mammoth²¹⁸ *Races of Ireland and Scotland* argued that Pictish was a mixed language, primarily Frisian (in its later period), containing Cymric and Danish elements (1916, 250-84).

1922 saw the publication of Anderson's *Early Sources of Scottish History*, a collection of texts relating to early Scotland, translated from the original languages and annotated. Much information on the history of the Picts, manuscript forms of personal names in particular, was published in an accessible and affordable format. The unusual spellings of some Pictish personal names in a small number of manuscripts²¹⁹ was discussed and it was suggested that these documents may have been composed in or transmitted through 'a district where Pictish or Strathclyde Welsh was spoken' (1922, cxxvi). It was presumably the southern Picts that were seen as speaking a form of Welsh,²²⁰ an interesting terminological departure from designations such as Kymric / Cymric etc.

²¹⁸ Almost four hundred pages of research into a great many historical sources, including Irish myths.

²¹⁹ In particular the 'Poppleton Manuscript' (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms Latin 4126).

²²⁰ Referring to the personal name *Wirp* the author notes '[i]t seems also to show that the writer of the insertion spoke a Welsh, not a Gaelic language. The insertion was written at Abernethy at the time when version A was written - at the end of the tenth century (cxxi, fn 1).

Let us turn now to R.A.S. Macalister (1870-1950), the author of *Corpus inscriptionum insularum Celticarum* (Vol. i, 1943), a massive collation and discussion of early Celtic inscriptions. His first comments on Pictish had been in *Ireland in Pre-Celtic Times* (1921) where he argued that a pre-Celtic Pictish had been spoken in Ireland perhaps until the time of Columba's youth and had survived in Scotland much later. The notion that Pictish was spoken in Ireland is derived from the use of the term *Cruithin* for groups in the north of this island. This term originally referred to inhabitants of Britain only later becoming restricted to Picts. This group is never labelled 'Picti' in Latin language Irish sources. Apart from Columba's use of an interpreter in Pictland, the sole items of evidence adduced are sixteen *ogham* inscriptions. Writing in the Scotsman (Dec. 9, 1922) he stated that 'the most reasonable theory about the Picts was that they were survivals of the aboriginal pre-Celtic Bronze Age people. Certainly no attempt at explaining the Pictish Inscriptions by means of any Celtic language could be called successful'.²²¹ We see here the Scottish *ogham* interpreted as the sole witness of the language. Those who focus on inscriptions often concluded that Pictish is an unintelligible non-IE language, while those who investigate place-names alone see a very neo-Brittonic-looking idiom. This dichotomy remains as one of the core issues regarding studies of the language, and until further discoveries or ingenious thinking result in convincing interpretations of the *ogham* corpus it seems likely that some will continue adhere to the view that a non-IE language was maintained in some form in Pictland.

Macalister was severely criticised by Diack (1865-1939) in *The Inscriptions of Pictland*, written in 1922 but not published until 1944 (posthumously). Diack was considered an authority on Gaelic place-names, and in this article he argued forcefully that the entire early historical onomastic evidence for Pictland was thoroughly Celtic. His interpretations of the *ogham* inscriptions were, however, flawed. He presented little in terms of plausible etymologies, while still claiming to identify Celtic features such as composition vowels which he used to sort items into their supposed stem classes. He then asserted the correctness of Skene's view that Pictish was Gaelic, the unequivocal proof being the supposed Gaelic language of the *ogham* inscriptions (1944, 82) demonstrated by a great

²²¹ Quoted from Diack (1944).

many instances of *q* in this corpus. His wish to deny the Brittonicness of Pictish can also be seen in his 'Place-names of Pictland III' (1924, 119) where he refuted the P-Celtic origin of Gaelic *monadh* (cf. *W mynydd* 'mountain') and also *pùr* (cf. *W. pawr* 'pasture'). In rather ambiguous terms, he argued that some 'un-Irish' features in the toponymy of Pictland were simply an 'awkward fact' (1922, 172-73). In '*Aber and Inver in Scotland*' (1926), reviewing a book by Beveridge (1923), he postulated that the *aber* names were reflexes of the Gaelic words *abar* 'marsh' and *eabar* 'mud, mire, sediment'. He stated that the 'supposed presence of British-Welsh material' in toponymy was due to erroneous etymologies (1926, 98), a claim specifically refuted by O'Rahilly (1946, 536, fn 5). What is perhaps more surprising is that in 'Place-names of Pictland I' he was quite open to the possibility that Brittonic-speaking Picts had been supplanted by Gaels later than the eighth century (1920, 120). Might this change of opinion have been due to his contemporary at Aberdeen John Fraser (1882-1945), who was Rhys's successor as Jesus Professor of Celtic at the University of Oxford (1921-1945)? Diack's first contribution to the debate was a lecture 'History and Etymology' delivered at Oxford in 1923 and published in the same year. He noted that 'arguments in favour of the views that the language of the Picts was Goidelic, that it was Brythonic, that it was not a Celtic or even Indogermanic language, have made little impression on any but their authors' (1923, 10). After a fairly cursory look at the evidence he concluded that 'there is, then, abundant evidence that a Goidelic dialect was spoken in Pictland, while the evidence for a Brythonic dialect is less conclusive. That a language which was not Celtic or even Indogermanic was spoken in Pictland is certain' (ibid. 15). Brittonic-looking items were explained as due to the 'sphere of influence of the Brythonic kingdom of Strathclyde' which would hardly apply to northerly names such as the river *Peffer* (ROS) noted by Watson (1904, xlvii - xlix). Yet again it was the *ogham* inscriptions which were taken as proof of a non-IE language.

A turning point in our understanding of Pictish came with the publication of Watson's *History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (1926). This provided considerable conclusive evidence for a language close to Brythonic in Britain north of the Forth-Clyde divide and was the first broad study to substantiate tenable propositions with copious use of early forms. He reiterated his earlier viewpoint 'that the Celtic of Scotland at this period [Roman] was of the p-type,

like Old British and Gaulish' (1926, 70). Names of both British and Pictish origin were discussed in one chapter 'British Names' and no major differences between the two were identified, indeed Jackson concluded that Watson saw Pictish as 'simply a northern Brittonic offshoot of British' (1955, 132). Only twice did he employ the word 'Pictish', in inverted commas on page 212 when referring to the river-name *Don* and on page 347 where he noted *Pean-fahel* as Pictish. This is most important because, in stark contrast, he had employed the term 'Pictish' throughout the *Place-names of Ross and Cromarty* (1904), indicating a significant modification in his thinking. In 1927, when discussing P-Celtic loanwords in Gaelic (*monadh* 'moorland', *díleab* 'legacy', *pailt* 'plentiful', *bagaid* 'cluster, troop' and *piuthar*²²² 'sister'), he categorised them as a 'relic of British'. Watson's approach was also criticised by O'Rahilly (1946) where he charged him with unduly minimising the difference 'between the Picts and the Britons', but the footnote comment would seem to imply that O'Rahilly is basing this on 'race' rather than language. Watson, writing solely as a toponymist, was not compelled to consider the more problematic evidence of personal names and inscriptions. However, from this date on we have reached the point of no return for P-Celtic in much of Pictland as the evidence lay in significant and widespread numbers of locatable place-names. Watson was one of a group of Gaelic intelligentsia, the aforementioned Alexander Macbain being one of the elder members, and it is notable that both shared the view of Brittonic and Pictish as being particularly close. In his introduction to Macbain's *Place Names of the Highlands & Islands of Scotland* (1922, v) Watson wrote: 'his position is that the Picts spoke Early British or a dialect of it, and that the Celtic language of early Britain was practically homogenous from the English Channel to the very North.' In the same introduction Watson noted that 'no one nowadays would suggest, as Sir John Rhys did once, that the Picts spoke a language that was non-Aryan, and very few would hold that Pictish was other than Early British' (vi). Watson's optimism was, however, premature, and a departure from his earlier view that a pre-Celtic language was also spoken in the north at the same time.

John Fraser's second contribution 'The Question of the Picts' appeared in 1927 and was rightly to be condemned by Jackson (1955, 132). This was a fairly in-depth attempt at synthesising the available evidence. He reiterated his view

²²² The latter is a development from the native OGael *siur*, see MacBain (1911, 277, s.v.).

that it was uncertain whether Brittonic had ever been spoken in Pictland (1927, 201). If it had, he argued, ‘it must have arrived late and disappeared not very much later’ (ibid. 189) and ‘from the seventh century onwards, all the evidence available is in favour of the view that the only Celtic language spoken in Pictland was Gaelic’ (ibid. 190). Ironically he was correct that *pit* place-names should be dismissed as evidence for Brittonic, not because they are pre-Celtic, but because they are Gaelic coinings (albeit containing a Brittonic loanword). Brittonic items were again ascribed to influence from Strathclyde and he dismissed *pit* names as proof of a P-Celtic presence claiming that they were all pre-Celtic. Fraser, like Skene, explained Columba’s use of interpreter as due to dialectal differences and Jackson labelled his arguments as ‘not only very doubtful but also tendentious’ (1955, 132).

G. M. Thomson, in *A Short History of Scotland* (1930, 13), saw only Celtic in the early period, considered the Galloway Picts to be Gaels and in his map of Scotland placed ‘British Language Extinct’ in southern Pictland. Mackie in the same year, in another *Short History of Scotland* (1930, 33) simply followed Bede noting that Gaelic was unintelligible to both Picts and Britons. Similarly the eminent French scholar Henri Hubert in *The Rise of the Celts*²²³ (1934, 204-5) was non-committal and remained neutral on the language of the *ogham* inscriptions. Julius Pokorny (1887-1970), a specialist on Old Gaelic and one of the greatest Indo-Europeanists of the twentieth century noted the following scenario:

Shortly after the Kelticising of the Cruithin of northern Ireland, Gaels and Kelticised Picts had come into Scotland, which was then also Pictic, and into its western islands, while British Kelts from the south had introduced their culture and speech into the territories of the north British Picts. (1933, 26)

This can be explained as reflecting new thinking on the spread of Celtic languages, derived from the emerging discipline of archaeology. One of the pioneers was the influential prehistorian and labour theorist Vere Gordon Childe (1892-1957). He was the first incumbent of the *Abercromby chair of Prehistoric History* at the University of Edinburgh and, as we shall see, his erudite views

²²³ This was originally published in French in 1932 as *Les Celtes depuis l'époque de la Tène et la civilisation celtique*.

permeated much of the thinking of archaeologists, historians and consequently linguists for much of the twentieth century. In a nutshell, he and others promoted the view that distinct cultures could be identified in the archaeological record and that archaeological change indicated invasion. This became known as the *Culture-history Paradigm*. This is of course an oversimplification and Childe himself was quite aware of the tentative and problematic nature of such facile equations (1950, 1). Nevertheless, this thinking and the models developed by archaeologists had a colossal impact on the understanding of prehistory. This *Invasion Hypothesis* was reflected in his *Prehistory of Scotland* (1935, 262) where he painted a picture of various archaeologically identifiable groups settling in northern Britain, for example, the *Cornavii* and *Dumnonii* being offshoots of more southerly tribes. While he did engage with the opinions of reputable linguists, his views on matriliney figured heavily in his somewhat confusing thoughts on the Pictish language. It was Childe's model, mediated by his pupil Stuart Piggott, which came to provide the historical background to Kenneth Jackson's views on Pictish, arguably the most influential item published on the subject. It is worth quoting Childe's own words as they still, by proxy, underlie various recent views on Pictish:

Other waves of Keltic invasion soon followed. By 200 B.C. groups, probably Brythonic, crossing the North Sea from Northern Gaul, had landed near the mouth of the Tay and round the head of the Moray Firth and were spreading across to the Firth of Clyde and the western coasts of Inverness and Argyll. Contingents allied to the Brigantes of North Britain, perhaps already led by Brythonic chiefs from the Parisii, came to reinforce the older inhabitants of the Lowlands. And in the first century B.C. Brythons from the south-west spread all along the west coasts and round Cape Wrath, precisely as the Neolithic colonists had done in the second millennium B.C. Each petty chief seized upon a strip of suitable land for his retainers to cultivate, and built him a castle [i.e. a broch] to overawe the former inhabitants and serve as a base for raids on the rich lands of Ireland, England, and the Scottish Lowlands. In the far north the Picts became for a time subject to these Brythonic conquerors. (1935, 266-67)

This view corresponds closely to the model described in 1955 by Piggott. It is the last sentence of this paragraph, which saw a Pre-Celtic people in the very north, briefly under the domination of Britons which ultimately provided a part of the fuel for the most contentious of Jackson's claims - that of the survival of a non-Indo-European language in Pictland.

W. C. Mackenzie (1861-1952) in *The Highlands and Isles of Scotland* (1937) repeated his earlier view and again rejected the notion that Pictish was either Gaelic or British, suggesting that it was full of Teutonic words with Norse and Frisian elements (1937, 309). He added that dialects of the east coast could still evidence some features of 'what was at one time the mixed language of the Picts' (ibid. 310). 1938 saw the publication of 'The Language of the Picts' by Eoin [John] MacNeill (1867-1945) the highly significant Celtic scholar, activist and first professor of early and medieval Irish history at the University College Dublin. He argued that the small number of (non-historical) personal names in the king-lists were evidence that the Picts had, at some time spoken a language that was 'neither Gaelic nor Cumric' (ibid. 17). As with Jackson some twenty years later it was not fully appreciated that these are probably highly corrupt and later retrospective insertions made in all probability in a Gaelic-speaking milieu. He also believed in the survival of at least one non-Celtic language into the tenth century or so. Two P-Celtic place-names, Adomnán's *Stagnum Aporicum* (Lochaber) and *Apor Crossan* (AU 673; Applecross) were explained away as representing 'outlying stations of the Northern Britons, probably ports of trade' (ibid. 42). The *aber* names of Pictland were considered 'remarkably local and can be explained by Cymric settlements on the coast and Cymric penetration along the river-valleys' (ibid.). He held it probable that 'the Cymry occupied all the eastern seaboard as far north as the Moray Firth and also penetrated inland along the wider valleys' (ibid. 44) and suggested that 'during the time of non-Indo-European Pictish expansion after the battle of Nechtansmere (685), the Cymry of eastern Scotland north of the Firth of Forth, already separated for about a century from the Cymry of southern Scotland by the Anglian colony of Bernicia, were brought under the power of the Pictish kings' (ibid. 44). He argued for the early presence of a 'pre-Celtic folk, not necessarily an ethnic unit, in the highland and island regions from the Mull of Cantire to the Orkneys; Epidii... Celts of Cymric dialect (Britons) in the Lowlands, western as well as southern, from Solway Firth to Moray Firth; a substratum of the older population everywhere, rising to a super-stratum in moorland and forest districts' (ibid. 45). Elements of this view closely resemble Childe's thinking, and the evidence adduced for non-Celtic was primarily the maverick names in the king-lists.

R.A.S. Macalister re-entered the debate in 1940 with his article entitled ‘The Inscriptions and Language of the Picts’. He extracted grammatical rules and phonetic features from a creative interpretation of the *ogham* inscriptions, asserting that Pictish was a ‘primitive language of bronze-age origin’ and ‘altogether independent of Celtic’. This conclusion was reached on the basis of the *ogham* inscriptions alone with no consideration of other strands of evidence, the whole article little more than an expanded reworking of his 1922 publication.

In 1946 the distinguished linguist and Celtic scholar Thomas O’Rahilly (1883-1953) published his controversial study *Early Irish History and Mythology*. Concealed within is one of the fullest contributions to our field, a thirty-four page chapter titled ‘On the Language of the Picts’. This was the first study since Stokes, almost half a century earlier, to propose significant numbers of considered and well-researched etymologies for Pictish personal names. It was also the very first fairly comprehensive survey of the whole onomastic evidence from all periods.²²⁴ He was, however, criticised for his devotion to the idea of invasion models of language change, which he used to explain the distinctiveness of the Picts from the Britons (1946, fn 2, 354). His conclusion was that the ‘place and personal names recorded by classical authors show us a Celtic-speaking Scotland’ (1946, 354), and he noted that four names, *Epidii*, *Mons Graupius*, *Pexa*²²⁵ and *Louco-pibia*²²⁶ contained the criterion *p* while none contained *q*. Of these only *Epidii* would now be considered as moderately good evidence (see below). The limited evidence of personal names pointed to ‘Pictish having been a Celtic dialect, more akin to British than to Goidelic, and thus re-enforces the conclusion drawn from earlier documents and from the place-names of Pictland’ (ibid. 365). He also noted (ibid. 354) that *Mael Mura* (c. 900), in his versified account of the Pictish origin legend,²²⁷ thought it appropriate to give their

²²⁴ Not all the place-names noted by Watson (1926) were discussed and neither were the Irish annals scoured for personal names.

²²⁵ This item may be a ghost, it occurs in the Ravenna Cosmography alone. See Rivet & Smith (1979, 438, s.v. *Picti*).

²²⁶ Corrupt and outwith Calidonia (Rivet & Smith 1979, 389, s.n. **LEUCOVIA*).

²²⁷ See *Lebor Bretnach* (van Hamel 1932, 12-14).

leader, *Catluan* a Welsh name (cf. OW *Caguollaun*) as if in his view Pictish was a variety of Brittonic.²²⁸

This was a broad, objective and thorough overview of the evidence but it seldom figured in later studies, not only due to its unusual place of publication but also because it was eclipsed by Jackson's article, published nine years later. However O'Rahilly turned a blind eye to the quandary of the uninterpreted *ogham* inscriptions, in marked contrast to Jackson. Had it not been for this later publication it is undoubtedly to O'Rahilly's chapter that non-specialists and specialists alike would have turned, and in all probability Pictish would subsequently have been perceived as a rather Brittonic language.

Hector Munro Chadwick (1870-1947), literary scholar, historian and linguist, in Chapter IV of the influential *Early Scotland* (1949)²²⁹ summarised a selection of earlier debates and developed elaborate and speculative theories relating language to invasions and material culture. He did emphasise the 'Welshness' of place-names in areas such as Fife and employed the term Welsh-Pictish (ibid. 30). A highly imaginative approach is seen in *The Painted Men* (1954) published by T. C. Lethbridge (1901-1971).²³⁰ His extremely readable work, more fiction than the history it claimed to be, reiterated the dated view that the Picts were a Gaelic-speaking people who had settled in areas where Welsh had previously been spoken (1954, 12).

Alan Orr Anderson made further comments in his article on 'Ninian and the Southern Picts' (1948). Here he noted that 'Gaelic in Scotland was preceded by British, traces of which are found from end to end of the land; There are also perhaps traces of Pre-Indo-European speech, and some non-Indo-European place-names' (30). Commenting on Bede's *Pean-fahel* he suggested that the language of coining 'might be described as PF-Celtic' and that it may have resulted from the mixing of Irish and British speech in the Cruithnian kingdom of Scotland (31). The language of Fortriu, which at this time was understood to be located in the

²²⁸ See Calise (2002, 197) for attestations. The name is almost certainly adapted from an early W form of 'Catualo:n son of Cadmann' – the seventh century ravage of Northumbria.

²²⁹ This work, completed by his wife Nora Chadwick and published posthumously, may reflect much of her academic, archaeological, interests.

²³⁰ Honourary Keeper of Anglo-Saxon Antiquities, University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

region of Strathearn, was also seen as having perhaps been a mixture of British and Irish.

We leave the middle of the twentieth century with continued disagreement regarding the linguistic affiliations of Pictish. Most informed commentators considered it to be closely related to (Neo-)Brittonic while some maintained the survival of a non-IE language. The scholar Agnes Mure Macalister in her *Kingdom of Scotland* (1940, 4) summarised such opinions and noted that partisans of each one are ‘prepared to go to the scaffold for them’. The corpus of available evidence was not dramatically less than today, the required sources had been well-edited and Watson had demonstrated that Brittonic-looking place-names were widely distributed throughout much of Pictland (apart from the north and west). The early evidence and later personal names had been discussed, the historical background had also been mapped, but the *ogham* inscriptions caused much consternation. Various scholars were arguing that early population, and therefore language, movements could be identified in the archaeological remains which had only been scientifically investigated in the previous generation of so. This issue is of some importance and leads us into the next section, the single most influential item published on the Pictish language.

1.9 The Deep Roots and Long Arm of Kenneth Jackson

Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson (1909-1991), one of the greatest Celtic scholars of the twentieth century and unparalleled Celtic linguist, made only a brief reference to Pictish in his monumental study of Brittonic, *Language and History in Early Britain* (1953, 576-77). This magisterial study of the development of the Brittonic languages focussed on a millennium of sound-changes (Proto-Celtic > Neo-Brittonic), significantly raised the academic bar and provided scholars with a solid framework to employ while investigating Pictish. It would not have been difficult to incorporate the linguistic aspects of his later chapter ‘The Language of the Picts’ (1955) into this schema, dealing with both Pictish and Brittonic together as Watson had done in 1926. However, the widespread academic view that Pictish was a distinct language, combined with its comparatively poor attestation and source difficulties, would provide ample reasons for the decision to exclude it from the study. Nevertheless, as Jackson noted himself, most of the Pictish features he proposed as distinctive were fairly minor, while a great

deal was identical with Brittonic. The simple fact that ‘LHEB’ excluded Pictish and that it was later discussed separately did much to promote the view that it was indeed a language distinct from Brittonic.

In ‘The Pictish Language’, a thirty-seven page chapter, Jackson surveyed both the early and medieval evidence for Pictish and, with characteristic caution and insights, provided a six-page summary of phonetic and other features (1955, 161-66). While he stressed that ‘in most matters it cannot be said to be distinguishable from Brittonic’ (1955, 152), he tentatively made three impactful linguistic suggestions. Firstly, in contrast to Watson and O’Rahilly, he saw a small number of concrete reasons for classifying Pictish as a distinct language from Brittonic, and one which had been diverging since the early third century at least. For this he coined the term *Pritenic*. The specific points of difference noted were not major and were based on very limited evidence, an issue which Jackson was at pains to underline. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Secondly, he tentatively suggested that it was an independent branch of Gallo-Brittonic with perhaps closer ties to Gaulish (*ibid.*). Again the points of difference were fairly minor, and he withdrew from one (/xt/ > /jt/) in his appendix to the 1980 reprint. This issue will also be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The third issue is that he gave support to the idea that Picts had maintained the use of a non-IE language in some areas and contexts as late as the ninth century:

Surely it is not too much to suggest that a possible interpretation is as follows. There were at least two languages current in northern Scotland before the coming of the Irish Gaels in the fifth century. One of them was a Gallo-Brittonic dialect not identical with the British spoken south of the Antonine Wall, though related to it. The other was not Celtic at all, nor apparently even Indo-European, but was presumably the speech of some very early set of inhabitants of Scotland. (1955, 152)

Jackson’s view was not entirely independent of the historical narrative which he sketched on pages 156-57. The Gaulish proposal is certainly indebted to this thinking. Most of his conclusions were derived from specific linguistic issues, such as various apparently non-Celtic place- and personal names and most of all the uninterpreted *ogham* inscriptions, but this perceptual framework does

require commentary. This historical model was acquired from the eminent archaeologist Stuart Piggott, Jackson's friend and colleague with whom he partook in the short summer school of 1952 which spawned *The Problem of the Picts* (Wainwright, 1955). Indeed, it is a summary of Piggott's chapter in the same volume 'The Archaeological Evidence' (1955, 54-65). This was in turn derived from the model developed by (or with?) Gordon Childe (see above), one of Piggott's mentors at Oxford some years earlier and his predecessor in the Abercromby chair of Prehistoric History at the University of Edinburgh.²³¹ It represented the state-of-the-art thinking of archaeologists at this period, and evidently the linguistic proposals needed to take account of such up to date thinking.

Jackson's narrative noted that Hallstatt Gauls were the first Celtic inhabitants of southern Britain who later expanded to eastern Scotland, built timber-laced forts and encountered a pre-Celtic Bronze-age population. They spoke Gaulish and replaced the earlier non-IE language, maintaining it only for certain ritualistic uses such as carving *ogham*, as late as the eighth and ninth centuries evidently. England then fell to 'La Tène Celts' who later, from bases in south-west Britain, invaded the north and west of Scotland by boat. These Brittonic-speaking 'La Tène Celts' built brochs, gave us the Celtic names recorded by Ptolemy and subsequently abandoned Celtic, reverting to the local non-Indo-European language. This explained the lack of Brittonic names in this area, a phenomenon which is now understood as being due to a later overlay of Norse and Gaelic which practically obliterated all earlier names. It also explained the presence of 'unintelligible' *ogham* inscriptions in the east, which was dotted with Brittonic-looking place-names and the peculiar (non-historical) name-forms in the first parts of the SL king-lists. It was only with some coaxing that the evidence for non-IE Pictish could be made to comply with this narrative, with non-IE making a comeback in the West while only being maintained for inscriptions in the East. This also provided a context for certain supposedly non-Celtic toponyms in Ptolemy and eccentric personal names in the King-lists. Jackson was understandably cautious with the validity of these mediated and corrupt texts as evidence for Pictish, and most modern scholars approach them with equal if not greater trepidation. It will be argued below that there is very

²³¹ See also Forsyth (1997) for a discussion of this issue.

little substance for the Gaulish-Pictish sub-branch, that the notion of Pritenic is questionable and that the evidence for a non-IE language is faint.

This article sealed the fate of Pictish for some decades and, due to his stature and expertise, these proposals largely went unchallenged. As encapsulated by Nicolaisen (1995, 11):

Jackson was, of course, not the first to reach this conclusion but it can be claimed that he argued the case so convincingly that any rival arguments asserting different linguistic affinity and descent have been effectively silenced ever since ...

His views, indeed, came to represent the orthodox consensus although they were very often misinterpreted.

We cannot, however, leave Jackson here.²³² In *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (1972) he made numerous further observations on the language but all seem to point to similarities with Brittonic. There was no longer any mention of non-IE Pictish, the evidence for which (in the vicinity of the monastery of Deer) was *ogham* alone. Also, when *The Problem of the Picts* was reprinted in 1980, he submitted a four-page appendix (1980, 173-76), one that very few later commentators notice. Here he reiterated the notion of the continued existence of a non-Indo-European language, justified by a strained list of supposedly analogous survivals, such as Sumerian (ibid. 174-75). He referred to the fact that the radio-carbon dating of the vitrified forts to 600-100 BCE effectively invalidated the earlier historical narrative, but maintained that invasions must have played a role in bringing ‘Hallstatt’ Celts to Britain, and categorised the non-invasion (immobilist) viewpoint as a ‘fad’ which would surely pass (ibid. 175).

All the same, the archaeological picture of early Scotland, and the background of the builders of the vitrified (better “timber-laced”) forts is somewhat less clear than it appeared to be in 1953, or in 1962 or 1967 for that matter; and the question whether the Pritenic... of

²³² There are a few very brief references to the Pictish language in his 1958 chapter ‘The Sources for the Life of St Kentigern’, in Chadwick (1958). Here he notes (p. 292) that both Brittonic and Pictish are ‘two languages about which little is known’ and he adds (p. 293) that *Aberlady* and *Aberlessic* (ELO) ‘may quite possibly be Pictish, given by settlers from across the Forth.’ No mention is made that Pictish is supposed to be a variant of Gaulish.

Pictland was merely a northern dialect of the Brittonic one, had best be left open at present. (ibid. 175-76)

What had happened in the intervening years is that Piggott's model had collapsed for various reasons. One was the development of radio-carbon dating in the 60s and its application to archaeological material, which dramatically altered the dating of many sites. The second was a severe criticism of the Culture-historical paradigm by the *New Archaeologists*, in particular Grahame Clarke's article 'The Invasion Hypothesis in British Archaeology' (1966). The somewhat simplistic view that ethnic groups were culturally and linguistically fairly discrete entities in prehistory, and that they could be identified in the archaeological record started to crumble. Piggott (1983) initially rejected these findings but later in life magnanimously conceded that his early proposals were untenable. The fact that Jackson provided an appendix to his article in the 1980 reprint of *The Problem of the Picts* is suggestive of a repositioning of views, as are some subsequent printed comments. In 1981 he published an entry in *The New Companion to Scottish Culture* (1981, 250) which stated:

It is likely that an offshoot from the Continental Celts settled in northern Scotland some centuries BC. Whether these were a simple extension of the British occupiers of Britain up to the Forth and Clyde, or whether a rather more separate Celtic nation, is uncertain,²³³ but perhaps the second... though whether it was more than a question of dialect is not really clear.

His uncertainty is evident. The proofs noted were the supposedly non-Celtic personal names in early sources and the 30+ 'unintelligible' *ogham* inscriptions. He categorised the 'Picts' as a 'mixed people, of both Celtic and pre-Celtic antecedents'. Here he is referring to ancestry, not claiming that the language was in any way a hybrid, even though that is how it was interpreted by many. The idea that some early ethnonyms were non-Celtic had been abandoned. His last contribution to the field (1983(a)) was his entry 'Pictish Languages' in *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* (Thomson 1983, 224) where he maintained the survival of a pre-Celtic language but made no mention of correspondence with Gaulish. Interestingly, Jackson contributed another entry to this volume '*place-names, British and Pictish*' (1983(b)). Now that he was dealing with toponymy alone, non-Indo-European figured not at all, and he noted that Pictish and

²³³ This statement seems somewhat ambiguous to me.

Brittonic could be so close as to be merely dialects.²³⁴ However, there was also a covert hint at a Gaulish link (ibid. p. 227). Jackson died in 1991 and it is his contribution which appeared in the 1994 edition.

Thus it is Jackson's view of 1955 projected into 1980 which commanded the thinking of many subsequent writers, aspects of which were inspired by an archaeological model which was later challenged and which may themselves owe a debt to the nineteenth-century proposals. The republication of this book, with its attractive and modern dust-jacket, may have been interpreted as a restatement of position, sanctioning the content of what should, in various respects, have been of more value to historiographers rather than to historians and linguists. By 1980 archaeologists were well aware that Piggott's narrative was 'of its time', while linguists seeking a scholarly investigative overview, even today, have little option but to turn to this study. It is Jackson's 1955 chapter that is almost always referred to in subsequent studies rather than his later modified views which are generally more favourable to Pictish being a dialectal variant of Brittonic. As noted, had it not been for Jackson's article it is undoubtedly to O'Rahilly's study that interested parties would have turned and Pictish would have been perceived as a variant of Brittonic, a view Jackson entertained himself. Most investigators turn immediately to Jackson's conclusions, evidently without considering the challenging discussion, few being aware that some of the linguistic proposals were teased out of a superseded archaeological / historical narrative. It must be borne in mind that this chapter was not intended as a comprehensive investigation into Pictish on a par with *Language and History in Early Britain*. It was an overview, the outcome of a summer-school lecture, and Jackson's unease with the material he was working with was evident on numerous occasions. Now let us investigate the legacy of this article.

In the decades after 1955 a great number of books about Celts, Picts, Celtic languages, early Scotland and so on were published. Most made some mention of the Pictish language and practically all followed Jackson referring to his views on Gaulish, Pritenic and non-Celtic Pictish. For example, they are encountered in important works such as *The Celts* (Powell 1958, 203), *The Prehistoric Peoples of*

²³⁴ See also his brief entry 'loanwords, British and Pictish' (2003(c)).

Scotland (Piggott, 1962), interestingly without reference to non-Indo-European (Piggott 1962, 147), *Archaeology and Place-names and History* (Wainwright²³⁵ 1962, 70-71), *The Celts* (Raferty 1964, 79-80), *Picts* (Henderson 1971, 53-55), *The Ogham Inscriptions of Pictland* (Padel, 1972; MA Thesis), *Scotland - The Making of the Kingdom* (Duncan 1975, 51), *Archaeology and Language* (Renfrew 1987, 227), *The Celts* (Delaney 1989, 47),²³⁶ *The Celtic Languages* (Ball & Fife 1993, 6), *The Picts and the Scots* (Laing 1993, 18-21), *Exploring the World of the Celts* (James 1993, 170) and *The Oxford Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (MacKillop 1998, 366, s.v. *Picts*).

Numerous confused interpretations emerged. To recapitulate, Jackson's view in 1955 was that eastern Pictish was a P-Celtic language closely related to Brittonic but possibly with closer ties to Gaulish. Perhaps, just perhaps, the speakers maintained the use of an earlier non-Indo-European language for certain prestige functions (1955, 154). The western & northern Picts had spoken Brittonic for a while but had abandoned it in favour of the indigenous non-Indo-European language. Compare this with, for example, the entry in Ogilvie and Richmond's edition of Tacitus:

the Caledonii probably spoke a form of Celtic, related to but not identical with British, which may have been contaminated with a non-Indo-European language. (Ogilvie & Richmond 1967, 178)

and Mackie, *A History of Scotland*.²³⁷

Their own language was a form of P-Celtic, with traces of Gaulish forms and some pre-Celtic elements, though in historic times they used Gaelic. (1969, 27)

In the later edition, and revision, of this same book by Lenman & Parker (1978, 16) this statement was modified:

The Picts certainly used a form of P-Celtic (the mother of Welsh, Cornish, and Breton, with traces of Gaulish forms. However, it is clear, from the few scraps of evidence which survive, that the Picts

²³⁵ The organiser of the 1952 summer-school and editor of *The Problem of the Picts*.

²³⁶ This book was written to complement a major BBC television series.

²³⁷ He was Professor of Scottish History and Literature at the University of Glasgow from 1930 to 1957.

also used another language, probably unrelated to any 'Indo-European' tongue and therefore so different from modern European languages as to be incomprehensible to us. In short, the Picts were an amalgam of peoples ... and there is no doubt that they were the original inhabitants of the land.

Dillon & Chadwick, in *The Celtic Realms* (1967, 72), noted Jackson as the source of the following statement.

Their language, which has survived only in proper names and inscriptions, has never been interpreted, but is now thought to be an amalgamation of an earlier form of Celtic, akin to British, with an indigenous non-Indo-European language, probably descended from a language of the Bronze Age.

The sole comment in Alcock's *Arthur's Britain* (1971, 276) was that their language is 'undecipherable', evidently having understood that the sole witness was *ogham*.

Marjorie Anderson in *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (1973, 120), noted:

An important element in the language of the historical Picts is thought to have been Gallo-Brittonic, that is a P-Celtic language of a type ancestral to historical Gaulish and British.

This was a departure from the view expressed in *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Anderson & Anderson 1961, 132) written with her husband, a qualified linguist. Here the language was generally referred to as 'P-Celtic' or more often 'North-British'. Referring to Bede's *Peanfahel* it was noted that North-British was then a 'mixed language' (ibid. 6). The 'North-British area' was seen as 'large and scattered' and it was noted that 'we must not *a priori* assume that only one North-British language pervaded it' (ibid. 157)'. This was an important foretaste of more modern views. In the highly influential *Age of Arthur* (1973, 186) Morris noted that Pictish, while related to 'British and Gallic' 'preserved a few Gallic words that are not known to have survived among the Roman British'. Laing, in *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland c. 400-1200 AD* (1977, 51) noted:

The Celtic element in Pictish was an earlier form than Old Welsh, and has certain affinities to Gaulish. Pictish, however, was not a pure Celtic language and contains a much earlier substratum belonging to a pre-Celtic and probably non-Indo-European language. This element

was probably the language of the Bronze Age natives of north-east Scotland who were the ancestors of the Picts.

Compare with *Place-Names of Roman Britain* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 11):

The inhabitants of Scotland north of the Clyde-Forth line... are thought to have been a partly Celtic people whose speech had Brythonic elements superimposed upon an older, non-Indo-European language... Place-names from this northern region sometimes present difficulties of a kind not found elsewhere and may indicate the presence there of originally non-Celtic peoples.

and in *Celtic Britain* (Laing 1979, 140):

... they spoke a lost language which was in part Celtic but in part belonged to some more ancient tradition, perhaps the tongue spoken by the natives of the late Bronze Age in eastern Scotland.

Closer to Jackson's actual view is Anna Ritchie writing in *The Kingdom of the Picts* (1977, 8), a work produced as teaching material for secondary school pupils:

The Picts spoke two languages: one was a form of Celtic, but it was rather different from the Celtic that Bede knew, and the other was a totally unknown language that no one but a Pict would have understood. This unknown tongue is still a mystery today.

Note also Nora Chadwick in *The Celts* (1970, 44):

Pictish seems to have included a large element of Gaulish or Welsh, but of an early type no longer identical with the Welsh of today.

The language of the Picts as shown in their inscriptions is not purely Celtic, but is thought to have been a superimposition of northern Celtic from the Continent on an indigenous language, perhaps dating from the late Bronze Age. (ibid. 75)

Padel, in his MA thesis on the *Inscriptions of Pictland*, referred to Jackson's views and noted that the language of the *ogham* inscriptions is 'not a known one' (1972, 38). He also noted the linguistic clash between the toponymic and inscriptional evidence. Glanville Price in *The Celtic Languages* (1984) divided his contribution on Pictish into two chapters, 'Celtic Pictish' (1984, 20-27) and 'Pictish -Non-Indo-European' (ibid. 155-57) and he gave Jackson's view his enthusiastic support. Wolfgang Meid in the important publication *Britain 400-*

600: *Language and History* (1990, 101) noted that Pictish was ‘nicht-keltische und nicht-indogermische’²³⁸ and this view represents the modern consensus in German-speaking Celticist circles.²³⁹ This can be compared with:

A Celtic aristocracy has been detected amongst the Caledonians as early as the first or second centuries; there were a warrior élite who must have held in subjugation a native, non-Celtic peasantry. (Lynch 1991, 23)

Clancy and Márkus (1995, 6) also noted the ‘continuance of at least some elements of a non-Indo-European language within the Pictish tongue’. Kitson (1998, 106), evidently thinking of Jackson (1955, 145) noted that no-one would dream of trying to etymologize the personal names *Usconbuts* and *Bliesblituth* as Indo-European. Both are pseudo-historical. The similarity of many statements represents the emergence of a secondary consensus, rather than an accurate reflection of Jackson’s actual proposals.

1.10 Brittonic Pictish and the Decline of Non-Indo-European

The second half of the twentieth century saw the continued publication of numerous journals, linguistic and toponymic studies, editions of primary sources and so on which provided further material to approach Pictish from an increasingly informed position. Importantly, Scottish toponymy was investigated by the linguist W. F. H. Nicolaisen,²⁴⁰ and slowly his views started to dislodge or at least impinge on those of Jackson. In 1972 he published the first of various relevant items, ‘*P-Celtic Names in Scotland: A Reappraisal*’. After Jackson (1955, 147 & 150) this was the first study to make conspicuous use of distribution maps, which the author repeatedly used to demonstrate the extent of Pictish place-names. After demonstrating that some toponymic items straddled the supposed ‘Picto-Brittonic border’²⁴¹ he concluded:

²³⁸ ‘Not Celtic and not Indo-European’.

²³⁹ Erich Poppe (pers. comm. August 2013)

²⁴⁰ Over the course of twenty five years he has published various works concerning Pictish: one significant chapter in *Scottish Place-names* (1976, reprinted in 2001), two significant articles (1972 & 1996) and two short ones (1995 & 1997).

²⁴¹ Wherever this probably complex and fluctuating isogloss lay.

Pictish, although not simply Watson's northern extension of British (or Cumbric), should rather be called a dialect of Northern Brittonic or of Brittonic in general, and not a separate language... In fact, one suspects that its separateness has been rather overstressed. (1972, 11)

An updated and more detailed version of the article was published by the author as a chapter in *Scottish Place-Names* (1976). There was, however, no engagement with the particular linguistic features proposed by Jackson. Nicolaisen noted that there was certainly no place-name evidence which would support the view of a continuing non-Indo-European Pictish, but that there was:

an absence of place-names belonging to the Celtic variety of 'Pictish' from certain areas which must be termed Pictish on non-linguistic grounds. This supports the theory of two completely different linguistic Picts. (ibid. 150)

The subsequent linguistic overlays have already been noted as the reason for this situation. Later in this work (ibid. 219) he referred to the possible Gaulish features, but also noted that Pictish should not be labelled a separate language. In 'Names in the Landscape of the Moray Firth' (1983, 257) he again indicated that a non-Celtic language was spoken to the north of this firth and it seems to be the view that was adopted by MacKie in his article 'The Early Celts in Scotland' (1995) published in Miranda Green's *The Celtic World*. The evidence for linking Gaulish to Pictish noted by Nicolaisen was the supposed shared use of the item *pett* and the similarity of the group-names *Pictones* and *Pictavi* in Gaul.²⁴² This book was reprinted in 2001, with no discernible differences in this chapter. In *The Picts and their Place Names* he noted that the accepted doctrine was that Pictish was similar to Brittonic (1996, 32, fn 18). In this booklet he also maintained that a number of river-names²⁴³ looked Indo-European but not Celtic (ibid. 4). This view had been propounded in 1976 in Chapter 9 (222-246) but many of the arguments had been demonstrated to be flawed by the Indo-Europeanist Hamp in 1990. Nicolaisen's most recent contribution to this issue was in 2007 in a chapter entitled 'The Change from Pictish to Gaelic in Scotland' where an 'undeniable non-Indo-European streak in the place-names of Pictland' was noted (115), referring not only to some island names but also to the rivers

²⁴² See 3.9. in general, and 3.8.9. & 3.8.10. in particular.

²⁴³ Shin, Shiel, Farrar, Findhorn, Deveron, Earn & Tay.

Touaisis, *Kailios* and *Lossa* (see Chapters 2 & 3). However no conclusions can be considered compelling without an investigation of other strands of evidence - personal names, Pictish words in Gaelic and inscriptions.

The Brittonic-Pictish viewpoint was reflected in works such as *Scotland's Place-Names* (Dorward 1979) where *Brittonic* was used for both *Cumbric* and *Pictish*. Similarly it was seen in *A History of Scotland* (Mitchison 1970, 4), *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages* (Hughes 1980, 49),²⁴⁴ *Pictish Place-Names - Some Toponymic Evidence* (Fraser 1987) and *The Picts and the Scots* (Laing 1993, 18-21). Hamp, in 1990, discussing the origin of a northerly Gaelic river-name *Duibhe* referred to it originating in *British Celtic* (1993, 193). In *The Celtic Empire* (1990, 83) Peter Berresford Ellis claimed that the historically attested Picts spoke Gaelic, but by *A Short History of the Celts* (1998, 33) their language was referred to as Brythonic. Foster, in the introduction to *The Worm, the Germ and the Thorn* (1997, 7) noted that the ill-founded notion that the Picts spoke a non-IE language, had yet to be dispelled from the popular consciousness.

Despite Nicolaisen's work, elements of Jackson's view persisted: 'Pictish ... is not an homogenous Celtic language', Schmidt (1990, 125) in *The Celtic Languages* (Ball 1993). 'It would seem, then, that the Picts spoke a form of P- or Brythonic Celtic allied to Welsh that contained elements of Gallo-Brythonic and probably retained traces of a pre- or non-Celtic Indo-European language...' in *In Search of the Picts* (Sutherland 1994, 203),²⁴⁵ and 'Picts spoke a form of Gaelic which was not the same as Irish Gaelic, more akin to Welsh, lost to us today' (Sutherland 1997, 10). 'The *p*-Celtic speakers may moreover have been ruling minorities among aboriginal populations' (MacKie 1995, 657), 'the Picts had two languages, one P-Celtic, brought from the Continent by Gallo-Brittonic settlers, and the other which was non-Indo-European but absorbed some Celtic vocabulary' (MacKillop 1998, 366). 'They apparently spoke two languages, a dialect of British Celtic and a second, non-Indo-European tongue of unknown affinity as yet undeciphered' (James 1997, 170). Venneman (1997), the renowned German linguist, suggested that Jackson's non-Celts spoke a Hamito-Semitic language. Cunliffe's view (1997, 263) was cautious: 'Picts were probably

²⁴⁴ Jackson but not Nicolaisen occurs in the bibliography of this work which was edited by David Dumville.

²⁴⁵ She was curator of the Groam House Museum which is primarily devoted to Pictish culture.

Celtic peoples, although some linguists claim to be able to detect a pre-Indo-European element in the Pictish language'. The archaeologist Martin Carver, in *Surviving in Symbols* (1999, 16), displayed four talking heads each expressing differing views representing non-IE, P-Celtic, a blend of Brittonic/Gaelic and finally the claim that the *ogham* inscriptions were in Old Norse. The latter statement reflected Cox's discredited hypothesis (1999).

In 1982 John T. Koch, an American Celticist, referred to 'Celtic Pictish', implying the existence of a non-Celtic equivalent (1982, 88). A year later, and twenty-eight years after Jackson's article, he became the first linguist to re-engage with the particular features of Pictish. His views were published as a section of a broader investigation 'The Loss of Final Syllables and Loss of Declension in Brittonic'. He confirmed some of Jackson's proposals and added a small number of others.²⁴⁶ His conclusion was that the 'admittedly slight phonological evidence' indicated that Pictish and Brittonic were 'distinct dialects by the Roman period and quite possibly by the last century of the pre-Roman Iron Age as Jackson thought' (1983, 216). This view was re-iterated by Forsyth (2001, 478) in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, while Taylor (2001, 483), in the same volume, simply mentions that the language was closely related to Cumbric but his use of the generic *abor*, as opposed to *aber* 'estuary',²⁴⁷ indicated acceptance of one of Koch's proposals.²⁴⁸ A number of both Koch and Jackson's ideas were summarised in *Celtic Culture: A Historical Atlas* (Forsyth 2006(b), 1444-1445) and this stands as the most recent scholarly statement of Pictish linguistic peculiarities. The added effect of these proposals would probably be sufficient to justify labelling Pictish a different language, rather than simply a dialect.

1.11 Non-Indo-European

In 1984 the historian Alfred Smyth, in *Warlords and Holy Men - Scotland AD 80 - 1000*, demonstrated the invalidity of much of Jackson's reasoning for the survival of a non-IE language in Pictland (1984, 46-53). He stressed the overwhelming Celticity of the items noted by Ptolemy (ibid. 49) and the Roman

²⁴⁶ See also Forsyth (1990) and Koch (1990).

²⁴⁷ Koch proposes that early forms indicate that Pictish had the o-grade in this item.

²⁴⁸ See Chapter 3.

period personal names *Calgacus*, *Argentocoxos* and *Lossio Veda*. Smyth's viewpoint was repeated in 'Language in Pictland, Spoken and Written' (Forsyth 1995), and two years later in 1997 the failings of the non-IE hypothesis were laid bare in Forsyth's *Language in Pictland*.²⁴⁹ She stressed that her approach was as a historian not a linguist, and the fundamental Celticity of the Picts was underlined, 'on current evidence the only acceptable conclusion is that, from the time of our earliest historical sources, there was only one language spoken in Pictland, the most northerly reflex of Brittonic (1997, 37).²⁵⁰ From this point onwards it was only with some difficulty that the notion of non-Indo-European early medieval Pictish could be upheld. An indication of changing views can be seen in that *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (Foster 1996) followed Jackson's view, but the 2004 edition incorporated Forsyth's rebuttal. However, the non-IE view has yet to recede from scholarly thinking even though the mainstream view has all but abandoned it, as in *The Picts - A History* (Clarkson 2008, 33-36). A brief but non-committed reference was also made in Koch's *An Atlas for Celtic Studies* (2007, \$355, 165).

The second major contribution made by Forsyth was her study of *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland: An Edited Corpus* (1996), her Harvard PhD thesis, which, in addition to her own numerous comments, contained various linguistic suggestions by her supervisor, John T. Koch. Many of these offered Brittonic interpretations of sections of the *ogham* inscriptions. Further articles (e.g. 2012) have been published on newly-discovered *ogham* inscriptions but we are still at some distance from being able to interpret them fully. It is notable that many contain variants of *MAQ* (son), the robustly Celtic personal name *Nechton* and probably *Edernan* (< Lat *Aeternus*). In 1999 Cox argued that these inscriptions had been composed in Old Norse but this hypothesis was rapidly and effectively demolished (Clancy 1999; Barnes 1999). Sims-Williams in *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain* (2003, 2, fn 10) noted that some of the *ogham* inscriptions are 'arguably Celtic'. This corpus remains as the driving force behind the view that a non-IE language survived in Pictland until historical times. The only other consideration would be the apparently non-IE origin of various westerly island

²⁴⁹ See McManus (1999) for a strong criticism, focussing on the general absence of specifically linguistic discussions.

²⁵⁰ This benefitted from the author's PhD thesis (1998), an in-depth study of the *ogham* inscriptions of Scotland.

names (see Broderick 2010 & Coates 2012), some river-names (Isaac 2005(c))²⁵¹ and perhaps a smallish number of poorly attested personal names. The final section of this chapter will chart how the language has been perceived in recent years.

1.12 The New Consensus

The last decade or so, despite some dissenting voices, has seen the normalising of the view that Pictish was fundamentally rather similar to Brittonic²⁵² and theories concerning its genesis and development have become increasingly sophisticated (e.g. Woolf 2013(d); James 2013). Forsyth (1997, 27), while accepting the early divergence of Brittonic and Pritenic, stressed that ‘we must keep in mind that they are united by far more than divides them’. This was the view expounded by Clancy & Crawford in *The New Penguin History of Scotland*, noting the previous tendency to portray it as a ‘mix of Celtic and non-Indo-European elements’ (2001, 36). It is the view usually found both in the incidental comments of scholars such as Russell when discussing the Pictish names in the *Durham Liber Vitae* (2007, 7), Foster *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (2004, 19-21), Yorke ‘Britain and Ireland, c. 500’ (2009, 47) and also in less specialised works such as *The Celts - A History from the Earliest Times to the Present* (Maier 2003, 160). Forsyth (2001 & 2005, 9) noted the similarity of various Pictish and Brittonic lexical items and personal names saw such evidence as hard to reconcile with Bede’s view and added that the divergence between the two languages started in the Roman period (2001, 478). McCone (2006, 18), after drawing attention to conflicting views on the language in this study of verbal morphology, concluded with the view that ‘no remotely firm conclusion is possible in our present state of almost complete ignorance regarding Pictish.’ However, the author made no reference to the significant corpus of evidence which demonstrates the presence of some form of Brittonic in Pictland. Koch in *An Atlas for Celtic Studies* (2007, 32) challenged Bede’s claim that the *lingua Brettonum* and *lingua Pictorum* were different languages noting that the accumulated place-name evidence indicated that ‘Pictish was a rather Brittonic-looking language’.

²⁵¹ See Chapter 2 for a refutation of this proposal.

²⁵² For a highly imaginative and inventive approach see Cummins (2001).

Alex Woolf in *From Pictland to Alba* (2007), discussed sociolinguistic reasons for divergences and similarities between Pictish and Brittonic, based on analogical situations. On the model of 'Scottish Gaelic', the term 'Pictish British' was coined (2007, xiii) indicating the author's view that Pictish, early Pictish at least, was closely allied to Brittonic. A considerable degree of mutual intelligibility between Pictish and Scottish Gaelic was envisaged and the relationship between the two was seen as similar to that between 'Old Norse and Old English' (ibid. 339). He argued that more northerly dialects of British (i.e. Pictish) would have escaped much of the impact of Latin, now known to have played a significant part in the evolution of neo-Brittonic (Russell 2011). Consequently the language may, like Irish, have been more conservative in some respects - a factor which may have contributed to Pictish ethnogenesis (ibid. 333-34). This chapter was based primarily on plausible analogues with other European linguistic scenarios, rather than on specific evidence and concluded with the statement that 'the Gaelic and British dialects of Albania probably influenced one another enormously during the course of the tenth century and probably began to converge into a single Albanian language' (ibid. 340). T. M. Charles-Edwards (2008, 186-87) rightly noted that this account exceeded the not-insignificant evidence.

The medievalist James Fraser (2009) championed a similar view and also employed the term 'Pictish British'. He did accord with Woolf²⁵³ on the possibility of a highly gaelicised later Pictish (2009, 53) but this was based largely on circumstantial evidence and more importantly on Bede's *Peanfahel*. He noted 'it is unnecessary to make room in Roman Iron Age Scotland for peoples who spoke any other language than variations on the Pictish British one' (2009, 53). An important refining of earlier views is that Bede's *lingua Pictorum* was 'whatever tongue the ascendant Werteras (northern Picts) identified as their own' (ibid.).

Simon Taylor's article 'Pictish Place-names Revisited' (2011) briefly summarised the main authoritative contributions to the field and aligned itself with the view that Pictish shared a great deal with Brittonic - a view which permeates the *Place-names of Fife* volumes (2006-13). An overview of Pictish, in Fife, is to be

²⁵³ Alex Woolf was Fraser's doctoral supervisor.

found in *The Place-names of Fife*, Vol. 5 (Taylor with Márkus 2012, 149-57). Here Pictish was seen as having been spoken in Fife and much of eastern and northern Scotland in the early historical period. Furthermore, it was suggested that it emerged from a collection of northerly dialects of what further south developed into the language known as British (ibid. 149). See also Taylor's contribution (including a map, p. 481) in the *Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (2001) and the brief discussion of Pictish (ibid. 483) where it is noted that it was spoken throughout the territories of the historical Picts and that it was closely related to Cumbric.

This growing consensus was reflected in *The Pocket Guide to Scottish Place-names* (Grant 2010), and BLITON (James 2012) where the term *Brit-Pict* was used - an abbreviation for 'British-Pictish'. James also noted that the evidence points to 'fairly substantial dialectal difference, and again tend to imply a degree of linguistic conservatism'. This was also the viewpoint taken by Jill Harden in *The Picts* (2010, 19). T. M. Charles-Edwards in *Wales and the Britons 350-1054* (2013, 89-92) noted the possible non-IE survival, while Pictish was seen as a variant of Neo-Brittonic. Various points of co-evolution were noted here e.g. /oj/ > /u/, /g/ > /ɣ/, retention of /st/ and apocope (ibid. 91). The observations were based on the king-lists alone and did not integrate the copious evidence of other fields such as place-names. This led to some questionable proposals such as the preservation of an oblique case (ibid. 90, fn 41). It agreed with Woolf that the emergence of Pictish as a distinct language could be related to the process of Pictish ethnogenesis and that it may have evaded some of the Latin influence evidenced in Brittonic (ibid. 91-92). Few of these commentators, however, have ventured to engage with the *ogham* inscriptions.

The non-IE hypothesis still has adherents. After much deliberation Isaac in his article 'Scotland' (2005(c), 212), published as part of a larger study on Ptolemy's Geography, argued for the survival of such a language in the north-west of Scotland perhaps as late as turn of the first century CE. The evidence was that about five river-names could not be analysed as Celtic (see Chapter 2). This discussion was summarised in Broderick (2010), in a weighty article engaging with non-Indo-European contact influences on Celtic. Isaac restated his view in his article 'Cormac's Pictish Brooch' (2005(a), 73-82) where the evidence adduced was not only the *ogham* inscriptions but also the royal name *Brude*

amongst others.²⁵⁴ Recourse to the endnotes reveals that the personal names referred to include the ‘list of thirty Brudes’ an unhistorical and later retrospective pseudo-historical insertion. The numerous items in this list which are compatible with Brittonic e.g. *Pant*, *Gart* are not discussed, neither is the fact that most IE languages attest similar borrowings.

Sims-Williams categorised Picts as ‘non-Celtic speaking peoples’ (1990, 58; 1998, 350) and with great caution this was repeated in *Ancient Celtic Place-names in Europe and Asia Minor* (2006, 177). Coates (2006, 53) referred to the uncertainty as to whether Pictish was even Celtic. In 2012, Noting McManus’ criticism of Forsyth (1999) and Isaac’s article, he stated that the presence of such a language was supported by the ancient river-names, so long as they were not emended (2012, 431). Woolf (2007, 13) also entertained the possibility of the survival of such a language on some of the early inscribed stones, in a handful of (un-named) place-names and also in remote areas. Coates in 2012 noted that it was still uncertain whether all the evidence for Pictish indicates that it was a Celtic language or not and referred to certainly or doubtfully non-Celtic place-names in northern Scotland. T. M. Charles-Edwards (2013, 90) also noted that one could not fully exclude the possibility, the footnotes indicating that the source of this view is Jackson (1955). It is worth mentioning that this position is also noted by Oppenheimer in *The Origin of the British* (2006, 356) and, again, the source for this was Jackson. Finally, the view of the eminent Indo-Europeanist Eric P. Hamp was expounded in the map of Pre-Indo-European substrates in Europe (Hamp 2013, 14) noting a prominent ‘Picti’ across Scotland.

Woolf, in his O’Donnell lecture (2013), on the basis other historical socio-linguistic scenarios, suggested that the attempt to shoehorn insular P-Celtic into the pre-prepared boxes of Pictish and Brittonic may be ill-conceived. Hudson has a three page contribution in *The Picts* (2014, 49-52), but the linguistic discussion is confused, ill-informed and misleading containing bizarre claims such as that Pictish *pett* was borrowed from Old Norse *beit* ‘pasturage’²⁵⁵ and that an *ogham*

²⁵⁴ For a discussion of this personal name, and its probable Celticity, see Chapter 4.

²⁵⁵ It is difficult to comprehend: ‘The *pī*t names are located within easy access of the coast and the waterways leading to the Scandinavian lands, and here is a correspondence of the area where the name *pī*t- is found with the Class 2 symbol stones possessing stylistic arrangements similar to those found on the Götland (sic) picture stones. So it is possible that language developed in parallel fashion on either side of the North Sea.’ One despairs.

inscription placed on the shield of the Irish mythological figure Conall Corc was in ‘the language of the Cruithne’.²⁵⁶ There is no engagement whatsoever with the large corpus of evidence of Pictish place- and personal names and the discredited Norse *ogham* hypothesis is noted while no mention is made of Taylor’s 2011 chapter. The conclusion seems to be that attempts to identify the vernacular language of the Picts is ‘contentious’, while the truth is that a great deal can actually be demonstrated. The worrying issue regarding this lacklustre contribution is that it occurs in an otherwise scholarly study titled ‘The Picts’ and doubtlessly this poorly-researched summary will contribute significantly to furthering the unjustifiable notion that the Pictish language is quite unintelligible. In his conclusion to his detailed discussion of ‘P-Celtic in Southern Scotland and Cumbria’ James (2013, 72) argued that terms ‘Pictish’ and ‘Cumbric’ should be ‘expelled altogether from toponymic discourse’ and advocates the cautious use of ‘Northern P-Celtic’.

1.13 Conclusion

Objective, inclusive and informed investigations of the Pictish language are very few and far between. Since the seventeenth century there have been competing views regarding its affiliations. The earlier commentators considered it to be close to Brittonic, using modern terminology. Some later commentators argued that it was Germanic while some argued that it was Gaelic, but such views were not free of ideological motivations. Ritson and others maintained that it was similar to Welsh. Skene argued that Pictish was Gaelic while the southern Picts spoke Brittonic and his view dominated most of the nineteenth century.

Numerous scholars thought that two languages were spoken in Pictland, non-IE in the north, where ‘Pictish’ place-names are extremely rare, and Germanic in the North-East. A non-IE theory emerged, generated primarily by the inability to interpret the *ogham* inscriptions, some personal names in the king-lists and aided perhaps by a period where the Picts were perceived as exotic. Watson and O’Rahilly had robustly demonstrated the presence of a Brittonic-looking language in much of Pictland but this clear-cut, and somewhat selective, view was largely obscured by Jackson’s study which was influenced by the contemporary archaeological/historical narrative. Jackson proposed two Pictish

²⁵⁶ It isn’t, it is simply a coded form, ‘covert, cryptic, occult’ (Hull 1947, 894, fn 54).

languages, one a descendent of Gaulish and the other non-Indo-European. The former view lost favour after a generation or two while the latter still withstood severe criticism. The current consensus view amongst those familiar with the toponymic and textual evidence for Scotland is that Pictish may have resembled Brittonic in many respects, though perhaps being less influenced by Latin.

It is now possible to identify the origins of and reasons for the discrepant views of the Pictish linguistic past. This should place us in a better position to re-approach the question of the linguistic history of northern Britain. The core question at present, and one which has been raised numerous times, is whether Pictish was truly a distinct language from Brittonic, as stated by Bede, or whether it could be considered a dialect. Alternatively, such a binary framework may be insufficient to describe what may have been a much more complex, dynamic and nuanced socio-linguistic situation in a wide area over many centuries. Both the limited amount of evidence and its restricted nature prevent an easy solution, however there are at present a number of items which, it has been argued, clearly demonstrate an early, Roman-period bifurcation. If this small number of distinctive features proves to be robust then the question is answered and we must maintain our use of the term Pritenic. However, if these can no longer be maintained then the door is open to the possibility that Pictish may have been co-evolving with Brittonic and that Bede's statement cannot be taken at face value. This thesis will scrutinise these proposals. In order to achieve this Chapter 2 will investigate the early evidence for language in what was to become Pictland. It will also engage with the issue of non-IE Pictish and some aspects of early divergence. Chapter 3 will investigate the proposals which argued that Pictish had been diverging from Brittonic before the emergence of the radically reformed Neo-Brittonic by the end of the middle of the sixth-century.

2. Language in Calidonia

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will be examining the contemporary linguistic evidence for ‘Roman period Britain north of the Forth-Clyde divide’, for which I will be using the term *Calidonia*. It should not be assumed that the use of such a term suggests that the area under discussion was in any way ethnically or linguistically homogenous or politically cohesive. Neither should it be assumed that this area was necessarily culturally distinct from regions to the south. There is no lack of evidence that some regions of Calidonia gravitated culturally towards areas outwith such bounds, and no reason to think that the inhabitants shared an identity exclusive of ‘Britons’ further south. The term *Calidonia* is therefore a modern construct and it is used here as no more than a convenient shorthand, in order to avoid repeated verbose geographical descriptions. It is not a satisfactory term as it runs the risk of colouring perceptions and suggesting a uniformity that is not supported by evidence. Whenever it is encountered such issues should be borne in mind.

While boundaries have to be set for such a study, this chapter will not be approaching the evidence in isolation - each item will be considered in the context of the wider Celtic-speaking world. The southern boundary chosen is the Forth-Clyde divide, simply because in 731 Bede noted this isthmus as the southern boundary of Pictland. As this study focuses on aspects of the later early medieval Pictish language this section will be limited to the same area. Whether or not this delimitation had any linguistic significance in the period under consideration is one of the main issues that will be discussed below.

There is a lengthy gap between the earliest evidence attested primarily in Ptolemy’s *Geographia* and Tacitus’ *Agricola*, composed in the first centuries CE, and the early medieval material which begins with the *Life of Columba* at the turn of the eighth. This makes chapter division fairly unproblematic, but the drawback is that the almost total absence of evidence in the intervening five and a half centuries allows for a multiplicity of interpretations regarding issues of continuity between the rather distinct languages attested at either end of this divide.

The contemporary evidence is severely limited due to the small number of surviving sources, itself largely due to the area being outwith lasting and direct Roman control. A significant number of names which were attested only in the medieval period may well have been current during the period under investigation here. Prime candidates would be the names of some islands for which there are, at present, no convincing Celtic etymologies such as Iona, Uist and Lewis (Broderick 2010; Coates 2013). To this list of unattested items one could add the names of rivers such as the Avon and Esk, names which are also evidenced contemporaneously further south. Various other river-names such as Ness, Shin and Shiel may also be early coinings and their forms may thus be of value to engaging with this early period. However, there is no means of conclusively establishing that these were not Roman-period coinings and therefore caution requires that they be placed in a distinct (limbo) category. Such names will, when relevant, be discussed in later sections of this study.

When Jackson discussed this issue in 1955 the main question to be resolved was whether early Pictish, for which he coined the term *Pritenic*, was P- or Q-Celtic. The prevailing view at the time was that Celtic had at some early point bifurcated into these two distinct branches. This was of some importance as the later evidence robustly demonstrated that Pictish shared many important linguistic features and innovations with Neo-Brittonic. The identification of features in the early evidence perceived as pertaining to either one of these groups would therefore be of some interest in approaching this issue. In recent decades the supposedly clear-cut and early bifurcation of Celtic into P- or Q-branches has been questioned with various Celticists, such as McCone (2008, 37), who labelled the development of /kw/ > /p/ as ‘essentially trivial’. There is an ongoing debate about the categorization of Brittonic as Insular Celtic or Gallo-Brittonic,²⁵⁷ while a much more intricate and fluid linguistic scenario has also been proposed.²⁵⁸

There is little consensus on how to categorise the attested early Celtic languages, so this section will not be focussing on trying to shoehorn an assumed unitary ‘Pritenic’ language into debated linguistic boxes. The approach to the

²⁵⁷ See Koch (2006(d)) for a brief discussion and further references.

²⁵⁸ See Woolf (2013(d)) for example, who does not actually engage with the linguistic evidence for Pictland.

variant(s) of Celtic spoken in Calidonia will be to scrutinise the evidence looking for noteworthy linguistic features and discussing how to interpret them.

Only two linguists have attempted a fairly comprehensive survey of the early evidence, O’Rahilly in 1946 and Jackson in 1955. Various others have engaged with certain aspects or distinct sources. Watson (1926), Nicolaisen (1976) and Rivet & Smith (1979) discussed the early toponymic evidence in detail. In 1983 Koch provided an overview accompanied by a number of specific proposals, and Isaac in ‘Scotland’ (2005(c)) discussed Ptolemy’s *Geographia*. Various other scholars, such as Breeze have discussed individual items or issues. This chapter will build on such research, collating all known items including the small number of relevant personal names. Summarising all earlier proposals is beyond the scope of this study and this has already been accomplished by Rivet & Smith (1979), where such investigations can be found. The section below is largely an update of their work.

An issue of some importance is the proposed survival of a non-IE language. This notion has been criticised by various scholars (see Chapter 1), but still has a number of adherents. Of major significance here is the fact that Peter Schrijver (2000, 2004) and de Bernardo Stempel (2007) have argued for the survival of a non-Indo-European language in Ireland until the Early Medieval Period. This view has been more fully developed by Schrijver in 2014 (II.8., 72-87) where he argues that a Celtic language was only first introduced into Ireland in the first century CE, possibly introduced from Britain by Brigantian refugees.²⁵⁹

Confirmation of such a pre-Celtic survival in Calidonia in this earlier period would lend support to the enduring belief that the *ogham* inscriptions of the early medieval period were not composed in a Celtic language, and that some of the more eccentric name-forms in the unhistorical sections of the SL king-lists were of a similar origin. There are also a small number of puzzling names from the historic period.²⁶⁰ Refutation would encourage persistence in searching for Celtic solutions. Forsyth engaged with this issue in 1997 but stressed that her

²⁵⁹ This radical proposal has yet to undergo serious criticism by other specialists.

²⁶⁰ For example *Corindu* (AU) *Girom* / *Giron*, *Wdrost* / *Budrost*, *Caltaine* / *Cailtram* (SL1 / SL2 H).

approach was not primarily linguistic. This section seeks to complement that study by re-investigating the evidence from a dedicated linguistic perspective.

The corpus of evidence is hardly any greater today than when it was discussed by Jackson in 1955. However, the intervening period has seen the publishing of a great many studies on early Celtic linguistics and onomastics, which enables the evidence to be approached with access to significantly greater comparative and interpretational resources. Additionally, there is new thinking on the questions that can be asked of the evidence and many of the assumptions and beliefs regarding ethnicity and language that characterised earlier commentators have been questioned.

The challenges of the sources have been discussed various times, for example by Rivet & Smith (1979, 29-36), by Russell (2000), by Sims-Williams (2006, 1-15) and by Coates (2009, 56-59). The following discussion draws on such work and highlights the limitations of the material employed in this chapter.

Early attested forms are not necessarily reliable representations of native realisations, and numerous issues render many of them of questionable linguistic value. The textual evidence is preserved in medieval manuscripts which attest numerous demonstrable corruptions, and such items are often attested in only one source and cannot be corroborated elsewhere.²⁶¹ The evidence is overwhelmingly onomastic, referring primarily to ethnonyms and rivers, with extremely few settlements or inland features noted. There is not a single item which can be claimed as directly representing a native form, and mediation has been both oral and written with items often passed through Celtic to Latin, and in the case of Ptolemy and Dio Cassius to Greek. While much of the material was collated by the Roman military many of these troops were from Celtic-speaking areas in Britain and Gaul²⁶² and their possible involvement in standardising or even coining names must be borne in mind.²⁶³ The least mediated item is perhaps the Colchester inscription which was commissioned by a romanised Calidonian, but even this has presumably been mediated by a Latin orthographer

²⁶¹ See for example Russell (2000).

²⁶² See Fraser (2008, 66) & Ogilvie & Richmond (1967, 251). See also Dobson & Mann (1973) in particular pp. 198-205 which discusses the constitution of the Roman army in Britain.

²⁶³ For a discussion of such issues see Parsons (2011).

and engraved by an artisan in a major Roman *colonia*. By the third century spoken Latin had evolved on most levels away from the established written norm and various local peculiarities had emerged, primarily due to contact with other languages.²⁶⁴

There are non-Celtic forms in the toponymic corpus, such as *Victoria* and *Πτερωτον στρατοπεδον*, a Greek name which apparently means ‘Winged Camp’, demonstrating that settlements need not necessarily represent local names. We also know that Ptolemy, when engaging with other areas, lists together place-names originally belonging to different periods (de Bernardo Stempel 2005, 101) and we cannot assume that the evidence for Calidonia represents a linguistic snapshot of c. 140. Various items would have been familiar to Greeks/Romans some centuries earlier, and the personal name evidence (apart from *Calgacus*) is significantly later and dates from c. 209 and 222x235. Not a single independent lexical item or sentence has survived and therefore investigating issues such as noun declensions, verb conjugations or syntax in any meaningful depth is impossible. It is only the phonology, severely restricted items of the lexicon and certain aspects of noun morphology which can be approached. These, and other, issues must be considered when engaging with the evidence, the main sources being discussed below.

2.1.1 *Tacitus – Agricola*

The earliest source of information is the *Agricola* a short eulogy composed c. 98 by the prominent Roman senator Cornelius Tacitus. It commemorates the life of Iulius Agricola, the author’s late father-in-law who oversaw the first Roman military campaigns in *Calidonia*. A copy (Cod. Vitt. Em. 1631) survived in the *Codex Aesinas* in a library at Jesi in Italy and this quite recently acquired by the *Biblioteca Nazionale* in Rome (see Woodman & Kraus 2014, 35-37). It was previously held, in the fifteenth century, in the Benedictine Abbey at Hersfeld near Fulda in Germany.²⁶⁵ The *Agricola* occupies folios 52-65 of the manuscript but is composed of two distinct parts. The central portion of the text (folios 56-63) was written in the ninth century in the so-called Carolingian miniscule hand

²⁶⁴ See, for example, Hamp (1975) who discusses social gradience in British spoken Latin.

²⁶⁵ For earlier views see Ogilvie & Richmond (1967, 80-87).

while the two outer portions (folios 52-55 & 64-65) were written in the fifteenth century by the Renaissance scholar Stefanor Guarnieri (loc. cit.). It is various copies removed from the original, and it is unlikely that the relevant items have escaped corruption in the process.

Active in Rome, Tacitus would have had direct access not only to his father-in-law but also to archive material and individuals directly engaged in the Flavian military campaigns.²⁶⁶ However, in contrast to Ptolemy, references to relevant names in his work are few and incidental. The items directly relevant to this study are the three rivers *Bodotria* (23, 25.1, 25.3), *Clota* (23), *Taus* (22.1); two island names *Orcades* (10.4), *Thule* (10.4); one mountain *Graupius* (29.2); one harbour *Trucculensis* (38.4), various attestations of *Caledonia* and the personal name *Calgacus*.²⁶⁷

2.1.2 Ptolemy - *The Geographia*

By far the most important source, in terms of the number of items preserved, is the *Geographia*²⁶⁸ of Claudius Ptolemaeus (Ptolemy), a Greek polymath working in the library at Alexandria in the second quarter of the second century. This work can be confidently dated to c. 140-150 (Rivet & Smith 1979, 103). It comprises eight books, the full description of the British Isles being contained in Book II. Place-names are listed sequentially in discreet groups with grid references. His sources, however, probably pre-date c. 120 as Hadrian's Wall and its associated forts are notably absent. Much of the material is derived from earlier writers, in particular the Greek cartographer Marinus of Tyre who, though a contemporary of Ptolemy, seems to have been active slightly earlier.

The earliest surviving copies of the *Geographia* date to c. 1200 (Russell 2000, 180) over a thousand years after the composition of the original. It is evident that these are many copies removed from the original, and a great many errors of transcription can be identified from the variants attested in the numerous surviving manuscripts. In areas under lasting Roman control corrupt forms can be

²⁶⁶ For a discussion see Woodman & Kraus (2014, 1-35).

²⁶⁷ See Woodman & Kraus (2014, 13-14).

²⁶⁸ The edition used here is Müller (1883). For broader studies see Parsons, Sims-Williams (2000) and de Hoz, Luján, Sims-Williams (2005) and especially Rivet & Smith (1979, Chapter 3, 103-47).

compared with those in other sources and adjusted accordingly, but many of the items in *Calidonia* occur in the *Geographia* alone, thus precluding such corrections.

Later reflexes can also provide the means to correct such errors, but in many important cases these do not occur in *Calidonia*, meaning that emending is fraught with uncertainty. A case in point is *ókitis* (the island of Skye), which is the primary manuscript form, but which can be confidently modified to *Σkitis* (*Scitis*) on the basis of numerous other contemporary and later attestations. While this can be corrected with confidence the same cannot be said for the following attested pairs for which there are no reflexes: *Kelníou* / *Kálios* (river Deveron) and the group name *Taiksáloi* / *Taizáloi* (ABD). The latter two forms vary in the same manuscript evidencing the confusion between ξ and ζ. Even the Thames, which would have been among the most familiar rivers on the island, and one which is well-attested in other sources, is transcribed in all the manuscripts as *ιαμησα* (*iamesa*), with τ (*tau*) misread as ι (*iota*). Another example from just to the south of *Calidonia* is *Ὀταλινοί* (*Otalinoi*), the form which Müller favoured in the standard edition of the *Geographia* published in 1883. On the basis of later reflexes, medieval Welsh *Guotodin* (HB§62, 79) and Irish *Fotudáin* (*Duan Albanach*, stanza 3; Jackson 1957, 129), the underlying original Latin form **Uotadini* can be restored with confidence, providing evidence for the omission of the initial consonant (probably in Latin) and the later misreading of Greek Δ (*delta*) as Λ (*lambda*). One can imagine the head-scratching and wild linguistic theories that *Otalinoi* and *iamesa* could generate were they not attested elsewhere. If a name as well-known as the Thames can be corrupted then how much faith can we place in names in a peripheral area like *Calidonia*, which was outwith Roman control at the time? A curious or even outlandish name-form is therefore to be treated with extreme caution, and cannot, on its own, be taken as evidence for any unusual linguistic situations. Additionally, there are various issues with how Latin forms would be adapted into Greek. For example Latin *e* could be transcribed as η or ε and *o* as ω or ο.

The ultimate source of much of the evidence is certainly the Roman military, as no other body had the organisation and resources to conduct such a survey. The recording of many of the items discussed below may be assigned to the activities of the fleet which circumnavigated northern Britain c. 84. Others may derive

from general Roman military involvement in the north. As noted, the mediation of Gallo-Brittonic troops is to be considered as is the possibility that some information was provided directly by Greeks such as Demetrios, the *γραμματικός* who seems to have sailed on a slightly earlier but similar voyage (Ogilvie & Richmond 1967, 32). Such items could have escaped the demonstrable Latin modifications seen in various items.

Ptolemy initially drew maps and from these he extracted grid references. Research has shown that he achieves an accuracy of no more than 16½ Roman miles which equates to a little over 15 statute miles (Rivet & Smith 1979, 105). All items are moved to the nearest grid line, meaning that the stated locations are by no means accurate by modern standards. The earth is also reckoned to be about 72% of its actual size and distances were calculated from one place to the next (Koch 2006(e)). Additionally, the further one moves from Alexandria the less accurate are the locations,²⁶⁹ and Scotland appears as if rotated some 90 degrees clockwise. Ptolemy or perhaps his source (Marinus) had access to various maps of parts of Britain,²⁷⁰ not all of the same scale, and it was believed that life was not possible above the 61st parallel which bisected Scotland laterally. The solution was to move and rotate these maps to bring the most northerly attested area below this line. Into this new arrangement items attested on separate itineraries or maps may have been integrated (Strang 1997, 1998). This all makes equating names with modern places very challenging. The Esk (ANG & ABD) which boasts a good though tidal harbour is absent, and the Don is attested only as a *polis* of the *Taiksáloi*. The incompleteness of this survey is to be borne in mind when engaging with any statistical approach to investigating issues such as ‘Celticity’ (cf. Isaac 2005).

Other sources of evidence, such as the writings of Dio Cassius (c. 155 - 234) and Pliny, which provide but one or two items will be discussed in context. Similarly the background of inscriptions will be discussed below. The Ravenna Cosmography,²⁷¹ a list of place-names covering the world from India to Ireland,

²⁶⁹ Dr Alastair Strang (pers. comm., 2011).

²⁷⁰ Note however that Woodman & Kraus (2014, 14) state that while itineraries were common ‘maps were almost certainly unknown’. See footnote 54 for a brief discussion and numerous further refs.

²⁷¹ The edition employed here is Teubner (1942).

survives in three medieval manuscripts and was composed in northern Italy by an anonymous cleric at some date soon after 700. It draws on much earlier Classical material but the forms are notoriously corrupt and have to be treated with extreme care, though occasionally they can be useful.

2.1.3 *The Corpus*

Only items which can be confidently ascribed to Calidonia will be discussed while those which cannot be located with any confidence, such as the group name *Attacotti*,²⁷² are not included. Items are grouped for convenience into coherent typological categories, rather than according to the definitions used by Ptolemy. For example, some rivers are noted only as bays or settlements, and are discussed under ‘rivers’, but their original designations are noted in the list below. Many items have variant attestations, often numerous, and there is necessarily an element of subjective choice in the form used as a headword. The forms used conform to what is judged to be the closest to the original, that is the form that best corresponds to a plausible etymology. *Cal̄idonii* is used rather than the variant *Calēdonii* as this is the form implied by the later Welsh reflexes (see 2.3.5.). There is admittedly a danger of circularity here, but relevant secondary and primary sources will be noted which will allow readers to pursue any queries.²⁷³ Greek forms are transcribed into the Latin alphabet. I have not included a discussion of Greek or Latin names e.g. *Pinnata Castra*, *Ripa Alta*, *Horrea Classis*, *Victoria*. The etymology and significance of some items are straightforward while others are problematic and of some importance, requiring longer and more detailed discussions. The aim is to establish whether or not a name can be interpreted as Celtic, whether there are any noteworthy linguistic features and to provide material upon which discussions in subsequent chapters will draw.

²⁷² See McCone (2008, 12-13) for a discussion of the name. He argues that they may have been from Ireland.

²⁷³ Attestations can be found in *The Place-names of Roman Britain* (Rivet & Smith, 1979).

1. Personal Names (4): *Calgacus*, *Argentocoxos*, *Lossio Veda*, *Vepogenus*.
2. Group Names (18): *Boresti*, *Damnónioi*, *Dekántai*, *Epidíoi*, *Kalēdónioi*, *Karinoí*, *Karnonákai*, *Kérōnes*, *Kornaúioi*, *Kréōnes*, *Loûgoi*, *Maiatai*, *Ouakomágoi*, *Oueníkōnes*, *Picti*, *Smértai*, *Taiksáloi*, *Uerturiones*.
3. River Names (19): *Alaûna* (Allan), *Bodería* (Forth), *Kaílios* (Deveron), *Klōta* (Clyde), *Dēoúa* (Dee), *Dēoúana* (Don), *Íla* (Helmsdale), *Ítuos* (Loch Etive??), *Lemannónios* (Loch Long, Loch Fyne, Loch Lomond), *Lóggou* (Loch Linne, Firth of Lorn), *Lóksa* (Lossie, Findhorn?), *Nabárou* (Naver), *Nassa* (?Ness), *Ouárar* (Farrar), *Oúolsas* (Loch Eriboll / Loch Broom), *Támeia* (Isla / Dean Water), *Taoúa* (Tay), *Tína* (? Eden), *Toúaisis* (Spey).

Alaûna, *Dēoúana* and *Támeia* & *Toúaisis* are noted as settlements. Others are noted as gulfs *kólpos* (*Lemannónios*, *Oúolsas*), river estuaries *potamoû ekbolai* (*Dēoúa*, *Íla*, *Ítuos*, *Kaílios*, *Lóksa*, *Lóggou*, *Nabárou*, *Taoúa*, *Tína*) and others as noted by the hapax legomenon *eískhysis* ‘outflow’ (*Bodería*, *Klōta*, *Ouárar*, *Toúaisis*).

4. Settlements (2): *Banatía* (Dalginross?), *Líndon* (Drumquhassle?).

The settlements *Alaûna*, *Dēoúana* and *Támeia* & *Toúaisis* are discussed above in section 3.

5. Promontories & Ports (4): *Ouirouedroúm* (Duncansby Head), *Oueroubíoum* (Noss Head), *Tarouedoúm* (Dunnet Head).

Taiksálōn is also noted as a promontory, but the name is discussed above in section 2 (under *Taiksáloi*).

6. Island Names (7): *Cana* (Canna??), *Daruveda* (uncertain), *Doúmna* (Outer Hebrides), *Éboudai* (Inner Hebrides), *Maleós* (Mull), *Orkádes* (Orkney), *Skitis* (Skye).

7. Geographical Features: (1) *Mons Graupius*.

2.2 Personal Names

Only four individuals, all male, are named in early sources.²⁷⁴ The first is *Calgacus*, noted by Tacitus as one of the supreme chieftains of the Calidonian confederacy who fought the Roman forces at the Battle of *Mons Graupius* (c. 84). The second is Ἀργεντοκόξου (gen.), normalised here as *Argentocoxos*, a Calidonian chieftain mentioned (c. 209) by the Greek historian and Roman consul Cassius Dio (c. 155 x 229+). The third and fourth names, *LOSSIO VEDA* and *VEPOGENI* are both inscribed on a small bronze plaque²⁷⁵ found in the ruins of a Roman temple in Colchester in 1891. This is dedicated to the emperor Alexander Pius Felix and therefore securely dated to 222 x 235. The qualifying *CALEDO* ‘a Calidonian’ indicates the ethnicity of the dedicator. This plaque also attests a unique theonym *MEDOCI*, noted in apposition to the Roman *Mars*, but as it cannot be demonstrated to be specifically Calidonian it will not be discussed here. This important piece of evidence is absent from early discussions such as O’Rahilly (1946).

2.2.1 *Calgacus*

*Calgacus*²⁷⁶ (Agricola 29), /kalga:kos/, is transparently Celtic, usually interpreted as meaning *swordsman*, *stinger* or perhaps *swordbearer*. The interpretation is derived from a comparison with OGael *colg* (& *calg*) ‘pointe, épée’ (LEIA C-157) and an adjectival suffix *-a:k-.²⁷⁷ This meaning is nowhere attested for the cognates in Brittonic e.g. W *cala*, Bret *calc’h*, < **kalga*-, which all unambiguously mean ‘penis’.²⁷⁸ This was the etymology accepted by Holder (1896, 698) and is also noted in CPNRB.²⁷⁹ An exact parallel to this suffixed compound, though not necessarily a direct reflex,²⁸⁰ is found in medieval Welsh *caliog* ‘having a penis,

²⁷⁴ The form *Medocio* is also discussed below (2.2.5.) but it is argued that this is not relevant to this thesis.

²⁷⁵

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_prb/d/dedicatory_plaque.a.spx

²⁷⁶ For a treatment of his historical role see Fraser (2008, 60-64).

²⁷⁷ On which see Russell (1990 *passim*).

²⁷⁸ Presumably the original root ‘point’ etc. had become narrowed by the period of Neo-Brittonic perhaps long before that.

²⁷⁹ <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/details.php?name=136>

²⁸⁰ The earliest references in GPC are from the 15th century meaning that this could be a medieval re-formation. However, given its meaning, its absence from earlier literature is hardly surprising.

vasatus' (GPC). A cognate OGael form is *colgach* (cf. *W colyn* 'sting') 'fierce (?)', 'bristling (?)' (eDIL) which would again provide an appealing meaning. The only other attestations as a personal name occurs some four or five centuries later in Ireland in an entry in the Annals of Tigernach (595.3) recording the death of *Tibruide maic Calgaigh* (gen.) and in the place-name *Daire Calgaich*, the earlier name of Derry (AU 724.6). If one wished to maintain a semantic link with a weapon it would be easier to equate this item with Goidelic, as there is no evidence that **calg-* ever passed through this martial semantic stage in Brittonic. This cannot be discounted, as a semantic shift of 'sword' to 'penis' could have post-dated the attestation of this name. However, **calg-* is otherwise unattested in early Celtic personal name nomenclature, and its absence would be unusual as words for weapons figure prominently in such contexts e.g. *Cladi-uata* < **kladjo-* 'sword' (Delamarre 2007, s.v. *clad-*). That this was the common name in Brittonic for the male member is likely given that there are no other competing forms, and that it is attested in all three Brittonic languages. A development from PIE 'point' to Britt 'penis' is uncomplicated. Interpreting this as vulgar is unnecessary as it is difficult to assess the impact of such items in Celtic-speaking societies. If Roman imagery is anything to go by then it need not be considered unusual and it might simply imply potency and be compared to other Celtic names with proposed phallic associations e.g. *Bussu-marus* (Delamarre 2007, 214; 2003, 95, s.v. *Bussu-*).²⁸¹ While transparently Celtic this name provides no conclusive evidence for any more specific linguistic affiliations. Speculatively *Calgacus* 'potent, swordsman, fierce, well-endowed' could even represent a nickname employed by the significant numbers of Celtic troops active in the Flavian campaigns in northern Britain. Woodman & Kraus (2014, 235) refer to some views which suspect him to be a fictional creation, meaning that this name provides no firm basis on which to base any grand theories.

2.2.2 *Argentocoxos*

The name is attested in the work of the Greco-Roman historian and consul Dio Cassius c. 220 (Boissevain 1901, Vol. III, lxxvi.16.5, 371). *Argentocoxos* is presented as the barbarian leader who engaged in diplomatic discussions, and

²⁸¹ Katherine Forsyth informs me that ithyphallic figures in Norse iconography denote power or force rather than being primarily sexual. See also Falileyev (2009, 64) for a discussion of this element and further references. It is noted that Stifter has challenged the equation of this element with OGael *bot* 'penis'.

war, with the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus during the military campaigns in northern Britain c. 209. For a discussion of his historical role see Fraser (2009, 27-8 & 60). The name represents a Greek adaptation of a Latin form of a Celtic name. It is easily interpreted as a regular Celtic close compound < **arganto-*+ **koxso-*²⁸² ‘silver-leg/foot’. It has been compared to the name of the Irish mythological figure *Nuadu Airgetlám* ‘silverhand’ and the homologous Welsh *Nudd Llaw Eiriant* (Mackillop 1998). Jackson (1955, 165) compared it with the problematic *Ar(t)cois* ‘bear-leg’ (?) which occurs in the SL versions of the king-lists, suggesting that it could represent a garbled reflex. Zimmer (2002) proposed that Celtic **arganto-*, though interpreted as ‘silver’ by the time of the earliest sources, originally meant ‘swift’ and this would tally well with the generic ‘foot’, giving a meaning ‘swift-foot’. Welsh *coes* is a borrowing from Latin *coxa* ‘a hip’ (Lewis 1943, §86, 23), and not a reflex of **koxso-*, an item which is not attested in Neo-Brittonic.²⁸³

It could have been claimed that the preservation of /nt/, which became /d/ in Goidelic, indicated proximity to Brittonic but, as noted by McCone (1996, 77) this development may not have occurred at this time. Names containing Celtic *arganto-* are often remodelled on the basis of the Lat cognate *argentum* e.g. *Argenta*, *Argentilla* (Delamarre 2007, 25), *Argento-rate* (Strasbourg; Delamarre 2007, 53) meaning that the distinct vowel is of no consequence. There are therefore no features in this name which can be shown to indicate affiliation with either Brittonic or Goidelic. Jackson employed this name as a *terminus post quem* for his proposed change of Pritenic /xs/ > /s/ (see Chapter 3).

2.2.3 *Lossio Veda*²⁸⁴

The inscription occurs on a bronze ansate plate a little larger than 8"x3" and was found in 1891 in the ruins of what was probably once a Roman temple (Collingwood & Wright 1965, 63).

²⁸² For **koxso-* see LEIA C-214 (s.v. *cos*) & Matasović (2009, 220, s.v. **koxsā*).

²⁸³ Unless it is preserved in W *cogwrn* ‘lump, knuckle’ etc. < **koxgurn* < **koxso-korn* (Anders Jörgensen, pers. comm.).

²⁸⁴ This inscription figured prominently as Jackson’s *terminus post quem* for the supposed Pritenic change of /xs/ > /s/, in that he suggested that the name *Lossio* could be derived from a root **loxs-* meaning bent oblique. For the full discussion of this issue see below at 3.8.7.

It reads as follows:

DEO MARTI MEDOCIO CAMP
ESIUM ET VICTORIAE ALEXAN
DRI PII FELICIS AUGUSTI NOSI
DONUM LOSSIO VEDA DE SUO
POSUIT NEPOS VEPOGENI CALEDO²⁸⁵

To the god Mars Medocius of the Campeses and to the Victory of our Emperor Alexander Pius Felix, Lossio Veda, grandson²⁸⁶ of Vepogenus, a Caledonian, set up this gift from his own resources. (Collingwood & Wright 1965, §191, 63)

It is due to the item *CALEDO* that this inscription is understood to have some bearing upon language in Britannia beyond the walls. This ethnonym would appear to represent a nom. sg. of a Latin 3rd declension (consonant stem i.e. PIE *n*-stem) noun as in *homō*, *hominis*. In the Celtic of this period this would have been declined as /kalidu:/ (nom. sg.) and /kalidones/ (nom. pl.). The Celtic form was equated with the cognate Latin declension due to evident similarities in the case endings.²⁸⁷

Due to the reference to the emperor Alexander Pius (222x235) this inscription can be dated with a high degree of confidence.²⁸⁸ It would probably be too sceptical to suggest that it could be a later and retrospective production. The presence of a Calidonian (or at least someone of Calidonian descent²⁸⁹ in the capital of Roman Britain (Camulodunum), so soon after the highly destructive Severan campaigns against the Calidonii (c. 209), is intriguing. Political stability may have been achieved by the reign of Alexander Pius (Fraser 2009, 26-28) and

²⁸⁵ See <http://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/191>

²⁸⁶ The precise meaning of *nepos* in this period is uncertain and it could mean 'descendent' (Collingwood & Wright 1965, 63).

²⁸⁷ With this one can compare how pre-apocope W interprets Lat *Salomon* as an *n*-stem and forms a new nom. sg. **Salomo*: (> **Salomu*: > **Salomi*: > *Selyf*). See Lewis & Pedersen (1937, §181(1), 108). Compare also with the Old Welsh name *Catguolaun* which gives Old English *Cædualla* due to equating the W form with OE weak nouns, and thus generating a nom. sg. in –a.

²⁸⁸ The lettering is internally consistent and there is no reason to suspect that it was not all inscribed at the same time. The inscriber is not particularly competent and runs out of space as he proceeds meaning that the last three lines are rather compressed.

²⁸⁹ It could be that it is *Vepogenus* who was a Calidonian.

our Calidonian's presence in Colchester would accord well with this modified political situation. Note that he advocates the victory of *our* emperor, *NOS[TR]I*, in the same dedication. This may be a further indicator that some Calidones accepted the political authority of Rome, perhaps as official clients, perhaps serving as mercenaries. Such contacts would provide a context for extra-mural barbarians to be engaging with the evolving Celtic dialects of the Empire.

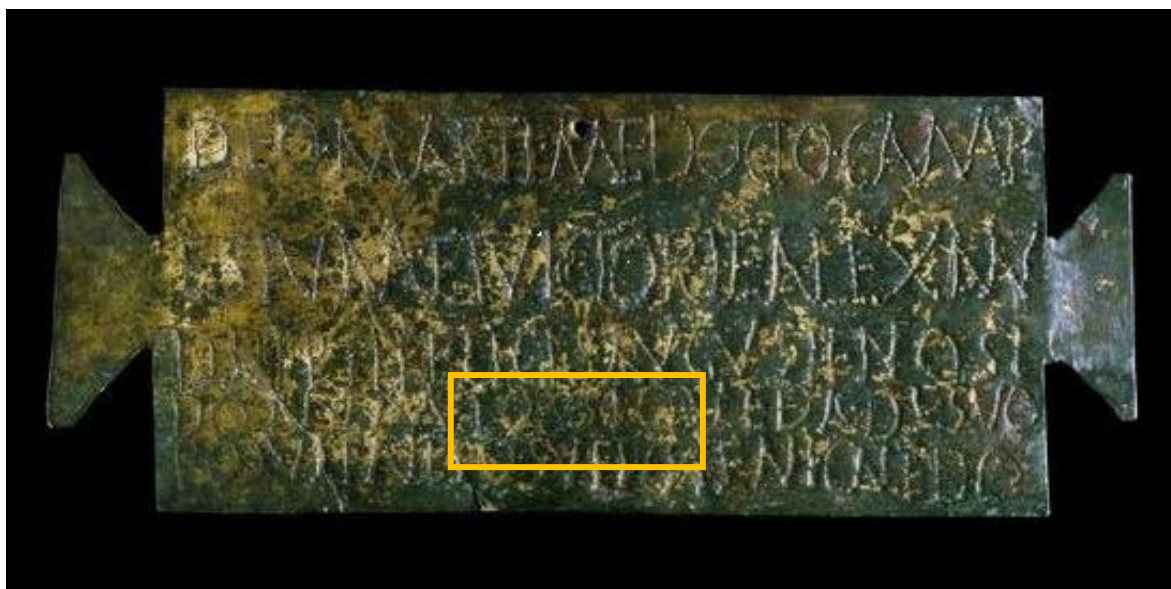


Figure 1 The Colchester Inscription (1)²⁹⁰

The actual form of the name *Lossio Veda* poses various questions. Both items are in the nominative, and *Lossio* is (like *Caledo* above) to be interpreted as the nom. sg. of a 3rd declension noun. The original Celtic would presumably have been /losju:/, or similar (see below), but given the intended audience, which is overtly Roman, making linguistic modifications would have served to broadcast the affiliation with Latinate culture.²⁹¹ Such modifications are common and one could compare this scenario with that of the Celtic-speaking potters of La Graufesenque in Gaul in the second century who never inscribe the Celtic forms of their names on the pottery they produce as the ‘language of choice is determined by the expected readership’ (Adams 2003, 705). In our case the readership is likely to be largely Roman.

²⁹⁰ ©The British Museum.

²⁹¹ For a discussion of similar approaches to Celtic names in a Latinate context, at the Gaulish pottery of La Graufesanque, see Adams (2003, Chap. 7, 687-724).

Several similar items such as *Lossa*, *Lossio*, and *Lossia* are attested on the Celtic-speaking continent (Delamarre 2007, 225, s.v. *losto*-; Falileyev 2009, 101; Whatmough 1970, 819, 840, 1347 etc.). One is identical (Delamarre 2007, 119, s.v. *Lossius*). Given the absence of *ov* (/ow/) in Latin writing one could also consider it as an adaptation of names in *Lous*- (Delamarre 2007, 120). CPNRB notes the interpretation as uncertain.²⁹²

Three interpretations could be suggested:

First, this could be a poorly attested Celtic root **loxs*- ‘bent, crooked’ (Jackson 1955, 165) derived from a Celtic cognate of the Greek *λοξός* ‘oblique’,²⁹³ cf. Lat. *luscus* ‘one-eyed’ and OGael *losc* ‘crippled’²⁹⁴ (Isaac 2005(c), 197, s.n. *Lóksa*). Such a form is apparently attested as the name of a Gaulish potter *Λοξ* (Beaulieu & Fischer 1998, G-47, 67; Delamarre 2007, 120, s.v. *Lox*; see photograph below). Both *Loxa* and *Losa* occur as divine names in Aquitania, although they may be Proto-Basque (Rivet & Smith 1979, 399). One could indeed imagine that ‘hunched’ would be an appropriate nickname for a potter. Note that *Λοξ* is the only Continental form which indicates /xs/ rather than /s/. This interpretation is plausible but uncertain.

This item provided Jackson with the earliest piece of evidence for his postulated Pritenic change of /xs/ > /s/ (1955, 165).²⁹⁵ However, it is commonplace for personal names to be adapted phonemically to the surrounding linguistic context, and as standard spoken Latin language lacked the cluster /xs/ a modification to /s/ would be very plausible. Such a latinisation could be seen as conferring a certain cachet on the individual.²⁹⁶ Compare this with the names *Camuloris* (for *-ri:xs*), *Cunoris* (for *Cunorix*)²⁹⁷ and the later *Ordovs* (see Jackson

²⁹² <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/details.php?name=284>

²⁹³ For a discussion of this form see Delamarre (2003, 209, s.v. *loxso*-). See also Falileyev (2009, 98) s.n. *Lexovius*, and Matasović (2011(b), 25, s.v. **losko*) where the interrelatedness of the proposed cognates is labelled as ‘very speculative’.

²⁹⁴ This would require early metathesis (anterior to /xs/ > /ss/) i.e. **loxs*- > **losk*-. This could be paralleled by the Gaulish name *Loscius* (Delamarre 2007, 119), unless this represents the etymon of W *llosg* ‘burning, bright’.

²⁹⁵ See 3.8.7 for a discussion of this issue.

²⁹⁶ For a discussion of similar issues in Gaul see Adams (2003, 7.IV.2, 703-7).

²⁹⁷ This occurs in *Flauia Cunoris*, in eastern Britain at Ashwell, Hertfordshire. See Sims-Williams (2013, 37, fn 4), quoting from *L’Année Epigraphique* (2005, 900).

1955, 619 & Sims-Williams 2003, 25). Note also, for example, Gaulish names from **dexsu*- ‘right, favourable’ (Delamarre 2007, 219) attested as *Desi-dienus*, *Dessu-aeona* and *Desu-mena* which alternate with forms in *xs*.²⁹⁸

It must also be noted that Latin *x* can also develop to /s/, or at least be represented by it in inscriptions, as in *Alesan(der)* (Collingwood & Wright 1965, 375; Mann 1971, 223) for *Alexander*. Note also the hypercorrect -*x*- for -*s*- in *Ixarninus* for **Isarninus* (loc. cit.). In Calidonia our individual may therefore have used the form ***Loxsiu*: (vel sim.). Note that *Calēdo* probably represents a latinisation of /kalidu:/, providing direct evidence of linguistic modification in this inscription.

Secondly, it might be proposed that this name, like similar forms in Gaul, is derived from Celtic **losta*- ‘spear, tail’ (Delamarre 2007, 225, s.v. *losto*-, *losso*-). Were one to argue for a change of /st/ > /s/ in Pritenic one could compare with O’Rahilly’s proposal for the Lossie (1946, 382) which also involved this root. This, however, would conflict with the preservation of /st/ in the later names *Vnuist* & *Onuist* (SL1).

The third option is that we are dealing with a Celtic name of unknown meaning. Ellis Evans, when discussing *Lousios*, *Lousius* noted that the ‘name is entirely without etymology... The name may be Celtic but I can see no way of proving it’ (1967, 457). If *Lousius* is indeed the same name as *Lossio* it must be noted that in this instance the name (and others) is latinised, in what appears to be a ‘Gaulish’ language text by substituting the *o*-stem nom. sg. with Latin -*us*. Such uncertainty regarding the etymology compromises its linguistic value. It may be the earliest instance of proposed Pictish /*xs*/ > /s/ but this can be questioned, in particular as it could be latinised. The numerous attestations of formally similar items would lend support to the view that the name is Celtic.

For *VEDA* there are various Celtic roots which could plausibly be represented by this latinised form. The Latin grapheme *E* can represent Clt /e:/ or /e/. There is also orthographic variation between Latin *i* and *e*, /i/ having been lowered to /e/ in variants of Vulgar Latin (Allen 1978, 48-49; Hamp 1975, 156-57), hence

²⁹⁸ Pierre-Yves Lambert confirms that /*xs*/ > /s/ is not a change in Gaulish itself but rather one that occurs in Vulgar Latin (pers. comm., March 2013).

CALEDO for /kalidu:/. This leads to much confusion in British inscriptions where -e- can stand for Lat /ɪ/ (e.g. *condedit* for *condidit*) and -i- can stand for /e/ (e.g. *Ociano* for *Oceano*).²⁹⁹

Presumably this word (*veda*) is to be interpreted as a Latin masculine first declension (*a*-stem) noun.³⁰⁰

E = /e:/

1. /we:do-/ ‘sight, presence, knowledge’, *W gŵydd*¹ (Matasović 2009, 407) - the etymology Jackson favoured (1955, 138 & 162). If it bore the meaning of the OGael cognate *fíad* ‘honour, respect’ it would provide an appropriate element for a personal name, cf. *Ver-veda*, *Vedius* etc (Delamarre 2007, 235, s.v. *ued*-).
2. /we:du-/ ‘wild’ > *W gŵydd*, Bret. *gouez* (Matasović 2009, 408). Attested according to Sims-Williams (2003, [58] 4., 191), in the name *VEDOMAVI* and possibly in *ogham VEDA-CUNAS*.
3. /we:d-o-/ ‘tell, relate’ (Matasović 2009, 407).

E = /e/

4. /wed-o-/ ‘lead, bring together’ (Matasović 2009, 406; Delamarre 2007, 235, s.v. *ued*-). Perhaps a fitting name or epithet for a powerful Calidonian with possible military interests.
5. /wedo-/ ‘yoke, harness’ (Matasović 2009, 407).

E = /i/, as in *Caledo* for /kalidu:/

6. /widu-/ ‘wood’ (Matasović 2009, 420).

²⁹⁹ For source references and numerous further examples see Mann (1971, 220).

³⁰⁰ See Delamarre (2003, 56) for a discussion of masculine *ā*-stems in Gaulish.

For the whole name Jackson proposed ‘the crooked knowing one’, but there would appear to be a multitude of possibilities. He also compared it to the name *Wid* of the king-lists. There are no reasons to seek any explanations outside Celtic, especially as the name of his grandfather/forefather is without doubt Brittonic.

2.2.4 *Vepogenus*³⁰¹

Due to the *p* this is transparently P-Celtic, or at least attests the change of /k^w/ > /p/. The first element **wepo-* is cognate with W *gwep*³⁰² ‘face’, perhaps OGael *focal* ‘word’ (eDIL)³⁰³ and Lat. *vōx* ‘voice’ < PIE *uek^w* ‘voice, speech’ (Matasović 2009, 409). It is a common Clt personal name element e.g. *Vepotalus*, *Οεπορειξ*, *Βηπο-λιτανος* (Delamarre 2003, 313; 2007, 239). Precisely what it means in such contexts is uncertain (see Evans 1967, 203-207).³⁰⁴ If this was the realisation of the name during the lifetime of this individual it would push back the change of /k^w/ > /p/ to somewhere in the region of 175-200 CE, but there is no certainty that Lossio Veda himself might not modify his ancestor’s name from an original /wek^wo/ given the context of the inscription. This process of linguistically updating names of ancestors must have happened at some point during this change or we would find numerous conservative forms in ‘P-Celtic’ languages preserving the original labiovelar.

Geno- is probably to be interpreted as ‘lineage, family’ (Delamarre 2003, 177), ‘born’ (CPNRB)³⁰⁵ or ‘descendent’ (Delamarre 2007, 222). The proposal that the name means ‘Fife-born’ (Koch 1982, 89) is not supported by the fact that **geno-* seems not to be compounded elsewhere with place-names.³⁰⁶ If **geno-* can be understood as ‘descendent’ then one could wonder whether it could be interpreted as ‘descendent of *Uepos*’, perhaps a hypocoristic form of a longer name in *wepo-* or a mythological ancestor. See the entry for *Damnónioi* below

³⁰¹ See CPNRB: <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/details.php?name=495>

³⁰² The final voiceless stop is curious, perhaps simply due to expressive devoicing, cf. *twp*?

³⁰³ Unless this is a borrowing from Latin *uocābulum* (Matasović 2009, 429, s.v. **wox-tlo-* & MacBain (1911, s.v. *facal*).

³⁰⁴ See also Falileyev (2009, 150, s.n. *Veponius*) for further references.

³⁰⁵ http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/search.php?s_element=geno-

³⁰⁶ See Delamarre (2007, 222, s.v. *geno-*) for a list and also Cane (2003, 240 & 264 & 288). Thomas Clancy has raised the possibility that this could be a Latin phrase, comparing with *Eriugena*, *Scotigena*.

where a similar possibility for *Dumnogenos* is explored. It is tempting to connect this to the name *Uip* of the king-lists and to wonder whether this in turn can be related to *Fib*, the earliest attested form of the name of Fife. However, note the difference in vowel and that one might not expect the /-p-/ to emerge as /-v/ in Gaelic.

2.2.5 *Medocio, Campesium*

Medocio (abl. sg.) appears to represent a by-name of Mars and is assimilated to this Roman god by *interpretato Romana*. There appear to be no other attestations of this name unless the *Medoci* attested in Roman north Africa is related (see Delamarre 2007, 130, s.n. *Medocius*). If it is Celtic then plausible roots are **med-o* - ‘measure, judge’ (Matasović 2009, 261)³⁰⁷ or **medu-* ‘mead, alcoholic drink’ (loc. cit.). It is difficult to know what to make of the *-oci* segment. It seems far too early to attest the velar suffix³⁰⁸ /-a:k-/³⁰⁹ as this only became /-ɔ:k/ in the later fifth to early sixth century (Jackson 1955, §9, 290-2; Sims-Williams 2003, §18, 55-70). Whether this name represents a Pictish deity, a local Brittonic one or one from further afield is unknown and for the present at least, this cannot be considered to provide any good evidence for language in Calidonia.

John Rhys, (see Collingwood & Wright 1965, 63) sought to connect *Campesium* with the Campsie Fells in Stirlingshire. This range of hills, despite lying to the north of the Antonine Wall (Bede’s Pictish frontier), forms the visible backdrop to the northern horizon of Glasgow and as such is almost certain to have, in a later period, fallen within the political ambit of the kings of Strathclyde rather than of Pictland. This item therefore requires some commentary, lest it be ignored as a potential source of information for ‘Pritenic’.

The first objection to this as evidence is the fact that there is no element in the known early Celtic lexicon that would explain *Camp-*. Secondly, the name of these hills is probably derived from a much later Gaelic *camas* ‘river-bend’ with

³⁰⁷ See also CPNRB http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/search.php?s_element=medo- which attests a number of names which may attest this element.

³⁰⁸ For an investigation of this suffix see Russell (1990 *passim*).

³⁰⁹ For attestations see CPNRB http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/search.php?s_element=-a:ko-.

a locational suffix (Drummond 2014, 194), attested as *Chamsy* (1165x1189 Kel. Lib. 386; loc. cit.). It is only c. 1200 that the intrusive *p* is attested (Campsy, Glas. Reg. i no. 103). It is likely that the hills take their name from a nearby settlement and Drummond discusses (ibid. 194-95) various other place-names which attest this element. It is therefore reasonable to discount *Campesium* as evidence for Pictish.

2.2.6 Conclusion

The personal name evidence is, apart from *Lossio*, fairly unproblematic and requires no explanation beyond Celtic. If *Lossio* is from /loxs-/ as Jackson suggested this could indicate /xs/ > /s/ prior to 222 x 235 (and after c. 209) and would be an important piece of evidence that Pictish was diverging from Brittonic long before the emergence of Neo-Brittonic languages (but see Chapter 3, Section 6). *Uepogenos* is transparently P-Celtic, but it cannot be demonstrated that this is the form employed by the individual himself in the late second century CE.

2.3 Group Names³¹⁰

About half of the eighteen are attested by Ptolemy alone, the *Boresti*, *Maiatai* and *Uerturiones* are absent from this source. Most groups cannot be located with any great certainty. Items will be discussed in alphabetical order.

2.3.1 Boresti

This is attested in the phrase *in fines Borestorum* (gen. pl.; *Agricola* §38) and located in northern Scotland. O’Rahilly proposed amending to *Uoretti* < *wo-ret-ia the proposed pre-form of W *Gweryd* (etc.) ‘The Firth of Forth’. As noted by Fraser (2008, 115) this cannot hold as the implication in *Agricola* is that the group was among the most northerly of the peoples of Calidonia. There are also evident and significant issues with such orthographic modifications. Breeze (2007), referring to known copying errors and attested phonetic variants of Celtic words proposes *ro-reti ‘great runners/attackers’. There is an appeal here but significant emendation is required. The first element could be equated with

³¹⁰ For a broad discussion of Celtic group names see de Bernardo Stempel (2008).

Clt **bor-*, Mlr *borr* ‘swelling, swollen, thick’, also ‘big; great; mighty; puffed-up, proud’ (eDIL),³¹¹ W *bwr* ‘fat, strong, big’ (GPC). This element does occur in personal names e.g. *Borro-con(is)* (Delamarre 2007, 213). The second element could correspond to the suffix of *Segesta* (Italy), *Segestica* (Croatia; Falileyev 2010, 198). Because the spelling, form and segmentation is so uncertain, it is unusable as linguistic evidence, either in support of Celticity or otherwise.

2.3.2 *Damnónioi*³¹²

Russell (2000, 185) notes that all the early manuscripts have *Δαμνονιοι* which Müller ‘probably rightly emends to *Δαμνονιοι*’. This group apparently straddled the line of the later Antonine Wall,³¹³ and the name can be related to various Celtic roots.³¹⁴ Isaac (2005(c), 191) favours **dam-no-*, OGael *damnae* ‘matter, material’, W *defnydd* i.e. ‘makers’. There are other possibilities such as **dam-na-* ‘subdue, break a horse’, OGael *damnaid* ‘binds’ (Matasović 2009, 88). The southerly *Dumnonii* (> Devon) is also attested by Ptolemy as *Damn-* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 342) meaning that such a variation can be entertained here as well. This proposed emendation to *Dumn-* (e.g. Falileyev 2010, 18), while rejected by Isaac, needs to be noted as it could be compared to the specific of the personal name *Dyfnwal* (< **dumno-*) borne by six members of the Strathclyde royal dynasty (Bartrum 1993, s.nn.). Note also the early medieval *Dumnogenos* on the Yarrow inscription (SLK)³¹⁵ and the place-names *Dowanhill* (LAN) and *Cardowan* (LAN; Wilkinson 2002, 143) which may be related.³¹⁶ Additionally, there is a *Dumn* attested in the Harleian Genealogies as a (mythological?) ancestor of the northerly leader *Cunedda* in a brief section which attests a patronymic pattern attested elsewhere only in the ‘list of thirty Brudes’ in the Pictish King-lists.³¹⁷

³¹¹ See also Evans (1967, 154); Delamarre (2007, 213, s.v. *bor-*).

³¹² See also Rivet & Smith (1979, 343) & James (2012) <http://www.spns.org.uk/bliton/dubin.html>.

³¹³ For the location see Rivet & Smith (1979, 343-44), Driscoll & Forsyth (2004) & Fraser (2009, 15-22).

³¹⁴ See also BLITON, s.v. *dußin*, for further etymological details and attestations of the root.

³¹⁵ <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/53078/details/whitefield+yarrow+stone/>. See also Sims-Williams (2003, 120).

³¹⁶ This theory is in need of some robust testing.

³¹⁷ In the SL versions of the PKL we have ‘Brude Pant. Brude Urpant. B Leo. B U[r]leo. B Gant. B Urgant’ etc. See Anderson (1961, 245). In the Harleian Genealogies we have ‘Cein (map) Guorcein (map) Doli (map) Guordoli (map) Dumn (map) Gurdumn’ (Bartrum 1966, 9). It was argued (e.g. Koch 1983, 219) that this represents an underlying royal succession model,

Jackson (1970, 75), when discussing the southerly ethnonym *Dumnonii*, suggested that the *Dumn-* could also represent a theonym, as in the Irish *Fir Domnan* ‘The Men (i.e. worshippers) of [the God] Dumnū or Dumnonū’. Ó Faoláin (2006(b)), when discussing the southerly group argues that the name may have had significance in the ideological claims of the tribe. Speculatively, one could compare *Dumno-genos* ‘Dumn-born’ to *Vepo-genos* ‘Wepo-born’, perhaps both indicating descent from a mythological or ancestral figure. De Bernardo Stempel interpreted the ethnonym as ‘The Lowland People’ (2005, 100; 2008, 106). This root also means ‘deep’ in modern Celtic languages and this interpretation has been noted in respect of three place-names in WLO which appear to attest cognates of ModW *pawr* ‘grassland’(?)+*dwfn* ‘low-lying land or land with deep soil (see BLITON, s.v. *duβin*).

The similarity to the southerly *Dumnonii* has, various times, been interpreted as indicating that they were immigrants, and this view impacted on some perceptions of the origin of Pictish. This group occupied an area which, many centuries later, formed the core of the kingdom of Strathclyde but there is no reason to assume that it consequently spoke proto-Brittonic rather than proto-Pictish, if there is any value to such terms.

2.3.3 *Dekántai*

They are located to the north of the Moray Firth, and the name was interpreted as ‘those who are excellent, worthy’ (Isaac 2005(c), 192) < PIE **deḱ*³¹⁸- + *-ant*, the participial suffix as in *Nouantae*. Cf. OGael *dech* ‘better’, suppletive superlative of *maith* ‘good’ (eDIL; Matasović 2009, 94). It seems to have a suffixed parallel in Deganwy (CVN; Owen & Morgan 2007, 120). De Bernardo Stempel (2008, 109) interpreted *Dekántai* as ‘The Ten Tribes’ < Clt **dekam*. Jackson (1955, 151 & 161) saw the preservation of /nt/ here as a diagnostically P-Celtic feature, but (as with *Argentocoxos* above) the Goidelic change to /d/ may not yet have occurred when this name entered Latin. Indeed the same suffix is evidenced unmodified in the Irish ethnonym *Brigantes*, who could however represent an immigrant branch of their British namesakes (de Bernardo

employing the preposition *wor* (< PrClt **wer*. ModW *ar* & *gor*-) in the sense of after) i.e. ‘Henry. After Henry, Richard. Richard. After Richard, John. John.’ and so on.

³¹⁸ Note that this is different to his earlier proposal s.v. *decant*- ‘tenth’ (2004).

Stempel 2005, 199). In any case, given the alternative etymologies on offer, this item can no longer be considered as proof that the local spoken form was P-Celtic.

2.3.4 *Epidíoi (& Epidion)*

This group is located in Western Scotland, Kintyre. This form is demonstrably P-Celtic < **ek^w*o- ‘horse’, ‘horsey people’ (Isaac 2005(c), 193). Watson (1926, 23-24) noted the presence of *ech* ‘horse’ in early dynastic names of Dàl Riata kings such as *Eochaid* (Koch 2006(f); Woolf 2013, 6). The form itself attests the Brittonic change of /*k^w*/ > /*p*/, but mediation by P-Celtic-speaking informants cannot be discounted. This could also be compared to the *Manapii* Ptolemy locates in Ireland, unless this does refer to some recently immigrant group. It is also attested as an island name (Rivet & Smith 1979, 361), and has various times been used to explain the name *Éboudai*, but this would require an unmotivated early sound-change of /*p*/ > /*b*/ which is only attested significantly later.

2.3.5 *Kalēdónioi (et al.)*

For the numerous variants see River & Smith (1979, 289-91). They are located in the central massif of the Highlands. The name was considered doubtfully Celtic by Jackson (1955, 151), and was classified as speculatively Celtic by Isaac (2005(c), 193). See Watson (1926, 19-22), Clarke (1969, 191-200) and Koch (2006(b)) for detailed discussions and further references. There are a number of continental parallels such as *CALEDV* (Beaulieu & Fischer 1998, 88, 163), on the coins of the *Aruerni*³¹⁹, also Gaulish personal names such as *Caledia*, *Caledonia*, *Caledo*, *Caledonnis* (Delamarre 2007, 53 & 214). Note that *Lossio Veda* of the Colchester inscription who designates himself a Calidonian, bears a plausibly Celtic name and that the name of his ancestor, **Uepogenos*, attests /*k^w*/ > /*p*/ (see also 2.2.3. - 2.2.5.).

Attestations in later Welsh literature (see Lloyd-Jones 1931+, 127), unless they are borrowings from Latin e.g. *Cat Coit Celidon* ‘Battle of the forest of the Calidones’ (HB §56, §76), would indicate that the historical vowel is /*i*/ rather

³¹⁹ Also *CALIIDV* (Beaulieu & Fischer 1998, 89, 164), *CALEDV* (ibid. 90, 165), *CALEDV* (ibid. 257, 398).

than /e/, as the latter would not induce the required *i*-affection of *Calidon* > *Celidon* (Jackson 1954, 14). The variance between *e* and *i* is common in Vulgar Latin inscriptions.

Watson (1926, 22) proposed a base in either **kal* ‘hard’ (Pok 523-4) or **kal* ‘cry, call’ (**kel*⁻⁶; Pok 548-50). PIE contains various other roots which would provide the required form and from which one could construct plausible group names e.g. **kal*- ‘beautiful’ (Malory & Adams 2006, 488; **kal*⁻² ‘healthy’, Pok 524). Lambert (2005, 226) noted Joseph’s interpretation of the Gaulish items as derived from a PIE root meaning ‘to freeze’ (i.e. **kêl*⁻¹ ‘cold, warm’, Pok 551-2) which would be apt for a group inhabiting the Highland massif. Derivations from zero-grades of PIE **kel*- are also possible e.g. **kel*⁻² ‘to stick; sting (Pok 545), **kel*⁻³ ‘to hit; cut down’ (Pok 545-7), **kel*⁻⁵ ‘to drive; force to move quickly (Pok 548). Also **kel*⁻¹ ‘to tower, be high’ (Pok 544) and **kêl*⁻⁴ ‘to conceal’. One could propose the adjectival suffix *-id-* as the second syllable, cf. *Epīdīoi*, *Tarouēdoúm* (< **tarw-ido-*). It survives in three place-names *Dùn Callden* / Dunkeld, Rohallion and *Sìdh Chaillean* / Schiehallion (Jackson 1954; Koch 2006(b)). Its rejection as Celtic is unnecessary.

2.3.6 *Karinoí* (see also *Kérōnes*)

This group is located in northern Scotland and there is a hint of confusion with *Kérōnes* (see Russell 2000, 186). The name was classified as plausibly Celtic by Isaac (2005(c), 194) without detailing any particular lexemes. He added that ‘the *-no-* suffix was at least suggestive of an IE formation’. Perhaps **kar*- ‘love, kinship’ (Matasović 2009, 191; Delamarre 2003, 107) could be considered. Rivet & Smith (1979, 286) proposed the root **caero*- ‘sheep’, but the conflicting manuscript variants, namely *καρηνοί*, prevent a confident etymology.

2.3.7 *Karnonákai*

This group is located in the western Highlands. The name is transparently Celtic, < **karn-on-āko* ‘people of the cairns’ (Isaac 2005(c), 195). *Càrn* is common as the generic of many modern mountain names, generally situated in the Monadh Liath and eastern Grampians, outside the probable location of this group (see Drummond 1992muigh, 25-26).

2.3.8 *Kérōnes*

This is located in the western Highlands and may represent a corrupt doublet of *Kréōnes*. Isaac (2005(c), 195) noted OGael *do-cer* (pret. ‘fell’) and W *ceri* ‘service trees, medlar trees; hips’. Compare also with the continental Belgic group name *Caerosi*, which has also been discussed in relation to OGael *cáera* ‘sheep’, and the homograph meaning ‘berry’ (Busse & Koch 2006(a), 199).

2.3.9 *Kornaúioi*

The group is located in northern Scotland and the name is a derivative of the *u*-stem **kornu*- ‘horn’, oblique **korneu* (Isaac 2005(c), 196). Various speculative interpretations of the name could be proposed but it is formally identical to another group name in the Midlands (Rivet & Smith 1979, 324) and influence from this more southerly form cannot be discounted. As with *Dumnónioi* (attested as the etymon of Devon) the evident cognacity with mediaeval terms for *Cornwall* contributed to the view that such groups represented immigrants from south-western Britain.³²⁰

2.3.10 *Kréōnes*

This group is located in the western Highlands. It probably contains the common suffix *-ones*. Note the possible confusion with *Kérōnes*. Isaac (2005(c), 195) proposed a possible derivation from the root **krep*- ‘body, shape’ hence ‘those characterised *par excellence* by body, shape; the shapely ones’.

2.3.11 *Loûgoi*

Located in the north east Highlands and derived by Isaac (2005(c), 197) from **lugo*- ‘dark, black’. Rivet & Smith (1979, 401) claim that it is plausibly commemorated in the name of the parish of Loth (older *Logh*) in south-east Sutherland but provide no source for this view. However, Watson (2002 [1906], 64) derives this from OGael *loth* ‘mud’ (eDIL ‘mud, mire; quagmire, marsh’) a straightforward proposal which requires no recourse to a change of /-y/ > /θ/. Isaac made no mention of either **lugiyo*- ‘oath’ (Matasović 2009, 247) or the

³²⁰ For example Chadwick (1949, 75-6), Wainwright (1955, 50) & Piggott (1962, 145). Neither Skene nor Rhys proposed that the northerly group represented a branch of a more southerly group.

theonym **Lugu-* (ibid. 248; de Bernardo Stempel 2008, 102). Ahlquist (1975, 143-46) discussed various etymologies and he did postulate a possible link with **lugiyo-* with which one could cautiously compare *Tungri*, < **tong-o-* ‘swear’ (Matasović 2009, 383). Toorians (2013) interpreted the latter as a Celtic semantic equivalent of Latin *foederati* ‘those who have sworn fealty to Rome’ (i.e. ‘allies’ or similar). No such Roman connotations are necessary here. See also Sims-Williams (2006, 86), Falileyev (2010, 23) and Ó Faoláin (2006(a)) for the theonym *Lugu-*. Lambert (2005, 244) also summarises earlier proposals when discussing *Lugdunum*, including the phonetically problematic derivation from **lugu-* ‘light’. There are other formally similar group-names such as *Lougei* and *Luggoni* in north-west Spain (Koch 2006(g)). Its Celticity seems assured.

2.3.12 *Maiatai*

Located in the region of Firth of Forth and therefore at the periphery of what was later to become Pictland. The name can be derived from **ma:jos* (Matasović 2009, 258 s.v. **māro-*; noted as **mā-yos-*) ‘bigger, larger, more’ (Jackson 1955, 357 & 360) + *-atai*, a common group suffix (cf. *Nantu-atai* etc.; Falileyev 2009, 107, s.n. *?Meatinus*). They were first attested by *Xiphilinus*, quoting Dio Cassius, c. 209 (see Rivet & Smith 1979, 404). For early comparanda such as *Maiensis*, *Maia* etc. see Falileyev (2010, 155). The name survives in Dumyat (CLA) and Myot Hill (STL) near Stirling (Watson 1926, 59) and is attested in the *Life of Columba* as *Miathoru[m]* (VC, 18a, 26) in the early eighth century. The modern place-name attestations (as noted by Watson, loc. cit.) preserve the final Brittonic /-d/,³²¹ while one of the attestations in the VC has the expected Goidelic affricated reflex /θ/. This could be a purely orthographic adaptation. A meaning related to ‘bigger’ would be a suitable name for a confederacy. As with the *Damnónioi*, it can be questioned whether this area is relevant to the Pictish question.

2.3.13 *Ouakomágoi*

The settlements attributed to this group would suggest, rather surprisingly, that they were controlling areas both to the north and south of the Mounth (see Rivet & Smith 1979, 484). The name was taken by Jackson (1955, 130) as non-Celtic

³²¹ Probably unvoiced in final position.

while Isaac (2005(c), 200), despite unresolved issues regarding the meaning, proposed **wako-mago-* ‘Those inhabiting curved fields’. Delamarre (2003, 305 s.v. *uac(o)-*) proposed no etymology for this element but referred to numerous early attestations such as *Bello-uaci*, *Ebro-uaccus*, *Sego-uax*. Falileyev (2010, 33 s.v. *uac(c)o-*) noted *W gwaeth* ‘worse’ < **wak-to-*. Isaac’s unease with certain morphological issues and the semantics is evident, but he saw no reason to reject this as a Celtic form. Breeze (2007, 79-82) has an imaginative proposal < **wo-com-iug-i* ‘those who are strongly bound together’, which requires far too many textual emendations to be credible.

2.3.14 *Oueníkōnes*

This is one of the most controversial and disputed items in this section. The group is located in an area between the Firth of Forth and the Mounth. This name figured prominently in the argument for the non-Celticity of the Picts as one of the items for which Jackson saw no Celtic etymology. It also figured in the argument for the validity of the term Pritenic. There are three competing etymologies. Firstly, Koch’s proposal **weni-+kones* ‘kindred hounds’ (1982) and secondly Isaac (2005(c), 201) who argued for **wen-ik-on-es*, from the same root but with a different interpretation of the final segments. Thirdly, Breeze (2006(b)) interpreted it as ‘hunting hounds’. The name may have survived to be attested in *Canu Aneirin* as *Gwynngwn* (Koch, 1980) but this is questioned by Sims-Williams (1991, 67, fn 1) and Haycock (2013, 17), who both saw this as representing the attested early Welsh personal name *Guincon/Guincun*. The only other element which may have some direct relevance is a late but undated altar inscription found in Carrawburgh on Hadrian’s wall, *Die Minerve Venico*, which could quite plausibly represent a Latinised form of **we:ni-ku:*, the nominative singular of a Celtic name meaning ‘a Veniconian tribesman’ (Collingwood & Wright 1965, 491). Koch argued that **kones* for supposed Brittonic **kunes* was a peculiarly Pritenic feature and this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (Section 2).

2.3.15 *Picti*

This term, while of great interest, is only attested as an exonym. See Rivet & Smith (1979, 438-40) for attestations. Whether this was an adaptation of a

Pictish form or whether it is a ‘Roman soldiers’ nickname’ meaning ‘painted ones’ cannot be determined, but the latter option is the commonest view. If it was of Pictish origin it would invite comparison with the name of the Gaulish tribe *Pictaui*, *Pictones* (Falileyev 2010, 182) and Gaulish personal names such as *Pectillus* (Delamarre 2007, 148), *Pictelancea*, *Pictilanci*, *Pictilos*, *Pictus* (ibid. 149) and perhaps *pixte* ‘fifth(ly)’ of the Rezé Gaulish inscription.³²²

The only possible surviving reflex discussed by Falileyev is OGael *cicht* ‘graveur, dessinateur’ but it has been suggested that this may be a borrowing from Latin *Picti* (see LEIA C-97). Speakers of Latin would undoubtedly have interpreted this form as meaning ‘painted ones’, even were it an adaptation of a Celtic name. De Bernardo Stempel (2005(b), 106) noted that Celtic *Albingaunon* in Liguria may derive from the ethnonym *Ingauni* < **Pingamnī* ‘The tattooed ones or *Picti*’. It cannot be determined whether this term is in any way Pictish therefore it has no bearing on the question of language in Calidonia. Much the same can be said for cognate Brittonic and Goidelic names for Picts, *Prydyn* and *Cruithin*, respectively and see Koch (2006(c), §2) for a concise discussion of etymological issues.³²³ See also 3.9.6. There is a *Peithan* in *Canu Aneirin* (Williams 1938, 171) which may attest the same element as in MidW *gobeith* (< **pext-*)³²⁴ and this would bear further investigation.

2.3.16 *Smértai*

Located in northern Scotland, this was interpreted by Isaac (2005(c), 203) as deriving from **(s)mer-* ‘think of, recall’ + *-teh₂*, and meaning ‘thoughtful, remembering ones’. No mention was made of previous etymologies which considered the item as derived from **smeru-* ‘to smear’ (e.g. Watson 1926, 17), with participial *-t* i.e. ‘smeared ones’. The notion that this referred to the smearing of faces with the blood of slaughtered enemies is probably derived from the work of the early Christian encyclopaedist Solinus,³²⁵ writing of Scotti to whom he ascribed this practice (see MacGregor 2007, 9). Other scholars (Loth,

³²² Anders Jörgensen (pers. comm.).

³²³ Note that McCone (2006, 9) has added a derivation from **k^writo-* ‘cut off’ (i.e. islanders) to the existing two proposals, i.e. items related to W *pryd* ‘appearance’ and *prydydd* ‘poet, maker’ (Koch 2006(h)).

³²⁴ GPC provides no etymology.

³²⁵ Quoted from MacGregor (2007, 9).

Dottin & Vendryes) connected the stem with W *armerth*³²⁶ ‘provision’, therefore a ‘Great Provider’ (see Falileyev 2009, 118, s.n. *Rosmerta*). De Bernardo Stempel (2008, 102) considered this ethnonym to be derived from a theonym.

Schrijver (2004) discusses another arguable root **(s)mer-* with meanings in the range of ‘unnatural or supernatural action’ and ‘impending or premature death’ (ibid. 297). This root (by means of the zero-grade) gives various Celtic words including OGael *mart*, tentatively interpreted as ‘prognosticated or impending death, death fate’ (ibid. 294) and Britt **marθ* ‘premature, impending death’ (ibid. 297-8). Semantically this seems less straightforward than the other two options.

It was thought that this survived as *Carn Smeirt* (ROS; Watson 1926, 17), the name of an upland mound, but this is unlikely (see 3.3.3). Koch (1983, 216) employed this proposed survival to argue for the preservation of /s/ before nasals in Pritenic but the modern form is almost certainly a modern coining (see Chapter 3). Jackson (1955, 13), comparing this name to the ‘Gaulish’ goddess *Rosmerta*, presented it as part of the argument for the cultural, and therefore linguistic, proximity of Pictish to Gaulish.

2.3.17 *Taiksáloi / Taizáloi*

See Rivet & Smith (1979, 463 & 464) for the attested variants and Russell (2002, 187) who notes that the two forms look like an early separation, probably in Ptolemy’s sources. This group is located in Aberdeenshire. On textual evidence alone it is not possible to determine which reading is primary but note that an identical confusion occurs between ξ (xi) and ζ (zeta) in ‘Uxela’ (ibid. 464, s.n. *Taexalorum Promontorium*) The former would allow a speculative derivation from Clt **tāxs-lo-* ‘hatchet’ (see Matasović 2009, 374), but Isaac (2005(c), 203) noted certain palaeographic and phonetic difficulties and classed its Celticity as ‘uncertain’. De Bernardo Stempel (2008, 108) interpreted this as referring to a profession. O’Rahilly (1946, 382, fn 3) proposed that the reading with *zeta* could be interpreted as a pre-form of Ir *taes* W *toes* ‘dough’. Cognates in OGael confirm this meaning as primary in Celtic, as does its derivation from the

³²⁶ GPC notes a different etymology while GPC II simply compares it to Midlr *airimibert* and Bret (Vannes dialect) *armerh*.

semantically identical PIE word **teh₂ys-t-* (Matasović 2009, 374). This seems an unlikely group name, while weapons are common. Breeze (2005) proposed a derivation from Ir *taesc* ‘jet (of blood)’, of uncertain etymology according to LEIA T-92 (s.v. *toesc*) hence ‘spillers of blood’, but this requires emending the attested form. Jackson believed it to be non-Celtic. Its etymology remains uncertain, but the confusion between *zeta* and *xi* is robust evidence that at least one of these forms is corrupt, and therefore it is questionable whether it can be used as evidence for non-Celticity.

2.3.18 *Uerturiones*

This group was attested by Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 370) alone (Rivet & Smith 1979, 496) and classed as a confederation, now known to be located in the region of the Moray Firth rather than as previously thought south of the Mouth (Woolf 2006). The name can be analysed as the intensive prefix **wer-+ tu(:)r-* *jones* a derivative of the PIE root **tuH-r* ‘mighty’.³²⁷ Alternatively one might wish to consider **tuer-1* ‘to turn, whirl’ (Pok 1100-1101) or **tuer-2* ‘to grab, to enclose’ (Pok 1101). The quantity of the vowel is debatable due to uncertainty regarding the original laryngeal.³²⁸ This root is also attested in Gaulish group names such as *Turones*³²⁹ (whence *Tours* and *Touraine*),³³⁰ the *jo*-stem personal name *Turionus* (Delamarre 2007, 186) and stem variants such as *Turi*, *Turonos*, *Turos* (ibid.). For a discussion of the PIE root **tūrjós* see Quiles & López-Menchero (2011, 740) where they compare with Sanskrit *turá* ‘fors, potens’.³³¹

Reflexes of this group-name are found in later Irish literature e.g. *Fortrenn* (gen. pl.; see O’Rahilly 1946, 463-64) and also in two Anglo-Saxon sources as *Werteres* (nom. pl.; The Peterborough Chronicle) and *Wærter(morum)* i.e. *moors* (Simeon of Durham). For further details see Woolf (2006). The Irish forms attest the

³²⁷ See Mallory & Adams (2006, 516, s.v. **teuh_a-* ‘swell (with power), grow fat’) and also pp. 385-6 where it is noted as ‘powerful’ or ‘strong’. See also Pok (1080-85, svv. *tēu-*, *tēu-*, *teuē-*, *tūō-*, *tū-*, ‘to swell; crowd, folk; fat; strong; boil, abscess’).

³²⁸ See Isaac (2007, Chapter 2, 21-56) for a detailed discussion of the result of laryngeal loss on preceding vowels.

³²⁹ First proposed by Diack. See O’Rahilly (1946, 463). Lambert (2005, 236) noted that no convincing etymology had been proposed for the *Turones* of Gaul.

³³⁰ The fact that the vowel of the modern PNN is /u:/ rather than /y:/ would suggest that the original Celtic form was /u/ (as opposed to /u:/). See Bonnard (1982, 24 & 25).

³³¹ See also Falileyev (2011, 33, s.v. *tur-*),

common substitution of the intensive prefix /wer-/ (or /wor-/?) by the cognate OGael *For-*,³³² and also other regular sound-changes. Alternatively, this could represent the regular reflex of an early borrowing. The Anglo-Saxon forms might suggest preservation of /wer-/, which would be interesting as this form would conflict with *Vrguist* & *W(i)rguist* (SL2 H), representing /ur-/ or /wur-/, which indicate that the vowel developed on similar lines to Brittonic. One could also compare this with Bede's use of *Vertigernus* in his *Chronica Majora*³³³ (see Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 20-1) which contrasts with the form *Uurtigern-* employed in the body of the HE itself. Wallace-Hadrill (loc. cit.) suggests that the more conservative form could derive from a glossed text of Gildas.³³⁴ Is it possible that Anglo-saxon sources similarly had access to a more conservative form of this group-name? Alternatively one could, due to the paucity of the evidence argue that /wer-/ did not evolve to /wur-/ among the Werteras themselves and that forms in *u(u)r* simply reflect more southerly (?) Brittonic-like Pictish realisations. It must be borne in mind that this is all very speculative and that the evidence is insufficient to enable any secure conclusion.

However assimilation to AS *wer* 'man' or *wær* 'wary, cautious' may be suspected, or perhaps *wær* 'true'. The OE *-ter-* for Pictish /tu(:)r/³³⁵ may simply be due to the loss of distinction in post-tonic OE vowels. It has also been suggested that this ethnonym could underlie the place-name *Fortrose* (ROS),³³⁶ and this would merit further investigation. By the third century this group was emerging as the dominant power in northern Pictland and a meaning 'very powerful ones' is attractive. In the early medieval Pictland it appears to have been a dominant kingdom.

³³² Cf. OGael *Forcus* (etc.) for Pictish *Wurgust*.

³³³ I am grateful to Paul Russell for drawing my attention to this form and to the W territorial name *Gwerthrynion*, itself derived from *Gwrtheyrn* (Richards 1998, 14).

³³⁴ On the possibility that Bede had access to manuscripts originating in the Brittonic monastery of Bangor Is-coed see Koch (2013, 109).

³³⁵ Or even /tʰ:r/.

³³⁶ Simon Taylor (pers. comm.), who also noted that James Fraser had also considered this possibility.

2.3.19 Conclusion

The only items that lack good or arguable Celtic interpretations are *Boresti* and *Taiksáloi*, but these are attested in corrupt medieval manuscripts alone, many copies removed from the original. They also lack later reflexes which would enable their actual forms to be established. Both are located in areas whose attested Roman period toponymy is overwhelmingly Celtic.

2.4 River-names

The evidence for river-names is derived almost entirely from Ptolemy's Geography and amounts to eighteen items. The Ravenna Cosmography possibly provides one additional name if *Certisnassa* actually refers to the Ness (Richmond & Crawford 1949, 28; Rivet & Smith 1979, 307 & 422). The Tay is also attested by Tacitus as *Taum* / *Tanaum* (Agricola §22), probably for *Tauum* or *Tauam* (Isaac 2005(c), 203). It is upon river-names that the theory of a closer proximity of a non-Celtic language was constructed (Isaac 2005(c)), therefore this section is of some importance. In addition, Nicolaisen (2006, 115) classed the *Toúaisis*, *Cailios* and *Lossa* as 'undeniably non-Indo-European', which is evidently incorrect as Watson had provided a plausible and paralleled explanation for the last of these items (< G *lus* 'herb, plant').

I divide the discussion into three parts. These classifications represent not my own views but rather the proposals of earlier scholars. I will argue for modifications to the categorisation of some items and a revised classification is presented in the conclusion to this section.

1. Celtic names.
2. Disputed names.
3. Names which have been classed as non-Celtic.

In reality no such categorisation is objectively possible as there is much dispute regarding the interpretation of these items. However, this approach enables similar issues to be tackled together. The coverage is fairly complete with most large waterways apparently attested. The main exception is the Esk and this is

itself an exceedingly common early river-name attested numerous times in Britain (Rivet & Smith 1979, 376-78). As will be seen, most also have modern reflexes and therefore comparison with these later forms can provide additional information regarding etymological questions. This is in marked contrast to the group-names, which are generally attested in early sources alone.

Celtic Names

2.4.1 *Alaûna* (PER; Ardoch, River Allan)

This was classed as a *polis* of the *Damnónioi* and is formally identical to various other river-names attested in Britain e.g. Alun (DEN-FLI; Rivet & Smith 1979, 243-46), and one in Gaul (Delamarre 2012, 43). Compare also with the continental ethnonym, *Alauni* (ibid.). Isaac (2005(c), 190) derived it from the PIE root **h₂el-* ‘shine’ with a suffix *-auna:*, which is attested in other river-names e.g. **Calaunā* > Colne (HRT; Ekwall 1928, 90). Sims-Williams (2006, 42) noted the etymology as ‘controversial’ while Delamarre (2012, 43) preferred a derivation from PIE **h₂elh₂* ‘aller sans but, error’, interpreting the name as the ‘wanderer’. See also Falileyev (2010, 6) for a discussion. *Alaûna* seemingly refers to the striking Roman fort rather than to a native settlement even though it is specifically noted as a *polis*.

2.4.2 *Dēoúa* (ABD; Dee) & *Dēoúana* (ABD; Don)

Both are derived from Clt **de:wa:* ‘goddess’, the latter with the suffix *-on-* (Nicolaisen 1976, 227 & 229). The *-wa-* of *Dēoúana* may be a copying error or may simply represent the common Celtic alternation between *-wa-* and *-wo-* (Isaac 2005(c), 192). This is attested in five other river-names in Britain (CVN, KCB, WML, CHE; Rivet & Smith 1979, 336) and one in Spain (Falileyev 2010, 113). See Falileyev (2010, 17) for further references.

2.4.3 *Klóta* (LAN etc; Clyde)

This forms a southern boundary to the area under study, and it is robustly Celtic < **kleuH-* ‘purify’ (Isaac 2005(c), 195; Nicolaisen 1976, 229), meaning the ‘pure,

cleansed one'. Koch (apud Clancy 2006(b))³³⁷ noted also the possibility of a derivation from /kluta:/ 'fame' (cf. W *clod*) or 'conveyance', < /klojta:/ (W *clud*).

2.4.4 Lemannónios (Loch Long / Loch Fyne / Loch Leven)

This is related to various possible IE cognates by Isaac (2005(c), 196) such as Clt **l(e)im* 'elm', Gk *leimón* 'meadow', *limén* 'harbour'. James (2010) has convincingly argued in favour of the root **(s)lei-* 'slippery, smooth' for similar river-names e.g. *Leven* (FIF, CMB).

2.4.5 Lóggou (Loch Linne / Firth of Lorn?)

This may simply be a Latin name meaning 'long river' (< Lat *longus*).

Alternatively, this could represent a latinised cognate of W *llwng*, a variant of *llwnc* 'swallow', originally referring to a 'gulping, gurgling river' (Isaac 2005(c), 197). Isaac (ibid.) rejected the suggestion of Rivet & Smith (1979, 399) that this may be derived from a Celtic word for ship **longo-*, as this was supposedly borrowed from Latin. However, the Celticity of this word is accepted by Delamarre (2003, 207) and Matasović (2009, 244), and it may be attested in other Celtic place-names such as *Longion* (Falileyev *apud*. Sims-Williams 2006, 204, fn 78). See also Falileyev (2010, 23, s.v. *longo-*) for a further discussion and references.

2.4.6 Lóksa (Lossie (MOR) / Findhorn? (MOR etc.))

Isaac (2005(c), 197), following Jackson (1955, 136) derives this from **loxs-* 'bent, crooked', a poorly and problematically-attested root in Celtic but supposedly cognate with Greek *λοξός* 'crooked' (see Delamarre 2003, 209). Whether *Lóksa* refers to the Lossie or the Findhorn has been debated numerous times (e.g. Watson 1926, O'Rahilly 1946, Strang 1997). If the *Lóksa* is the Lossie then the impressive Findhorn would be strangely absent from the survey, but such an absence would be paralleled by the non-attestation of the Esk. It is conceivable that the *Lóksa*, as argued by Watson, referred to the Findhorn, whose modern name may be a later coining (see Clancy 2010).

³³⁷ Thomas Clancy informs me that the final linguistic paragraph of this item was composed by John T. Koch, the editor of the Encyclopedia.

The Lossie is a minor stream but the name attested by Ptolemy may refer to what was once a large inlet now represented by the dramatically reduced Loch Spynie. There are similar continental hydronyms, such as *Losa* perhaps also evidencing /s/ for /xs/ (Falileyev 2010, 151) if these are etymologically related. If one accepts that *xi* is a misreading of *zeta*, a derivation from **lostā*: ‘spear’ is possible (O’Rahilly 1946, 382). Breeze (2005) proposed a derivation from **losk-* ‘to burn’ which would correspond well with one of the two earliest attestations *Loscyn* & *Lossyn*. This item is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (3.6.4) as it plays a pivotal role in the argument for the validity of the proposed Pritenic sound-change of /xs/ > /s/. This is a very problematic item and no proposal is conclusive although ‘crooked’ river is attractive.

2.4.7 *Nassa* (INV; *Ness*?)

This is putatively attested as *CERTINASSA* in the Ravenna Cosmography alone, perhaps representing a conflation of two items (Rivet & Smith 1979, 422). Possibly from the PIE root **ned-* ‘wet’ or **neid-*² ‘to flow, stream’ (IEED2172). Further analogies, *Nestos* (Thrace & Dalmatia) are noted by Nicolaisen (2001, 242), but consider also *ned-*² ‘to sound, roar’ (IEED 2168). This may be absent from the Ptolemaic survey as it flows directly into the attested *Ouárar* which discharges into the Beaully Firth. All the rivers noted as such by Ptolemy discharge directly into the sea.³³⁸

2.4.8 *Támeia* (ANG; *Isla* / *Dean Water*)

This is from **temh₂* ‘cut’, and there are extensive reflexes of this root in Celtic hydronymy e.g. *Tamar*, *Thames* (Isaac 2005(c), 203). There is no attested later reflex.

2.4.9 *Ouárar* (*Farrar* / *Beaully Firth*)

This is from **h₂uer* ‘flowing water’ (Isaac 2005(c), 201) cf. *Tryweryn* (MER) and survives as the river Farrar (Gael. *Farar*). See also Delamarre (2003, 301) s.v. *treuero-*. The change of *e* to *a* may be due to assimilation to the final vowel or a

³³⁸ *Alaúna* and *Támeia* are not noted as rivers.

variant of Joseph's Rule /oRa/ > /aRa/. Compare perhaps with *Nabárou* < **nebh-* and *Malaíos* (see below).

2.4.10 *Oúolsas (SUT; Loch Eriboll or ROS, Loch Broom)*

This may be etymologically related to W *gwall* 'error, deceit' OGael *fell* 'deceit, treachery' (Isaac 2005(c), 202). Macbain had equated it with Loch Alsh (ROS), which is much further south, but see Watson (1926, 47) who disagreed with this view. There is no later attested reflex so the form must be approached with caution.

Disputed Names

Isaac has proposed that three items, while not certainly Celtic are 'susceptible to speculative analysis as Celtic': *Ítuos*, *Taoúa* and *Toúaisis*.

2.4.11 *Ítuos (uncertain)*

This has been much discussed (see Breeze 2005) but no definitive solution has been provided. Isaac (2005(c), 193) suggested < **pi-tu-* < PIE **pei(H)* 'swell up' thus 'swollen river' or < **itu-* 'wheaten river' (Falileyev 2010, 21, s.v. *itu-*). Breeze (2005) proposed < **uei-ti* 'twisting' etc., cf. W *gwydn* 'tough', ingeniously argued but requiring some significant though paralleled textual emendations. He linked it to Loch Etive while Strang (1998, 436) located it significantly further to the north. Note that *itu-* is also attested in Gaulish personal names e.g. *Bitu-itos*, *Itos*, *Itu-tagus* (Delamarre 2003, 223; Evans 1967, 356). It is not immediately evident how to evaluate such proposals. To 'swell up' (become powerful?) is preferable to 'wheat', cf. W *ŷd*, a cereal which requires a more clement environment than northern Scotland. 'Swell' would provide a particularly attractive meaning for the Falls of Lora at the mouth of Loch Etive. This impressive (swelling) tidal race forms noisy, white-water rapids for two to five days either side of the spring tides, Lora being from G *labhrach* 'noisy'. One would however expect a Gaelic *th* in the reflex. Watson (1926, 46) interpreted the G form *Eite* as deriving from a female personal name meaning 'foul, horrid' (< OGael *étig* 'unnatural, unseemly', eDIL) representing a goddess of the river. The attestation of an identical element in Gaulish personal names gives strong support to its Celticity.

2.4.12 *Taoúa (Tay)*

Two proposals have been made in recent publications: firstly a derivation from PrClt **tausa-* ‘silent’,³³⁹ and secondly from a PIE root **tā-* meaning ‘to melt, dissipate, decay’. For a full summary of earlier views see Taylor (2010, 56-58). Isaac (2005(c), 204) classified this name as doubtfully Celtic. The earlier derivation from **tausa-* ‘silent’ was questioned on the basis that other contemporary insular names attest the retention of *-s-*, and that rivers are not called ‘silent’. Jackson (1953, 522-23) dated the elision of *s* to ‘perhaps’ the first century and it is preserved in the group-name *Parisi* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 435). However, it is not impossible that this could represent one of the earliest attestations of the loss of intervocalic */s/*. It is also true that most similarly large rivers tend to bear names relating to audibility, for example the great number of Brittonic and Goidelic names deriving from **labaro-* ‘talkative, loud’ (see Falileyev 2010, 21, s.v. *labero-*)

A derivation from PIE **teh₂-u-eh₂* (**tā-*) ‘to melt, dissipate, decay’ (see Falileyev 2010, 31) was also rejected by Isaac, both for semantic and formal reasons. It was noted that the root **tā-* specifically refers to changes in state such as melting, rather than a more general ‘flowing’. The phonetic difficulty was that the *Taw* of Devon (OE *Tǣw*) indicates Early Neo-Brittonic ***Taw* rather than the required **Tō:w* (*/ɔ:/* < *ā*), the regular reflex of this root. Nicolaisen (1976, 244) saw the supposed lack of Clt */a:/* > */ɔ:/* as evidence for coining in Old European. ModGael *Tatha*, however, represents the regular reflex of an original long vowel, hence an original *Tōe* (Watson 1926, 51), and this is consistent with a derivation from Clt. */ta:/* (> */tɔ:/*). In the seventh century Irish poem *Amra Choluimb Chille* ‘The Elegy of Colum Cille’ (Clancy & Márkus 1995, l.15, 105) the river is attested as *Toí* (gen. sg.), a spelling which would seem to confirm the early Medieval vowel as */ɔ:/*. Indeed, this river-name may be attested in the personal name *Tóe* the father of *Agnaman*, a mythological Pict in a version of the Pictish origin legend relating to the *Laigin* (Calise 2002, 176, s.n. *Agaman*). Spellings with *a* therefore represent later developments. The equation with the Devonshire *Taw* may therefore be spurious, or there may be an alternative explanation for its short vowel. Despite the primary PIE meaning of ‘melt’,

³³⁹ See Matasović (2011(b), 39, s.v. **tawso-* ‘deaf’) for further linguistic references.

James (2013 s.v. **tā-*) saw this as attested in numerous river-names such as Tame, Team and a similar etymology seems arguable here.³⁴⁰

See also and Sims-Williams (2006, 275, fn 76) and Falileyev (2009, 144, s.v. *?Tavius*) for further discussions. Note the river *Tavia* (Isaac 2002) in France which also does not attest an intervocalic *-s-*, which would be expected were it from **tausa-*. Delamarre (2003, 293, s.v. *tauo-*) names various rivers which are formally similar, such as *la Tave* and *Tavium* in Galatia,³⁴¹ even though he saw these as from **tausa-*. Perhaps a derivation from **ta:* could indeed be considered for these, supporting such an etymology for the Tay. It is the longest river in Scotland and is indeed, in its lower parts, a powerful but slow moving river. There are therefore grounds for considering this name to be of Celtic origin.

2.4.13 *Toúaisis (MOR; Spey)*

Isaac (2005(c), 206) discussed various possibilities but considered none convincing. He proposed a possible derivation from PIE **tueh₂* ‘swell’ and the arguable correspondence with a Celtiberian inscribed word *tueisu*. Breeze (2006(b)) proposed < Clt **tu-ues-su-*, cf. W *tywys*, OGael *tús* ‘to lead, guide’ etc. which he saw as derived from PIE **wed^h* ‘to lead’. This would correspond adequately to Isaac’s /tu:esis/. However, Matasović (2009, 386) proposed an alternative derivation to this root < **to-wissu-*, stating that the OIr form *tuus*, *tús* are inconsistent with a derivation from **wed^h*, as is the *ogham* inscription *TOVISACI* (Macalister 1945, 399), relating it rather to PIE **weyd-* ‘see, know’. This weakens Breeze’s proposal. The vowel of the prefix of the latter etymology, i.e. *to-*, also conflicts with Ptolemy’s form. The modern name Spey seems to be unrelated,³⁴² and as the name occurs in Ptolemy alone with various spelling variants (Müller 1883, 83) there is no way of verifying the original form. Note that the *p* of *Spey*, if it accurately reflects a local realisation, would rule out a coining in Goidelic. The etymology remains uncertain but the significant number of variant spellings suggest that the attestation is highly corrupt and that the native form is probably unrecoverable.

³⁴⁰ Note that this interpretation is not accepted by all. The earlier interpretation from PIE **tem-* ‘black, dark’ has also been questioned (Falileyev 2010, 31, s.v. *tamo-*). Isaac (2005(a)) derives such names from **tamo-* ‘cutter’, from PIE **tmh₁-* < **temh₁-* ‘cut’ (Pok 1062-3).

³⁴¹ See Luján (2005, 256) who notes that this could be Hittite.

³⁴² But see 3.4.2.4. where the name is discussed in detail.

Non-Celtic river-names

Isaac (2005(c), 208) proposed that five names were not of Celtic origin: *Íla*, *Kelníou*, *Nabaíou*, *Tína*, *Bodería* and also, outwith our area, the *lēnâ* of south-west Scotland (ibid.193). It is largely on the basis of this argument that some scholars continue to hold that a non-IE language was spoken in Roman-period Scotland, and perhaps even later (see Chapter 1).

2.4.14 *lēnâ (south-western Scotland)*

This is outwith the study area but as it is one of the five supposedly non-IE names a brief note is required. There are too many significant variations to confidently reconstruct the form in the original. One variant *Ikóe* (Müller 1883, 81, fn.3) could be compared to unetymologised *ico-* (Isaac 2004), and note OGael *ícc* which Matasović (2009, 171) related to **īkkā* ‘cure, treatment, salvation’ which would provide an arguably Celtic interpretation. Likewise Falileyev (2010, 20) considered the element ‘unquestionably Celtic’. It lacks a later reflex, is unlocated and may be inserted in error.

2.4.15 *The Firth of Forth*

The three earliest attestations referring to the Forth represent the same name but given the significant discrepancies in form there is no way of demonstrating the superiority of one over the other: Agricola *Bodotria*, Ptolemy *Bodería*, Ravenna *Bdora*. These have been discussed in detail many times (see Taylor 2006, 39). Proposals range from comparisons with G *bodhar* ‘deaf’ (Watson 1926) to W *budr* ‘filthy, dirty’ (Breeze 2003). Due to the numerous variants it is impossible to establish a form which cannot be challenged, and an item whose actual form cannot be reconstructed is not valid as evidence for non-Celticity.

I will briefly discuss the etymology of the remaining four rivers without engaging in too much detail with the historical debates. They are discussed in anticlockwise direction.

2.4.16 *Íla (SUT; Helmsdale)*

The name is preserved as G *Ilidh*, and has been compared to OGael *ilach* ‘cry, shout’ etc. (Isaac 2005(c), 193; eDIL), but see Coates (2006, 67) for a speculative Semitic etymology from a root meaning ‘god’. It is one of the major rivers of the Highlands, having a large drainage basin and flowing south-eastwards for almost fifteen miles from Loch Badanloch through a narrow and steep valley called Strath Donan before discharging into the Moray Firth at the small port of Helmsdale (Gaelic *Bun Ilidh* ‘Ilie-foot’). While both its upper and lower reaches are comparatively steady moving the two-mile section at Kildonan is interrupted by numerous very noisy rapids (see picture below).³⁴³ There is a well-known category of Celtic rivers-names referring to audibility e.g. *W Llafar* ‘noisy’ etc. (see King 2008, 4.3.5, 140-42) and this would at least provide a plausible context for the speculative etymology.



Figure 2 The River Helmsdale³⁴⁴

³⁴³ I am grateful to Mr Ronald Sutherland, a ‘hard-core fly fisherman’ and owner of The Helmsdale Tackle Company Ltd. for discussing this issue with me. His father, Andrew, was a guide on this river for forty years.

³⁴⁴ From Wikimedia Commons.

Watson (1904, 14) noted that it was pronounced identically to (Creag) Illie (ROS; G *Creag-illidh*) which possibly referred to a now nameless stream. It is worth noting that *illio-/ ilio-* is a very common theme in Gaulish onomastics e.g. *Ila*, *Illo-marus*, *Illia*, *Illos* (Delamarre 2003, 189; 2007, 109-10 & 223). No etymology or meaning is provided in these sources. One may rather compare this element to the River Isla (G *Uisge Ìle*) in Morayshire and Perthshire (see Watson 1926, 87). While this issue would benefit from further research there is a plausible etymology in Celtic.

2.4.17 *Kelníou* (BNF; Deveron)

Isaac (2005(c), 195) rejected the Celticity of this river-name partly on the reasoning that *-ln-* is ‘an unlikely cluster for Celtic’. Were this a pre-Celtic name one might have expected such a cluster to have been modified to Celtic phonemic patterns,³⁴⁵ and this incongruity would be reason enough for questioning the authenticity of the attested form. Russell (2000, 186) noted that *Κελνίου* is the *lectio difficilior* in that *Καίλιος* could be seen as a re-analysis under the influence of the Latin personal-name *Caelius*. Bear in mind that Isaac argued for the closer proximity of a non-Celtic language, not that one was necessarily still spoken when this onomastic material was entered Latin. Items coined in a pre-Celtic language would therefore have been provided by speakers of Celtic. While *Kelníou* is the form attested in most of the primary manuscripts, also attested is *Kailios* which, if representing an underlying Clt /kajl-/, would give MW *coel* ‘omen’ (see Falileyev 2000, 33).³⁴⁶ This proposal has been developed by Breeze (2005, 66-8) who argued that the well-attested Celtic cult practice of worship at rivers provides an attractive context for such a proposal. Such a belief system is reflected in the great number of Celtic rivers named after divinities or incorporating **de:wo-* ‘god’ (e.g. the Dee and Don). IEED (1425) noted that W *coel* is derived from **kai-lo-* ‘bright; safe, healthy’, itself a common theme in river-names.

³⁴⁵ Cf. the various rivers named ‘Derwent’, which Kitson (1996) has convincingly argued derive from an Old European form.

³⁴⁶ In Ayrshire there is the Water of Coyle, but one would expect a vowel closer to /ɛ:/ were it cognate (see James 2012 s.v. **cūl*).

2.4.18 *Nabaíou (SUT; v.l. Nabárou; Naver)*

According to Isaac (2005(c), 198) this name is ‘strictly non-Celtic, probably non-IE’. Watson (1926, 47) proposed that it was from an Indo-European base ‘nabh’ meaning ‘cloud’ or similar suggesting that the ‘reference is probably to fogs rising from the river’, a view repeated by Hamp (1990, 192). Delamarre (2014, 45) derived it from a theonym from **nab* ‘navel’.

The Naver rises in the uplands about *Loch Nabhair* (Naver) which lies in a striking and large basin surrounded by high mountains (e.g. Ben Klibreck, 962 m). This forms an immense frost hollow, where temperatures can drop greatly and rapidly at night, and it is commonly recorded as one of the coldest places in the United Kingdom. On clear, cold nights dense, heavy air drains down neighbouring slopes into this enclosed bowl ponding in the valley bottom. It subsequently descends along the river Naver where it encounters wetter air warmed by the Gulf Stream, at which point it forms a large misty cloud which fills the relatively narrow valley bottom and flows to the estuary emerging as a specific type of mist analogous to ‘Arctic Sea Smoke’. This impressive ground-cloud, to which further motion is imparted by the flowing river, is often some 20ft high. It is a frequent phenomenon on this river due to the distinct upland topography and according to local sources it is a stunning sight.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ I am grateful to Mr Elliot Rudie of the Strathnaver Museum and Mr Jim Johnston (former teacher of English and Geography, and currently headmaster of Farr High School) for discussing this issue with me, and the latter for explaining this meteorological phenomenon in some detail.



Figure 3 Looking towards Loch Naver from the Mudale River (Altnaharra).³⁴⁸

Isaac noted other European river-names in *Nab-* e.g. *Nabios* (Falileyev 2010, 166) *Nablis*, *Nabalia* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 422).³⁴⁹ This all lends great support to Watson's proposal, as would the fact that semantically similar names do occur elsewhere. For example *Nant Tarthen* (CVN), *Y(r) Wybrnant* (CVN; < W *wybr* 'sky'), *Nant-Niwlen* (MER; < *niwl* 'mist'), *Tochen* (BRE; < *tawch* 'haze', Thomas 1938, 125). There is also *Nebis* in Portugal (Ptolemy *Nῆβος*), now the Neiva and also the Navia in Spain (Delamarre 2010, 167) which could be cognate. The latter is attested as *Naβίου* by Pliny. The /a/ of the root could either be due to assimilation to the suffix, cf. *Ouárar* < /wer/, or due to regular anaptyxis from the zero-grade (Hamp 1990, 192), which may be paralleled in the continental river-names noted above. Importantly, this meteorological phenomenon is most obvious when viewed inland, and the occasional but regular appearance of a river-cloud is unlikely to have generated a name of any navigational value to mariners. This would indicate that it is a local coinage and therefore a robust indicator of the presence of a Celtic, or at least Indo-European, language *in situ* at the period of when the material was gathered. It also confirms the unreliability of many manuscript readings for place-names in Calidonia.

³⁴⁸ Photograph by Jim Johnson of Strathnaver.

³⁴⁹ There would appear to be another similar root in Celtic, but with a long vowel, **na:b-* 'centre, navel', (Delamarre 2007, 227, s.v. *nab(ion)-*), which may underlie some of these names. It is unlikely to be relevant to the discussion of Naver.

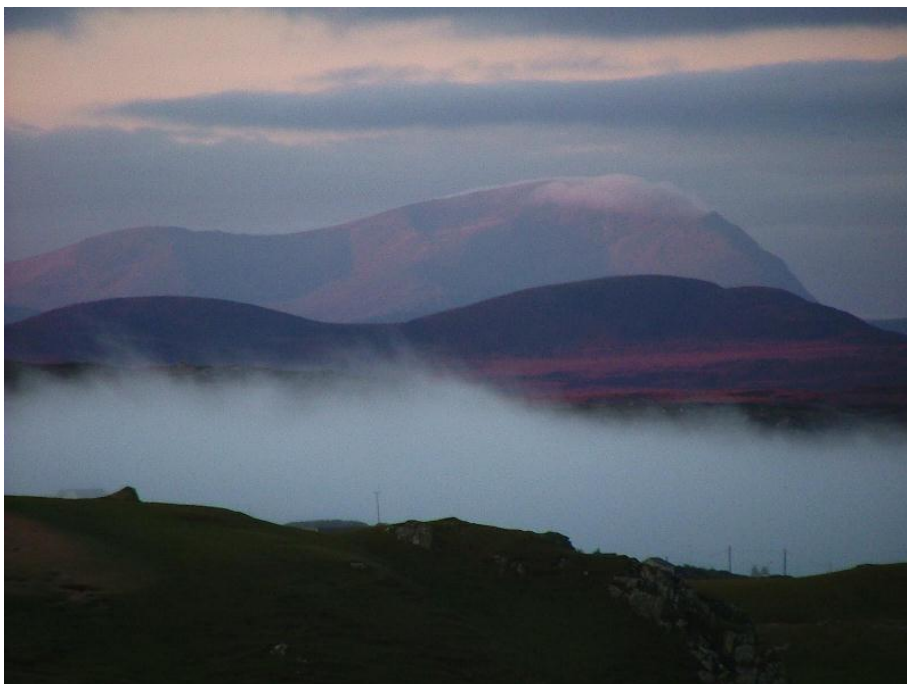


Figure 4 Cloud descending the Naver³⁵⁰

2.4.19 *Tína (FIF; Eden?)*³⁵¹

This was categorised as ‘non-Celtic / non-IE’ by Isaac (2005(c), 205). He drew attention to Rivet & Smith’s ‘bold amendment’ to **Ituna* (1979, 380). These modifications were noted as plausible but it was argued that the manuscript form must stand, despite the modern form Eden which is the expected reflex of **Ituna*. *Eden* as a river-name is attested in at least three other locations (Rivet & Smith 1979, 380). The Eden (CMB) is noted as *Ιτούνα* in Ptolemy demonstrating that such coinings can be early. Rejecting the modifications proposed by Rivet & Smith would entail the renaming of a significant river after the first century CE, a process which is by no means impossible and is probably attested along the Moray coast, in the Findhorn and Deveron. Isaac discussed some formal etymological possibilities for *Tína* such as **tih₁neh₂* < **teih₁* ‘get hot’, cf. OGael *tinaid* ‘melts away’. However, an objection noted is that the Greek form attests a short coda vowel while the etymology above requires a long one. Given the known errors of transmission and transliteration from Latin into Greek this is by no means an insurmountable objection. He also discusses a the possible meaning

³⁵⁰ From Wikimedia Commons.

³⁵¹ See Taylor with Márkus (2008, 42) for a full discussion of the river-name.

of ‘muddy river’ comparing with Old Church Slavonic *tina* ‘mud’, but questions this due to the apparent lack of rivers with semantically similar names.

The other reliably attested toponyms in the region are Celtic e.g. *Alaûna*, *Oueníkōnes* (through whose territory it flows) & *Maiatai*. Watson (1926, 51) wondered whether this was a misplaced reference to the Tyne (ELO) or the Tyne (NTB), both of which would otherwise be absent from the *Geographia*. The above issues compromise the value of this item as evidence for language, but the claim that this can be considered as indicating the proximity of a non-Indo-European form is extreme as an identical claim could be made for the other two Tyne rivers.

2.4.20 Conclusion

Let us remind ourselves that the claim that ‘Scotland’ evidences an unusually high percentage of non-IE items is based on no more than five rivers-names, one of which was located in lowland south-west Scotland. These occur in what is otherwise an overwhelmingly Celtic toponymic landscape. However, the comparison with areas to the south is invalid as we are not comparing like with like. In the north, in particular, many of the river-names do not have later reflexes and their forms often occur in Ptolemy alone. Consequently, their original forms cannot be confidently reconstructed. There is robust evidence of textual corruption in this area, as with *Taiksáloi* and *Nabáiou*. To be consistent it would be necessary to categorise the corrupt *ιαμησα* (*iamesa*) ‘Thames’ as non-IE, as it is only by reference to other sources that the misreading can be corrected, an approach not available for the *Kelníou* for example.

Importantly not all major rivers are attested by Ptolemy, for example the robustly Celtic *Esk* (ANG), a name seen further south in the same period. Also unattested are the two Shiels (ARG & INV) and the Shin (ROS, SUT) which seem to be very early coinings (Nicolaisen, 1976, 243 & 244), meaning that they cannot be ignored in the context of a discussion on the early language of Calidonia. Nicolaisen argued that they are Old European names but the former could equally be from early Celtic **sal-* ‘salt’ or ‘dirty, sedimented’ (Falileyev 2010, 29). He derives Shin from PIE **sindhu* ‘river’ but this word is absent from the

standard works on PIE.³⁵² The Shiel argues against the presence of a non-Celtic language in this area.

I would argue that the conflicting attestations of the *Bodería* (Forth) are far too inconsistent to reconstruct a form which is valid as evidence, the *Íla* (Helmsdale) can be speculatively analysed as Celtic, the forms of the *Kaílios* (Deveron) are contradictory and one has a very plausible Celtic etymology. The *Nabárou* (Naver) is robustly Celtic while the *Tína* (? Eden) is possibly corrupt or even misplaced. This significantly reduces the number of possibly non-IE names and I would argue that there is little firm basis for the view that such rivers indicate the closer proximity of a non-IE language.

2.5 Settlements

2.5.1 Introduction

Ptolemy noted the names of seven settlements *Alaûna*, *Dēoùana*, *Támeia*, *Banatía*, *Líndon*, *Ουικτωρία* ‘Victoria’ and *Περωντον στρατορεδον* which translates as ‘Winged Camp’. All the Celtic names are located south of the Mounth. The first three items have been discussed above as they simply bear the names of the nearby rivers. ‘Victoria’ is Latin while the last item is problematic and has yet to be convincingly explained. This leaves two names to be discussed below.

2.5.2 *Banatía* (*Dalginross?*; *PER*)

This was classed as a *polis* of the *Ouakomágoi*, and is from Clt **bann-at-yā* ‘peaked place’ (Isaac 2005(c), 190). Due to the *a* of *Ban-* ‘peak’ Jackson and others interpreted this as evidence that Pictish was P-Celtic, the OGael cognate being *benn*. The *a* of *Dekántai* was similarly interpreted. However McCone (1996, §2.1-§2.7, 70-79) argued that the distinct vowels of Goidelic and Brittonic do not represent the results of an early PrClt bifurcation. Rather, the Goidelic form represents a secondary general primitive Irish development of *a* > *e* in this phonetic environment. Consequently, this item can no longer be considered as evidence for the presence of a Brittonic-like language in Calidonia in the early

³⁵² Is it to be related to **sed-* ‘to go’? (Quiles & Mechero 2006, 116 & 395)

Roman period as the realisation may have been identical in contemporary Ireland. Indeed, this may be indicated by Brigantes also attested by Ptolemy in Ireland, unless they simply represent a recent immigrant group or a misplaced British group of the same name.

2.5.3 Líndon (Drumquhassle; STL / Malling; STL)

This is noted as a *polis* of the *Damnónioi*. This certainly represents Celtic **lindo-* ‘lake’. It is questionable whether this monotheme fully represents the local name as one would expect a qualifier in a region where there are numerous noticeable lakes. Toner (2000, 79) raised the same issue with the unqualified *Dounon* in Ireland, but **lindon* is attested as a simplex elsewhere in Britain, as in *Lindum*, *Lindos* (Sims-Williams 2006, 84). Such simplexes are characteristic of very localised usage and it would hardly have been a meaningful name for the *Damnónioi* for whom this would have meant ‘lake’ and no more. Given that no lake is visible close to the fort at Drumquhassle it seems possible that the lake referred to is the outstanding local feature, Loch Lomond. Alternatively, it may refer to the fort at Malling which is on the shore of Lake of Menteith (PER), also an attractive proposal as the fort is situated right at the water’s edge. Similarly, *Banatía* ‘place at the peaks’ is hardly a helpful disambiguating name considering that it is located in the most mountainous area of Britain. However, were these the names employed by the great number of Celtic-speaking troops in the service of Rome, such simplexes would provide convenient means of disambiguating between particular forts. *Ουικτωρία* is evidently such an exonym and perhaps also *Πτερωτον στρατορεδον*, and three forts simply take the names of nearby rivers (see above). However, only seven items are referred to as settlements while a great number of sites, both native and Roman, go unrecorded meaning that such a limited and geographically restricted sample cannot be used as evidence for general conclusions on language in Calidonia.

2.6 Promontories & Ports

In addition to the three promontories discussed below there is *Όχθη υψηλη* (Tarbat Ness) which translates as ‘high bank’, an adaptation of a Latin form such as *ripa alta* and one which is therefore of no direct linguistic value. *Taizálon akron* (promontory) has been discussed above. *Tarouedóum* (Dunnet Head, CAI)

is derived from **tarw-ido-* ‘bullish, bull-like’ (Isaac 2005(c), 204). *Oueroubíoum* (Noss Head, CAI) is from **weru-biyo-* ‘broad cutting, cutter, swathe’ (Isaac 2005(c), 201). Breeze (2004) proposed an amendment of the *b* to *d* hence enabling a comparison with W *rhudd* ‘red’, but the emendation is unnecessary. See also Rivet & Smith (1979, 497) and Falileyev (2009, 6) for a discussion of a probably spurious element ***ub*, proposed as attested here. *Ouirouedroúm* (Duncansby Head, CAI) was derived from **wer-wedro-* ‘very watery, wet’ (Isaac 2005(c), 202).

Trucculensem / *Trutulensem Portum* (acc.) is noted by Tacitus alone (Agricola §38, 4) but its location is uncertain though probably in the north-west. It stimulated a lengthy and inconclusive debate in Rivet & Smith (1979, 479) who cautiously suggest a possible connection with Clt **turko-* ‘boar’, while Breeze (2002) has argued that this may be related to W *trwch*² ‘unfortunate, sad; incision, cut’ (GPC). Consider also W *trwch*¹ ‘thickness’ (GPC). Given the unreliability of forms in the *Agricola* this name is at least plausibly Celtic.

2.7 Island Names

Some islands, which are first attested in the Early Middle Ages, bear names which continue to deny interpretation as Indo-European (see Coates 2012 & Broderick 2013). This section discusses only the names attested in the Roman period as it is not possible to establish earlier forms of items which are only attested many centuries later.

2.7.1 *Cana* (*Canna*, *INV*)

This is attested in the Ravenna Cosmography alone (Rivet & Smith 1979, 296). It has extremely speculatively been equated with *Canna* (Gael *Canaigh*) but various issues make this equation too speculative to be of any linguistic value. Richmond & Crawford (1949, 292) suggested an origin in the Latin feminine adjective *cāna* ‘white’ agreeing with an unexpressed *insula*. Other island names, which cannot be located, could similarly be Latin: *Anas* and *Grandina* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 249 & 370). *Daruveda* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 330) attested in the *Ravenna Cosmography* alone can be interpreted as Celtic < **derwo-* ‘oak’, but the two

attestations are too corrupt and the location is uncertain. Such names can provide no reliable information for the linguistic situation in Calidonia.

2.7.2 *Doúmna (Harris and Lewis)*

This is apparently a simplex name meaning ‘world, deep’ (Matasović 2009, 107, s.v. **dubno-*; Falileyev 2010, 18, s.v. **dumno-*), is transparently Celtic and evidences *-Vmn-* for historical *-Vbn-*, the original form being fairly common on the Continent (Delamarre 2007, 220, s.v. *dubno-*). An alternative explanation by McCone (1996, §4.1-§4.6, 81-97) is that the Celtic first lenition (of voiced stops & /m/) had already occurred. If so, this form could attest the lenited phoneme /v̥/. Watson (1926, 40) noted that the reflex *Domon* occurs in Old Irish literature indicating its survival into the Early Medieval Period. One wonders whether **dumn-* ‘deep’ in this, and perhaps other, contexts could mean ‘far’ or ‘peripheral’ which would parallel the modern forms *Na h-Eileanan A-muigh*³⁵³ & ‘the Outer Hebrides’ (cf. Broderick 2013, 6). If such an interpretation holds this could represent an exonym simply ‘the far one’.³⁵⁴ This might go part of the way to explaining why it is the unetymologised *Leòdhas* (*E Isle of Lewis*), possibly representing a reflex of the local form, which won out in the end. Otherwise, perhaps one could consider a meaning as the ‘low one’, corresponding to de Bernardo Stempel’s suggestion for *Dumnónioi* (see above).

2.7.3 *Éboudai (Inner Hebrides)*

This is well-attested in numerous early sources (Rivet & Smith 1979, 354; Broderick 2013, 4) and was classed as ‘opaque, non-Celtic, non-IE’ (Isaac 2005(c), 192). Attested in OGael as *lbdaig* < *Ebudākoī*, demonstrating that the name survived, with a suffix, into the Early Medieval period. Woolf (2013, 6), perhaps following de Bernardo Stempel (2007, 155) suggested that this could represent an Irish attempt to realise *Epidioi*, but this requires an unmotivated early development of /p/ to /b/. See also Coates (2012, 70) and Broderick (2013, 4) who discuss possible origins in Semitic words for ‘lamb’ or ‘fear’.

³⁵³ This is presumably a back-formation from English but nonetheless it confirms a perspective of viewing the islands as distant.

³⁵⁴ Perhaps a similar usage could be considered in regards of three place-names of WLO (Pardivan, -dovan & -duvine; Watson 1926, 372) i.e. ‘distant grazing’. See also BLITON s.v. *dußin* (sic).

2.7.4 *Maleós (Mull)*

Isaac (2005(c), 97) derived this from **Melaio* < **melh₂-io* ‘rising up, mountainous island’. It apparently attests assimilation of first vowel to the /a/ of the second syllable, an indicator that Celtic in this area was not conservative, regarding this feature at least. Less appealing is a derivation from **ml̥-yo-s* ‘the evil one’ (de Bernardo Stempel, 153). Coates (2006, 68) investigated a possible etymology from a Semitic word meaning ‘salt’. This name survives and is attested in the VC (I, 22; I, 41; II, 22) as *Maleam* (acc. sg.).

2.7.5 *Orkádes (Orkney Islands)*

This is usually derived from **ork-ad-* ‘pig islands’ (Isaac 2005(c), 200; Falileyev 2010, 27; Rivet & Smith 1979, 433-34). Koch (2006(i)) suggested that the name may be totemic or based on the metaphor of the islands as the mainland’s pigs. For other names in **orko-* ‘pig’ see Delamarre (2003, 243). Sims-Williams (2006, 178, fn. 6) noted also OGael *orc* ‘salmon’. Whales, dolphins etc. attract ‘pig’ names e.g. *W mor-hwch* (see Rivet & Smith 1979, 433). According to LEIA (0-28) *orc* ‘salmon’ is simply a variant of *erc* ‘speckled’ (see Hamp 1989). Interestingly these islands are known as *Erch* ‘speckled’ (GBGG 483) in Welsh, a word which might also provide a plausible meaning for an island group. A Celtic **orkā* ‘pine’ has also been proposed (Sims-Williams 2006, 178, fn. 6). However, these islands are known for their lack of trees. More speculatively Lockwood (2003, 247) proposed an origin from a ‘pre-Celtic Pictish’ word meaning ‘headland’ supposedly attested in other names in Shetland (e.g. *Orka* or *Orki*), and that this was later re-interpreted as Celtic referring to schools of pilot whales. This name may have been known to Greeks as early as the 4th century BCE and is often employed as early evidence for a Celtic language in the very north of Britain (Koch 2006(i)).

2.7.6 *Skitis (Isle of Skye)*

The above, along with *σκίτις*, represents one of the two primary manuscript readings (see Rivet & Smith 1979, 452). Later forms and *Scetis* of the Ravenna Cosmography allow a confident correction, and this provides further evidence for copying errors in relevant sections of the *Geographia*. Isaac (2005(c), 199) noted a possible formal derivation from **skiti-* ‘cutting, splitting’ but he

recognised difficulties with the meaning and concluded that ‘the IE character and Celticity of the name are questionable’. The island is indeed split and characterised by various deep inlets. See Watson (1926, 39) for numerous early medieval attestations such as *Scia* (VC).

2.7.7 *Thoúlē (unknown)*

‘Rationalistically applied to the Shetland Islands, but properly without real designatum’ (Isaac 2005(c), 204). While this has no evident Celtic etymology the fact that it is attested as early as Strabo, recalling Pytheas of the 4th century BCE (Rivet & Smith 1979, 437) means that such an early name need not have any bearing on the time period under scrutiny here. It could represent a pre-Celtic name but there is no evidence that it was ever used locally.

2.8 Geographical Features

‘*Mons Graupius*’

The only such name attested is *Mons Graupius*, noted as *ad montem Graupium* (gen. / acc. sg.?; Agricola 29, 2). Its location is uncertain, possibly Bennachie (ABD) or the Gask Ridge (Fraser 2008, 76-78). It has been the subject of numerous debates and there is no consensus on its meaning (ibid. 72-78). Watson (1926, 55-56) equated it with *W crwb* ‘hump’, but this is probably a late loanword from English (GPC). Jackson, after having initially doubted the possible equation with *Dorsum Crup* of the Pictish Chronicle (Rivet & Smith 1979, 370), concluded that this was possible. It is this view that is noted by Woodman & Kraus (2014, 234). Breeze (2002) argued that it represents a corrupt form of the etymon of *W crib* ‘comb, ridge’. This entails some fairly drastic orthographic modifications, *Graup-* for /kri:p-/. Koch modified the form to **Kraupios* (2006(j)) but did not discuss an etymology. It has been assumed that this form, even without a robust etymology, provided evidence that Pictish was P-Celtic but, considering the difficulties discussed above, this view cannot exceed the level of a possibility.

2.9 General Conclusion

Now that the evidence has been discussed what conclusions can be drawn? I will not be discussing the issue of the presence of a pre-Celtic IE language (alteuropäisch / Old European) as I see little in the evidence that necessarily requires recourse to such a solution (but see the discussion of Spey below 3.4.2.3.-3.4.2.4.). This view was promoted by Nicolaisen (1976, 222-46) but it was severely criticised by Hamp in 1990. The four issues that will be discussed below are:

1. Whether or not there is evidence for a non-IE language.
2. Whether or not there is evidence for P- or Q-Celtic (if these are valid classificatory terms).
3. Whether there are any noteworthy linguistic features.
4. Survival of items.

2.9.1 *The Proposed Survival of a Non-Indo European Language*

There are some later-attested island-names such as Iona, Lewis or Uist, *G Hirt* (St Kilda) which defy fully convincing interpretation as Indo-European,³⁵⁵ but such survivals are not unusual and do not constitute evidence for the continued use of pre-Celtic language as late as the Roman period. The etymologies of the islands of Ibiza (Spain), Scilly, Batz (Brittany) and Sark (Channel Islands) are unknown (ibid.). Some island names are arguably Celtic such as the Orkneys, Skye and Mull. *Thoúlē* is of limited value here given that it is probably attested by Pytheas as early c. 325 BCE, has no reflexes and need not represent a native form. *Éboudai* resists satisfactory interpretation, but again we may be dealing with a name coined earlier than the Roman period. *Boderia* (and *lēnâ*) attest significant manuscript variations, have no reflexes and their authentic forms cannot be established.

³⁵⁵ For a discussion of such island names see Coates (2012) and Broderick (2013).

Credible etymologies can be proposed for *Kelníou* by accepting the variant reading *Kailios*. Likewise *Tína* (if it is not misplaced) is susceptible to etymologising on the basis of plausible emendations. In any case it flows through the territory of the Celtic *Ouenikōnes*. Lastly, the *Nabárou*, the most northerly major river in Scotland, can be shown robustly Celtic (or at least IE). There are also some river-names which may also be early Celtic coinings such as the two named Shiel. There is no convincing linguistic evidence, based on robust sources which would lead us to imagine the continued presence of a non-Celtic language in Calidonia in the first century CE. It might however be wise to keep an open mind as to the linguistic situation in the western coast and isles, as there is but limited evidence for this area.

2.9.2 *P- or Q-Celtic?*

Koch (2006(d)) noted that there is no general consensus about how the family tree of the Celtic languages is to be drawn, in particular whether the Brythonic group is more closely aligned with Gaulish or with the Goidelic group. What is fairly certain is that by the post-Roman centuries most, if not all, of Ireland (& Argyll) was speaking Goidelic³⁵⁶ and most of Britain (including Pictland & western Brittany) were speaking variants of Neo-Brittonic.³⁵⁷ How far back we can push this linguistic bifurcation is debated and it cannot be established where such variants were spoken. Most of the Roman-period place-names of both Britain and Ireland provide no undisputable diagnostic features. In fact Schrijver (2014, 72-87) has gone as far as to argue that Irish is descended from Brittonic and that it may have been introduced into the island as recent as the end of the first century CE. These two language groups have traditionally been classified according to the attestation of the innovation of /k^w/ to /p/. While still perhaps useful, the change is phonetically trivial and is attested in numerous languages such as Oscan, Greek and Romanian. It may also be misleading as it suggests an Ibero-Goidelic branch, as Celtiberian preserves this labio-velar. Proto-Goidelic and Proto-Gallo-Brittonic may be more accurate but as earlier sources use P- and Q- they have been retained here. It is primarily this change that earlier

³⁵⁶ See de Bernardo Stempel (2007) and Schrijver (2000) for the proposed survival of a pre-IE language in Ireland.

³⁵⁷ There is little evidence for the linguistic situation in western and northern Scotland, and that which exists is ambiguous and problematic.

researchers sought in the early evidence in order to determine whether Pritenic belonged to either Goidelic or Brythonic but this is only one phonetic innovation. Evidence of /p/ < /k^w/ would not necessarily prove that the dialect was incipient Brythonic simply that this change had occurred, in the speech of informants.³⁵⁸ Our evidence dates from a period when divisions between many dialects of Celtic may not have been so crisp as they became in the post-Roman period, and even in the centuries BCE it may still be legitimate to think of a widely-spoken and relatively homogenous Celtic language (cf. McCone 2006, 46).

Having said this, there is nothing conclusive in the evidence to suggest affiliation to early Goidelic. The proposed change of /xs/ > /s/, possibly attested in *Lóksa* > Lossie and the personal name LOSSIO, does correspond to a Goidelic sound-change. The evidence for this item is problematic and will be discussed in full in Chapter 3 (3.6.4.). The evidence for P-Celtic is equally problematic. Jackson (1955, 161) discussed three items (*VEPOGENI*, *Banatía* and *Dekántai*) as indicating that Pritenic belonged to this branch. He dismissed *Epidíoi* as valid evidence for Pictish as it was located too far south, i.e. to the south of the supposedly Brittonic area of Strathclyde. I would query its evidential value due to the possible mediation of Brittonic-speaking informers, as perhaps with the group-name *Manapii* (Ptolemy) in Ireland. As discussed above *Banatía* and *Dekántai* could represent Goidelic forms prior to the raising of /a/ to /e/. *Dekántai* and *Argentocoxos* show the preservation of /nt/ which became /d/ in Goidelic.³⁵⁹ Indeed, there is a group named *Brigantes* (Ptolemy) in Ireland itself, but this could be a misplaced example of the British group of the same name, or influenced by it (cf. Toner 2000, 79). *VEPOGENI* however seems robustly Brittonic. This would appear as good evidence for the change of /k^w/ to /p/ among the Calidones, but one cannot assume that this is evidence for Brittonic in other regions of the far north. Note that names such as *Alaûna*, *Ιτούνα*, and *Esk* are common in Britannia and that *Kornaúioi* and *Dumnonii* (if not *Damnonii*) also occur further south and forms similar or identical to *Kalēdónioi* occur in Gaul. It is doubtful whether any robust conclusions can be drawn from such correspondences and the question of P- versus Q-Celtic is best left open in areas outwith the particular Calidonian group.

³⁵⁸ A P-Goidelic variant is plausible.

³⁵⁹ See De Bernardo Stempel (200, 101) for a brief discussion.

2.9.3 *Distinctive features*

There is little in the way of noteworthy features. *Doúmna*, and possibly *Damnónioi* (if an error for *Dumn-/ Dubn-*) may indicate the lenition of voiced stops but a confusion of /bn/ and /mn/ could be no more than a trivial dialect difference. *Nabárou* may attest a regressive assimilation of the vowel similar to Joseph's Rule (*eRa* > *aRa*) which may be attested in *Ouárar* < /wer-/ and perhaps also in *Maleós*.

2.9.4 *Survival*

The actual attested reflexes of some items provide information about the languages in which they have been mediated so they will be discussed when relevant in Chapter 3.

The *Ouenikōnes* may survive to be mentioned once in northerly early Welsh poetry, but this has been questioned (see Chapter 3). *Epidíoi* may speculatively be echoed in later gaelicised personal and group names, but this could also be coincidental. The *Maiatai* are referred to in the *Life of Columba* (gaelicised once) and are attested in two modern place-names, Dumyat and Myot Hill. The *Uerturiones* are well attested in both Irish and English medieval sources, and perhaps in the place-name Fortrose. The *Damnónioi* may be attested in Cardowan and Dowanhill (but see above) and may speculatively figure as a theme in later personal names. Rivet and Smith proposed that *Loûgoi* may survive in the name Loth, but a Gaelic origin seems more probable. It has been proposed that the *Smértai* were attested in a modern hill-name but this is probably spurious (see 3.9.2.). The *Kalēdónioi* are attested in three surviving Gaelicised names Dunkeld (G *Dùn Chailleann*), Rohallion and *Sídh Chaillean* (Schiehallion). Promontory names do not survive. Islands on the other hand survive very well in particular into the Early Medieval Period. A reflex of *Éboudai* is attested in Old Gaelic, as is *Doúmna*, but both fall out of use at some later period. *Orkádes* survives into the modern period as does *Maleós*, *Skitis* and speculatively *Cana*.

The degree of survival of river-names is high. *Lóggou* may be equated with Loch Long and *Ítuos* with Loch Etive but this is uncertain. *Alaûna*, *Dēoúa*, *Dēoúana*,

Ouárar, *Taoúa*, *Íla* and *Nabárou* all retain their names. It is only with some massaging of the early forms that *Bodería* can be equated with more recent forms of the Forth. The *Támeia*, a smaller inland river, is replaced. *Nassa* may represent the Ness. Whether the *Lóksa* represents the Lossie is uncertain as is the relationship between *Tína* and the Eden. The *Touáisis* is replaced by a diagnostically non-Q-Celtic name the Spey (but see Chapter 3) while the *Kailios* is replaced by the demonstrably later form Deveron. If the Findhorn is not the *Lóksa* then the Findhorn is curiously absent from the survey as is the Esk. Whether or not any conclusions can be drawn from the good rate of survival is uncertain. Lesser place-names tend to be replaced with far greater ease than the names of places which are widely known, and in Ptolemy's survey it is only the most important items that are noted. The exception here is the name of forts whose names are secondary, often simply attesting the name of the nearby river or representing perhaps military coinings, perhaps both in Latin and Brittonic. The dataset is simply too small and selective to maintain any grand theories.³⁶⁰

2.9.5 Summary

The Celticity of most of the area seems beyond reasonable doubt, with only a small number of unetymologised items of possible non-Celtic origin. This is important as it weakens the case for a non-Celtic form surviving over five centuries to be attested in the *ogham* inscriptions. The only evidence for pre-Celtic languages are the westerly island-names. Whether or not the language or dialects spoken belonged to the P- or Q-Celtic branch is uncertain, indeed it may be premature to think in such terms in this area in this period.³⁶¹ The most one can say regarding the bulk of the names is that they represent undifferentiated Celtic. *VEPOGENI* is the only robust piece of evidence for the change of /k^w/ to /p/ but this is evidence for one group alone.

³⁶⁰ For an in-depth discussion of issues relating to place-name survival and replacement (albeit early medieval) see Hall (2012). Also available online: http://www.alarichall.org.uk/alaric_hall_instability_of_anglo-saxon_place-names_working_paper.pdf

³⁶¹ See, in particular, Schrijver's 2014 study of the origins of Germanic languages who argues that a Celtic language had only recently been introduced into Ireland, perhaps as early as the end of the first century of the Common Era.

The next question to be approached is what is the relationship between the Celtic language(s) spoken in this early period and the language which slowly emerges into our evidential records from a considerable gap some six centuries later. Is it a direct descendant of the early language of Calidonia (i.e. Pritenic)? Is it a sister-language of Neo-Brittonic with which it may be sharing important innovations, or is it, as Jackson proposed, a dialect of Gaulish?



Figure 5 Ptolemaic Map of The British Isles³⁶²

³⁶² Ca. 1480 ff. 60v-61 © The British Library.

3. The Question of Pritenic

Introduction³⁶³

That early ‘Pictish’ represented a distinct node of the P-Celtic family tree had been argued by Stokes (1890), Macbain (1892) and O’Rahilly (1946), but no name had been coined for this language. Commentators simply employed ‘Pictish’ for both the early Roman period form and the distinct early medieval language. In the final paragraph of his chapter ‘The Pictish Language,’ in *The Problem of the Picts*, Kenneth Jackson suggested that an appropriate name for the language of the *proto-Picts* would be ‘Pritenic’ (1955, 160). This was coined on the base of the ethnonym *Priteni*, which, he argued, would have been the form current amongst speakers of P-Celtic in northern Britain to refer to the inhabitants of this island. When Romanised Britons ceased to think of themselves as ‘Priteni’ (vel sim.), they restricted the use of this term for northern barbarian groups. The Latin term *Brittones*, which was ultimately derived from *Priteni* itself, was subsequently borrowed back into Brittonic giving *W Brython* (see Koch 2006(c)). *Priteni* evolved into *W Prydyn* which was the term the Welsh employed for Picts. Jackson intended ‘Pritenic’ as a term for the Roman period language of Calidonia which was generally assumed to be ancestral to Early Medieval Pictish. *Pritenic* would therefore, in his view, correspond to the northerly P-Celtic language attested in Classical sources,³⁶⁴ which in 1955 he argued was an independent branch of Gallo-Brittonic more closely related to Gaulish.

The notion of any early divergence was given additional substance by John Koch in his weighty 1983 article ‘The Loss of Final Syllables and Loss of Declension in Brittonic’. Evidence that would suggest further points of divergence from Brittonic was adduced (1983, 214-220) and many of the particulars of his theory were noted, with various qualifications, by Forsyth in 2006 (2006(b)). The

³⁶³ Repeated references will be made in this chapter to a number of sources, in particular the Pictish king-lists, Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* and the *Vita Columbae* (Life of Columba). References to secondary discussions are provided in the footnotes. In addition to Fraser’s 2003 article on the latter see also Stansbury (2003-4) who discusses the composition of this document and the surviving recensions.

³⁶⁴ See Chapter 2 for a discussion.

modern concept of Pritenic would place it in the same relationship with Pictish as Brittonic with Welsh - a Roman period sister-language to Brittonic. It is usually assumed, or argued, that the main reason for its distinctiveness was its avoidance of Latin influence and its preservation of certain features which were modified in Brittonic.³⁶⁵ Brittonic underwent a cascade of changes on all levels between c. 400 and c. 550,³⁶⁶ with a distinct, significantly latinised³⁶⁷ and more analytical form emerging towards the end of this period. According to current thinking the spoken language of about 550-600 would have been largely unintelligible to Brittonic-speakers of the late Imperial period.

The later, but admittedly restricted, evidence for early medieval Pictish demonstrates that it shared much with Brittonic at least on the lexical level³⁶⁸ and in many issues of phonetic and grammatical evolution e.g. lenition,³⁶⁹ syncope³⁷⁰ and apocope.³⁷¹ However, at present we lack the evidential material to engage in detail with many crucial aspects of the relationship between the two. For example, we cannot approach the verbal system, syntax, prepositions, vowel affection or grammatical lenition etc. Advances in toponymic studies and the discovery of new inscriptional material, may well enable some progress in the future. Just how distinct Pictish was from Brittonic is a matter of debate. Watson (1926), Nicolaisen (1976 etc.) and Jackson in some brief later writings (1980, 1983), are comfortable with the view that it was perhaps a dialect of Northern Brittonic. Jackson in 1953 (& 1981) and Koch in 1983, however, noted a number of specific and significant early points of divergence.

³⁶⁵ This is a view I hope to discuss in print in the near future.

³⁶⁶ See Jackson 1953 *passim*, Sims-Williams 1990. For a chronologically arranged list of changes see Jackson 1953 (§210, 694-99), with modifications Sims-Williams (2002, 394-95).

³⁶⁷ For a discussion of a selection of Latin features in Brittonic see Russell (2011).

³⁶⁸ As noted by Taylor (2011, *passim*) and discussed in detail by James (2013) all identified 'Pictish' lexical items are also attested in Northern Brittonic.

³⁶⁹ For example compare the names *Unust* (et al.) < **Ojno-gustu-* with *Uurgust* (et al.) < **wor-gustu-*.

³⁷⁰ For example the personal name **Lutrin* (SL1) < **Lugu-*, and *Meilochon* (HE) > *Mailcon* (SL1).

³⁷¹ Underlying this claim is not only Jackson's item of 1955, but the studies of Koch (1983) and Taylor (e.g. 2011). Additionally I have a substantial study of Pictish personal names (30,000+ words) and an overview of Pictish phonology including a gazetteer of lexical items (20,000+ words). It is hoped that these can be completed in the near future.

Any evidence that would demonstrate divergence prior to c. 450 is of the greatest importance as it would indicate a parting of the ways prior to the emergence of Neo-Brittonic. If so, Pictish need not have undergone the entirety of the momentous changes which gave rise to this newly-emerged variant. Consequently, it could be argued that it was indeed a distinct language with restricted degrees of mutual intelligibility with Brittonic. The further back one can push the date of divergence with Brittonic the more time is allowed for Early Medieval Pictish (and Brittonic) to have been innovating on distinct lines. The more numerous and significant these points of divergence the more likely it becomes that Pictish was distinct on other unattested levels. This is all very uncertain and relies on hypotheses, but nevertheless these proposed points of divergence are, at present, the strongest indicator that there was a language distinct from Brittonic to the north of the Forth-Clyde divide.

The alternative scenario, that Pictish was more a dialect variant of Brittonic, would be easier to argue if the proposed early changes were demonstrated to be spurious. If Pictish is to be seen (merely) as northerly Brittonic then it has to have undergone a transition similar to that which gave rise to Neo-Brittonic. Given that these changes are clustered during and either side of the century 450-550 the proposed early divergences are of the greatest importance. If such proposals do not withstand scrutiny the need for the terms Pritenic, and also Pictish, could be questioned.

To recapitulate: Early Medieval Pictish could be a dramatically distinct P-Celtic language with only a superficial similarity to Brittonic, the close resemblance having been assumed on the basis of very restricted and overwhelmingly lexical evidence. The opposite extreme is that Pictish was simply a dialect variant of northern Brittonic which largely co-evolved with Brittonic proper. One could propose an evolving post-Roman insular speech area which was inclusive of Pictland (and Brittany). Alternatively, Pictish could represent the episodic or even abrupt northward expansion of post-Roman Brittonic, vaguely paralleling the expansion to Aremorica. As with many opposing scenarios a grey and fuzzy area may exist in between the polar extremes. While Pictish could be sharing innovations with Brittonic it could also be conservative in regards to many important, but invisible, issues. We should also bear in mind that any boundary

between Pictish and Brittonic may itself have been complex, fluctuating and indistinct (cf. James (2013)).

Precisely when a dialect becomes a language is an issue upon which there is unlikely ever to be consensus, and is the realm of sociology or philosophy as much as objective linguistics. With respect to Pictish the evidence is unlikely ever to be sufficient to come to a firm conclusion - for that we would require a number of narrative texts from a range of locations. What we can do is suggest parameters based on the available evidence. Distinctive features of language do not carry the same weight when attempting to assess this issue. Some vowel changes, unless they carry additional grammatical information, may be trivial and suggest little more than a difference of accent. The supposed Pictish preservation of stops after liquids (i.e. *pert* vs Britt *perth* etc.) or the preservation of voiceless geminates (e.g. *pett* vs Britt *peth*) are, on their own, unlikely to have impinged significantly on mutual intelligibility.³⁷² However, the proposed lack of *i*-affection would have implication for issues such as plural-marking and is therefore more significant, as would be /xs/ falling in with /s/ in Pictish and with /x/ in Brittonic. The survival of a PIE ablaut variant in a common noun might also cause similar difficulties. While a certain sound-change may appear significant, if it is only attested in a limited number of words or grammatical contexts then it is unlikely to impede communication. So it is not only distinctiveness that must be considered but also frequency and context.

This chapter will investigate the limited number of linguistic features which have been interpreted as indicating that Brittonic and Pictish were diverging prior to the emergence of Neo-Brittonic. Indeed, the question could be reframed as asking whether the evidence for ‘Pritenic’ will withstand sustained scrutiny. It should be noted that even were all the points discussed demonstrated to be untenable this would not disprove the existence of Pritenic. It would only remove a major obstacle to the view that Pictish was the most northerly dialect of Brittonic.

The nine points listed below are the only indicators of early bifurcation between Pictish and Brittonic which have been proposed by qualified Celticists, and which

³⁷² See Jackson (1955, 164, (vii) & (vii).

have not been demonstrated to be spurious. They are noted in chronological order, apart from the last which makes references to prior sections. The date given in brackets indicates roughly the date of divergence on the particular issue and is based on the datings of Jackson (1953) and Sims-Williams (2003). Such precise datings are to be treated with caution and are meant only as a rough guide.

Chapter Sections:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. <i>o</i> -grade in <i>abbor</i> ‘aber’ | (Brittonic / Celtic?) Koch | (Forsyth) |
| 2. (-)kun- > (-)kon- | (?100 BCE) | Koch (Forsyth) |
| 3. Preservation of Britt. /sN-/ | (50-100) | Koch (Forsyth) |
| 4. /-j-/ > /-ǵ-/ | (50-100) | Koch (Forsyth) |
| 5. /oj/ > /o:/ (Britt. > /u:/) | (75-100) | Koch (Forsyth) |
| 6. /xs/ > /ss/ | (222-235) | Jackson & Koch |
| 7. Preservation of /o:/ (</ow/) | (275-300) | Koch (Forsyth) |
| 8. /-jos/ > -ei | (450) | Koch (Forsyth) |
| 9. The Gaulish Question | 100 BCE | Jackson & Koch |

3.1 Section 1: The o-grade in Pictish *abor*

3.1.1 Introduction

1961 Anderson & Anderson (158) suggested that the toponymic item *apor*, variants of which were attested in the *Vita Columbae*, the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Book of Deer*, evidenced ‘North-British’³⁷³ *ab(b)or*, a vowel-grade variant of Brittonic *aber*, ‘estuary, confluence’³⁷⁴ (< **ad-bero-*, GPC II). This proposal was elaborated by Koch in 1983 (214), who added to the list two forms from the ‘Poppleton’ manuscript: *Apurnethige* & *Aburfeirc*. Forsyth (2006(b), §2.(1), 1444-45) modified this proposal, noting that *abbor* may have existed ‘alongside the e-’ (sic.). Taylor also discussed this variant (2001, 483; 2011, 76 fn 18 & 83), and James (2012, s.v. *aber*), referring to *æborcurnit*, an early form of Abercorn (WLO), suggested that the variant could also have been current in Northern Brittonic. It has therefore become a widely accepted feature of Pictish morphology.

Were this the correct interpretation of the evidence it could be seen as indicating that Pictish was diverging from Brittonic at some point before vowel-grade (ablaut)³⁷⁵ variance was lost in these languages. The issue of how or when Celtic languages lost a functioning PIE ablaut system has not been discussed in print, but there is no trace of a functioning system in neo-Celtic languages.³⁷⁶ It would consequently probably be safe to assume that it had ceased by the sixth century, perhaps long before that. This section will investigate the evidence noted above and other relevant items and will argue that these incongruous vowels are due to modifications in the languages and texts in which they are attested and that they do not represent a vowel-grade variation in Pictish itself.

³⁷³ This is the term they used for what others would term as ‘Pictish’ indicating their view that it was but a dialect of Brittonic. See Chapter 1.

³⁷⁴ O’Rahilly had already noted *apor* < **ad-boro* in Scottish place-names but he classified this as an Old Irish feature which contrasted with Brittonic *aber* (1946, 356, fn 5).

³⁷⁵ For a brief discussion of ablaut in PIE see Mallory & Adams (2006, §3.3, 48-9).

³⁷⁶ I know of no examples of a functioning system in attested early Celtic, but this is a field which could benefit from further research.

There are perhaps some 60 place-names in northern Britain, primarily in eastern Pictland and the Lothians, which may attest reflexes of *aber*.³⁷⁷ They are generally first attested much later than the examples referred to above, usually in charters from the twelfth century onwards. A few may be reflexes of Gaelic *eabar* ‘marsh’ while others may have been remodelled on it - an issue which requires a full investigation.³⁷⁸ All the Scottish examples apart from *Abercorn*, have been mediated by Gaelic, and most subsequently by Scots / English. The earliest attested spellings of such forms are consistent with the vowel of the final syllable representing schwa. None provide any compelling indications of the survival of an /o/, which is not surprising given the general tendency of G and Scots to reduce most vowels in this post-tonic position. The same can be said for the three items which are reflexes of **kom-bero-* ‘confluence’ (cf. ModW *cymer*), Dalfouper (ANG), Coupar Angus (PER) and Cupar (FIF).³⁷⁹ This is also composed of the same nominal root. There is consequently nothing in the later evidence which can provide any useful information for the issue discussed here and we therefore remain restricted to the same four items previously adduced as evidence. However, scrutinising the textual and linguistic context in which these items are preserved suggests alternative interpretations. Firstly, it is necessary to comment on the root itself and its attestations in modern and early Celtic languages.

Brittonic *aber* is derived from the PIE root **bher-*¹ ‘to bear, carry’³⁸⁰ which would mean that the proposed Pictish cognate, i.e. ***abor*, derived from *ad+bor*.³⁸¹ The nearest Gaelic equivalent is *inbhir* < **eni-bero-* (Macbain 1911, 213), from the same root but with a different prefix. The root **bher-*¹ - is one of the most productive in PIE giving words such as Lat *ferō* ‘I carry’, Armenian *berem* ‘bear,

³⁷⁷ See Watson (1926, 458-67) and BLITON for further discussions. For maps see Nicolaisen (2001 [1976], 209) and Barrow (1998, 57)

³⁷⁸ There are numerous issues with this element in particular the fact that many (e.g. *Aberbrothock* [Arbroath], *Aberfeldy* [G *Obar Pheallaidh*]) attest Gaelic (or gaelicised?) river-name specifics and attest G spirantisation rather than Brittonic non-modification.

³⁷⁹ See Taylor (2011, 85).

³⁸⁰ See Pok (128-32), Matasović (2009 62, s.v. **ber-o-*) for a concise discussion, and Hamp (1982) for further reflexes of this root.

³⁸¹ Brittonic /d/ plus another voiced stop resulted in the assimilation of the /d/ and the doubling of the second stop which resisted lenition and was later simplified e.g. **ad-bero-* > **abbero-* > **abber* > **aber* (Jackson 1953, §70, 427).

bring’ and the ModE verb *bear* (IEED 400).³⁸² There are extensive reflexes of the *e*-grade **bher* in Celtic, for example W *adfer* ‘restoration’, *cymer* ‘confluence’, *cymeryd* ‘take’, OC *guuer*, MidB *gouver* both ‘stream’ (GPC) and OGael *beirid* ‘carry’ (LEIA B-38, s.v. *ber*). No forms in Brittonic indicate derivation from an *o*-grade variant. This root is poorly attested in the surviving early Celtic evidence. Falileyev (2010, 73) suggested that the ethnonym *Berones* in Spain, if Celtic, might attest it, and if so it would evidence an *e*-grade. If an *o*-grade survived into early medieval Pictish one might expect some attestations elsewhere in Celtic. IEED (132) traces OGael *topar* ‘well’ back to **to-uss-boro* but this could equally well derive from **bero-*. The later plural *toibreacha* with palatised *r* could be a weak hint at an /e/.³⁸³ OGael *tipra* (eDIL³⁸⁴), Modlr *tiobraide* ‘well, spring, fountain, source’ might suggest a non-palatal cluster and the syncope of a non-front vowel.³⁸⁵ Mlr *commar* ‘confluence’ (LEIA C-178) could also derive from an *e*-grade. OGael *báire* ‘direction, voyage’ may attest the lengthened *ō*-grade, < **bhōr-jo-* (LEIA B-8). The *o*-grade is not conclusively evidenced in this root anywhere else in Celtic and the attestation of an *o*-grade in Pritenic, and in Pritenic alone, would be highly suspect.

3.1.2 The Evidence

The evidence previously adduced refers to six different place-names:

1. stagno litoribus Aporum (VC 68a, 366) & stagni Aporici (VC 83b, 410), Lochaber (INV).
2. Apor Croosan (AU 673.5), Applecross (ROS).
3. Aburnethige & Apurnethige, Abernethy (PER) in SL1 (Anderson 1973, 247).
4. Aburfeirc, Aberargie (PER; *ibid.*).

³⁸² See Watkins (2000, 10) for further examples.

³⁸³ I am grateful to David Stifter for drawing my attention to this item.

³⁸⁴

http://edil.qub.ac.uk/dictionary/index2.php?letter=T&&column=186&&dictionary_choice=edil_2012

³⁸⁵ I am grateful to Paul Russell for this suggestion.

5. Abbordobo[i]r, Aberdour (ABD) in the Book of Deer (Jackson 1972, 19 & 38).
6. Æborcurnit (Abercorn, WLO) HE I.12 (Namur manuscript; BLITON).

In addition, there are a further 8 attestations of *Applecross*: *Apor crosan* (AT 672), *Apur chrosan* (AT 721; dat.), *Apuir crosan* (AT 736; gen.), *Apor croosan* (AU 672), *Apur croson* (AU 721; dat.), *Apuir crosan* (AU 802; gen.), *Apur crossan* (*Calendar of Oengus*; dat.), *Apur crossan* (*Martyrology of Donegal*; dat.).

The evidence is therefore limited to five, or at most six, place-names which occur in written sources of diverse provenance, linguistic contexts and periods. These sources do represent the very earliest attestations of *aber* / *abor* and consequently cannot be brushed aside, especially as there are no competing early forms attesting an *e* (but see below). The entries in the *Vita Columbae* and the *Book of Deer* probably attest contemporary Gaelic realisations of c. 700 and c. 1130-50 respectively (Jackson 1972, 96). Those of the *Poppleton Manuscript* and the *Annals of Ulster* represent copies which are several times removed from the original.³⁸⁶ These items also represent places at great distance from each other, ranging from Abernethy and Aberargie in the south of Pictland in Perthshire, to Aberdour in the north-east (Aberdeenshire) and Lochaber and Applecross on the north-western coast. It is not surprising therefore that these items were interpreted as indicating a general and genuinely Pictish feature, confirmed by their presence in a diversity of text types (chronicles, hagiography and foundation legends).

All the attestations noted above, apart from Abercorn, occur in manuscripts which are either of Irish provenance or have been mediated by Gaelic and are not direct witnesses to Pictish. For the proposal to stand it is crucial to rule out the possibility that the form is not due to a Goidelic realisation of a Pictish item or due to later scribal issues, and it is to these questions that I will now turn.

³⁸⁶ See Evans (2002) for a discussion of the 'Poppleton' manuscript.

3.1.3 Linguistic Background

By the time of Old Gaelic, ‘not long before the eighth century’ (i.e. prior to c. 700), *a*³⁸⁷, *e*, *i* and *o* in unstressed closed syllables had been neutralised as ‘schwa’ (McCone 1996, 133). This of course compromises the evidence in that *o* of ***abor* may simply represent /ə/. However, the regularity of the spelling with *o* would benefit from a fuller explanation. McCone has recently provided this in that internal unstressed vowels are sometimes rounded by a preceding labial consonant (2012, 26). Three items are noted:

<i>cráb<u>u</u>d</i>	< <i>*krāB<u>i</u>ð</i> ³⁸⁸	‘piety’
<i>dechenb<u>o</u>r</i>	< <i>*dexanB<u>e</u>r</i> < <i>*dekan-wiro-</i>	‘ten people’
<i>adb<u>u</u>l</i>	< <i>*adB<u>e</u>l</i> < <i>*adwelo/ā-</i>	‘great’

Furthermore, he added that it is ‘striking that a number of these have *a* in the preceding syllable’ (ibid. 27), a precise parallel to *aber*. This provides a model for the regular modification of the loanword *aber* to /abor/, thus eliminating the need to propose the unusual preservation of an *o*-grade. A number of issues particular to each attestation require further commentary.

3.1.4 Discussion

3.1.4.1 Abercorn - Bede

It would be difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to claim mediation by Gaelic in order to explain the form *Æborcurnit* in one manuscript copy of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. However, most manuscripts attest *æber*- or similar (Colgrave & Mynors 1991, 42 & 428) and the form with *o* can be reasonably considered as a copying error. The Namur manuscript (Namur, Public library, fonds de la ville 11) in which this form is attested is inferior in various respects (see Colgrave and Mynors (1991, xli-xlv). The unreliability of this variant is underlined by the mis-copying of the final *-c* as *-t*, hence *æborcurnit* (< *W corn+-ig*; Macdonald 1941, 12-13).³⁸⁹ Confusion may also have been encouraged by the reduction in vowel

³⁸⁷ See below for a discussion of the preservation of this phoneme in Gaelic.

³⁸⁸ cf. ModW *crefydd* ‘religion’.

³⁸⁹ See also James (2012).

distinction in unaccented syllables in Old English (Campbell 1959, §368-§377, 153-56). The earliest subsequent attestation according to Watson (1926, 461) is *Ab̥ercorn* (1335) while Macdonald (1941, 19) has *Abircorn* (c. 1320) and *Abyrcorn* (c. 1370-76). These forms are more consistent with *aber* rather than **abor*. This item can therefore be discounted as evidence for a Northern Brittonic *o*-grade.

3.1.4.2 Lochaber & Applecross

Turning now to the two forms attested in the *Life of Columba*. *Abor-* was Latinised by Adomnán first as a third-declension noun in the genitive plural, *stagno aporum* ‘(to) the loch of the river-mouths’ suggesting a nominative singular **apor* (Anderson & Anderson 1961, 366, fn 5; Taylor 2011, 83). The second attestation *stagni litoribus Aporici* ‘(to) the shores of the river-mouth-loch’, a first/second-declension adjective in the genitive singular suggesting a nominative singular masculine *aporicus* (ibid.). As the VC was composed c. 700 this attestation is certainly late enough for P-Celtic *aber* to have undergone the Old Gaelic sound-changes discussed by McCone.

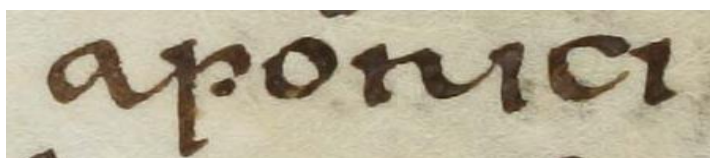


Figure 6 ‘Apor-’ in the *Life of Columba*³⁹⁰

Most of the earlier literature which discussed Applecross noted only one attestation, that of the *Annals of Ulster* which refers to the foundation of the monastery by the Irish saint Mael Rubha, ‘Mail Rubai fundauit eclesiam Apor Croosan’ (AU 673.5). However, as noted by Diack in 1926, there are in fact eight attestations of this name in early Irish sources (see above). The fact that *apor* is often written apart and that it undergoes the expected case modifications in the gen. and dat. (raising and slenderisation) demonstrate that it was perceived as a separate lexical item.

³⁹⁰ Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek, Gen. 1 <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/preview/sbs/0001>

3.1.4.3 Abernethy & Aberargie

The two place-names attested in the *Poppleton Manuscript*, *Apurnethige* and *Aburfeirc* are highly gaelicised. The brief section which contains these items is a probably spurious foundation account for the monastery at Abernethy and is a late ninth-century interpolation (see Evans 2002). The common Pictish name *Drest*, which is attested in the least gaelicised section of this document, is rendered here in the usual Gaelic form *Drust*- and is independent evidence for Gaelic authorship of this section, as is the form *Cairfuill* for Carpow.³⁹¹ *Nectonius*, the central character of this section bears the early Pictish form of the name,³⁹² probably preserved in a context related to his purported founding of the monastery.

Apurnethige is derived from a river-name **nejθ-* < Clt **next-* ‘washed, pure’.³⁹³ This name can be compared with the Nethan of Lanarkshire (James 2102). *Nethige* probably represents a gaelicised P-Celtic form, the genitive of *Nethech* or *Neitheach* (fem.; Watson 1926, 210-11). *Aburfeirc* contains the genitive of *ferg* which may be adapted from a P-Celtic **wergā* ‘anger’ (see Matasović 2009, 414). The meaning of the Welsh cognate *gvery* is ‘lively, spirited, vigorous’ (GPC) a particularly apt name for this mountain river. The *f-* of the name demonstrates that this is gaelicised, as the evidence indicates that Pictish preserved the original Celtic /w-/ (Koch 2000, 33). It is only in Goid that this phoneme evolves to /f-/ and this is confirmed by *Farg*, the name of the river (Watson 1926, 462). These two names are therefore far too Gaelic in form to provide any convincing evidence for Pictish phonology. In any case the vowel under scrutiny is *u* not *o*, and it can be explained by the Goidelic sound-changes discussed above.

An issue relevant to the above discussion and the following is that in standard Gaelic orthography *e* and *i* would indicate a palatised preceding consonant which would not be appropriate for the /b/ of *aber*, which would have been perceived as velar. This would leave *o*, *u* or *a* as appropriate graphemes for the Gaelic

³⁹¹ See Anderson (1973, 247) and Watson (1926, 370) for a brief discussion.

³⁹² The usual Irish equivalent being *Nechtan*, which is formed on the same root but with a different suffix.

³⁹³ See LEIA M-6 & Matasović (2009, 290, s.v. **nig-yo-* ‘wash’).

form. In Gaelic, as opposed to Irish, there are numerous instances where the quality of post-tonic /a/ in closed syllables was maintained into the modern dialects.³⁹⁴ The issue of unstressed vowels was deliberately targeted in the *Survey of Scottish Gaelic Dialects* (Ó Dochartaigh 1997, 161). For example, in the following items:

<i>ar<u>a</u>n</i>	‘bread’	205/207	52
<i>ar<u>b</u>h<u>a</u>r</i>	‘corn’	92/198	54
<i>ba<u>l</u>a<u>ch</u></i>	‘boy’	24/185	69
<i>coi<u>l</u>e<u>a</u>ch</i>	‘cock’	60/198	221
<i>ga<u>l</u>a<u>r</u></i>	‘disease’	120/127	454

As there is no general change of schwa to /a/ in this position in other words, it is clear that this is a distinction that was maintained. As loss of quality in unstressed position was probably spreading gradually through the dialects it is likely that when this and the following source were composed /a/ was preserved in even more instances. If so, *a* in this period would be interpreted as /a/ which again would not be appropriate for *abar* (or *abor*). This would leave us with only *o* or *u* as appropriate graphemes for schwa when the preceding consonant was not palatal, and this is indeed the situation we encounter.

3.1.4.4 **Aberdour**

The final piece of evidence to be discussed is *Abbordobo[i]r* which occurs in the first of the seven Gaelic notes inserted about 1130-50 into the *Book of Deer* (Cambridge University Library, MS. li.6.32). This is a tenth-century illuminated Latin Gospel book from north-east Scotland.³⁹⁵ The script is clear and the reading is firm.³⁹⁶ The name occurs in the first sentence of the entry on Folio 3v-4r:

³⁹⁴ I am grateful to Prof Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh for drawing my attention to this.

³⁹⁵ <http://bookofdeer.co.uk/>; See also Jackson (1972) & Forsyth (2008).

³⁹⁶ See Plate 3 in Forsyth 2008.

Colum Cille ⁊ Drostan mac Cosgreg a dalta tãngator a hÍ mar ro-[f]alseg
Dia doib gonic' Abbordoboir...

Collum Cille and Drostan son of Cosraig, his dalta ['fosterson / pupil], came from Iona as God revealed to them, as far as Aberdour.
(Forsyth, Broun & Clancy 2008, 136-37)

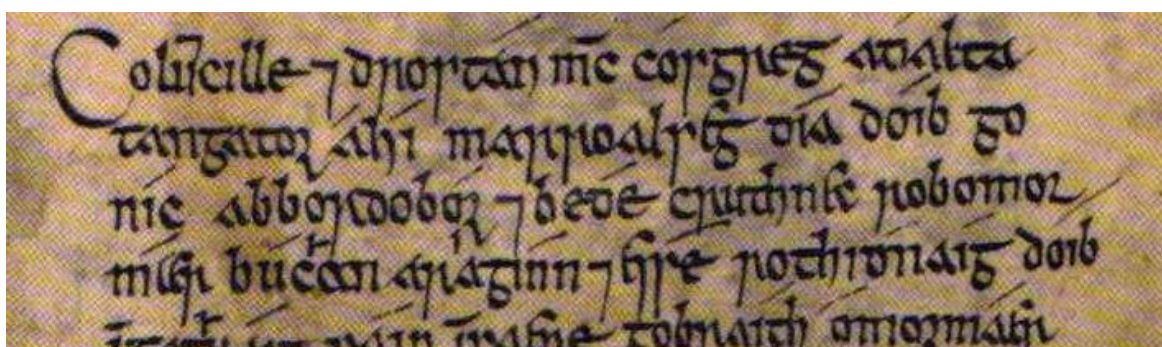


Figure 7 Abbordobor. The Book of Deer

Taylor noted that the name was 'probably completely Pictish and that it is identical with Aberdour in Fife (2008, 280), but given the genitivised specific and the incongruous *abbor* a fully Gaelic coining seems more likely, or perhaps a significantly modified form of /aber-duBr/. It is a compound of *abor*+Gaelic *Dobair*, genitive of *Dobar*, the small stream which flows into the river there and is now called the Dour. *Abbordobo[i]r* is indeed the earliest form of this name, the later attestations *Abirdouer* (c. 1329; Watson 1926, 462) and *Abirdowyr* (1336; *ibid.*) do not favour /o/ and are quite compatible with the vowel being schwa. Indeed it is likely that a Gaelic *abor* would be adapted (or adopted?) into Scots as /abər/, hence the *Abir*- spellings. The fact that the only other *aber* name in the Book of Deer, in a later note, is *Abberdeon*³⁹⁷ (Aberdeen) demonstrates that the evidence is not fully in support of a historical variant with o.

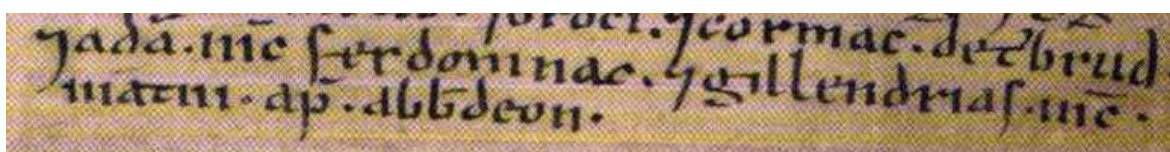


Figure 8 Abberdeon. The Book of Deer

³⁹⁷ Indicated by a suspension mark for which the usual transliteration is *er*.

Ó Maolalaigh's brief discussion of the name in 2008 (166) did not cover the *o* of *Abbor*, but did note that 'round vowels are used frequently in unstressed syllables where these would not be expected'. He provides a list of fifteen items (ibid. 167) which evidence this unusual spelling and the relevant rounded vowels are noted in **bold** below.

Scribe A	Scribe B	Scribe C	Scribe D
tangator	madchór	morgunn	abstoil
abbord <u>o</u> boir			d <u>o</u> lodib
dor <u>o</u> loeg			d <u>o</u> mongart
rolaboir			
morcúnn			
mormoir			
morcunt			
gobróig			
luloíg			
nolloc			

He noted that it may be significant that in the vast majority of these the preceding stressed syllable contained a round vowel (underlined above). One possible explanation that is proposed is that this may indicate a form of vowel harmony 'perhaps indicating further the existence of clear short non-schwa-like vowels in the unstressed position in twelfth-century eastern Scottish Gaelic'. This regressive harmony (or umlaut) could be called upon to explain unusual *o*. In this particular instance the post-tonic schwa of *abbordoboir* may have been assimilated to the two following vowels, both *o*. Ó Maolalaigh noted ten counter-examples (ibid. fn 54) and allowed that this may be purely orthographic and have no phonetic significance.

What is perhaps most relevant to this argument is that this is predominantly a feature of Scribe A. Of the fifteen examples of this feature ten are from his hand. His tendency was to round, orthographically at least, indistinct vowels when there was a rounded vowel in the accented syllable. It is quite possible that he applied similar thinking to the disputed vowel of *abbor*-. Note also that

all of the above examples have back vowels in the preceding syllable. At the very least it is evident that this form does not provide reliable evidence for the earlier Pictish realisation of the vowel under question. The alternative, that a Pictish ***Abor-duBr*, was partially gaelicised to ***Abor-đovər*, with replacement of the P-Celtic specific /dʊBr/ by Gaelic *dobar* while maintaining the vowel quality of unstressed /o/ of *abor* for many generations after the demise of Pictish stretches credulity.

3.1.4.5 Aber in Pictland, Gaelic or Pictish

A number of the medieval reflexes of aber names are followed by Gaelic (or gaelicised) river-names many of which are lenited and/or genitivised, in contrast to Brittonic where the radical is retained. For example Abertarf (INV) attests G *tarbh* ‘bull’ rather than Pictish **tarw* (G *Obar-thairbh*, Watson 1926, 466). There is no reason to imagine that Pictish followed Irish in turning /-w/ > /-v/ in such positions. Aberfeldy (G *Obar-pheallaidh*) attests a Gaelic river-name according to Watson (1926, 463) as does Aberfoyle (G *Obar-phuill*; *ibid.*) which he derived from *poll*, itself a loanword.

Moreover, Aberchirder (ABD) is derived by Watson from the river-name *ciardhobhar* ‘swart water’, and given that there appears to be no Britt cognate to OGael *cíar* ‘dark, black’ (Macbain 2011, 82; LEIA C-95) this would appear to represent *aber* prefixed to a river-name coined in Gaelic. This would also seem to be the case for Abergeldie (Gaelic *Obair Gheollaidh*), Watson (1926, 465) deriving this and various other river-names from *geal* ‘white’ (*ibid.* 440). Note that the Brittonic cognates, MidW *gell* ‘bay, brown’ (GPC) and MidBret *gell* ‘brown’ (Matasović 2009, 156, s.v. **gelo-* ‘yellow, white’), do not seem to occur in river-names, the nearest relevant items being two rivers in France, Gèle and Gèlise (Delamarre 2012, 156, s.v. *gelā*), which, due to their distance, do not provide ideal analogies for the item discussed here.

Note also that *Obar-bhrotháig* (the modern Gaelic form of Arbroath; Watson 1926, 465), *Obar Dheathan* (the modern Gaelic form of Aberdeen; *ibid.* 211) and Aberchirder appear to attest Gaelic lenition, i.e. spirantisation of voiceless stops. This could be due to a scholarly gaelicisation, done with an awareness of

the grammatical requirement to lenite. Nevertheless it demonstrates that *obar* was perceived as a separate lexical item.

The following appear to attest Gaelic genitival suffixes: Aberdollo (*Aberdolo* in 1611, but *Aberdolloche* in 1630; Watson 1926, 462) where the second part is *dolach* the old genitive of *dol* ‘a mead’; *Apurfeirt* (recte *-feirc*; see below) which occurs in the PKL (SL1) may represent the gen. *feirge*. Watson (1926, 211) noted that when ‘British (i.e. ‘Pictish) names were taken over into Gaelic they were often gaelicised by the addition of the Gaelic suffix *-ach*, *-ech*’. He adds that Abernethy (PER) has as its second part the genitive of a nominative *Nethech* or *Neitheach* (fem.). The same goes for *Obar Neithich* (Abernethy; INV; *ibid.*), where the genitivised ending indicates an awareness that the second element is qualifying a separate item i.e. *obar*. Are we to imagine that Gaelic-speakers (perhaps of Pictish descent) simply genitivised this because they felt that river-name should be genitivised in this position, whatever the first section? That is they encountered /*aber-nejθax*/, and due to the transparency of the first element genitivised the second?

Added to this is the lexical item *abar*, noted by Watson (1926, 454) as meaning ‘confluence’. This presumably refers to *tabar*, an entry in Macbain’s dictionary (1911, 2) which he noted as occurring only in Pictish place-names. Given that it occurs in his Gaelic etymological dictionary it would suggest that he considered that it had been loaned into that language, as *obair*. It may simply be that as *aber* generally occurs with a known river-name such toponyms were easy to segment. The location at estuaries and confluences would also provide an unambiguous and blatant clue as to the meaning.

It therefore seems probable that *aber* was in some way adopted into Gaelic, perhaps various times and in distinct contexts. By this I mean that some awareness of the meaning and use of the word continued after a switch from Pictish to Gaelic. For example, the Gaelic grammatical modifications made in the earliest attestations suggest that it was understood as a distinct lexical item, and the lenition attested in some of the later forms also confirm this. This is not necessarily to claim that it was in common usage for ‘estuary’ or ‘confluence’, but that, at the very least, its meaning was familiar in various Goidelic contexts. It would be reasonable to expand the claim and suggest that the word may have

adopted at an early period and that its gaelicised form, *apor* or *apur*, became a standard adaptation of Pictish *aber* thus explaining *Apor Croosan*.

Why this term might have survived the language shift is uncertain as Gaelic already had the synonym *inbher*. However, one can compare this with other loanwords such as *preas* ‘thicket’, *bagaid* ‘bunch, cluster’ and in particular the topographic items *dail* (< dol) ‘meadow’ and *monadh* ‘moorland’ (etc.). Semantically identical or similar terms are attested in Irish. One might suggest that these occupied specific semantic ranges for which the Gaelic form was not quite adequate. In the case of *aber* there may have been some specific ritual aspect, an issue which has been raised in regards to the fact that many parishes bear this name.

3.1.5 Conclusion

I would argue that *aber* was so common in Pictish toponymy that its meaning was well-known in certain early Goidelic circles and in the vast Irish-influenced religious province in the north and elsewhere (where Gaels would also be exposed to the common Brittonic *aber*). An awareness of the meaning of this word would have been facilitated by intimate, multi-levelled and enduring interaction between both linguistic communities.

The fact that each *aber* is located on either an estuary or a confluence would be sufficient to ensure a continuing awareness of its meaning, long after Pictish had ceased to be spoken. A similar situation is evidenced in Leon in north-west Brittany where three striking estuaries (Aber Ildud, Aber Ac’h & Aber Benniget) have recently generated the touristic label ‘Le Pays des Abers’ (The Region of the Abers). This word is no longer in use in the local dialect³⁹⁸ and yet it is evident to all, both local Breton-speakers and French-speaking tourists that *aber* means an estuary or an inlet. In Wales the preponderance of *aber* names followed by a known river-name (Abergele, Aberystwyth, Abertawe (Swansea) etc.) is enough for any armchair toponymist to quickly deduce its meaning.

³⁹⁸ I lived in the adjacent parish (Plougerne) for a year and a half (2004-5). Iwan Wmffre informs me that it may still be used by some fishermen in southern Brittany.

With this phenomenon one could compare the apparently post-medieval coining Abertay (for the new university), which could have been inspired by Aberdeen and other *Aber-* names. The first secure attestations of this very problematic name only begin in the eighteenth century (Taylor with Márkus 2010, 360) and it should be noted that it is not **Invertay*, with the Gaelic generic, that is devised. There is also Aberhill (FIF) which appears to be a modern coining (Taylor with Márkus 2006, 583). What this would suggest is that *aber* is, due to both its frequency of attestation and its required proximity to a particular geographical feature, prone to a long afterterlife and is easily resurrected.

I would suggest that Pictish *aber* was adopted as /aber/ or /abər/ and underwent the regular post-labial rounding to /abor/, hence explaining the earliest attestations. With the later adoption of Gaelic by Pictish-speakers *aber* continued in use, being apparently occasionally used to coin new place-names such as Aberchirder. The early pronunciation /abor/ may have been maintained into this period. This would explain the *Book of Deer* form, if it is not simply due to the orthographic practices of Scribe A. In the later period (8-11th centuries?) when Pictish was being abandoned in favour of Gaelic a new form of the word gained currency in Alba,³⁹⁹ giving the usual toponymic form *obar*⁴⁰⁰ attested in great numbers of place-names e.g. *Obar Dheathain* (Aberdeen; ABD) or *Obar Phuill* (Aberfoyle; PER). This could also simply be a later internal development of G /abor/ or /abər/ > /obər/.⁴⁰¹

There is one other alternative which must be considered.⁴⁰² Could the *abor* forms derive from a dative of *aber*, i.e. *abur*⁴⁰³ through a process of generalising the most frequently occurring form? This is what happens with the ubiquitous *Kin*-names in Scotland, deriving from the dative of Gael *ceann* ‘head’.

³⁹⁹ Used here for the Gaelic-speaking polity, successor to Pictland.

⁴⁰⁰ Presumably the first vowel has been modified by the following labial and the *a* represents schwa. This would benefit from an in-depth study of early forms.

⁴⁰¹ In order not to distract attention from the central point of this discussion I have not noted that intervocalic voiced stops are unvoiced in G, hence /opər/ would be a more accurate phonetic transcription. Thomas Clancy suggested that this could perhaps also represent a metathesis of *abor* > *obar*.

⁴⁰² I am grateful to Paul Russell for this suggestion.

⁴⁰³ For the paradigm of o-stems see, for example, Strachan (1949, 2).

A specifically Pictish *abor* is therefore a ghost form and there is no need to resort to a striking vowel-grade variation to explain the early attested place-names. Consequently, there is no evidence that the language differed from Brittonic in this respect.

3.2 Section 2: /(-)kun-/ > /(-)kon-/

3.2.1 Introduction

In his 1982 article ‘The Stone of the *Weni-kones*’ Koch proposed that there were some indications that in both Gaulish⁴⁰⁴ and ‘Celtic Pictish’ ‘-ǔ- was at times perceived as -ō-... indicating either open pronunciation or a centralizing reduction’ (88). He cited as evidence of this innovation cognate variants of one lexical item, the noun **kuno-* ‘hound’, which he understandably saw as attested in three different ‘Pictish’ names: *Wenikones*, *Meilochon* and *Congust*. The following year Koch affirmed more explicitly that this vocalic lowering was, in Proto-Pictish, limited to this noun alone while it was attested in a somewhat greater number of items in Gaulish (1983, 215 & 216). He stated that the change of ‘C[ommon] C[eltic] **(-)kun-* to Pritenic **(-)kon-* ... in some contexts would define ‘a clear-cut Pritenic innovation from Gallo-Brittonic in the first century A.D.’ (1983, 215). On the following page it was suggested that it could probably be dated to the ‘early first century B.C.’. Koch’s belief that this change occurred not only in Pictish but in the Brittonic of the Old North is reflected in his use of the conjectural form ‘Guincon’ (manuscript *gwynngwn*) for the proposed Brittonic reflex of *Weni-kones* in his edition of *The Gododdin of Aneirin* (1997, 184). While this does refer to a name in ‘Pictland’ it occurs in a song supposedly composed in *Gododdin*, a northerly kingdom⁴⁰⁵ where Brittonic is usually assumed to have been spoken. If not restricted to Pictish then this change cannot have been quite as geographically clear-cut as indicated.⁴⁰⁶

It is important to stress that Koch suggested that this was at most an occasional change, and that it may not indicate that the vowel /u/ was fully lowered to /o/ and consequently merged with it, rather that it was less distinctly realised than in Brittonic i.e. the general phonemic contrast would presumably have been

⁴⁰⁴ The suggestion that this change could be interpreted as additional evidence for the proximity of Pictish to Gaulish is discussed in Chapter 3. Note that it corresponds to Jackson’s view (1955) that Pictish was derived from Gaulish.

⁴⁰⁵ See Woolf (2006) for a discussion of new thinking on its location.

⁴⁰⁶ The authenticity of *Canu Aneirin* is currently being challenged from some quarters (e.g. Padel 2013). It is a source to be used with caution.

retained. It is easy to see how at first glance these items were interpreted as divergent, as they contrast with known W items such as *cŵn* ‘dogs’, and Old Welsh personal names such as *Cunan*.⁴⁰⁷ Forsyth (2006(b), §2(4), 1445) limited this change to the ‘second element in compounds’, making no reference to ‘Congust’, the one item where it supposedly occurs in initial position and, as will be shown, a dubious piece of evidence.

In a footnote in the 1982 article (fn 9, 87) Koch noted that a ‘Gallo-Brit. *kōnes* independent of **kūnes* is perhaps suggested by the Late OW personal name *Guincon* which was seen as a cognate of *Weni-kones*, but see below for complications. **Kones* in second position in this name and also in *Meilochon* would still require some explaining as it can hardly correspond precisely to *kones*, which is plural. A personal name with a plural as a second element, i.e. ‘Kindred Hounds’, would be typologically bizarre and inherently unlikely.

To summarise:

1. The PrClt nom.pl. of **ku*: ‘hound’ was understood to be **kunes* > W *cŵn*, which conflicts with Pritenic **Weni-kones*.
2. The compositional form **kuno-* (e.g. *Cynobelinos*⁴⁰⁸) > early Neo-Britt **kun-* conflicts with Pictish **Congust*.
3. Pictish *Meilochon* / *Mailcon* (etc.) conflicts with the early W personal name *Mailcun-* (DEB §33.1; ModW *Maelgwn*).

Koch was not alone in proposing that /u/ was lowered to /o/ in Pictish. Jackson (1955, 161) had already suggested the possibility that ‘*u* was sometimes advanced and lowered to some sort of *e* or unrounded *ö* sound’. This *e* would have represented /ə/ or similar. He, however, cited quite distinct items as evidence, namely names such as *Brude* & *Drust* vs Pictish *Bredei* & *Drest*.

As will be discussed below, the evidence for the changes put forward by Koch and Jackson is ambiguous, at best. Even if it is accepted, the significance of the

⁴⁰⁷ See Cane (2003, 262) for examples.

⁴⁰⁸ <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/details.php?name=200>

change is unclear. A slight lowering of /u/ is unlikely to have had a significant impact on mutual intelligibility between Pictish and Brittonic, especially if the change was restricted to a single lexical item or evidenced in only a very limited number of conditioned environments. In these cases it could be categorised as a minor or trivial dialectal peculiarity of no greater significance than the Breton variants for ‘hand’ which are generally /dɔrn/, contrasting with Leon /durn/ (Le Roux 1927-1953, 172). If, however, this change were part of a broader readjustment of the inherited Celtic vowel system or indicative of grammatical or morphological variation its impact could be much greater. It is the earliness rather than the actual distinctiveness of this supposed change which would be most significant. Depending on the motivation for the proposal the result could either be inconsequential or could indeed indicate early and perhaps significant diversification, and therefore this issue merits serious consideration.

3.2.2 Discussion

3.2.2.1 *Congust

I will start with the least problematic item, the compositional form **kuno-*, proposed as underlying *Congust*. This word is derived from the PIE root **k^won-* ‘hound’ (Isaac 2002, s.v. *cuno-*; Delamarre 2003, 132; Matasović 2009, 181 s.v. **k^won-*) and is well attested in early British personal names such as *Cuno-belinos* and *Cuno-moltus*.⁴⁰⁹ Even with this item some caution is required as there is evidence for a formally similar form, *coni-* which some scholars see as a variant of **kuno-* e.g. Delamarre (2007, 217; forthcoming⁴¹⁰). Isaac however is more sceptical and while noting **cono-* (2002, s.v.) suggested that it may actually be a ghost form. If not, then this debated and possibly distinct element could arguably underlie any Pictish forms.

All later neo-Celtic languages attest reflexes of **kuno-* written with *o*, either due to regular vowel changes or as variants. In Goidelic the first vowel was, by assimilation to the modified stem vowel, lowered to /o/ giving /kono-/,⁴¹¹ which, after the loss of composition vowels (syncope), gives *con-* in OGAel

⁴⁰⁹ http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/search.php?s_element=kuno-

⁴¹⁰ See section 3 for a discussion of the *coni-*.

⁴¹¹ This transitional form is actually absent from the inscriptions (Sims-Williams 2003, 354).

(Thurneysen 1946, §73, 46), i.e. **kuno-* > **kuna-* > **kona-* > *con-*. Hence OGael names such as *Conall*, *Conmail*, *Conchobair* etc. (see index to O'Brien 1962). In Archaic Welsh the first vowel is pretonically reduced giving /kən/⁴¹² (Jackson 1953, §205, 678-81) which could be spelt as either *Cun* - or *Con* -, both variants coexisting in the earliest texts. The former probably represented a historical spelling which disappeared in the eighth century (Sims-Williams 1991, 45).⁴¹³ Consequently OW attests names such as *Conmarch*, *Conuor* but also *Cungen*, *Cunblus*.⁴¹⁴ Late Brittonic /u/ became /o/ in (early) Cornish hence *Conreðeu* (Cane 2003, 240), *CONHINO-* (ibid. 232), *CONBEVI* (ibid. 234). In Breton this change is but sporadic (Jackson 1967, §197, 125) giving pairs such as *Conan* / *Cunan* (Loth 1890, 120). Therefore, despite generally being spelt identically, with *o* in OGael and in Neo-Brittonic, such forms represent quite distinct developments, any of which could theoretically be called upon to account for the supposed Pictish spelling. A Pictish name in *Con-* (< **kuno-*) would be no more unusual or distinctive than names in all other contemporary neo-Celtic languages.

3.2.2.2 **kuno-* in Northern Brittonic

Were the change of *kun-* > *kon-* demonstrable in Northern Brittonic or at least in some areas, as apparently suggested by Koch, it would count against it being specifically Pictish. Whether a feature is geographically restricted to 'Pictland' is a core but neglected issue.⁴¹⁵ If it is attested to the south it would be evidence for shared features with Northern Brittonic and could be interpreted as suggesting a linguistic continuum rather than the existence of two distinct languages.

Here I will first engage with the element under discussion, and then approach the broader evidence for a change of /u/ > /o/ in supposedly Brittonic-speaking areas. If the personal name *Cundiȝeorn* (< **kuno-tigerno*- 'hound-lord') attested in the *Durham Liber Vitae* represents an authentically northern form then it would suggest conservatism (Jackson 1953, 280; Russell 2007). Later forms of

⁴¹² /ə/ represents rounded schwa, used here for Jackson's rotated œ and Sims-Williams' ö.

⁴¹³ For a full discussion of this issue see Sims-Williams (1991, 36-47).

⁴¹⁴ There are later changes to this vowel but these are not relevant here.

⁴¹⁵ See James (2013) for a discussion of Pictish features apparently attested in southern Scotland.

this name occur as *Kentigern* & *Kyentyern*, the patron saint of Glasgow, in the twelfth-century life (Forbes 1874, *passim*).⁴¹⁶ This apparent *e* for historical *u* is reminiscent of *Drest*, for *Drust*, in the Pictish king-list but this is invalid as evidence for vowel modification as the underlying Brittonic form has been reinterpreted as Gaelic *cenn+tigern*, glossed in Latin as *Capitalis Dominus* (*ibid.*, Chapter IV, 169) ‘The Capital Lord’ (*ibid.* 41) where *cenn* ‘head’ has replaced whatever form may have been current in the Brittonic kingdom.⁴¹⁷

The only other possibly fully relevant piece of Northern Brittonic evidence is the place-name Polterkened (CMB) which Breeze (2006(a), 230) has interpreted as containing W *cynydd* ‘master of hounds’ (< **kuno-*), but other interpretations are possible (BLITON, s.v. *cönið*). James (*loc. cit.*) notes the root of *cef(n)* ‘back, ridge’ and the underlying form of *Kennet* (*cf.* W *Cynwyd*), which is of uncertain derivation, as considerations. Koch’s proposed **Guincon* (< -*cun*) could be considered as evidence but it may rather correspond to the Britt personal name *Uuincon* / *Guincon* which may be unrelated to *Wenikones* (Sims-Williams 1991, 67, fn 1 & see below).

Toponymic instances where /*u*/ may be attested include Buckland (KCB; BLITON, s.v. *buch*; W *bwch* ‘a male cervid’⁴¹⁸). However, Maxwell (1930, 50), who notes the earlier spelling ‘Bucklin’ suggests that this may actually represent Late Scots ‘buck’s linn or waterfall’. We also have Drumburgh (CMB; *Drumbogh* 1171-5 (1333)⁴¹⁹; W *bwch* ‘buck’;), Bulgieford (KCB; Maxwell 1930, 51;⁴²⁰ BLITON, s.v. *bulch*; W *bwlch* ‘gap’). There are various names in *Cum-* (W *cwm[b]*; ‘bowl shaped valley’ (see BLITON s.v. *cwm[b]*). All the examples have *u*, none attesting spellings that would suggest a vowel lowered to /*o*/. There is also Tralorg (Trewlorg, 1459 & Trolorg, 1523⁴²¹; AYR; OW /*lury*/ ‘track’), Glenturk

⁴¹⁶ For a discussion of this saint’s background see Davies (2009).

⁴¹⁷ An earlier saint culted here may have been Caintigern daughter of Celleachan Cualu, Kentigern representing a later reinterpretation. See the online database: *Saints in Scottish Place-names* <http://www.saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/saint.php?id=122>.

⁴¹⁸ But note that Maxwell (1930, 50) says that this could be a Scots formation. He provides no early forms.

⁴¹⁹ See Armstrong, Mawer, Stenton & Dickens (1950(b), 124), where spellings vacillate between *o*, *u* and *ou*.

⁴²⁰ Maxwell provides no early form.

⁴²¹ See Watson (1926, 361).

(WIG; BLITON, s.v. *turch*; *W twrch*, ‘boar’⁴²²), Mindork (WIG; BLITON loc. cit.⁴²³). Cardurnock (CMB; *Cardrunnock* 13th cent., *Cardonock* 1366) may attest a derivative of Britt /durn/ ‘fist’ or G *dorn* ‘fist’ & ‘fist-sized pebble’ but spellings of the vowel under consideration vary and the role of G here is uncertain.⁴²⁴ The general impression is that of the retention of /u/ but as many of these have attractive G origins there is little here to provide evidence either way. There are also some names attesting *W dwfn* ‘deep’ (< **dubno*-) such as Pardivan (ELO; *Pardauarneburne*, 1144⁴²⁵), Parduvine (MLO; Watson 1926, 372) and Pardovan (WLO; *Purduuyn*, 1282; *Perdovin*, 1542; Watson 1926, 372) and *Perdovingishill* (RNF) attested in 1478 (Watson 1926, 372) but such constant variation in spellings prevent us from coming to any robust conclusions.

It seems safer to provisionally assume that Northern Brittonic was conservative in this respect but the place-name evidence is lacking in some areas and it is probably not sufficient to draw an impermeable and chronologically stable isogloss along the Antonine Wall. There is therefore no robust evidence to suggest that /u/ developed to /o/ in Northern Brittonic as was proposed for Pictish.

The most worrying aspect however is the actual piece of evidence itself, the postulated Pictish personal name *Congust* which is interpreted as a reflex of a Celtic name **Kuno-gustu*- ‘hound-force’.⁴²⁶ It is well attested, as *Congus*, in Gaelic sources (O’Brien 1962, 562) and appears on a broadly contemporary inscription from Llanfaelog, Anglesey, as *CVNOGVS*- (Nash-Williams 1950, 55), although probably referring to a man of Irish ethnicity.⁴²⁷ The form *Cinust* in the Book of Llandaff (Cane 2003, 164 & 167) may be a Brittonic cognate but Davies

⁴²² Maxwell (1930, 151) provides the forms *Glenturk* (1462, *Rot. Scot.*) and the same in 1493 (Register of the Great Seal). However, he sees this as G *Gleann Tuirc* which is unproblematic.

⁴²³ Maxwell (1930, 211) notes *Mondorck* (1508, Register of the Great Seal) and proposes a G derivation from *Muine d-torc* ‘the boars’ thicket’. The vowel of ‘torc’ gives this interpretation

⁴²⁴ For further attestations and a discussion see Armstrong, Mawer, Stenton & Dickens (1950(a), 123-4).

⁴²⁵ Watson (1926, 372).

⁴²⁶ For **gustu*- ‘excellence, force’ see Matasović (2009, 169 & 2011(b)).

⁴²⁷ See Sims-Williams (2003, 88 & 355-56) for further comments. As Paul Russell (pers. comm.) notes the composition vowel is more consistent with Irish (where /o/ > /a/ is regular in this context) but compare with *CVNALiPI* (CVN) which is certainly Welsh due to the <P> and which corresponds to the W personal name *Cynllib* as in the region name *Cinlipiuc* attested in the *Historia Brittonum* (Phillimore 1980, Chap 70, 81).

(1979, 76a, 94) suggested it may be a scribal error for *Cinuin* (Evans 1893, 76.1).⁴²⁸ The two continental forms *Congusso* and *Kongoustos* (Falileyev 2010, 106 & 139) probably do not represent equivalent names as they appear to contain the prefix **kom-* not **kuno-*.

But to what extent do the Pictish examples actually reflect reflexes of **Kuno-gustu-*? It would seem that there are only two items which have been interpreted as indicating that this name existed in Pictish, one recurrent item in the Pictish king-lists and one entry in the Annals of Ulster, *Talorgg m. Congusso* (734.5).

The king-list forms are as follows:

SL1	Usconbuts	SBD/F	Combust
SL2 H	Usconbest	SBI	Conbust
SL2 M	Usconbust		
SL2 O	Usconbust ⁴²⁹		

Weighing all the attestations against each other it would seem that the most likely proto-form is *(Us)conbust*.⁴³⁰ I assume that the *Us* of the SL versions is a later addition and that SB1 and SL2 preserve the spelling of the original element but I see no way of establishing this view and it cannot exceed the status of a personal judgement. All the forms above require a non-trivial emendation of *b* to *g* in order to conform to a plausible cognate of ***Cungust*. The miscopying of a manuscript *g* as *b* would be very unusual as both graphemes are quite distinct in all of the scripts likely to have been used in the copying of these texts. There may, however, be similar confusion elsewhere, e.g. *Onbes* (SL2 H) against the *Onuis* & *Oniust*⁴³¹ (< **-gust*) in other SL lists, meaning that we should not dismiss

⁴²⁸ The Middle Welsh *Cynwst* noted by Forsyth (2000, 23) is not a historical form but is derived from a hypothetical reconstruction by Williams (1980, 20).

⁴²⁹ Contractions, in italics in the secondary sources, are expanded in this item and in SL2 H. *Con* in both (i.e. SL2 H & SL2 O) are represented by an inversed 'c'. See Calise (2002, 259) for further references to these attestations.

⁴³⁰ I have wondered whether the *Us-* could represent a misreading of *ur-* (< **wer* 'on, after') as in 'The List of Thirty Brudes', in original insular script.

⁴³¹ I am grateful to Nicholas Evans for drawing my attention to this possibility.

this possibility out of hand. Alternatively, this could simply represent a miscopying, a process which would not require resorting to a misinterpreted hypothetical ***Ongust* where the *g* is preserved.

**(Us)conbust* occurs in the unhistorical section of the lists, in a post 834⁴³² addition back-projected into the fifth century or so. It attests clearly fanciful reign-lengths (e.g. of one hundred years), probably corrupt name-forms (e.g. *Cinioiod*, *Gartnaithloc*, *Canutulachama*) and simple errors such as *Talore* for *Talorc*. Also there seem to be various hints of gaelicisation here. Consequently we cannot be fully confident that even the first syllable *Con-* faithfully represents an unmodified Pictish name-form. It is quite possible that it could have been analogically remodelled on the vast number of Gaelic personal names in *Con-*.⁴³³ While it is not impossible that **kuno-* may underlie this part of this name the issues noted above render it unusable as robust evidence for Pictish phonology.

Moving on from this uncertain issue let us turn to the second item which was seen as evidencing this personal name, **Con-gust*. This is a conjectural form which was first put forward by Stokes in 1890 (399), taken not from the king-lists but adapted from an entry in the Annals of Ulster s.a. 734.5, which reads *mac Congusso* i.e. the expected Gaelic genitive form of *Congus*. This was perhaps imbued with added substance by Macbain's brief discussion of Pictish personal names in his article 'A Study of Highland Personal Names', where he also refers to this form (1905, 65), but without any indication that it is a conjectural adaptation of a Goidelic name. Stokes was doubtlessly influenced in this by Pictish royal names in *-gust* e.g. *Vrguist* & *Onuist* (< **gustu-*). He made it clear that this was a hypothetical form by prefixing it with an asterisk. It is significant that O'Rahilly, despite discussing the Gaelic form in his chapter on Pictish, made no mention of a Pictish equivalent (1946, 368, fn 1) and neither did Jackson in 1955, even when discussing the Pictish preservation of */-st/* for which it would have provided important evidence. Indeed, he actually labelled *Usconbuts*, the only variant he discussed, as 'certainly not Celtic at all' (1955, 145). Anderson (1973, 246) made no comment whatsoever, all indicating how little faith such

⁴³² Nicholas Evans (pers. comm.).

⁴³³ For example *Con-* names fill about 10 of the 271 pages of O'Brien's *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* – more than any other item.

scholars placed in this item as dependable evidence for Pictish. In the above instance Stokes has pictified the AU form *Talorgg m. Congusso*, the actual manuscript attestation, demonstrating that *Congust* as a Pictish name is in fact a ghost-form and we must conclude that there is no direct evidence of even the existence of *Congust* as a Pictish name. *Congus* himself could have been a Gael.

3.2.2.3 Further Evidence for *Con*-?

Is there any other evidence for Pictish names in *Con*-? There is one inscription and a small number of place-names which are relevant here. The former is the fragmentary *ogham* inscription referred to as *Cunningsburgh 2*, transcribed by Forsyth as *-EHTECONMORS*, and recovered along with two other *ogham*-inscribed fragments from the vicinity of the churchyard of a disused church on the southern mainland of Shetland (Forsyth 1997, 206). The first section is lost but the final seven characters could possibly represent a name cognate with Brittonic names such as PrBret *Chonomorus* (Sims-Williams 2003, 253), MidW *Kynfawr* (Koch 1987, 256; Bartrum 1993, 176-77) and Romano-British *CVNOMORI* (Sims-Williams 2003, 64), the regular reflex of **kuno-ma:ro-* ‘great hound’. This name seems not to occur in Goidelic or continental sources. However, the incomplete state of the inscription means that this is only one possible segmentation, *-JEHTECON+MOR* (+ ‘great’) representing an alternative. A cognate of W **Cynfor* remains an attractive interpretation.

Taylor and Márkus (Taylor with Márkus 2006, 494) favour a ‘British’ derivation to the personal name attested in Pitconmark (FIF), namely *pett* ‘portion (of land), land-holding’⁴³⁴ + the personal name **Conmarc* (< **kuno-marko-* ‘hound+horse’) - a personal name which is scarce in Goidelic but less so in Brittonic.

Personal names are rare as qualifiers for *pett*,⁴³⁵ and the lack of lenition in the second element (i.e. ***Conyarc*) raises questions over the interpretation. It is also difficult to ascribe the name with any certainty to either Brittonic or Goidelic, and therefore too much weight cannot be attached to it especially considering that most, if not all, *pett* names are post-Pictish coinings in Gaelic. This opens up the possibility that *Conmark* could represent a gaelicised

⁴³⁴ See Taylor (2011, 77-80) and *Section 9* on *pett*.

⁴³⁵ Only five are noted in Table 4 (Taylor with Márkus 2012, 221).

borrowing of a Pictish name. The same could be argued for the River Conon (ROS; G *Abhainn Chonainn*) which Watson (1930, 214) compared to W *Cynon*, but its Pictishness could be questioned on the basis of the Conon river on Skye which is significantly less likely to be an unmodified P-Celtic coining.

3.2.2.4 Conclusion

Neither **Conbust*, *CONMORS* nor *Conmark* offer unproblematic evidence for the view that the Pictish reflex of **kuno-* was *Con-*, but there is no evidence for ***Cun-*. Even if it could be demonstrated that **Con-* was the authentic Pictish form the supposed change of /u/ to /o/ could be ascribed to the various processes which gave identical spellings in other Celtic languages. Such a form would, if anything, indicate parallel development not divergence, or a trivial alternation as evidenced in Breton.

3.2.3 Prehistory of **kuno-*

Before embarking on a discussion of the next two pieces of evidence, *Wenikones* and *Meilochon*, where the item supposedly occurs in second position as a generic, it is necessary to provide an outline of its relevant historical case variations as this will figure significantly in the discussion of both items. It is not clear how exactly to reconstruct the PIE paradigm, but it is worth setting out the most recent scholarly view (Quiles & López-Menchero 2011, 4.5.3. & 4.5.4, 183).⁴³⁶ The question of the paradigmatic variants of **kuno-* in PrClIt has been the subject of a bewilderingly lengthy and intricate debate amongst Celtic linguists (e.g. Pedersen 1909, Joseph 1990, Schrijver 1995 & McCone 1996). The proposed PrClIt reflexes are noted in italics below each item⁴³⁷ and those which attest an /o/ are underlined. PIE cases which are generally considered as not having survived into PrClIt are not shown, and neither is the vocative (which is identical to the nominative) nor the dual **kwone*, simply in order not to unnecessarily complexify the chart. The Old Gaelic forms (Thurneysen 1946, §328, 209-10) are noted in **bold** and placed below the others in each section.

⁴³⁶ See also Appendix III.1., 765-66.

⁴³⁷ As well as the views noted above Matasović (2011(a), 31) is employed (permission provided by the author):
http://exadmin.matita.net/uploads/pagine/644703631_handouts_pavia_matasovic.pdf

Singular		Plural	
NOM.	kwōn <i>kwū > kū</i> cú	NOM.	kwones <i>>> <u>kones</u> (/kunes?)</i> coin
ACC.	kwonm̃ <i>kwonam >> <u>konam</u></i> coin	ACC.	kwoñs <i>kunās > <u>konās</u></i> cona
GEN.-ABL.	kunós <i>kunos (gen.)</i> con	GEN.	kunóm <i>kunom</i> con
DAT.	kunéi <i>kwonē >> <u>konē</u></i> coin	DAT.-ABL.	kwñbhós <i>kunobis</i> con(a)ib

The oldest OGael attestations are consistent with a preservation of /o/ in the acc. sg. and pl. forms, as in PIE (Strachan, 1949, 13; Stüber 1998, 86). The other cases also attest /o/, but this is probably due to secondary vowel assimilation. Other PIE languages level the variants in different ways; for example Greek generalises /u/, a reflex of the zero-grade, (Quiles & López-Menchero 2011, Appendix III.1., 765-66) as does Germanic (Watkins 2000, 46, s.v. *kwon*) and a similar phenomenon may play a part in this section as will be discussed below. Celtiberian seems only to attest /u/ in the four possible examples with *-unei* in the dat. sg. < *-onei*.⁴³⁸

How exactly the pre-apocope P-Celtic of Britain realised the ablaut variants of **kuno-* is quite uncertain and probably irrecoverable as the early (Roman period) evidence is limited and ambiguous, and the neo-Brittonic languages have lost all indications of case distinctions, apart from a handful of instances of fossilised items. For what it is worth there are four possible Roman period attestations in personal names with the element in second position, and the most northerly

⁴³⁸ Ranko Matasović,
http://exadmin.matita.net/uploads/pagine/644703631_handouts_pavia_matasovic.pdf

(Carlisle) attests an *o*: *Aessicunia* (SOM; c. 275-400), *Titocuna* (NOT; uncertain), *Verconus* (CUM; c. 79-103/5).⁴³⁹ Such vocalic variation in the above three names could be purely scribal, deriving from regular modifications to the Latin vowel system (Allen 1978, 47-59) but it could also be ascribed to actual case variation in the root-vowel. I assume that these represent various latinised Celtic oblique forms but more research might prove fruitful. To recapitulate, *Wenikones* was seen as evidencing a nom. pl. of **kuno-* as was *Meilochon*, but as noted above *Meilochon* must evidence something else.

One general point to bear in mind is that *cú* is one of a small number of nouns with a very irregular declension in Goidelic languages. It is only items which are in extremely frequent use which are not levelled e.g. *bean* ‘woman’ and *bó* ‘cow’. It would not be surprising to see the preservation of aspects of such an irregular paradigm in Pictish as in OGael. The Welsh and Cornish plurals, *cŵn* and *kuen*, provide further evidence of how such nouns can preserve distinct grammatical variants.

3.2.4 **Wenikones*

I will first engage with *Wenikones*, and then I will discuss names in *-con*. As noted in Chapter 1 there are two interpretations of the group-name, neither of which, as will be shown, necessarily requires that the proposed Celtic etymon contains a /u/. Firstly, Isaac (2005(c), 201), interpreted *Wenikones* as **wen-ik-on-* from the PIE root **wen-* ‘become fond of, win’ with a velar suffix, and declined as an *n*-stem, hence the plural *-ones*, as in *Caledones* (etc.). The nom. sg. would have been **Venicu:*, which would be Latinised as **Venicō*, a form which corresponds precisely to the Carrawburgh inscription (Collingwood & Wright 1965, no. 1543). Compare this with *CALEDO* (Clt **Calidu:*) of the Colchester inscription. Were this interpretation the only possibility it would render the following discussion redundant, but Koch’s proposal **We:ni-kones* ‘kindred hounds’, is also possible.

Clearly this is only an issue if the Celtic / Brittonic nom. pl. was **kunes* rather than **kones* so it is necessary to consider the evidence for this proto-form (see the table above). The most recent discussion of this intricate issue is by Stüber

⁴³⁹ See CPNRB http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/search.php?s_element=kuno-

(1998, 88)⁴⁴⁰ whose conclusion is that the most likely reconstruction of the PrClt nom. pl. is **kones* not **kunes*, a view which agrees with Joseph (1990, 113) and McCone (1996, 114) but conflicts with Schrijver (1995, 51) and also Williams (2006, §3.9, 24-25). Most scholars would consider **kones* to be the most probable PrClt form, evidencing the same root vowel as its PIE antecedent i.e. /o/. Stüber (1998, 86) stressed that the OGael nom. pl. *coin* can straightforwardly be reconstructed as **kon-es*, which does not require an assimilation to the thematic vowel /e/ (i.e. **kunes* > **kones*) as previously suggested by Schrijver (1995, 51); hence this weakens the case for **kunes*. The *o*-vocalism could possibly be confirmed by the structurally similar Continental ethnonym *Calucones*, but Falileyev (2010, 88) notes that Holder hesitated between a Celtic and Ligurian origin for this name. It may be attested in the place-name *Viroconivm* (SAL) which Delamarre (2003, 263; 2012, 273) has interpreted as ‘établissement des **Uiro-cones* ‘Were-Wolves’, but Isaac (2002, s.v. *cono-*) suggested that this and other similar names may attest another root, albeit without a known interpretation.

The major objection to **kones* is primarily the W plural *cŵn*, which is difficult to see as a regular development from **kones*, as it is only in certain contexts that /o/ is raised to /u/ and this is probably not one of them (Schrijver 1996, §III.2.2, 30-52). The vowel of W *cŵn*, would previously have been explained by Jackson’s proposed raising of /o/ to /u/ before a single nasal (1953, §4.1, 272) but there are too many significant exceptions for this to be considered a rule. The vowel /o/ is evidently preserved in this context in the reflex of the *n*-stem nom. pl. which provided Brittonic with a new plural suffix i.e. **-on-es* > W *-on* (Stüber, 3.3, 29-30) as in *golygon*, *meibion* etc. It is also evidently preserved in the personal name suffix *-on* as in *Maponos* > W *Mabon*, all meaning that the expected plural in Brittonic would have been **kon* giving OW ***/ko:n/* after the New Quantity System. In order to explain the W pl. *cŵn* Stüber (ibid. 88) resorted to raising of /o/ > /u/ ‘between k and n’ which seems a somewhat *ad hoc* solution, but for which there is unsurprisingly no contradictory evidence. If anything, this environment seems to conserve, as with the similar mid-high vowel /e/, as in W *cen*, *cededl*. This is of some importance as W *cŵn* indicates that the Brittonic proto-form would have been /kunes/, the form with which

⁴⁴⁰ See pp. 85-88 for a summary of previous discussions.

Wenikones was compared. Stüber noted that the (older) Bret pl. *koun*, which also attests /u/, could be explained by a pre-nasal raising also attested in *ounn* ‘ash-trees’ (cf. *W onn*) so this need not count as evidence against a PrClt nom. pl. **kones*. However, there seems to be evidence of both *con* and *coun* in MidBret as in *dourgon* ‘otters’ (Trépos 1956, 111) or the place-names Kerhon (x6), *Coet-Con*, *Rozoucon* (ibid. 132-135) supporting the view that this is the primary form and thus providing evidence for a Britt pl. **kones*. Padel (1985, 58, s.v. *ky*) noted a similar issue with the Cornish plural *kuen*, probably for /kœ:n/, as this conflicts with the expected cognate of *W* which should also be /ku:n/, or /ko:n/ if from **kones*. Williams (2006, §3.9, 24-25) suggested that the Cornish form may be due to the breaking of /u:/, a secondary development which would seem to suggest an earlier **kun*, but this again is not a regular sound-change, which would perhaps allow for this also to represent a modified form of **kones*.

From the attested Brittonic languages it would be possible to reconstruct either **kones* or **kunes*, but it is the latter that is most at odds with the PIE and the OGael form. There seems to be no easy and robust way of reconciling PrClt **kones* with *W cwn* by regular sound-changes alone, but it is by no means impossible that the ancestor of the *W* pl. had generalised the /u/ from other cases (see above), hence a nom. pl. **kunes*, while OGael preserved the original form. One could also consider the possibility of analogical pressure from the nom. sg. **ku:*. Both Stüber and Schrijver referred to the possibility that our ethnonym may provide an indication of the veracity of an *o*-grade in the nom. pl., and both noted an awareness of the dangerous circularity of this argument.

Importantly an analogically remodelled **kunes* could be a late and localised innovation limited to proto-Welsh and perhaps proto-Cornish, and one which had not taken place when the material for Ptolemy’s *Geographia* was gathered. The upshot of this is that if *Weni-kones* is to be interpreted as ‘kindred hounds’, as argued by Koch,⁴⁴¹ it need not necessarily conflict with the OGael nom. pl. *coin*, or with the later Brittonic plurals evidencing /u/ which could be secondary developments. It need not point to any distinctiveness at this early period, as **kones* could have been current in Brittonic, and also there is nothing to

⁴⁴¹ I would like to note here that John Koch volunteered the option that **kones* could be an example of simply the generalisation of the *o* of the other case variants, in an informal meeting in March, 2014.

demonstrate that it could not have become **kun* in later Pictish either. This would correspond to *gwynngwn*, the form in Canu Aneirin, but mediation by Welsh renders this form unusable as evidence for Pictish. Furthermore, **kones* as an analogically remodelled **kunes*, is apparently accepted by Sims-Williams (1991, 67, fn 1).

To conclude, there are at present two plausible interpretations of *Wenikones*, neither of which necessarily indicate any divergence from early Brittonic but there is no evident way of demonstrating the superiority of one view over the other. Koch's proposal would, if anything, suggest that it may be Welsh (and Cornish) that have innovated, while Isaac's would deny the name any relevance to this section.

3.2.5 *Mailcon*

The final piece of evidence consists of variants of the personal name *Mailcon*, which are generally assumed to represent a cognate of the Welsh name *Maelgwn* (< **maglo-kunos*, 'prince-hound'). There is no full cognate in OGael, even though the elements are attested in inverse order in Ir *Con-mál* (LEIA M-13),⁴⁴² and incidentally in W also as *Cyn-fael*. There are three attestations of the name referring to the same individual, the father of the Pictish king Bredei / Bruide (c. 555-585,) and one slightly later form (see below). Bredei's fame was assured by his postulated relationship with St Columba.

The name is attested in four sources. The origin of each text is also noted:

1. Bede - *Meilochon* - Anglo-Saxon.
2. Annals of Ulster - *Maelchon* - Irish.
3. The Annals of Tigernach - *Maelchon* - Irish.
4. The Pictish King-lists⁴⁴³ - *Mailcon* - Pictish.

⁴⁴² The OGael cognate would have been 'Málchon'.

⁴⁴³ See Calise (2002, 240) for a full list of PKL attestations.

All attestations are as a patronymic and therefore in genitive position, and they could actually represent functioning genitive forms of a nom. **Maylgi*: (vel sim.). At first glance, this would seem to represent a clear-cut distinction with W *Maglocun*- but there are two alternative explanations, firstly that the vowel may be derived from an oblique form of the noun and secondly that the element does not contain /kun/ ‘hound’ at all.

The original name (**Maglo-ku*:) had split into two in Brythonic, OW *Meilic* (Jackson 1953, 182) and *Mailcun*. The former is the regular reflex of the nom. sg.⁴⁴⁴ while the latter is derived from an oblique stem (e.g. **Maglo-kunos*; Koch 2006(k)). The latter form is evidenced in the genitive as *MAGLOCVNI*⁴⁴⁵ on a bilingual inscription from Nevern and also Gildas’ vocative form *Maglocune* (ibid.). While *u* is well-attested in these Brythonic forms **Maglocon*- > *Mailcon* is also a possible reflex of the Celtic paradigm. An examination of the table above shows that forms in /o/ are more numerous than those in /u/, being attested in the acc. / dat. sg., the nom. / acc. pl. and also the dual. A great number of Brittonic personal names which are usually interpreted as containing **kuno*- are attested with *-con* e.g. *Elcon*, *Guidcon*, *Guincon*, *Gurcon*, *Uincon* (Cane 2003, 175 & 262) as are a number of Breton names such as *Galcon*, *Guitcon*, *Arcon*, *Iarncon*, *Uuincon* (Cane 2003, 262). We also have numerous contemporary forms in *-cun*: *Draincun*, *Gallcun*, *Katcun*, *Maencun*, *Uaracun* (ibid.). If names in *con* are not related to the Celtic form **coni*- / **cono*- discussed above then perhaps we are seeing remnants of the PrClt case variants (gen. sg.), fossilised in personal names at some point prior to apocope. Therefore the Pictish *-con* may simply correspond to such Brittonic forms, and may be no more irregular than Welsh *Elcon*, for example. Added to this is the fact that in W we have an attestation as *Mailconum regem Guenedotie* in the *Vita S. Teliaui* in the Book of Llandaff (Evans 1893, 107), demonstrating that even in W there is vacillation in the same name as this form unquestionably refers to Gildas’ tyrant.

An alternative is that the second element of *Mailcon* corresponds to OW */kɔ:n/ ‘glory, power, abundance’, a possibility raised by Sims-Williams (1991, 67, fn 1). This is the element probably attested in W *coned*, *dichon*, *digon*, *gogoniant*

⁴⁴⁴ /magloku:/ > /mayloku:/ > /mayloku:/ > /mayloki:/ > /maylɪki:/ > /maylɪgi:/ > /maylɪg/ > /meylɪg/ > /mejɪg/.

⁴⁴⁵ See Nash-Williams (1950, 353).

(GPC),⁴⁴⁶ in the river-name Conwy (Williams 1945, 37) and in OGael *cáin* ‘law, tribute’ (Matasović 2009, 183, s.v. **kā(g)ni-*). This is unambiguously attested in two medieval names *Gwgawn* (OW *Uocon*) and *Cadwgawn* (*cad*+*gwgawn*) where the *aw* diphthong can only represent the reflex of /ɔ:/ . It could also be evidenced in the names in *con* noted above but without medieval reflexes it is impossible to say whether these contain /o/ or /ɔ:/ , as both were represented by *o* in OW. A good example of the ambiguity of *o* in OW spelling is seen in a charter in the Book of Llandaff (Evans 1893, 62.1, 209) in which two names are attested, *rubon* and *mabon*. The former represents /rʉ:vɔ:n/ (< Lat. *Rōmānus*; Lewis 1943, 46, s.n. *Rhufain*) and the latter /mabon/ (< *Maponos*) demonstrating that *o* can stand in the same document for two distinct phonemes. Coincidentally the following charter (ibid. 62.2, 209) actually attests *mailcon*, which could represent either *-cawn* or *-con*. There is also an OGael personal name *Conn* of uncertain origin.

As noted, **/kɔ:n/* could be related to OGael *cáin* ‘law, regulation, rule’ (eDIL),⁴⁴⁷ and there are a number of continental names which could attest this form, such as *Cania* or *Canicus* (Delamarre 2007, 215). That PrClt /a:/ evolved to /ɔ:/ in Pictish is indicated by the Gaelic loanword *pòr* ‘cropland’ (in place-names) from P-Celtic /pa:r/ (Taylor 2011, 105; Pokorny 1956).⁴⁴⁸ Consequently, we cannot be entirely certain whether the Pictish *-con* represents a reflex of **kuno-* ‘hound’ or **ka:n-* ‘glory’. This may seem somewhat startling at first sight and should be treated with some caution as names in *-c(h)on* ‘hound’ are exceedingly common in the OGael corpus, and also as a first element in both Brittonic and Goidelic. This would still allow for *Maelgwn* to represent **kuno-*, simply that more names than *Gwgawn* might attest a proto-form of *cawn*. The fact that it may be gaelicised by *con* ‘hound’ (and not *cáin*) may count against this, but it does not exclude the possibility.

⁴⁴⁶ See Lindeman (1981, 507-12) for a discussion, but one which would rule out ‘Conwy’. I would question this interpretation.

⁴⁴⁷ Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (pers. comm.). An alternative derivation would be from < **ka:nj-*. See LEIA-C15, s.v. *cáin*, for a brief discussion of tentative PIE derivations.

⁴⁴⁸ For the etymology see Pokorny (1956) who derives it from **k^weru-* ‘to chew’. See also Pok (1956, 642).

I would briefly like to turn to the attestations themselves. The earliest manuscript form (737 or soon thereafter)⁴⁴⁹ is as *Bridio filius Meilochon* in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (iii.4), but this is still a century and a half after the individual's *floruit*, ample time for oral or scribal interference. *Bridio* (abl.) is certainly closer to the Pictish *Bridei* (& *Bredei*) than to OGael *Brude* indicating that a Pictish form underlies it. The apparent preservation of the composition vowel⁴⁵⁰ in *Meilochon* is a feature found only in Welsh and Breton and here only sporadically.⁴⁵¹ It seems to be more common in northern Brittonic but this phenomenon never occurs in OGael and this may provide a further indication of an early Pictish source. However, as noted by Koch the lenition of the second element (i.e. *-con* > *-chon*) is Gaelic not Brittonic, and mediation is to be suspected here. Indeed, for a Gael any other form would be deemed ungrammatical. The great number of OGael personal names such as *Lerchū* / *Lerchon*, *Murchū* / *Murchon*, *Oschū* / *Oschon*⁴⁵² (nom. / gen.) would provide considerable analogical pressure allowing even for a modification of an underlying pre-syncope (nominative) Pictish **Maylo-gi*: (vel sim.).⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ The Moore manuscript, composed in Northumbria.

⁴⁵⁰ This issue requires further study. The name *Virolec* of the VC may attest such a feature but it is clearly absent from other names such as *Artbranan*. See Jackson (1955, 166) for a brief discussion.

⁴⁵¹ E.g. *Dinocat* (< **Du:no-catu-*) or *Dumnagual* (< **Dumno-walo-*). For a discussion of some aspects of this issue see Russell (2004). See also Sims-Williams (2013), for discussions of this composition vowel. The only other relevant item which almost certainly preserves a composition vowel in Early Medieval Pictland is *Virolecus* of the *Life of Columba*. This important issue merits a fuller discussion but this would be outwith the stated bounds of this study. Syncope is clearly attested in forms of *Uurgust* (< **wer-gustu-*) and *Unust* (< **ojno-gustu-*) and are a very strong indication that Pictish was co-evolving with Neo-Brittonic (or Neo-Celtic as this phenomenon occurs in Irish) in regards of some core morphological features.

⁴⁵² Collated from the index of O'Brien (1962).

⁴⁵³ I know of no good evidence for the fate of PrClt /u:/ in Pictish. In Brittonic this became /u:/, and later /i:/ in Brittonic (see Jackson 1955, §15, 302), hence the hypothetical reconstruction *-gi*: (lenited; < PrClt /k(w)u:/; see Matasović 2009, 181, s.v. **k^qon-*) in the main text. If it had not developed beyond /u:/ it would have fallen in with /u:/ < PrClt /oj/, a development demonstrated by the personal name *Unust* (Durham Liber Vitae; see 3.5.2.). The only relevant piece of information I have on this matter is the personal name *Cian* which is attested in *Y Gododdin*, on which see Williams (1938, 93 & Koch 197, 167 & 184). There are several good attestations of this name-form in Welsh (see Bartrum 1993, 127-28) and it would appear to be a neo-Brittonic coining composed of *ci* 'hound' + the diminutive suffix *-an* (Jackson 1964, 29 notes that *Cian* means 'Puppy') i.e. it does not employ a derivative of the earlier compositional form /kuno-/. Attention must, however be drawn to the Irish personal name *Cian* (for attestations see O'Brien 1962, 544; for a brief etymological discussion see Ó Corráin & Maguire (1981, 51), where it is noted as 'ancient, enduring'. While this is orthographically identical to the personal name *Cian*, is from a distinct root (see LEIA C-94). However, while this name is attested by an individual from 'Pictland' it is being noted in a thoroughly Brittonic context meaning that issues of mediation and modification compromise its value for the phonology of Pictish.

The Annals of Ulster attestations are *Bruidi m. Mailcon* (501.1), *fuga ante filium Maelcon* (558.2), *mc. Maelcon* (560.2), and also *Bruide mc. Maelcon* (584.3, the year of his death) and under 752.4 in the Annals of Tigernach there is *Bruidhi mac Maelchon*⁴⁵⁴. Additionally under 703.5 the death of a certain *Fergus m. Maelcon* is noted. The form of the name *Brude* indicates that we are almost certainly dealing with gaelicised items as does the *punctum delens* above the *c* and the digraph *ch*. Despite apparently confirming Bede's *-con* this cannot be accepted as unquestionable evidence for Pictish phonology due to the demonstrable Goidelic lenition.

This name occurs only once in the Pictish king-lists. *Poppleton Manuscript* attests *Bridei filius Mailcō*, where the Pictish form of *Bridei* is an indicator that the patronym should also be viewed as evidencing the Pictish form. At first glance this would indeed seem to confirm the proposal and, in contrast to *Conbust* discussed above, this name occurs in a historical section where many of the names can be corroborated in various other sources. Unfortunately, even this manuscript, despite being widely recognised as by far the least gaelicised version of the king-lists is not free from Goidelic linguistic interference, as in the phrase *D̥a Drest* 'Two Drests' for instance. This is perhaps the strongest indicator that *-con* may indeed be the authentic Pictish realisation, but due to the demonstrable mediation of Gaelic in this section this is not certain.

A Pictish /kon/ may underlie all the early medieval items discussed so far. However, /kon/ could be explained as due to mediation by Gaelic or as the generalisation of a distinct root vowel. The evidence is so limited that we cannot exclude the possibility that forms in /kun/ and /kon/ co-existed in Pictland as they did in Wales and Brittany. Another option is that there was a general lowering of /u/ in Pictish, perhaps to /ə/, so let us now examine the evidence for this phoneme.

3.2.6 Other Attestations of /u/

Such a vocalic lowering or centering could indeed account for *Drest* (< *Drust*) in the king-lists and *Drosten* on the St. Vigean's inscription (ANG; Okasha 1995, 59-

⁴⁵⁴ This is evidently not the same individual but see Grabowski and Dumville (1984, 124-26) for a discussion.

61). This is presumably from an original name (perhaps from **dru-* ‘tree’)⁴⁵⁵ which attests /u/ as in *DRVSTAVS* (COR; Sims-Williams 2003, 29-30) while there is also the farm Tredruston in the same county (Padel 1985, 309). The Pictish equivalent of *Brude* is generally *Bredei* (or *Bridei*) which could again support some modification to /u/. Note, however, that names in *-gust* preserve the /u/ in a curious contrast to *Drest*. It might be suggested that spellings in *ui* in the PKL indicate some distinction but note that the Durham Liber Vitae attests unmodified *Unust*. The form *Lutrin* in SL1 is probably derived from the theonym *Lugu-* (OW /low/) as indicated by the Irish form *Lugthren* and this indicates conservatism. One could also note that *Munait* (SL1) could correspond to *Moneit* (AU 729.2), to **MONAI** of the Dunadd ogham inscription, and more speculatively to *Mund* of the ‘list of thirty Brudes’, but without a good etymology this is of little value. In terms of toponymy there are few items of relevance. It could be noted that the names derived from **kom-ber* ‘confluence’ *Coupar Angus* (ANG), *Cupar* (FIF) evidence the opposite process of /o/ > /u/ but this may be a post-Pictish change. There is little in the supplementary evidence, due to the conflicting reflexes of /u/, which would allow us to come to any overall conclusions.

3.2.7 Conclusion

There are two possible interpretations of *Venicones*, neither of which provides any clear evidence for early divergence between ‘Pritenic’ and Brittonic.

**Congust* is a ghost form and is therefore immaterial. /Kon/ may be an authentic Pictish form, as in *Mailcon*, but variation between /kon/ and /kun/ is widely attested elsewhere in Brittonic. This may reflect the incomplete generalisation of root-vowel variation. There is some evidence for modification of /u/ (*Drest*) but also evidence for preservation (*Unust*). The evidence is insufficient and too ambiguous to argue that /kon/ is evidence for Pictish proximity to Gaulish or indeed to posit any significant or early divergence.

⁴⁵⁵ See Delamarre (2003, 149) & (2007, 220).

3.3 Section 3: Preservation of Celtic /sN-/ & /sV-/

3.3.1 Introduction

According to Jackson Brittonic initial /s-/ was lost before nasals by the end of the 6th century, hence Irish *snámh* ‘swimming’ but W *nawf* (< **snāmo-*; Matasović 2009, 348). Koch proposed that it was preserved in Pritenic (1983, 215-16; Forsyth 2006(b)). The single piece of evidence cited is an ethnonym noted in Ptolemy’s *Geographia* as (Σ)μέρται (see 2.3.16) and its supposed reflex in the modern place-name Carn Smairt, a raised upland bog in Kincardine parish in Ross & Cromarty. This proposal could be complemented by Jackson’s brief suggestion that initial /sV-/ was preserved in Pictish as it was in Goidelic (1955, 165), while it generally became /hV-/ in Brittonic. His evidence is also limited to one item, the putative yet unetymologised personal name *Simul*, supposedly attested in the Annals of Ulster. Taken together these two proposals, which appear to support each other, could be seen as indicating the preservation of /s-/ in Pictish before all voiced phonemes, exactly as in Goidelic and in marked contrast to Brittonic. Had this phoneme been preserved in Pictish it would represent a significant divergence beyond mere dialectal variation between the two. However, detailed examination of each item suggests that neither may be used in support of this view and that the lack of additional good evidence means that this issue must remain open.

3.3.2 Linguistic Background

There are other items in Pictland which could have bearing on this question and some background to the change is necessary, especially as there are various complications in Brittonic which impact on the interpretation of the Pictish evidence. The main difficulty is that in Brittonic there are numerous exceptions to the change of /s-/ > /h-/ , for example the cognate of W *hidl* ‘strainer’ is MidBret *sizl*, < Clt **si:tla*: (Matasović 2009, 338). Exceptions occur even within Welsh where there are distinct reflexes of the same Celtic word, for example W *sil* ‘spawn’ vs W *hil* ‘lineage, offspring’ or *sedd* ‘seat’ vs *hedd* ‘peace’. In various words the /s-/ is preserved in all Brittonic languages, for example MidW *seith*, MidCorn *syth* OBret *seith*, all ‘seven’ < **sextam* (ibid. 332), or MidW *syui* ‘strawberries’, ModBret *s(u)iu*y, ModC *sevi* < **subi-* (ibid. 358). Before resonants,

including nasals, /s-/ is lost without exception for example PrClt **sme:ro-* ‘blackberry’ gives ModBret *mouar* but OGael *smér* (ibid. 347), **sni:s* ‘we’ (pronoun) gives OGael *sní* but W *ni* (ibid. 349). The usual loss of /s-/ in both the above contexts is probably broadly simultaneous and part of the same linguistic process, therefore evidence of the loss of /s-/ in one of the above-noted phonetic environments might cautiously be interpreted as indicating a general loss.

An additional issue is that some Brittonic river-names resist this change⁴⁵⁶ as with Saint (CVN) < **Segontjon* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 454), Syfynwy (PMB) or Seven (YNR), both < **Sumin-* (Jackson 1953, §115, 519; Ekwall 1928, 358). Various personal names seem to avoid this change as well for example *Sandde*, *Sedd*, *Seiriol*, *Silin* (see Bartrum 1993), but this field requires further investigation. Such items make it unreasonable to exclude the possibility that there were also exceptions in Pictish. To make the above proposal truly convincing one would need a significant number of items which strongly indicate the preservation of the phoneme, or otherwise good evidence of /h-/ from /s-/.

While Jackson saw /s-/ > /h-/ as a purely phonetic change, Schrijver has argued that it represented the incomplete working out of a generalised grammatical lenition. In Goidelic the contrast between these phonemes remains allophonic, in that /h-/ only occurs as the lenited form of /s-/.⁴⁵⁷ At some quite late point this contrast was phonemicised in Brittonic with items becoming fixed with one phoneme or another. For example, W *hedd* ‘peace’ would represent the grammatically lenited form of *sedd* ‘seat’, both items surviving but with distinct meanings (1995, IX.2, 377-83).⁴⁵⁸ Jackson considered that this process began in the late first century (1953, §115, 517) and was completed by the middle or second half of the sixth (ibid. 521) and this is supported by Sims-Williams (2003, 394). Koch, however, discussed evidence which, he would argue, placed the completion of the Brittonic modification of /sN-/ perhaps as early as the third century (1983, 215). Acceptance of Jackson’s dating would indicate that

⁴⁵⁶ See Thomas (1938, 167) for a brief discussion.

⁴⁵⁷ /h/ in positions of hiatus e.g. *na h-eich* ‘the horses’ (< *eich*) is another matter.

⁴⁵⁸ See also Sims-Williams 2003 (§44, 142 & fn 838).

Brittonic was innovating independently somewhere between the first and the sixth century while Koch would place this in the third.

3.3.3 *Carn Smairt*



Figure 9 Breac-Bheinn from the 'summit' of Carn Smairt⁴⁵⁹

Let us now turn to the first piece of evidence, Carn Smairt (NH 502 945). This is an unimposing, flattish, windswept hump, 422 metres high, forming a satellite top of the nearby Breac-Bheinn, itself at only 463 metres, not a striking feature in the local landscape. It lies in the peat-hagged moorland between the river Carron and Strath Oykel to the north, all about eight kilometres to the west of the upper reaches of the Dornoch Firth.

⁴⁵⁹ Photograph by Richard Webb, who was kind enough to discuss this location with me by email. He confirmed that this heathland is quite unremarkable. Taken, 3 May, 2008, courtesy of Geograph.org.

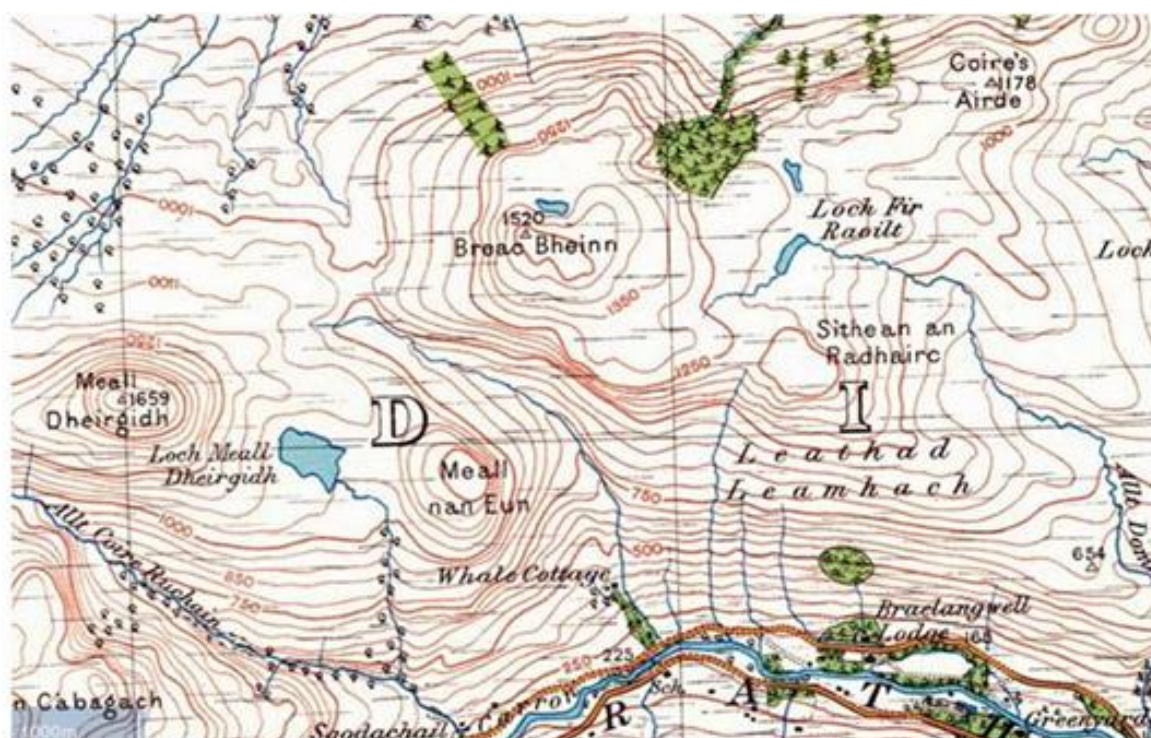


Figure 10 Breac-Bheinn⁴⁶⁰

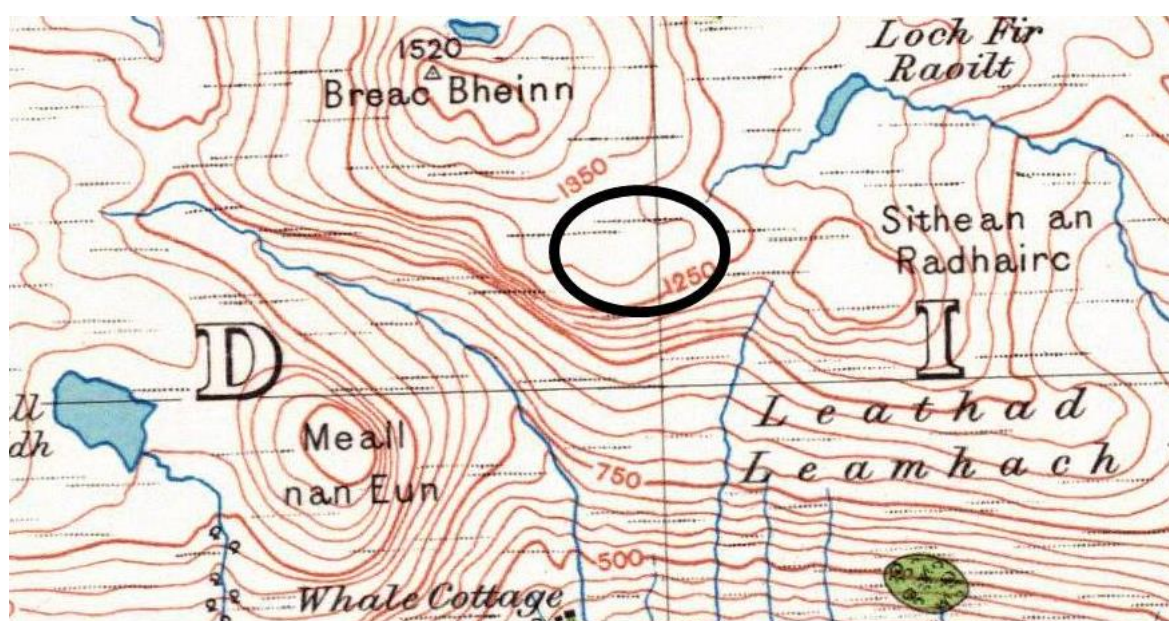


Figure 11 Carn Smairt

From the surrounding valleys it is only visible from certain viewpoints, being largely obscured by Meall nan Eun to the west and Sidheann an Radhairc to the east. Despite providing good views up the Carron valley from its 'summit' it is in no way a prominent feature and the makers of the OS 1st 2nd Edition map (1896)

⁴⁶⁰ OS National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=13&lat=57.9136&lon=-4.5215&layers=1250&point=-4.5095,57.6217>

did not even feel compelled to note it. Despite A.B. Scott's claim in 1918⁴⁶¹ that it evidenced a burial cairn a representative of the Royal Commission for Antiquities and Historical Monuments in Scotland was quite unable to locate any such feature when it was visited on 29 May 1963.⁴⁶² A recent archaeological survey confirmed this absence, thus denying it the status of an early ritual site. This proposal may have been generated by the name itself as *G càrn* can refer to such a man-made feature. On the other hand *Carn* here may simply refer to this rounded plateau. There are various hills in the vicinity bearing name in *Càrn* e.g. Carn Chuinneag (838m), Carn Cas nan Gabhar (603m), Carn Salachaidh (649m) and Càrn a' Choin Deirg (701m). These are fairly substantial hills demonstrating that *càrn* in this area can refer to mountains (as in the Grampians) rather than simply to piles of stones. Neither are there any known boundaries running across it which could provide it with historical or geographical significance.

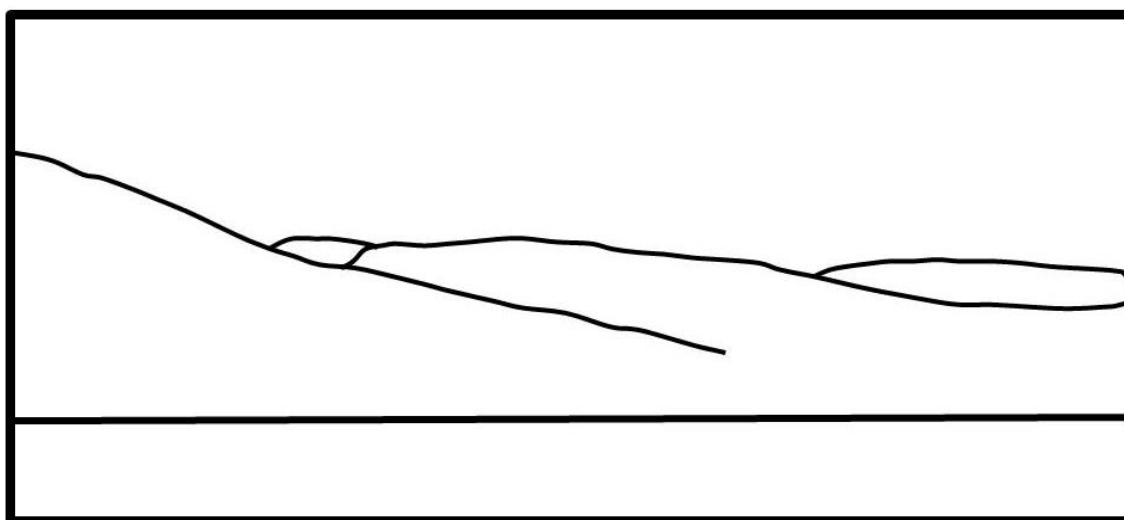


Figure 12 **Carn Smairt from the west**⁴⁶³

A small number of early group-names do survive in later sources, for example the *Calidonii* in Schiehallion and the *Maiatai* in Myot Hill and Dumyat (see Chapter 2). However, Schiehallion is a particularly distinct mountain, visible and easily identifiable from afar and possibly of some ritual importance, its specific being OGael *sìd* 'fairy hill or mound'. Myot Hill is also a prominent feature in the

⁴⁶¹ This claim is made on the relevant RCAHMS page (Carn Smeirt (sic)) but I cannot locate it in *The Pictish Nation* (Scott, 1918).

⁴⁶² See <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/13068/details/carn+smeirt/>

⁴⁶³ Image generated by the author from online sources.

local landscape and Dumyat boasts a hillfort. In contrast to these there is nothing distinct or noteworthy about Carn Smairt.

The ethnonym (Σ)μέρται is noted in copies of Ptolemy's *Geographia* both with and without the initial *sigma* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 460). The loss of initial graphemes is attested elsewhere such as with *Otadini* for *Uotadini* > MidW *Gododin* (/wo-/ > /gwo-/ > <go->).⁴⁶⁴

All surviving copies are dated to the twelfth century or later but there is no reason, despite the numerous issues of mediation and transcription, to be overly sceptical regarding this form as it is very plausibly interpreted as Celtic (see Chapter 2). As noted by Watson the variant without initial Σ- appears in the most reliable manuscripts but the Ravenna Cosmography's forms *Smetri* (ibid.) very probably authenticates the historicity of the initial sibilant. Two PIE etymologies have been proposed, either from **(s)mer-* 'think of, recall' (IEED 2800) or from **smeru-* 'to smear' (ibid. 2799). Owing to various issues with Ptolemy's map it is only possible to broadly locate the group, with Rivet & Smith suggesting 'central parts of Sutherland and northern Ross' (1979, 461) while Koch similarly places them in central Ross-shire (2007, §15.1).

Contrary to the initial impression of extreme antiquity implied by previous commentators, Carn Smairt's actual modern recorded pedigree is significantly less arresting. The first known mention is by the Gaelic scholar W. J. Watson who, in an article in *The Celtic Review* (1906), noted the following:

Of the tribal names no trace can be found except in the case of the Smertae. These I discovered last summer are commemorated by the Ross-shire hill-name *Càrn Smeirt*, 'the Smertae's Cairn,' in Strathcarron (Kincardine), behind Braelangwell Lodge, and east of *Meall Dheirgidh*, 'lump of redness,' forming part of the ridge between Strathcarron and the Oykeell estuary. It does not appear on the O.S. maps. This indicates the location of the Smertae as at least partly in Ross. They probably occupied the valleys of the Carron, Oykeell, and Shin. With Smertae is to be compared the Gaulish goddess Ro-smerta, *πολύφρων*, 'deep thinking,' from the root *smer*, 'think.' The Smertae were *smart*. (233-34)

⁴⁶⁴ For such omissions, which are most common at the beginning of a name see Russell (2000, II(a), 181).

Sadly he did not disclose any information regarding the informant, but given that he was from the same county it could be derived from personal knowledge. The following year (1907) the form ‘Càrn Smairt’ appears on the OS 6” map.⁴⁶⁵ Considering that the survey work for the map was conducted in 1903 it seems that both may have been drawing on a common source, unless one did provide the form for the other. The earlier 1st edition OS map (1875) simply has ‘Càrn a’ Chraisg’ in the vicinity. By the publication of the *History of the Celtic Placenames of Scotland* in 1926 (17) Watson has modified the form to ‘Carn Smeart’, and the form on more recent OS maps is ‘Carn Smairt’.

Watson, however, missed the possible linguistic impact of this item despite being quite aware of the Brittonic loss of /s-/ before sonorants.⁴⁶⁶ Perhaps it was simply considered an early borrowing into Goidelic which required no commentary. Neither did Jackson comment on this issue despite discussing *Smertae* in *Language and History in Early Britain* under his section on ‘sm-’ (1953, §129, 542). This is curious as *The History of the Celtic Placenames of Scotland* is used extensively in this work and Watson’s comments on Carn Smairt must have been encountered. Strangely any mention of the preservation of /sm-/ is also absent from his article on the Pictish language (1955) despite mentioning ‘Smertae’ twice (136 & 153).

While Carn Smairt could be derived from the early group name its lack of known significance makes this questionable, and there are various other possibilities. An initial consideration was that the name represented an antiquarian revival which is by no means impossible given that the earliest post-Ptolemaic attestations are so late i.e. 1906. We have no medieval forms which would support the view that this is indeed a genuine survival and we do have a gap of about one thousand eight-hundred years between the two attestations. Ptolemy’s *Geographia* was quite familiar to historians of the Renaissance such as George Buchanan. In *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582) he discussed Ptolemy’s work in some detail in Books I & II, but I have not yet identified any reference to the *Smertae*. Such resurrections of defunct but prestigious Roman forms are

⁴⁶⁵ Ross and Cromarty, Sheet 18, Second Edition.

⁴⁶⁶ ‘Initial sm-, sn-, sl-, sr-, remain in Gaelic; in Welsh they become m-, n-, ll-, rh- respectively: G. *smear*, marrow, W. *mer*’ where the example is one of the two possible etymologies of *Smart* (Watson 1926, 4).

attested elsewhere. For instance, the W river-name *Seiont* (CVN) was only first attested in 1570, the historical reflex of the attested *Segontium* is the MidW *Seint* (Owen & Morgan 2007, 64). Other examples are Morecambe (LNC) first attested in 1771, adapted from Ptolemy's *Morikambe* (Watts 2010, 421). Closer to home are the Grampians, the form possibly deriving from a misreading and scribal emendation of Tacitus' *Mons Graupius* (Drummond 1991, 126-28). However, there seems to be no convincing reason why such a minor geographical feature would attract such a reinterpretation and this is best considered an outside possibility.

That Carn Smairt was a distinct later Gaelic coining was also considered, perhaps a form of OGael *smer*⁴⁶⁷ (Gaelic *smeur* 'bramble, berry')⁴⁶⁷ which can refer to blackberries or various wild fruits (LEIA, S-141; eDIL). This has a degree of attraction but such plants prefer woods, hillsides, scrub and hedgerows and do not grow on cold, boggy hilltops. It could perhaps be argued that the name was taken from fruit-bearing lower slopes. This interpretation would however leave the realisation of the final consonant unexplained unless one were to posit the participial suffix *-te* which is often realised in Gaelic without the final schwa, hence ***Càrn Smeurt(a)*.⁴⁶⁸ A possible analogy would be *Sròn Smeur* in Perthshire so this remains an option not to be discounted.

The consonants of OGael *smiur* 'marrow' (LEIA S-142; eDIL), the form cognate with Watson's proposal for *Smertae*, correspond fairly well. This is found in Gaelic as *smeur* 'anoint, besmear, daub, fumigate, grease, smear' (Dwelly 1901), with *smeurta* as the past participle. With the aforementioned palatisation this would provide a plausible form but I have not yet been able to construct a satisfactory narrative to explain such an interpretation. It was also considered whether this could derive from a Goidelic personal name, similar to *Smirgoll mac Smertha* proffered by Watson (1926, 515, Additional Notes, P.18). O'Brien in his *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (1962) noted only four items with the required initial *sm-*, *Smern*, *Smerdub*, *Smirgoll* and *Smreth*, none of which, despite being historically related, would give *Smeirt* without vigorous

⁴⁶⁷ Dwelly's online dictionary gives *dris-smeur* 'common bramble', *smeur dhearg* 'wineberry', *smeur loganach* 'loganberry', *smeur-phreas* 'common bramble'.

⁴⁶⁸ Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh informs me that the final *-t* is more liable to palatisation than other stops which could possibly account for the early slenderised form i.e. *Smeirt*.

manipulation. Another candidate is *smer*² ‘fire’ (LEIA, S-141; eDIL) but this is only attested in glossaries and can therefore be discounted. Watson (1904, 233) noted the place-name Smiorasair (ROS) which he derived from ON *smjör* ‘butter’, a form broadly similar to our form. Similar names including the word *butter* or the Gaelic equivalent *im* may indicate places with good pasturage (e.g. *Beinn Ìme*; DMB; Drummond 1991, 149) but such an explanation seems highly unsuitable for our barren, boggy moorland.

None of the above proposals seems fully convincing and a preferable solution is that this may indeed represent a later coining, but one based on the common Scottish Surname *Sma(i)rt*. This is derived from the OE personal name *Smert* (Black 1946) a ‘nickname for a brisk or active person from ME *smart* ‘quick, prompt’, itself from OE *smeart* ‘stinging, painful’ (Hanks, Hodges, Mills & Room 1998, 575). This is a surname which would have spread in and from the English/Scots speaking burghs from their founding in the twelfth century. Black in *The Surnames of Scotland* (1946) gives various individuals who bore this surname as holding land to the north of the Forth-Clyde divide. Perhaps the most relevant are William Smart, burgess of Tain, who was fined for reset of members of outlawed Clan Gregor in 1612, and this town is but some twenty miles downriver from Carn Smairt. There was also John Smairt ‘minister of Weik (Wick)’ in 1638.⁴⁶⁹ The 1861 census evidences six Smarts at Tain⁴⁷⁰ and the 1911 census noted fourteen males of this surname in Inverness-shire, probably representing five or six families.⁴⁷¹ The greatest concentration of Smart names is in Fife and then Angus, and a search of the catalogue of the National Archives of Scotland returns 2430 matches. The surname Smith, the most common in Scotland, returns 35359. This is fourteen times more than Smart, but this does demonstrate that it is by no means a marginal name. An online database gives it as the 316th most common in the UK.⁴⁷² Ronnie Ross⁴⁷³ who worked as a gillie in Strathcarron for many decades was acquainted with a family of gamekeepers

⁴⁶⁹ National Archives of Scotland GD96/667. A Google search of ‘Smart + Bonar Bridge’ brings up individuals bearing the surname. Possibly only recent immigrants.

⁴⁷⁰ Ancestry.com - a searchable online database.

⁴⁷¹ This information was provided over the phone by *Scotland’s Peoples* a company who operates a website and provides genealogical information to interested parties.

⁴⁷² <http://www.britishsurnames.co.uk/>

⁴⁷³ Of Tain, who kindly discussed this issue with me.

who bore this name from the Invergordon area, one of whom worked for many years at Tongue (SUT). There was, until very recently, an Electrical shop at Tain (T.G. Smart & Co. Ltd, 31-35 High St, Tain) but the owners moved to the area from Aberdeen about 1898.⁴⁷⁴

The Scots pronunciation is /sme:rt/ (often spelt *Smairt* in Scottish records) and this occurs also as a common Scots adjective ‘smairt, smart, smert’ (Robinson 1997). This surname would be adapted into Gaelic spelling as *Smert*⁴⁷⁵ and would generate the required genitive singular qualifying *càrn* as *Smeirt*, which corresponds to Watson’s earliest form. Initially he seems to have overlooked the fact that *Smeirt* suggests a genitive singular form, while his interpretation ‘Carn of the Smertae’ requires the genitive plural. By 1926, the year of the publication of his magnum opus the *History of the Celtic Placenames of Scotland*, his earlier form has been modified to *Carn Smeart*, the regular gen. pl. of a hypothetical reflex of *Smertae*. One suspects that the irregularity of the early form may have gradually revealed itself to Watson whereby he felt justified in tampering a little with the details of the vowels in order that it conformed to his etymology. This issue may have influenced later revisers of the OS maps who regularised it to ‘Smairt’ perhaps also under the influence of the known surname.

A trawl through the secondary literature and the relevant volumes of ‘Hooker’s Gazetteer’⁴⁷⁶ of the names on the OS Pathfinder maps provides numerous parallels for such coining involving *Càrn* qualified by personal names. Firstly, it should be noted that *càrn*,⁴⁷⁷ while probably originally meaning a burial cairn (Matasović 2009, 191, s.v. **karno-*), is more commonly used in Scotland, in contrast to Ireland, for a rounded hill perhaps betraying a Pictish substrate influence (Taylor 2011, 105, s.v. ? *BEINN*). It is applied to significant hills including, for instance, the names of thirty out of two hundred and eighty-two Munros (a mountain in Scotland with a height over three thousand feet), yet it is also very frequent in the names of comparatively insignificant features.

⁴⁷⁴ Telephone conversation with A.S. Smart (15 July, 2011).

⁴⁷⁵ Ronnie Ross, named above, whose grandparents spoke Gaelic gives the local pronunciation as /ka:rn sme^ərt/.

⁴⁷⁶ This is a privately published name-list of all the items attested in the Scottish OS Pathfinder 1 : 25,000 maps. The copy consulted is held by the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

⁴⁷⁷ For a discussion of *càrn* in Scottish hill-names see Drummond (1991, 25).

Examples containing common Gaelic personal names are *Càrn Chailein* (Drummond 1991, 195), *Carn Neil* etc. We have others representing names borrowed from English such as *Càrn Ealasaid* ('Elizabeth'; *ibid.* 196). Note also *Càrn Mhàrtuinn* (ROS; Watson 1904, 159) and *Càrn Màiri* (*ibid.* 74). *Carn Cassie* and *Carn Robin* on the face of it appear to be relatively recent coinages. Of particular relevance is *Carn Richard* a burial cairn some miles to the north, in Strath Ila, coined shortly before 1899, the year of the death of Richard Rutherford after whom it was named.⁴⁷⁸

More pertinent are the names containing what appear to contain English / Scots surnames: *Carn Daley*,⁴⁷⁹ *Carn Henney*, *Carn Lee*, *Carn Geddes* and *Cairn Gibbs*.⁴⁸⁰ Compare also *Creag Phetridh* from the surname Petrie. A prestigious outsider might have been known by his surname in Gaeldom and this scenario does not strike modern educated Gaelic speakers as egregious.⁴⁸¹ Moreover, this phenomenon has been reported from the Western Isles where individuals with distinctive or alien surnames are referred to by these forms rather than by their first names, for example *Bramwell* and *Elwood* from the island of Barra (*Bramwell* 2007).⁴⁸² We therefore have good parallels for the use of English / Scots surnames as the specifics of *càrn* names. I have not yet been able to identify an individual bearing this surname with a close link to the place, but further research in local archives or genealogical sources could prove fruitful.

Perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence that this may be a recent coining is the name *Smart's Cairn*⁴⁸³ (NO 693 777) in Kincardineshire, a clear post-Gaelic coining in an area far from one which could have come under the domination of the *Smertae*. The two farms immediately below this hill are called *East* and *West Cairnbeg* and '*Càrn Beag*' may have been the original name of this hillock. This may well be an analogous coining using the same surname and borrowed generic,

⁴⁷⁸ I am grateful to Jake King for drawing my attention to this fact. See 'Ordnance Survey, C. M. Robertson Collections, National Library, MS359a, p. 68'. See <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/6743/details/carn+richard/>

⁴⁷⁹ A chambered cairn
<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/search/?keyword=carn+daley&submit=search>

⁴⁸⁰ Supposedly named after the owner of the nearby Glen Isla house.

⁴⁸¹ I am grateful to John Urquhart (minister, native speaker from Uist and translator at Sabhal Mór Ostaig) for discussing this issue with me.

⁴⁸² For more detailed discussions of such phenomena see *Bramwell* (2011 *passim.*).

⁴⁸³ <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/36090/details/smart+s+cairn/>

albeit in a different language. The most plausible explanation of the name Carn Smairt is that it is a modern coining based on the Scots surname Smart. Consequently, it has no bearing whatsoever on the question of /sN-/ in Pictish.

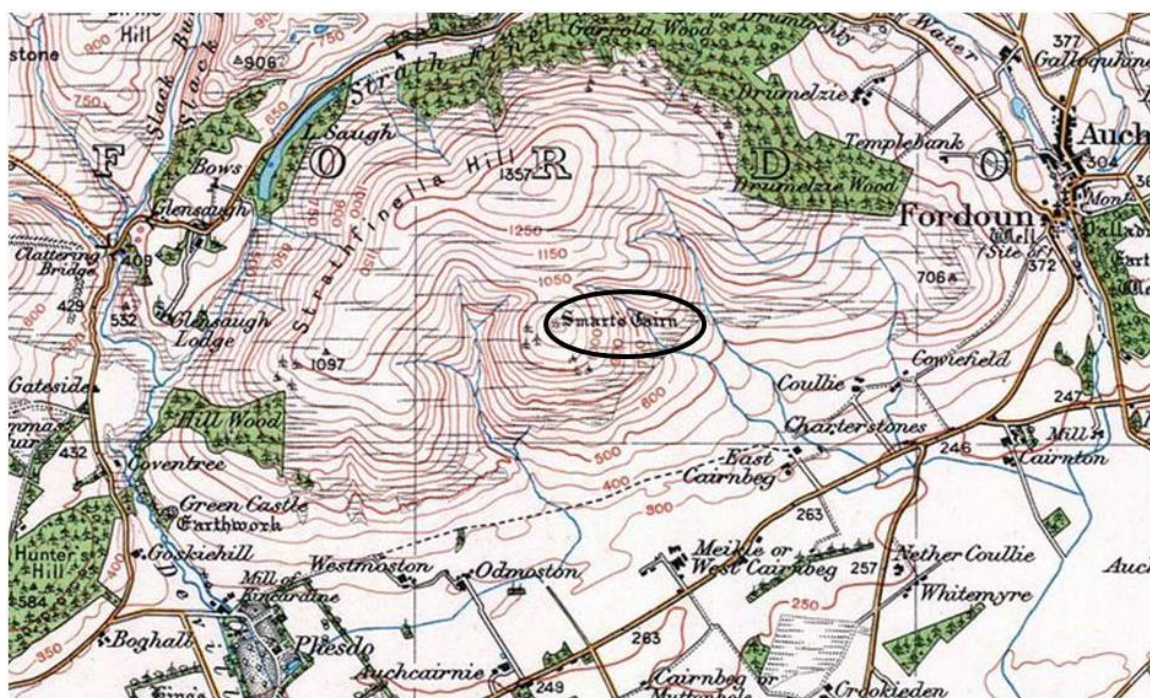


Figure 13 Smart's Cairn⁴⁸⁴

3.3.4 Initial /sV-/

Let us now turn to the issue of the postulated preservation of initial /s-/ . As Jackson pointed out the loss of the initial sibilant before nasals is paralleled in its loss before vowels, all being part of the same process. Firstly, I will discuss the postulated Pictish personal name *Simul* and then five additional issues which could have bearing on this change:

1. xTTuCUH)(TTS of the Lunnasting *ogham* inscription.
2. The place-name Lindifferon in Fife.
3. The place-name Soutra in Angus.
4. Three river-names: Shiel (x2) and Shin.

⁴⁸⁴ <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=13&lat=56.8899&lon=-2.5046&layers=1250&point=-4.5095,57.6217>

5. The mythological Pict *Solen*, attested in Irish sources.

3.3.4.1 *Simul*

The putative personal name *Simul* is attested in the Annals of Ulster (725.3) but it lacks a convincing Celtic etymology, and is therefore scarcely strong evidence. It seems that it was Stokes (1890, 413) who first proposed that it was a personal name and he thought it could represent a form of W *Hywel* (OW *higuel*), but this is quite impossible. He thought that Pictish had preserved the original /s-/ (ibid. 418), and it is to him that we must ascribe the origin of this linguistic proposal which was later adopted by Jackson (1955, 165). It occurs in the phrase *Simul filius Druis constringitur*, the latter name probably referring to the Pictish king Drest who was killed in 729 (AU 729.3). *Constringitur* is the third-person present passive indicative of *constringō* ‘tie up, inhibit’ etc. and the phrase could be translated as ‘Simul son of Drust is bound/imprisoned’.

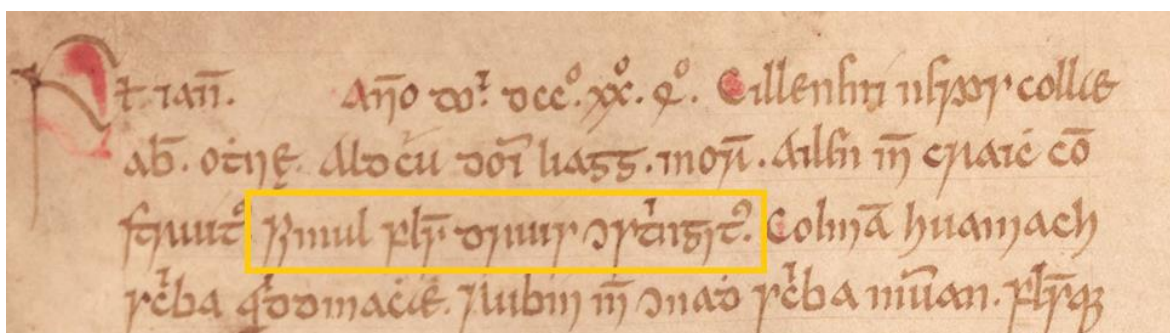


Figure 14 *Simul filius Druis*⁴⁸⁵

Although *Simul* has also been interpreted as a personal name by Fraser (2009, 289) and others it is identical to the Latin adverb *simul* meaning ‘together, at once, at the same time’. This occurs three other times in the Annals of Ulster under 744.9, 598.5 and 604.2 indicating events which happen concurrently with an event in the previous phrase. The form *Simul*, which occurs in the Annals of Tigernach version, may be due to reading the *u* as an open *a*,⁴⁸⁶ but it suggests that the copyist also interpreted *Simul* as a personal name. In this particular instance *Simul* occurs immediately after the sentence *Ailen m. Craich construitur* ‘The fortified island of Crach’s son is constructed’. Our sentence is therefore to be interpreted as ‘at the same time the son of Drust is imprisoned’

⁴⁸⁵ Bodleian Library MS. Rawl. B. 489, folio 12v.

⁴⁸⁶ Nicholas Evans (pers. comm.).

meaning that *Simul* is a ghost name and is of no relevance to the fate of /s-/ in Pictish.

3.3.4.2 xTTuCUH)(TTS



FIG. 2.—Lunnasting Stone—Face.

Figure 15 Lunnasting *ogham* inscription⁴⁸⁷

Now that the two pieces of evidence adduced have been demonstrated to be almost certainly spurious it could still be argued that the theory could be ‘right for the wrong reasons’. So let us turn to the first item on the list above, the well-preserved Lunnasting ogham inscription found in 1876 in Shetland and which is transcribed as **xTTuCUH)(TTS** by Forsyth (1996, 402-19). Koch proposed that it contained a cognate of W *cyhyd* ‘as far as’, and Welsh *hyd* ‘length’ is from **siti-* (Matasović 2011, 338). This item could be taken to indicate co-evolution rather than preservation i.e. Pictish followed Brittonic. Given the numerous profound issues with this material this interpretation is open to debate and, while possible, requires significant caution. Koch also wondered whether the various ‘s’ *flesca* which appear word-finally on various *ogham* inscriptions

⁴⁸⁷ See Gouldie (1876).

could represent the syncopated affixed demonstrative *-se*⁴⁸⁸ (cf. W *heddiw*, (*h*)*eleni*) as in Breton *-se*. However, the preservation of this phoneme in Breton would allow for a similar exception in Pictish and therefore this cannot be employed as evidence either.

3.3.4.3 Lindifferon

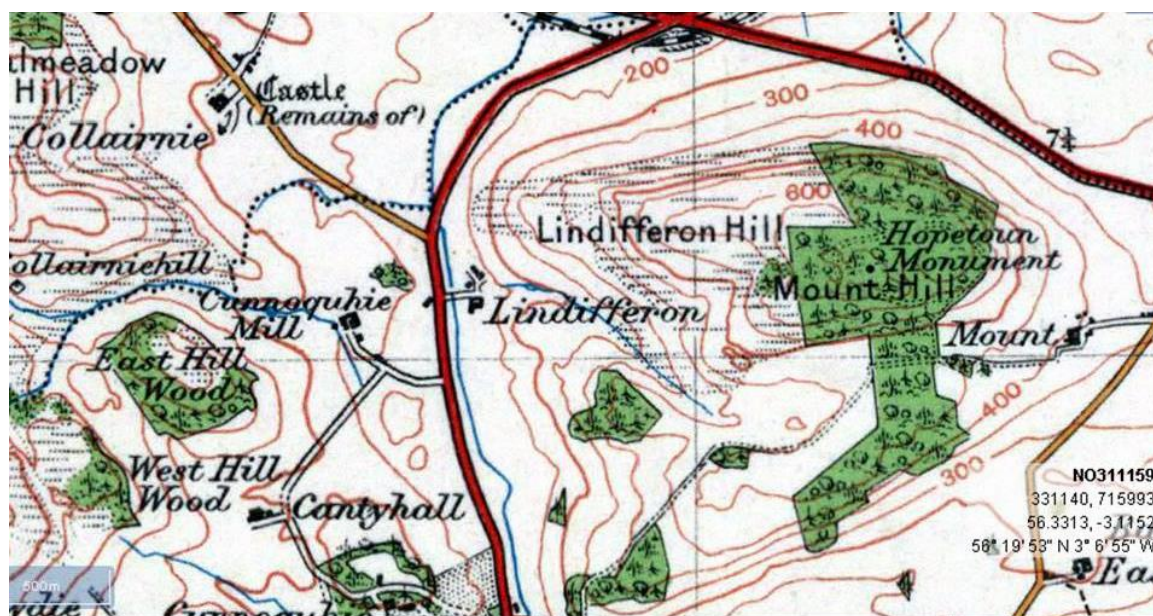


Figure 16 Lindifferon (FIF)⁴⁸⁹

The second item to be discussed is the settlement name Lindifferon (FIF, NO 316 165). Watson (1926, 383) interpreted the final section as a reflex of *dyffryn*, this being a composition of *dwfr+hynt* < PrClt **sentu-* ‘path’, ‘watercourse’ > ‘valley’. If correct, this explanation also indicates that Pictish followed Brittonic. The location of this farm at the confluence of two streams in a valley makes this an appealing etymology, but this is so far south that issues of relationship with Brittonic muddy the waters.⁴⁹⁰ The earliest attestation is *Lediferin* (1204x1229; Taylor 2010, 592) whose final section does bear a striking resemblance to W *dyffryn*, OW *difrin* (attested in the Book of Llandaff⁴⁹¹; GPC).

⁴⁸⁸ See Kervella (1947, §459-465, 275-77), Jackson (1953, §115. 517) & Schrijver (1995, IX.2(2), 377).

⁴⁸⁹ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=14&lat=56.3351&lon=-3.1026&layers=1250&point=-4.5095,57.6217>

⁴⁹⁰ I am wary of assuming that the Pictish of Fife was closer to the Pictish of the Werteras than to the nearby Brittonic of Gododdin. With the detailed investigation of place-names north of the Mounth we may be able to make some progress in regards of this issue.

⁴⁹¹ For a discussion of the four attestations in this book, and for a broader discussion of terms for ‘river’ and ‘valley’ see Coe (2000), in particular 2.1.3., p. 18.

It should be borne in mind that this word would appear to be a distinctly early W coining as it does not occur in either Cornish or Breton, and is also absent from Northern Brittonic which attests various other items indicating depressions such as *pant*, *cau*, *nant*, *glyn* (see BLITON svv.). The Neo-Brittonic form would have been /dʊβr'hɪnt/ which is quite distanced phonetically from the place-name. This is a cautionary note not a rejection of the etymology, but one wonders whether a Gaelic explanation might be possible.⁴⁹²

3.3.4.4 **Soutra**

The third item is the farm-name Soutra (ANG, NO 446 609) located on the south-western slopes of the Hill of Ogil, itself a name of Brittonic / Pictish origin. The earliest forms I have been able to identify are *Sautra* (c. 1640, Pont's map⁴⁹³) and *Soultra* (1794, Ainslie's map⁴⁹⁴).⁴⁹⁵ I know of no reason to suspect that it could be a transferred name from Soutra (MLO) but this possibility must be borne in mind. If this is indeed a reflex of a local Pictish form, rather than a later Gaelic coining, then it will have undergone the mediation of two successor languages over a period of some six or seven centuries before the first attestation. Its value as evidence is therefore questionable. It may be identical in derivation to Soutra (MLO) whose early forms are regularly *Soltre*, a name whose generic is probably *-tref* 'settlement' (Watson 1926, 363; Nicolaisen 2001, 217). The following brief discussion proceeds on this assumption. The same specific may be evidenced in Solport (CMB; Armstrong 1950, 107) and perhaps also in the name *Dinsol* noted in the medieval Welsh tale *Culhwch ac Olwen* which is located *yn y Gogledd* 'in the North' (Bromwich & Evans 1988, lxxx, fn 220).

⁴⁹² The only speculative thoughts I have on this is that it could be from *leathad* 'slope' + *aifrinn* (mass) with which one could compare *Inchaffrin*, the earlier form of Inchaffrey (PER; < G *aifreann* 'mass'), and W *Maen-offeren* 'stone of the mass' (CVN). Simon Taylor notes, however, that in this period one might expect to see some reflex of G. *th* and that the vowel *i* is somewhat at odds with the vowel of *aifrinn*. Another option, suggested also by Simon Taylor is that this could represent **Leth-lfrinn* (gen. of *ifern* 'hell') meaning the 'hillside/slope of hell'. For *leth* see Taylor with Márkus (2012, 423). This, he notes, is a better phonological fit but semantically unlikely. Note however that there are about a dozen examples of the Welsh cognate *uffern* (< Lat *īferna*) in AMR.

⁴⁹³ Available online at the National Library of Scotland: <http://maps.nls.uk/pont/>.

⁴⁹⁴ Available online at the National Library of Scotland: <http://maps.nls.uk/mapmakers/ainslie.html>.

⁴⁹⁵ I am grateful to Simon Taylor for this reference.

At first glance this would seem to indicate a preservation of initial /s-/ but Welsh /s-/ can derive from Clt /st-/.⁴⁹⁶ There are no Proto-Celtic roots in /stVL-/ to provide a credible etymon and this option can be discounted. While Brittonic /s-/ does generally evolve to /h-/ the sibilant is almost always preserved in Latin loanwords such as *sach* < *saccus* ‘sack’ or *Sul* ‘Sunday’ < *sōlis* and this issue must be taken into account. Indeed a derivation from Latin *solum* ‘lowest part; base, foundation; floor, pavement’ is suggested by Breeze (2006(b)) noting W items such as *sylfaen*. It is, however, not certain that this is derived from Latin as GPC (s.v. *sylwedd*) simply compares with this word, as does LEIA (S-167) when discussing *sol*. Neither states that it is a loanword, and it could be a cognate. While there may be some Roman remains at Soutra (MLO) nothing similar is known from the site in Angus. It would be most interesting to find a Latin loanword robustly attested in Pictland⁴⁹⁷ but the preservation of /s-/ in a native W *syl-* would deny it any value in this discussion.

An alternative is to consider a connection with **soli-* (or **so:li-*), an element well-attested in Celtic. In personal names in Gaul we have *Solibitis*, *Soliboduus*, *Solidumnia*, *Solimarus*, *Solirix* (Delamarre 2007, 232; 2012, 239). According to Delamarre this could either be an item of obscure origin or a variant of **sūli-* ‘(good) view’ (cf. OGael *súil*) but there are issues with this correspondence (Delamarre 2003, 287; Lambert 2008, 90). The element may also be attested in the British place-name *Corio Soliorum* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 320) and in the *Coriosolites* of Gaul. The two names in *Soutra* do have commanding views over the local landscape, and it would be a fitting specific for a name in *Din-* ‘fort’.

Isaac (2002, s.v. *soli-*; < *o*-grade of PIE **sel-*¹ ‘dwelling’) cautiously interpreted this form as meaning ‘hall?, homestead? habitation?’ and compared with MidW *dihol* ‘to un-hall, to send away from habitation’. If correct this could be interpreted as indicating retention of the sibilant. However, if it is cognate with

⁴⁹⁶ See Jackson (1953, §122, 529) & Schrijver (1995, IX.4.5, 415-430).

⁴⁹⁷ There is a Pitpointie in ANG which Watson saw as derived from *pont* which, like W *pont* is derived from Lat *pons*, *pontem* (Lewis 1943, s.v.). However this farm (NO 356 374) is not situated near any waterway that would require a bridge. It is however in the bottom of a depression, which makes a derivation from *pant* ‘depression, valley’ (see GPC) very appealing. There is also Pointack (NO 352 239; Taylor with Márkus 2010, 285) which lies on the northern flatlands of Fife. There are, however, only minor streamlets in the vicinity, certainly nothing that would have required a bridge. The drainage band is only about 500m wide, between the Firth of Tay and a line of hills to the south-east. Unsurprisingly, there are several features in the vicinity which could be classed as *pant*.

the name in Mid Lothian then the preservation would also be attested in an area generally not considered to have spoken Pictish, and would have some interesting implications for the relationship of the two languages.

There are various roots in PIE which would give the required form, and which might provide elucidation of **soli-*. These would clearly require an *o*-grade: **sel-*² ‘beam, board’, **sel-*³ ‘to take, grab’ (cf *W helw* ‘possession’), **sel-*⁶ ‘luck, lucky’ (cf OGael *slán* ‘fit, healthy’; see IEED s.vv.). The two items with reflexes in Celtic languages might represent the most likely candidates but the others cannot be ruled out due to the well-attested form **soli-* in Gaul. These are too speculative to provide valid evidence for the issue being investigated here.

W sofl ‘stubble’ < VL **stubla* < Lat. *stipula* (Jackson 1953, 531) also appears in *W* place-names as *Sol-* e.g. Solvach (PMB; Owen & Morgan 2007, 443). The reflexes in ModBret ‘soul’ and ModC ‘zoul’ have both elided the /v/ and this would provide a plausible explanation. However as this is a word of Latin origin the preservation of /s-/ would be regular and would not have any bearing on the fate of Pritenic /s-/. It is difficult to favour a particular proposal for ‘sol’ but the issues discussed above mean that no firm conclusions can be drawn from this name. In any case the possible equivalent name in Brittonic lands (MLO) which also preserves the /s-/ would, if cognate, cancel out this item as evidence for Pictish, unless of course the dialect of the Lothians was also conservative in regards of this phoneme.

3.3.4.5 Shiel & Shin

The final issue to be discussed are the river-names Shiel (INV & ROS) and the Shin (SUT), which would seem to indicate the preservation of the phoneme. The former river is attested as *Sale* in the *Life of Columba* (VC 100b) and its modern Gaelic form is *Seile* (Nicolaisen 2008, 235). The latter is noted as *Glenselle* in the sixteenth century (ibid.). Proposed roots are either PIE **sal-* ‘current, stream’ or the homophonous root meaning ‘dirty, sallow’ (Kitson 1996, 94, fn 7; Nicolaisen 2008, 235). The Shin (SUT) has been derived from the PIE root **sindh-*

‘river’ (ibid.),⁴⁹⁸ and also compared to the gen. sg. of *sean* ‘old’ (Watson 1926, 464).

The two Shiels are in areas which may have been marginal to Pictish dominance, but it is more problematic to claim this for the Shin. It may be that such areas maintained a conservative pronunciation or simply that such river-names had been borrowed early into Gaelic. The phonemicisation of the contrast between /s-/ and /h-/ may have been as late as the second half of the sixth century in Brittonic and this period is early enough for a borrowing with a preserved /s-/, even for a name derived from Brittonic itself. One could compare this with the river-name Severn (< **Sabrinā*; Ekwall 1928 358 & 358) where the English form preserves a more conservative form than the W *Hafren*. While the /s-/ is undoubtedly preserved in these names the same can, as noted above, be said for various Brittonic river-names. Consequently, these three names do not provide conclusive evidence for preservation of the phoneme in Pictish. An alternative explanation would be that Neo-Pictish was itself a fairly late arrival (6-7th century?) and that it adopted these forms from the local Celtic dialect. This is almost certainly the situation regarding some river-names such as *Sal*, *Saled* and *Salou* (le Bihan 2006) in the Vannes region of Brittany where Breton may only have become spoken in the ninth century.

3.3.4.6 **Solen**

This name is noted in Irish versions of Pictish origin legends (Calise 2002, 253). Stokes (1890, 413) compared it with W *Sulgen* while O’Rahilly (1946, 363, fn 5) compared it with OBret *Sulan* < Latin *sōl* ‘sun’.⁴⁹⁹ Whether or not this represents an authentic Pictish name is uncertain. I know of no P-Celtic forms similar to ***Hol*, which would provide a Britt cognate. If it is Pictish and its origin is from Latin (cf. *Elpin* < *Alpīnus*) then it is irrelevant to this discussion, as Latin personal-names preserve the initial /s-/. If it is an Irish name or at least influenced by Irish then one could perhaps consider the noun *sol* ‘base’ (etc.; LEIA S-167) and the personal name *Solach* (O’Brien 1962, 162 f 19, 331). Its attestation in an Irish mythological context renders it questionable as evidence.

⁴⁹⁸ This is presumably from PIE **sed-* ‘go’ (Mallory & Adams 2006, 116 & 394) but the semantic and formal changes are not without difficulties.

⁴⁹⁹ For Bret names supposedly from Lat *sōl* see Loth (1890, 165, s.n. *Sul*).

3.3.5 Conclusion

The two items *Smart* and *Simul*, cited in previous works as suggesting the retention of initial /s-/ in Pictish, are almost certainly invalid as evidence, and the additional items do not provide conclusive proof either way. What would provide good evidence would be robust examples of initial /h-/ from /s-/, but this phoneme is unlikely to survive mediation by Gaelic which lacked it in absolute initial position. This question must remain open at present.

3.4 Section 4: The Change of /-j-/ > /-ð-/

3.4.1 Introduction

In 1983 Koch briefly discussed four items relating to the evolution of PrClt /-j-/ in Pictish. Two suggested that it conserved the original phoneme unmodified and two were interpreted as indicating that it mirrored Brittonic in changing the approximant to /-ð-/. There are further items relevant to this issue and these will be discussed (and dismissed) below.

Arguing for co-evolution with Brittonic were:

1. The ‘Pictish toponymic element *Monid*’ (> Gael *monadh* ‘upland, rough pasture’⁵⁰⁰ < Britt *monīð* < PrClt **monijo-* ‘mountain’).
2. The Pictish personal name *Itharnan* etc. (supposedly representing **iðarnon* < **ijarnon* < **ijarnonos* < **isarnonos*, < **isarno-* ‘iron’).⁵⁰¹

Arguing for conservatism were:

The twin river-names Spey and Spean < **skwijat-* ‘hawthorn’ (Watson 1926, 474).

The reason for this conflicting outcome was left unexplained. Jackson, in 1955, did not comment on the issue posed by the proposed etymology of the Spey (< **skwijat-*), while Nicolaisen queried Watson’s interpretation (1976, 246) but making no alternative suggestions. In 2006 Forsyth summarised the proposal but did not engage with this quandary (2006(b)). It is immediately clear that the evidence for a distinct development from Brittonic is not only minimal, but also subject to a serious challenge on the grounds of apparent counterevidence.

3.4.2 Linguistic Background

Jackson dated the change of /-j-/ to /-ð-/ to the ‘fourth to early fifth century’ (1953, §38 A.3, 694) and this is supported by Sims-Williams (2003, ¶13, 23).

⁵⁰⁰ In G orthography *dh* original represented /ð/.

⁵⁰¹ Note that this would require initial stress.

Jackson termed this ‘one of the knottiest problems in British phonology’ to which ‘no satisfactory all-embracing solution has yet been found’ (1953, 348). Schrijver devoted a whole lengthy chapter to the development of PrClt /j/ in Brittonic, which underlines the challenges of this multi-faceted change (1995, Chapter VI, 279-324). As this development pre-dates the emergence of Neo-Brittonic c. 500-550 (Sims-Williams 1990, 260) it could be cautiously interpreted as indicating that Pictish was diverging from Brittonic early enough to exclude its categorisation as a dialect variant.

Had Pictish, or a dialect of it, preserved the phoneme /j/ it would have had an impact on a significant portion of the lexicon including such common items as W *newydd* ‘new’ and numerous suffixes, for example the W abstract in *-edd*, agent nouns in *-ydd* and W plurals in *-ydd* & *-oedd* (Jackson 1953, §36-41, 344-63, Schrijver 1995, VI.1.2, 280). This would also have impacted on the verbal system as with the future / habitual of the verb *bod* ‘to be’ as in ModW *byddaf*, *byddi*, *bydd* etc. (Lewis & Pedersen 1937, §485, 325) and the Britt pres. 2nd sg. suffix attested in ModW as *-ydd*, Bret *-ez* (ibid. §449, 2. sg., 282). Thus, this issue exceeds a mere difference in accent.

This section will examine the groups of evidence in an order which deals firstly with the least problematic items, that is *Itarnan*, *Monid* and then *Spey* / *Spean*. Following this there will be a brief discussion of other items which could theoretically evidence the change under scrutiny. It will be argued here that the items of evidence adduced are open to serious challenge and that the most robust item indicates co-evolution with Brittonic.

3.4.2.1 **Itarnan**

The first item is the personal name *Itarnan* which occurs in the *Annals of Ulster*, *Itarnan et Corindu apud Pictores defuncti sunt* (669.3), and as *Itharnan* in the *Annals of Tigernach*. It is quite possible that Itarnan and Corindu were important Pictish churchmen, perhaps ones who had studied in Ireland (Fraser 2009, 109). In 1997 Forsyth (1997, 487) considered it a form of the personal name *Ethernanus*. Charles-Edwards (2006, 157, fn 7) noted that this Itarnan may perhaps be the founder and first bishop of Rathin in Buchan and *Ethernan* is attested in the Aberdeen Breviary as a ‘Scot’ who studied in Ireland before

returning to Scotland as a bishop (Macquarrie 2012, 357). Watson, in 1904 (142) noted that the name was probably attested in Killearnan (ROS; Gael *Cill-iùrnain*) and in 1926 (321) he noted the variants *Ethernen*, *Ithernanus* and *Ydarnasius*. Indeed a saint of a similar name, *lotharnaisc* / *Ethernascus*, was culted in Ireland and in Fife (Lathrisk; Ó Riain 2011, 384). Additionally, this item can be compared to three items on Pictish ogham stones: **EDDARRNONN** (Bressay, SHE & Scoonie, FIF) and **IDARRNNN** (Newton; see Forsyth 1996 s.nn.). It is evident that there was at least one important Pictish ecclesiast who bore this name.

Jackson commented that this name⁵⁰² was ‘apparently not Celtic’ (1955, 140), a statement perhaps more influenced by the belief in the survival of a non-IE language in Pictland than by an in-depth investigative failure to identify arguable etymologies. For example, Stokes (1890, 407), whose article Jackson discussed, had suggested a derivation from Ir *itharna* ‘a torch’ (eDIL *ítharnae*, ‘a rush light, candle’). Jackson did discuss the inscription *PIDARNOIN* of the Fordoun Latin script inscription (see Okasha 1985, 51-53) which may also attest the name, but admitted to being baffled by it. *Itarnan* is accompanied in the AU by the unetymologised name *Corindu*, which could indeed have lent considerable support to the view that it was not Celtic.

Koch derived *Itarnan* from Celtic **isarno-* ‘iron’, where the hiatus created by the regular loss of intervocalic /-s-/ had evolved through /-j-/ to /-ð-/ (Jackson 1953, §37, 347 & fn 2). **Isarno-* is indeed an exceedingly common Celtic personal name element, for example *Isarninus* in Roman period Suffolk,⁵⁰³ *Isarnus* in Gaul (Delamarre 2007, 112), *Iarnwallon* in Cornwall (Bodmin Manumissions), and *Haarnbiu* in Wales (Evans 1893, 204) making this a plausible, though convoluted, interpretation of the form. **Isarno-* is probably the origin of the similar Ir name *Ernene* whom Adomnán translates as *ferreolus* < Lat. *ferrum* ‘iron’ (Anderson & Anderson 1961, 534, fn 1), and the interpretation of *Itarnan* may have been suggested by this etymology. Both *t* and *th* would be unusual spellings for the proposed Pictish /ð/, of Koch’s **l̥ðarnon*. One might expect *d* (Thurneysen §30, 22), but given the great uncertainty regarding Pictish phonetics and orthography it would be unwise to rule it out. This etymology conflicts not only with Koch’s

⁵⁰² He actually employs only the AT form *ltharnan*.

⁵⁰³ <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/details.php?name=271>

own acceptance of the lack of /ð/ in Spey but also with the two distinct developments of **isarno-* in Brittonic, for example > W *haearn*, OBret. *-hoiarn-* & *larn-*, etc. (Jackson 1953, 361).

An alternative and more straightforward etymology was proposed by Padel in 1972 (33), that this was a suffixed cognate of the common Brittonic personal name *Edern*,⁵⁰⁴ as in the father of the northerly ‘Cunedda’ (Bartrum 1966, 9). This was noted, but tacitly rejected, by Koch (1983, 217, fn 2). The name is attested in Wales in Llanedern⁵⁰⁵ (GLA), Bodedern⁵⁰⁶ (AGL) and in Brittany in Lannedern⁵⁰⁷ (Finisterre), for example.

It is derived by regular sound changes from Latin *Aeternus* > *Eternus*⁵⁰⁸ (Morris-Jones 1913, 87; Jackson 1953, 279; Schrijver 1995, III.2.3 (9), 48) ‘lasting, enduring, endless’, an appropriate name for a churchman⁵⁰⁹ and one well attested in Wales.⁵¹⁰ We would therefore expect a Pictish realisation similar to /e:der̥n/, as *ae* had developed to /ɛ:/ well before the period of late Latin (Allen 1965, 60-61). Indeed, the Latin name *Aeternalis* (gen.) is attested in a Welsh inscription from Margam (GLA) as *ETERNALI* (Sims-Williams 2003, 56 & 135).

It is likely that the voiceless inter-vocalic stop /t/ would have been voiced to /d/ in Pictish, as in Brittonic cf. Blebo (FIF), *Bladebolg*⁵¹¹ (1140; Taylor 2008, 190) < **bla:to-bolgo-* & Ogle Hill (PER) < **okelon* ‘ridge’. Forsyth (*pace* Jackson 1953, 280-81) explained the vowel /a/ of *Itharnan* (< *Aetern-*) as paralleling a late Brittonic change which Jackson (1953, §6 (3), 280) noted as looking like ‘a late and independent development in the dialects’. Schrijver (1995, III.2.3 (4), 66) however saw this as characteristic of Latin loanwords rather than representing a Brittonic change as in W *tafarn* < *taberna*, *Padarn* < *Paternus* (cf.

⁵⁰⁴ For such names see Bartrum (1993, 222-23) and Richards (1998, 154).

⁵⁰⁵ See Owen & Morgan (2007, 236).

⁵⁰⁶ See Owen & Morgan (2007, 38).

⁵⁰⁷ Deshayes (1999, 291) derives this from a cognate of W *edyrn* ‘mighty’ but this seems unlikely given the generic *Lan-*.

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. Eng *eternal* < OFr *eternal*.

⁵⁰⁹ For a further discussion of the name see Forsyth (1997, 486-91).

⁵¹⁰ E.g. *AETERN-* (Sims-Williams 2003, 373).

⁵¹¹ Note however that the absence of the expected lenition raises a question regarding the etymology i.e. one would expect the first letter of the second element of a close compound to evidence /b/ > /β/.

Jackson 1953, 281; Hamp 1980, 161-63). Were the former explanation accepted it would be open to an interpretation as a significant indicator of co-evolution between Pictish and Brittonic, but the VL explanation seems more likely, i.e. the name was already realised in Brittonic Latin as **Etarn* / **Edarn*, a variant of the more standard **Etern*.

The realisation of historical /e/ as *i-* (i.e. **Edarn* > *Itarn-*), in the Irish sources is not worrying, especially as two of the Pictish forms, *EDDARRNONN*, agree with the VL vowel. The two graphemes *e* and *i* are habitually confused in various Celtic languages and orthographies due not only to similar realisation and evolving interchanges between the two, but also due to developments in VL (Allen 1965, 48-49) which rendered the late Latin graphemes as ambiguous. The medieval Scottish attestations also attest both graphemes.

Note also that **Haearnon* / **Iarnon* (etc.), the hypothetical Brittonic reflexes of Koch's **Isarnonos* are not actually attested,⁵¹² even though such an absence would not pose a major objection as most early Celtic names do not survive into the medieval period. It is highly unlikely that the name *Itarnan* is related to **isarno-*, and consequently it cannot be used as evidence for a Pictish change of /-j-/ to /-ð-/.

3.4.2.2 **Monadh**

Taylor categorised *monadh* as a P-Celtic loan-word attested as a common noun in Scottish Gaelic and translates it as 'hill, rough pasture' (2011, 103). The majority of the various toponymic attestations discussed by Barrow (1998, 62-65) and Taylor (2011, 103) have unquestionably Gaelic specifics⁵¹³ thus lending strong support to this view. As it does not occur in Irish and would have no obvious Goidelic etymology it can be confidently considered a loan from a P-Celtic **monið* (< **monijo-*) 'mountain' (OW *minid*, OBret *monid*; Matasović 2009, 277)⁵¹⁴ after the change /-j-/ > /-ð-/ . An important example is the *Mounth*

⁵¹² It is absent for example from Loth (1890, 213 s.v. *Houarn, harn*) Bartrum (1993) & Cane (2003, 266).

⁵¹³ For example Barrow notes Monedie, Montcoffer, Mountbleton, Kinminty, The Garmond, Kinninmonth, Balmonth, Finmont etc.. See also BLITON s.v. *mōnið* where the difficulty of disentangling G *monadh*, the Brittonic form and OFr and E *mo(u)nt* is discussed.

⁵¹⁴ See BLITON for a discussion, refs and attestations in the Old North
<http://www.spns.org.uk/bliton/monid.html>

(Grampians), the central mountainous massif of Scotland, an early attestation being in the phrase *citra Monoth* in the Annals of Ulster (782.1).

It is tempting to conclude from this that Pictish did indeed share this development with Brittonic, but one cannot rule out that this item was borrowed from Brittonic itself or a variant, perhaps southerly, of Pictish which attested /-ð-/ . If Goidelic-speaking groups were indeed present in the south of Pictland early as the seventh century⁵¹⁵ then this could provide a suitable context for its adoption.⁵¹⁶ Indeed, Jackson conceded the possible Brittonic origin of this item in 1953 (149) and it seems unsafe to assume, without robust *in situ* evidence, that this change necessarily permeated all of Pictland. It would therefore be unwise to rest too heavily on one lexical borrowing as evidence of the fate of Brittonic /-j-/ in all of Pictland even though the most economical interpretation may be that the evolution was identical. It would be difficult to consider Pictish as one language were both outcomes attested in different dialects, but this point can only be resolved confidently with further evidence or with the reinterpretation of known items. Indeed, if the Spey & Spean were derived from **skwijat-* then /-j-/ > /-ð-/ could indeed be a southerly feature alone. We shall now examine these two items.

3.4.2.3 Spey & Spean

Apart from the etymon of *W newydd* there are comparatively few PrClt lexical roots (as opposed to suffixes) which evidence a /j/ in a position where it would yield /ð/ in Neo-Brittonic. The only item likely to appear in the onomastic material is *W pridd* ‘soil’ (< **prījess*, GPC). There are also exceptions to this ‘rule’ in Breton, such *pri* ‘clay, soil’ (*W pridd*) itself, and *B trede* ‘third’ (*W trydydd*, < **tritijō-*, GPC), meaning that this is an area where it would be wise to

⁵¹⁵ See Forsyth (1997, 48) who notes that the Auquhollie (KNC) ogham is stylistically compatible with Irish stones of the 6th or at the very latest 7th century and may be the only physical remains from an early Irish settlement in this period in eastern Pictland’.

⁵¹⁶ As discussed in detail by Taylor (2010) various items of Pictish provenance, *pett*, *monadh* etc were borrowed into Gaelic. I would cautiously add *aber* to this list. Were there powerful Gaelic groups deliberately settled in Pictland by the Waerteras (Broun 2005, 265-274) at an early period, unassimilated but intensely engaged with and immersed in Pictish administration, land management and law it would be unsurprising if the specific vocabulary of such interactions were adopted. But this is not the only scenario and such vocabulary could, for example, had entered Gaelic as a ‘package’ of broadly fiscal or land-management terms as Pictish ‘administration’ shifted to Gaelic. See also Jackson (1955, 171), Barrow (1998, 55-6) and Woolf (2007, 322-40).

tread carefully. Much rests therefore on the form and interpretation of the river-names, as the single item *monid* does not provide decisive evidence for the change in question. Before turning to discuss the river Spey I will discuss some issues regarding the Roman period attestations of this river, *Τούεις* (*vel sim.*) as it poses numerous questions.

Spean is generally interpreted as a diminutive of Spey, with the suffix *-an* which could be either Pictish or Gaelic in origin.⁵¹⁷ This view is reasonable, but not certain (cf. King 2008, 45). Therefore there will be no separate etymological discussion. If a derivation from **skwijat-* withstands criticism then it would lend significant support to the view that the approximant was not modified, at least in northern Pictland and this might require some rethinking on Pictish.

The Spey, at one hundred and seven miles, is the seventh longest river in Britain and the second longest, after the Tay, in Pictland. It rises at over one thousand feet by Loch Spey, ten miles south of Fort Augustus. It descends through Newtonmore and Kingussie crossing Loch Insh before reaching Aviemore and giving its name to Strathspey. From here it flows the remaining sixty miles north-east to the Moray Firth reaching the sea some eight miles to the east of the town of Elgin. On some sections it changes course frequently either gradually as a result of deposition and erosion or in a matter of hours as a result of spate. The Spey spates quickly due to its wide mountainous catchment area as a result of rainfall or snow-melt, a feature which is reflected in the district name *Badenoch* (= Gael *Bàideanach*, ‘drowned land’; Watson 1926, 118). This impressive river is also liable to flooding closer to the estuary. The Spean runs a course of about thirty miles in the opposite direction emerging from Loch Laggan in Glen Spean next to the source of the Spey. It flows out from this loch in a westerly direction collecting tributaries before turning northwest before reaching Spean Bridge and finally joining the River Lochy at the south-western end of Loch Lochy. As demonstrated by King in 2008 the characteristics of a river, especially its length, have a significant impact on the type of name it is likely to bear and this issue, as will be seen, is of some importance to the discussion.

⁵¹⁷ See Thomas (1938, Chapter IV, 34-91) for an in-depth discussion. For references to discussions of this suffix in Watson (1926) see James & Taylor (2013) <http://www.spns.org.uk/WatsIndex2.html>. For a discussion of this suffix which is common in Welsh hydronymy see Thomas (1938, Chapter IV, 34-91).

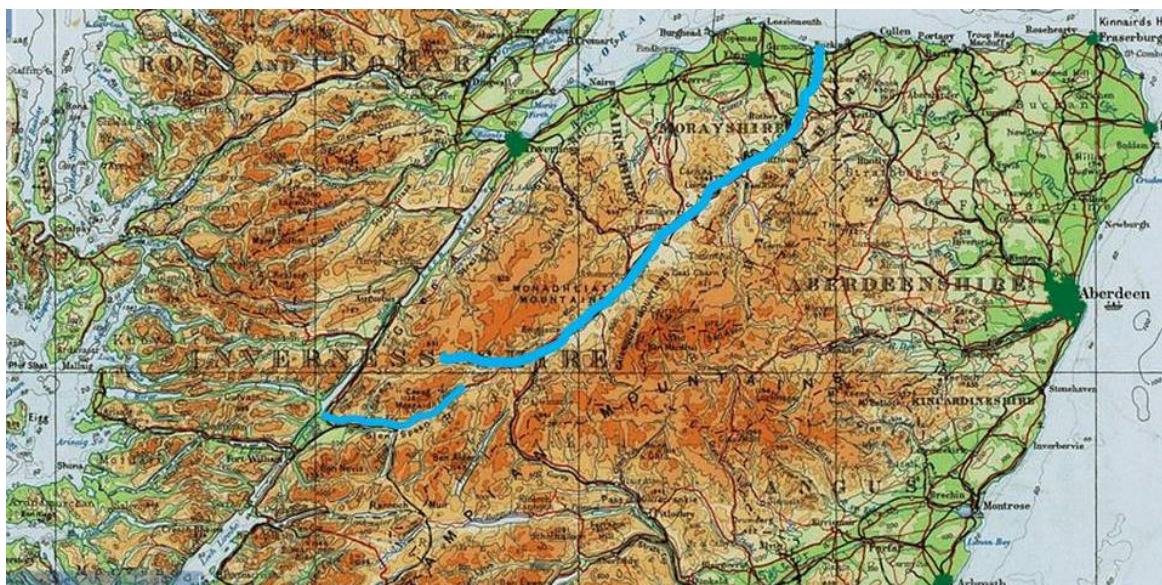


Figure 17 The rivers Spean and Spey⁵¹⁸

3.4.2.4 Spey and Tóuais(is)

It would seem that the first attestation of the name of this river is as *Tóuaisis* & *Tóuais* (*et al.*; Müller 1883, 89 & 95) in Ptolemy's Geography (see Chapter 2) which, as it stands, appears unrelated etymologically to Spey. There are several variations in the different manuscripts, and as noted by Fraser 'there is nothing here to enable us to decide between *Twes and *Twesis, for dittography or haplography will serve the arguments for or against either form' (1931, 135). An important issue is that a number of rivers in Pictland (see Chapter 2) are qualified by the word *εἰσχυσις* 'outflow', a *hapax legomenon* which occurs in Ptolemy alone. Fraser suggested that this could be derived from a Lat interpretation of a Clt noun **ad-bero-* (> *W aber* 'estuary'), but this would not fully explain its limited distribution. However, it may well be an indicator that Ptolemy or his informant was working with a discrete map or a coastal itinerary covering this northerly area. In the manuscripts there is much confusion in between the end of the river-name and the beginning of the qualifier, for example *Touaίς χύσις*, where the first letters of the Greek generic have been omitted. Partial dittography could be called upon also to support forms such as *Touaίς* in the exemplar. Some forms note the ending as *-ης* as opposed to *-ις*,

⁵¹⁸ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=8&lat=57.1751&lon=-3.9529&layers=1250&point=-4.5095,57.6217>

which corresponds to the gen. sg. of fem. short *a*-stem nouns e.g. γλῶσσᾶ (nom. / voc.) ‘tongue’ and γλώσσης (gen.) adding to the confusion, and eye-slip from εἴσχυσις could account for the variance.

About half of river-names of Pictland attested in early sources do survive into the medieval or later documentary record (Chapter 2) and consequently the replacement of the name of the imposing Spey is of some significance, even though neither the adjacent Findhorn or Deveron correspond etymologically to their early names (?*Lóksa* & *Kelníou* / *Káilios*). These may represent a renaming in the Gaelic period i.e. OGael *find*- & *dubh*- (white & black + *Eireann*) but see Clancy (2010) for an alternative view. However, an interpretation which may allow a tentative etymological link between *Touais(is)* and Spey will be discussed below.⁵¹⁹

There are issues in Ptolemy regarding the transcription of initial letters. For example, most manuscripts note the island name Skye, Σκητίς (Ravenna *Scetis*), with an initial Ὠ.⁵²⁰ *Votadini* (MidW *Guotodin*) appears as Ὠταδῖνοι in all the manuscript variants of the *Geographia* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 509) attesting the omission of the initial letter. Similarly the initial Σ (Sigma) is absent from some manuscript versions of (Σ)μέρται. Such errors do not provide a licence to amend but they are a reminder that, in our area in particular, one has to keep a fairly open mind as to the accuracy of attested forms. On this basis could one propose an earlier Στούαις in the *Geographia*.

Were the *T* (Tau) a misreading of Π (Pi), which is epigraphically unproblematic (or τ for π), one could propose an original form, perhaps in the work of Marinus of Tyre as Σπούε(ις), transcribed from a Latin **Spue(is)*. As the manuscript attestations of *Τούεσις* are consistent in respect of noting the initial *T* a hypothetical loss of Σ would presumably have been in a source common or prior to all surviving documents. In other words *Spuesis* (or even *Puesis*) was attested in the Roman military maps (or documents at least) employed by Marinus or Ptolemy himself. This was Hellenised as (Σ)πούεσις, the *sigma* was either already

⁵¹⁹ Some details are generalisations as further research is required into the details of both Latin and Greek phonology and orthography in the period c.40 > 140 CE, when this material was collated and copied.

⁵²⁰ Perhaps representing a misreading of σ (sigma) as ο (omicron).

lost or was accidentally overlooked hence *πούεις* misread as *τούεις* by Ptolemy. If the last two letters were due to miscopying, or represent a suffix one could even consider an original *Σπούες*. This could represent a transcription of Lat. **Spues*. Alternatively the most common manuscript form, *πούεις*, could give a similar form after the insular Celtic loss of intervocalic /-s-/ and apocope. The loss of approximants in OGael (Thurneysen §203, 124) would account for /spue:/ > the modern Gael. *Spé*, if Lat. *u* = /w/. One might also wish to consider the possible influence of Lat *spuō* ‘vomit’, *spuma* ‘foam’ as corrupting an original **/spe:/*.

To summarise this speculative and possibly over-ingenuous consideration:

Local Form:	<i>*Spwe:</i> or <i>*Spue:</i>	
Agricolan document:	<i>*Spve(is)</i>	<i>v</i> = /u/
Roman Manuscript copy:	<i>*pve(is)</i>	orthographic omission of <i>S</i>
Marinus of Tyre:	<i>*πούεις</i>	Gk genitival suffix/mis-segmentation with <i>εἶς(χυσίς)</i>
Ptolemy:	<i>τούεις</i>	misreading of <i>pi</i>
Some ms. copies:	<i>τούαίς</i>	haplology / mis-segmentation
Ravenna Cosmography	<i>Tuessis</i>	

An objection to the protoform is that **Spw-* or *Spu-* would represent a problematic initial sequence in PrClT, because PIE /sp-/ > Goid /s-/ and > Britt /f-/; and /sk^w-/ > /sp-/ or /hw-/⁵²¹ and this will be discussed below. Suggesting that the *w* or *u* were yet another copying error would probably stretch credulity so we will now return to the attested Gaelic form.

3.4.2.5 Alternative Derivations

So far we have no truly satisfactory explanation for the initial /sp-/. One possibility raised by Milne in 1926 (see below) was that this was derived from **Speisis* ‘stretch, extend’. However, the derivation from this PIE root in /sp-/ would be incompatible with an origin in Celtic as this had evolved to /sφ-/ in PrClT and then to /s-/ in Goid and /f-/ in Britt. The objection could be over-

⁵²¹ For example PIE **sph₂en-* > MidW *ffonn* & MidIr *sond* ‘stick, piece of wood’. For /sk^w-/ see Jørgensen (2012).

ridden by proposing a PrClt borrowing from an Old European hydronym where the initial PIE cluster was preserved. The presence of a ‘level of Indo-European habitation chronologically prior to the dialects of IE which we call Celtic’ is endorsed by Hamp (1990, 191), and Nicolaisen (1976, 222-46) argued for the presence of non-Indo-European river-names in this very region⁵²² while Coates (2009) has argued that many of the island names of north-west Britain are pre-Celtic. Others such as McCone (2006, 18) question aspects of this view even though some names are not readily explained as purely Celtic e.g. Derwent (see Kitson 1996).

If one wished to pursue the Old European consideration further one might wish to consider the following roots. **(s)p(h)eu-d-* ‘to press, hurry’ (IEED 2871), **sp(h)ē(i)-* ‘to succeed, prosper; to fatten etc’ (ibid. 2875), **(s)p(h)jēu-* ‘to spit’ (ibid. 2879) or even **(s)p(h)ei-* ‘sharp, sharp stick’ (ibid. 2873). This latter form also has meanings of ‘slender, thin, mild’ (Matasović 2011, 332) and gives items as diverse as Gk *spinós* ‘thin’ and Lat *spīca* and Eng *spit* (for roasting meat). For the attestation of an incongruous /p/ in Celtic one could compare with the Goid word *partan* ‘shore crab’ which is almost certainly a borrowing from some pre-Celtic language (Schrijver 2005).

A suffixed form of the zero-grade of **sek^w-¹* ‘to follow’, or **sek^w-²* ‘to see, show; to speak’ (> W *chwedl* ‘legend’) may also be worthy of consideration, but importantly these two could actually be PrClt with **skw-* > *sp-* thus requiring no resort to a pre-Celtic stratum. Some ending would evidently be required for this to work. But we do have a difficulty even here as there seem to be conflicting reflexes of PIE **skw-* even before front vowels, **skwetlo-* > W *chwedl* but **skwijat-* > W *ysbyddad*. The most attractive items in my view would be **sp(h)ē(i)-* speculatively referring to the river’s regular flooding, or perhaps even **(s)p(h)jēu-* ‘to spit’. Eminently suitable to a large fast-flowing river would be **(s)p(h)eu-d-* ‘to press, hurry’ but these are no more than plausible considerations. Unless one were to argue for yet another Latin or Greek spelling error these forms would be at odds with Ptolemy as they all (apart from the last), while compatible with *Spé*, lack a phoneme which would explain the *ou* of

⁵²² He notes (1976, 223) ‘it would appear to follow that the names of the larger rivers should go back to the earliest ‘stratum’ of settlement and therefore also to the earliest language spoken’. However he failed to give any actual examples of such ancient names.

Toúaisis. It is doubtful whether a derivation from the above would provide a context which would require /ð/ as they do not all end in /j/, therefore were most of these tenable they would eliminate the totality of the evidence adduced so far in favour of the proposal.

If the above considerations do not convince then we must consider alternative proposals. The initial /sp-/ of this name more or less rules out an origin in Goidelic as the phoneme /p/ was lost in Celtic, only to be restored in Brittonic with the sound-change of /k^w-/ > /p/.⁵²³ As noted, the regular development of PrCl^t /sp-/ is to Goid /s-/ and to Britt /f-/ e.g. **sperh₁-o-* > Midlr *seir* and MidW *ffer* ‘ankle’ (Lewis & Pedersen 1937 §25, 18). It is consequently on PrCl^t /sk^w-/ that we must focus if searching for a Celtic etymology for this name which is obviously required if this is to be used as evidence for Celtic phonology.

The earliest attestation is as *Spe*, which occurs four times in the text known as *De Situ Albanie*, the first of seven Scottish documents found in the *Poppleton Manuscript* (Anderson 1973, 240-45). This was composed 1165x84 (See Taylor with Márkus 2012, 84, fn 51), and this probably reflects a broadly contemporary Gaelic pronunciation identical with the modern *Spé*. This spelling is confirmed by an entry in the Register of Moray i.e. *Spe* c.1235 (Innes 1837, Charter 107, 120). In Forlani’s map of Scotland (1558x66) it is noted as *Spea*⁵²⁴, the *a* simply representing the Lat. 1st declension fem. sg. ending. I assume that the vocalic digraph of modern English form *Spey* indicates a long vowel. Three etymological proposals have been made and these will be scrutinised below, focussing on the issue of whether /ð/ might be expected in the reflex. If not then they are all immaterial to our question.

In 1890 (413) Stokes proposed that the name derived from a PrCl^t **squêas* which would be cognate with Ir *scéim* ‘vomo’, W *chwŷd* ‘a vomit’ (his forms), a view endorsed by Macbain in 1891 (175-76) and initially followed by Watson in 1904

⁵²³ However see Schrijver 2005 for discussions of items in Goidelic borrowed from a language which had initial /p-/. Additionally Schrijver mentions the possibility that Goidelic itself could have undergone the same change as Brittonic (/kw/ > /p/) and then at a later stage changed each /p/ > /kw/. This is not so strange as it seems as Cherokee, a p-less language does this, hence when surfing the net they often employ *Wikikwedia*.

⁵²⁴ <http://maps.nls.uk/scotland/detail.cfm?id=126>

(l). As this proposal was resurrected recently, apparently without knowledge of its antiquity, it will be discussed in greater detail below.

The above etymology was rejected by Milne in 1926 who argued for a PrClt etymon **Speisis* < **spē-* (etc.) ‘stretch, extend’ referring to the river’s notorious floods with which he compared Macbain’s derivation of Badenoch from **bādh-* ‘drown, submerge’ (1922, 71-72). This would agree well with Isaac’s comment regarding a speculative derivation of *Touáisis* from a root meaning ‘to swell’ (2005(c), 206), which he eventually rejected on formal grounds. Presumably, Milne’s proto-form corresponds to the modern reconstruction **sp(h)ei* ‘to pull, drag’ etc. (IEED 2851). Due to the preservation of /sp-/, this is impossible as a P-Celtic name. It is surprising that none of the commentators noted this despite the issue being discussed in well-know works such a *Welsh Grammar* (Morris-Jones 1913).

In 1904 Watson followed Stokes noting ‘Spean, Spesona, from root as in Spey cognate with Ir. *scéim*, vomo’ (l.) but by 1926 he had rejected this. Perhaps he had become aware of the phonetic issue noted above. Alternatively, it may be related to his thinking on the etymology of three names he proposed as cognate (see below) and which would scarcely fit the semantics of *scéim* - they are toponymic features unlikely to mean ‘burst forth’ or similar. It is unlikely that he had seen Milne’s proposal as it was published in the same year, and as he discussed the name in some detail (1926, 474) it is clear that it was no novel theory. He noted that the Gaelic form is *Abhain* (or *Uisge*) *Spé* where *Spé* (*Spéith*) is the genitive of a nominative *Spiath*, whose diminutive is the *Spiathán*. He compared these forms with W *ysbyddad* ‘hawthorn’ < **skwijat-*, Ir *scé* and Lat *spīna* ‘a thorn’. As cognate Pictish forms he added three items: *Caisteal Spiathanaigh*, a broch near Lentrán (Inverness), an inlet in the Kyle of Sutherland *Eilean Spiathanaigh* and Spynie in Moray. He interpreted *Spean* as ‘hawthorn stream’ and compares with G *Allt na Sgitheach* ‘hawthorn burn’. As these three forms in *Sp-* could also provide evidence for the issue under consideration they cannot be overlooked and will be discussed below.

Nicolaisen in 1976 (246) concluded that the Spey, with various other Scottish river-names, had never been explained satisfactorily and was not Indo-European. King in 2008 (45) discussed the etymology in some detail with the added weight

of having thoroughly studied the typology of river-naming practices and patterns throughout Scotland. His conclusion was that it would be extremely unusual for such a large watercourse to bear a name derived from flora. ‘On Geographical terms if the Spey were to mean ‘hawthorn’, it would be by far the largest river in Scotland to relate to flora, and would not fit into the standard deviation model discussed’ (King, 2008, 151). Like Stokes he proceeded to derive it from the etymon of OIr *sceid*, W *chwydu* ‘to vomit’, hence **skwei-iā* > Pictish **spē(a)* > G *Spè*. He noted that the *Spean* may only ‘superficially resemble the Spey and may indeed represent the ‘hawthorn’ element’. He added that the suffix could also represent the common *-onā* - or *-anā* and that the relationship between Spey and Spean could mirror the relationship between Dee and Don.

At present we have three different proposals for the etymology of this river one meaning ‘to pull, drag’ (discussed above) one meaning ‘to vomit, expel’ and the last meaning ‘thorn’. The first, as noted, cannot be Celtic because of the preservation of /sp/ and is consequently irrelevant to this discussion.⁵²⁵ One could propose that Spey represented an archaic form of Celtic which had preserved initial /p-/ but this would conflict with the *Orkneys*, if from PrClIt **porko-* ‘pig’. In order to assess whether or not /-ð-/ would indeed be expected in the reflex it is necessary to investigate the remaining two items. If it cannot be demonstrated with confidence that the most likely solution would provide a context for the sound-change under scrutiny then the whole proposal must be relegated to a possibility and no more.

A cognate of OGael *sceid* ‘vomit’ (pres. 3sg; LEIA S-37) would seem appropriate for a river known to regularly flood large areas, but as this root also ends in a palatal approximant /-j/ it could be taken as evidence of the absence of the development under discussion in Pictland. That is something similar to **skija:*, with the common river-name suffix would provide a context where /ð/ would be expected in the reflex. The form employed by King differs significantly from the more recent reconstructions. His form **skwetī* was acquired from an online Proto-Celtic lexicon assembled under the supervision of Prof. Koch at the

⁵²⁵ We would be entering quite hypothetical territory if we were to consider the fate of /j/ in a name of non-Celtic origin.

University of Wales, Aberystwyth⁵²⁶ who has noted (pers. comm. 30 Oct 2012) that he has no strong feelings regarding the details of this proposed reconstruction. Indeed, if this is related to ON *skíta* ‘defecate’ Eng *shit*⁵²⁷ then it would never have had a labio-velar /w/ in the first place and could not have given /sp-/ in any known Celtic language.⁵²⁸ Indeed Matasović reconstructs a PrClt **skij-o* (2009, 343). Additionally, King noted, referencing Jackson, that while PrClt **sk^w-* gives W ‘*ysb-*, *ysp-*⁵²⁹ or *chw-*’ in Welsh the cognate of OGael *sceid* being W *chwyd-* which clearly conflicts with the /sp-/ of Spey. Additionally, the reflexes all concur on meanings such as G *sgeith* ‘puke, retch, spew, vomit’ (Mark 2004, 518) or W *chwydu* ‘vomit, spew, disgorge’ (GPC) and note Eng *shit* (if cognate)⁵³⁰. Such specificity and agreement in the reflexes of the protoform and also the cognates mentioned suggest that the Celtic meaning was similar if not identical. Smaller streams do occasionally bear names which we might perceive as disagreeable, such as *Cachan* (MON) < W *cachu* ‘shit’ (Thomas 1938, 44,) but the absence of parallels in major Celtic river-names might suggest that in earlier times such a name would also be perceived as disagreeable and inappropriate for such an imposing watercourse. This proposal has to be rejected both on semantic and on solid phonological grounds, meaning the ball is, as it were, ‘back in the court’ of **skwijat-*.

Let us now return to Watson’s derivation, upon which Koch based his linguistic proposal. To summarise **skwijat-* ‘thorn’ is supposed to give Pictish **/spijad/* or similar while in Brittonic it gave ModW *ysbyddad*, Corn *spethas* and Bret *spezad*.⁵³¹ So the Spey would mean either ‘thorn’ or ‘hawthorn’ river and the absence of anything resembling /ð/ in Spey demonstrates that /j/ did not evolve to /ð/ as it did in the WCB cognates.

⁵²⁶

<http://www.wales.ac.uk/en/CentreforAdvancedWelshCelticStudies/ResearchProjects/CompletedProjects/TheCelticLanguagesandCulturalIdentity/CelticLexicon.aspx>; See <http://www.wales.ac.uk/Resources/Documents/Research/CelticLanguages/ProtoCelticEnglishW ordlist.pdf>, p.74.

⁵²⁷ Note that Watkins (2000, 77) derives this from PIE *skei-* ‘to cut’, while Kroonen (2013, 446, s.v. *skītan*) notes it as of uncertain etymology.

⁵²⁸ See Schrijver (1995, IX.1, 374-75) & Jørgensen (2012).

⁵²⁹ This is simply the MidW orthographic variant of the preceding ‘*ysb-*’.

⁵³⁰ Watkins (2000, 77) derives this from **skei-* so it may not be relevant here.

⁵³¹ See BLITON s.v. *Spīðad* for further refs: <http://www.spns.org.uk/bliton/spidad.html>

The valid objection to this etymology raised by King, that large watercourses do not bear the names of flora, could have been challenged on the basis of the various rivers of the type *Derwent* or *Leven*. These were generally derived from Celtic words meaning ‘oak’ and ‘elm’ respectively,⁵³² and they would have provided good supporting evidence for the names of trees as the base for river-names. Whether one would interpret this as referring to adjacent flora or to some other, perhaps cultic, phenomenon which may be lost to us is outwith the scope of this piece. Recent research however has plausibly argued for alternative interpretations of such hydronyms with Kitson deriving the *Derwent* (et al.) from a Brittonic reinterpretation of an *alteuropäisch* (Old European) **drawant-* < PIE **dre-* ‘run’.⁵³³ This was developed in an in-depth study which discussed the widespread distribution of such river-names e.g. *Dravantia* > Drewenz (East Prussia), *Dravantī* (Early India), *Dravant* > Trionto (foot of Italy), *Druantia* > Drance (Savoy) etc. (Kitson 1996, 78).

The equation of ‘Leven’ names with W *llwyf-en* ‘elm’ had long been challenged (e.g. Ekwall 1960, 296) but it was convincingly argued by James (2010) that such names are better suited to the root **(s)lei* ‘smooth, slippery’ etc. Such rivers are indeed slow-running water-courses which in three instances flow short distances, with but a small drop, from significant lakes: Lomond (DNB), Leven (FIF) and Windermere (CMB). Additionally, this root is particularly common in Welsh river-names such as Llyfni, Llynfi (with metathesis), Llyfnell etc. While ‘Hawthorn River’ is indeed a suitable name for a stream, as in Watson’s *Allt na Sgitheach* or *W Nant Ysbyddaden* (GLA), it is an unlikely candidate for one of the largest rivers in Britain. Also, there appear to be no convincing parallels in Dauzat’s work on French toponymy (1963) and Ekwall (1928) on England and various other works on Celtic place-names. On comparative grounds it is therefore difficult to be fully convinced by Watson’s etymological proposal, which leaves the Spey, the thorn river, worryingly stranded.

Let us now leave the semantic problem and, for the sake of argument, examine the phonetic correspondence between **skwijat-* and *Spé*. To recapitulate,

⁵³² For ‘oak’ see Rivet & Smith (1979, 333-36) who note nine British watercourses, or Ekwall (1928, 113-15, 121-23). For ‘elm’ see Rivet & Smith (1979, 385-87) or Ekwall (1928, 243-46, 250-52) where he rejects his earlier view of 1922 (191).

⁵³³ See BLITON, s.v. *dār* for a discussion and refs: <http://www.spns.org.uk/bliton/dar.html>. See also de Hoz (2005, 177, fn 36) **dru-ent* ‘the flowing one’.

Watson argued that the Spey represented the English / Scots form of (*Abhainn*) *Speith* a petrified genitive of **Spiath*, the Brittonic cognate of Goid *scé*. The Goid form is presumably from the nom. sg. **skwijats* while the Britt represents the reflex of an oblique **skwijat-*. Were the *Spe* of *De Situ Albanie* indeed a reflex of **skwijat-* one would certainly expect this early attestation to preserve some trace of the final PrClt dental stop, such as ***Sped* or ***Spet*. As noted above such intervocalic consonants as */-t-/* were almost certainly voiced in Pictish as in Brittonic so we would have expected Pictish **/spijad/*. On the model of neo-Britt */kɛ:d/* ‘wood’ which seems to appear in the historical record as *Keith* etc (Taylor 2011, 87) it would also be permissible to consider a reflex such as **Speth*. The loss of a final stop in the Gaelic of c. 1190 would be unparalleled and the loss of a fricative would be highly irregular.⁵³⁴ This final fricative is maintained in place-names recorded in this period in areas where Gaelic was still spoken e.g. Beath (FIF) attested as *Beeth* (1128) and *Beeth* (1154x1159; < G *beithe* ‘birch’; Taylor 2006, 158) or Little Raith (FIF) attested as *Rathe* (1288x1309; *ibid.* 108).

One wonders whether Watson’s *Abhainn Speith* / *Spiath* may have been modified in line with his revised view of 1926 i.e. that rather than think immediately of the problem of *Spe* he developed a theory of **Skwijat-* > **Spiath*. It seems highly unlikely that this river-name ever evidenced a final consonant and therefore Watson’s proposal is incompatible with the evidence. The digraph *th* of *Spiathan* (Spean), the form used by Watson, seems also to be unhistorical and simply represents regular Gaelic orthography for hiatus. Again one suspects that Watson’s orthography may have been influenced by his thinking on the etymology i.e. PrClt **skwijat* > Pict *spiath-an* with the *th* representing the reflex of the intervocalic stop. This would also require Goidelic lenition, i.e. assibilation, as opposed to the voicing evidenced in Pictish.

3.4.2.6 Conclusion

No fully satisfying solution for the Spey is evident. One might wish to consider the possibility of a reflex of the suffix-less e-grade root **skwej-* ‘thorn’ (Matasović 2009, 339)⁵³⁵ which may also be evidenced in OGael *scé* (LEIA S-37).

⁵³⁴ Simon Taylor & Richard Cox (pers. comm.).

⁵³⁵ See BLITON s.v. *spīðad*, for an alternative development.

Here there would be no context for a development to /ð/ as the approximant would be final rather than inter-vocalic and the expected Celtic reflex of the final diphthong would be indeed be the attested /e:/. Perhaps the Spean represents a Gaelic diminutive of this root simply added to the early form of the Spey itself. But the semantics of ‘thorn’, even if used in some metaphorical sense, do not appeal for such an impressive river. One might wish to categorise such a meaning with the various W river-names which represent long, sharp metallic objects such as *Cleddau* ‘sword’, *Gelau* ‘spear’ (Abergele) or *Nodwydd* ‘needle’. Suffixing of some sort seems to be the norm for early Celtic river-names and any vocalic segment placed after **skwej-* would produce an environment where one would expect hiatus-filling /ð/ in neo-Britt. There seem to be cases where both reflexes are attested as such, as in W *Derwennydd* of *Canu Aneirin* and the attested *Derwent* (etc.) < **Derwentiu:* or W *Caer Lywelydd*⁵³⁶ and Carlisle < **Lugu-walion*. An Old European coining seems possible but it is difficult to identify one option which is particularly more attractive than the alternatives. An origin from a cognate of the W noun *chwyd* ‘vomit’ does not appeal on either semantic or phonetic grounds and the issue can be left open. There is, however, no convincing evidence that the proto-form of this river-name contained /-j-/.

3.4.3 Further evidence of /-j-/

Given both the semantic and phonetic objections it seems highly unlikely that either of these rivers derives from a form fully cognate with W *ysbyddad*; thus this item cannot be considered as evidence for the sound-change under question. However, even if these twin river-names were disqualified from the debate, Watson’s supposedly cognate *Caisteal Spiathanaigh*, *Eilean Spiathanaigh* and Spynie, could still provide evidence for Pictish phonetic conservatism. These represent a hill, an island and a settlement respectively, quite a distinct class of toponyms from the impressive Spey and require a tailored approach. As noted the /p/ phoneme more or less rules out an origin in Gaelic and therefore, while it is legitimate to seek an origin in P-Celt, this is not the only option.

⁵³⁶ For attestations see Lloyd-Jones (1931, 96).

There are no significant objections to considering these three items as cognate. Spynie is attested as *Spynyn* c. 1202x22 (Innes 1837, Register of Moray, Charter 21, 16), presumably attesting the ubiquitous and debated *-in* ending. It seems likely that all the three evidence the Gaelic *-aigh* which is probably a realisation of *-ach* or *-aidh*, the former is a common Celtic suffix with the meaning of ‘abounding in’, the latter is adjectival.⁵³⁷ If these are not full adaptations of underlying Pictish forms then as a Gaelic suffix⁵³⁸ indicates a Gaelic coining we may need to consider the possibility that the root was itself borrowed into Gaelic. Before engaging with etymologies I would like to briefly examine each of these three items.

The first is Loch Spynie, situated between Elgin and Lossiemouth on the coast of Morayshire a small lake which is now a shadow of its former medieval self. Originally it was a shallow, marshy loch a few miles long, open to the sea and debouching about a kilometre to the west of its present estuary. The second item was referred to by Watson as *Caisteal Spiathanaigh* (INV) ‘a broch near Lentrán’ Inverness. It is now listed as Castle Spynie (NH 545 425) and sits on a hilltop (232m) with magnificent 360 degree views over the area to the south of the Beauly Firth. The third item Watson noted was *Eilean Spiathanaigh* which is opposite Rosehall by the Kyle of Sutherland (NC 479 006). On the current OS map this appears as *Eilean an Speanan*, a little different to his form. It is a flattish, scrub-covered tapering island of about four hundred metres, around which flows the river Oykel.

Support for Watson’s view come from place-names in Wales which evidence ‘ysbyddad’ e.g. *Bryn Ysbaddaden* (AGL) or *Tonysbyddaden* (BRE).⁵³⁹ There are also two identical names in Cornwall where it is attested *Wheal Sperris* (with /ð/ > /r/; Padel 1985, 211) and in Brittany there is the village *Spezed* (Fr *Spézet*; Tanguy 1990, 214), not to mention a possible attestation in the ‘Old North’ in Spadeadam (< *ysbyddad*+ singulative *-en*; CMB).⁵⁴⁰ Additionally, this is

⁵³⁷ For variants and discussions in Watson (1926) see James & Taylor (2013). For the suffix see Russell (1990, III.9, 86-103).

⁵³⁸ The Neo-Britt cognates of these suffixes would be /-ɔ:g/ and /-ið/.

⁵³⁹ See AMR for further examples.

⁵⁴⁰ See Armstrong, Mawer, Stenton & Dickens (1950(b), 96-7).

one of the commonest tree-names in English toponymy (Smith 1956, 204, s.v. *porn*).

However *Eilean an Speanan* has the appearance not of an ancient fossilised and corrupted Pictish name of a millennium earlier but much rather, with its phrasal construction and definite article, of a name containing a living lexical item. There are no items in Gaelic dictionaries which suggest that Gaelic borrowed such a word from Pictish, however there is an alternative. Dwelly's Gaelic dictionary notes an obsolete word *spin* 'thorn' but provides no more information than the bare translation. Macbain however has the following under *spion* (1911, 339) 'Ir. *spionán*, a gooseberry, M. Ir *spínán* ; from Lat. *spîna*.' This is confirmed by the LEIA S-178, and one may suspect that a borrowing from a Latin word meaning 'thorn' became narrowed to 'gooseberry bush' due to this being the only plant of the currant family which produces thorns. We have an exact parallel in Breton where *spezad*, the cognate of W *ysbyddad* now means 'gooseberries' (Menard & Kadored 2001, 1208) alone and one could compare with German *Stachelbeer* 'prickle-berry'. Indeed Welsh also evidences such a borrowing *ysbîn* (GPC) either from Eng or Lat and used for the berry *berberis vulgaris* and thorn etc.

It seems more probable that *Eilean an Speanan* evidences this borrowed word, probably meaning 'island of the (haw)thorn / gooseberry bush'. A similar interpretation seems credible for Castle Spynie, 'abounding in thorns / gooseberries'. Loch Spynie probably took its name from a nearby settlement as this grew in importance. It was the fortified seat of the Bishops of Moray for about 500 years from the early twelfth century.

Given that the usual G word for 'thorn' is *sgitheach* one wonders what semantic range was covered by the proposed Gaelic *spianan*, whether it refers perhaps to feral gooseberries. As this is a borrowing from Lat, perhaps through Eng or Fr, a speculative trajectory could see this as a medieval borrowing, perhaps in a monastic context, for 'gooseberries' which were widely cultivated. The modern word for such currants is *gròiseid* (< Scots *grossets*) whose root bears more than a passing resemblance to Fr *groseille*. ModW generally employs 'gwsberis' a recent borrowing from English (1760, GPC) and the French word *groseille* is from Frankish *krûil* (< High German *Krauselbeere* 'striped berry; DuBois 1971, 357)

which all seem to indicate the ease with which this plant changes its name. The only authority for the orthography is Watson himself and it seems possible that it was his thinking on these three items, for which he saw only a P-Celtic etymology, which led him to favour an identical explanation for the Spey and to proposing spellings which agreed with this view. In any case this proposal makes it unlikely that these three place-names represent a Pictish cognate of *Wysbyddad*, meaning that they cannot be legitimately used as evidence for the sound-change being discussed here.

3.4.4 Conclusion

The personal name *Itarnan* is of no relevance to the issue under question while the most straightforward interpretation of *monid* is that the evolution was parallel in Brittonic i.e. /-j-/ evolved to /-ð-/. There is no fully satisfying solution to the river-names Spey and Spean, but as a derivation from **skwijat-* seems most unlikely they are of no consequence here. There is therefore no robust proof that Pictish diverged from Brittonic on this important issue and some that it was co-evolving, but this is based on minimal evidence and should be approached with due caution.

3.5 Section 5: The fate of Proto-Celtic /oj/

3.5.1 Introduction

In 1955 Jackson cautiously suggested that PrC /oj/ may have survived in Pictish until the sixth century, becoming monophthongised to /o:/ by the mid eighth, and finally becoming raised to /u:/ about half a century later (1955, 162). This was in marked contrast to Brittonic where this diphthong had gone directly to /u:/ in the late first century (Jackson 1953, §21, §22(2)). Jackson's opinion regarding the late development of /o:/ > /u:/ was upheld by Koch (1983, 215), although he tacitly rejected Jackson's view of the late survival of /oj/. Koch, however, wavered and subsequently expressed some uncertainty regarding the late preservation of /o:/ (1983, 136). This change was also noted by Forsyth (2006(b), §2(3)), who referred to the uncertainty flagged by Koch. The evidence adduced comprises of three personal names from two texts of distinct periods and provenance: *Broichan* (VC), *Onust*⁵⁴¹ (SL1) & *Unust* (ibid.), and can be set out as follows (dates are approximate):

		PrC	75-100	100-500	500-575	>750	c. 800
Jackson	Britt	oj	u:		ʉ:		
	Pict		oj			o:	u:
Koch			o:			u:	

Koch noted this treatment of /oj/ as an instance where Brittonic and Pritenic innovated differently: 'British *oi* direct to *ū* in the late first century; Pritenic *oi* to *ō*' (1983, 216). As Pritenic /o:/ did subsequently develop to /u:/, it would be better described as a case of Pritenic 'lagging behind'. The contrast between /o:/, /u:/ and /ʉ:/ are probably within the bounds of dialect variation. If /oj/ had indeed survived into the sixth century in Pictland, while the Brittonic reflex had evolved to /ʉ:/, then this would represent a significant disparity - but the duration of this contrast would have been short. It is not a particularly common

⁵⁴¹ Note that I have here standardised the final segment as it is not the issue being discussed here. Most versions of the PKL have *Onuist* / *Uniust* or similar. For personal names in *-gust* I employ this form, as it is the form attested in the DLV, which I consider to be the variant closest to the native realisation.

diphthong and the evidence is severely restricted meaning that whatever the conclusion it cannot be interpreted as indicating major linguistic distinctiveness.

3.5.2 Discussion

Jackson's argument (1955, 143) was based on the form of the personal name *Broichan*, attested in the *Life of Columba* (composed c. 700, manuscript c. 713) as the name of the *magus* and foster-father of the Pictish king *Bridei* whom Columba is supposed to have visited c. 565. He noted that it could represent a gaelicised form of Pictish **Uroican* (< Clt **wrojko-* > W *grug* 'heather'), while on page 162 he expressed uncertainty as to whether the name was even Celtic. The etymological proposal was derived from Stokes (1890, 395), and O'Rahilly (1946, 533) who forcefully argued that it was an adaptation of **Vroichān*, a latinised form of the etymon of the Irish name *Froíchán* / *Fróechán* a derivative of *froích*, *fróech*⁵⁴² 'heather' (the cognate of W *grug*) i.e. an original written Irish *uroican* was latinised as *broican*, and also gaelicised to *broichan*. It seems to be a rare name in Irish with only one attestation in O'Brien as *Frāechān* (1962, 334 ac 20, 421) and a single (probably Irish) inscription as *FILI VROCHANI* in Cornwall (Macalister 1945, 460). The Andersons (1961, 84-85) equated *Broichan* with a broadly contemporary Irish druid, *Froichan*, but this was rejected by Sharpe (1995, 334, fn 291). Welsh also attests names based on the same root e.g. (*G*)*rugyn* of *Canu Aneirin* (Williams 1938, 218), *Grucinan* in the Book of Llandaff (Evans 1893, 155), with which one can compare the Gaulish *Vroicis* (Delamarre 2007, 206).

There are twelve declensional variants of *Broichanus* in the *Dorbbéne* (Schaffhausen) copy of the *Life of Columba* (c. 713) and one attestation as *de Froichano* (II 33),⁵⁴³ an anomaly not attested in the other three manuscript versions. There are various minor orthographic variants which are of no consequence here, but the name is spelt with *c* instead of *ch* five times in the early thirteenth-century British Museum Cottonian manuscript (Tiberius D III) perhaps indicating that this was the grapheme penned by Adomnán.

⁵⁴² See also Delamarre (2003, 329), Calise (2002, 189) & Sims-Williams (2003, 114, fn 622).

⁵⁴³ Jackson (1955, 143, fn 1) notes the following 'Dr A. O. Anderson kindly tells me, by letter, that the Schaffhausen MS of Adamnan actually reads *Uroichan* in one place.' This supposed variant is not noted in Anderson & Anderson (1961).

O’Rahilly’s interpretation seems plausible. As discussed by Anderson & Anderson the initial *B* either represents the Irish voiced fricative /β/, that had developed from initial /w-/ and become /f-/ in Adomnán’s time, or it is a Latin substitute for the sound /w-/ (1961, 84). By the fifth century Latin /w/ had fully merged with /β-/ (< /b/) in the Romance languages generating significant confusion in VL spellings: *b* for historical /w/ and /v/ for historical *b* (Allen 1965, 40-42).⁵⁴⁴ There are a small number of such errors in the VC, for example *cavallus* (127a), *repadayit* (49a) with *v* for /β/, and with *b* for historical /w/ we have *corbus* (85b), *Fabionus* (100b, 101a) and *recuperabit* (77b; Anderson & Anderson 1961, 129). However, this confusion is limited to Latin words, does not occur initially and is not attested in personal names. One could, however, compare with the variants of the Pictish personal names *Budrost* (SL2 H) and *Wdrost* (SL1).

The Pictish realisation, if from /wrojko-/, could have been **uroican*, **urocan* or perhaps even **urucan* which, like most P-Celtic names in the VC, was subject to modification by Gaelic. The influence of the name of the Irish druid *Froichan* (< **uroican*) is also evidently to be borne in mind. The only other name in this section is *Bruide-*, the OGael equivalent of Pictish *Bredei* (SL1). Other examples of gaelicisation in the VC are *Miathi* (< *Maiatai*), *Emchath* (< **Ambi-catu-*; see Anderson & Anderson 1961, 157-61). If this name represented an underlying Goidelic form then it is curious that it was not modernised to *Froichan*, but the stranded *Froichano* may well indicate this process. Perhaps one could suggest that **uro(i)can* or similar was in Adomnán’s written source(s) (e.g. Cumméne, c. 650) and that the etymology was not recognised. By his time it may not have been evident that a written form **uroican* corresponded to oral /frojxa:n/. This could explain the routine orthographic updating to *Broichan*, with this oversight only becoming apparent with the final attestation, hence *Froichan*.

To summarise (speculatively):

<i>Uroican?</i> / <i>Urocan?</i> / <i>Urucan?</i>	Pictish name
<i>Uroican</i>	Gaelicised form? Cumméne?
<i>Broic(h)an</i> & <i>Uroic(h)an</i>	Adomnán
<i>Broichan</i> & <i>Froichan</i>	Dorbbéne

⁵⁴⁴ See also Adams (2007, X 2.1.. & 2.2., 626-28).

I know of no alternative etymology apart from proposing a name based on W *broch* ‘badger’ (< **brokko-*), but this begs the question of why an *i* would be inserted into the form *Broichan*. One could speculatively compare with the various examples of unhistorical *i* in the PKL as with *Breidei* for *Bredei* (SL1). It is more difficult, however, to envisage a situation where the initial *b* of Pictish **brokk* would give the attested *F* of *Froichan*. Another issue is that *ch* in the VC always represents /x/ and this would not be the regular Pictish reflex of intervocalic /k/, one might expect a written form more similar to Pictish /wrojgan/. The *ch* is presumably a standard Gaelic updating of archaic *c* for /x/. It seems assured therefore that the name-form *Froichan* has been heavily mediated by Gaelic, meaning that this cannot closely represent a Pictish realisation. Consequently it cannot be taken as robust evidence of Pictish /oj/ as it seems more likely that this reflects the historical Gaelic, not Pictish, diphthong.

What then of the second part of the argument, the late survival of /o:/? This too, as Jackson noted (1955, 162) comes down to a single name - *Onuist*, one of whose slightly later successors is attested as *Unust* (vel sim.). The former reigned in the mid eighth-century, the latter in the 820s. Both are attested in the PKL and the attestations have been painstakingly investigated by Forsyth (2000), to whose study this section is heavily indebted. *Onust* is derived from PrC **ojno-gustu-* ‘unique excellence / force’ the generic being lenited in close compounds, hence Neo-Britt /u:nyust/.⁵⁴⁵ The reflex of this name-form is extremely common in Goidelic,⁵⁴⁶ as *Ōengus*, but it is exceedingly rare in Brittonic.⁵⁴⁷

Almost all the versions of the PKL make a distinction between *Onuist* for the earlier individual and *Unuist* for the later (Calise 2002, 165). This indicates that the alternation was in the original and the form *Onust* could be considered as

⁵⁴⁵ See Jackson (1953, §74(3), 439), Forsyth (2000, 23), Schrijver (§§4.4.3 & 4.4.4., 410-13) and Matasović (2011, 169, s.v. **gustu-*). For further refs see Russell (2007, 43).

⁵⁴⁶ See O'Brien for attestations (1962, 716-19).

⁵⁴⁷ There is one attestation as *Ungust* in the Book of Llandaf (Evans 1893, 62.1; Cane 2003, 240 & 242 & 246) and also in the Bodmin Manumissions.

the authentic Pictish form. The attestations below are from the *Poppleton Manuscript* (SL1).

1. *Oniust filius Vrguist* (reigned 728-761)
2. *Talorgen filius Onuist* (reigned 780-782)
3. *Vnuist filius Wrguist* (reigned 820-834)
4. *Vuen filius Vnuist* (reigned 836-839)

Reign-lengths are approximate and taken from Fraser (2009).

The issue is whether this does indeed represent a sound-change in progress, or whether there is an alternative explanation. After all, the form of one name is debatable evidence for a phonological change especially when preserved in a document which has been heavily mediated by another language. Fortunately Unust son of Uurgust (the former of the two namesakes) seems to be attested in various other sources under forms which clearly derive from Pictish attestations, one Irish, two Northumbrian and one Scottish. Irish forms will not be discussed here as they simply attest the cognate *Oengus*.⁵⁴⁸

1. Umust - The *Book of Uí Maine*,⁵⁴⁹ c. 1400.
2. Unust - The Durham Liber Vitae, 800x840.
3. Unust - *Historia Regum Anglorum*, c. 1170.
4. Ungus - *St Andrews Foundation Account* (A version), c. 1350.

The *Book of Uí Maine*⁵⁵⁰ (c. 1400) is a very mixed bag of Irish literary, historical and legendary texts composed by a number of scribes in East Galway c. 1400.⁵⁵¹ Here the name is attested as *Tolorgein f. Umust*, a form identical to SL2 M (see Calise 2002, 165), from where the name may have been obtained. SL2 M attests more gaelicisation than SL1 and the entry referred to in this Irish text is to be

⁵⁴⁸ E.g. 'Mors Oengusa m. Fherghussa regis Pictorum' (AU 761.4). Similarly the 'continuation of Bede', also referred to as the *Chronicle of 766*, it the form *Oengus* which is employed (Colgrave & Mynors 1969, 576).

⁵⁴⁹ <http://www.isos.dias.ie/english/index.html> and <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/G105007.html>

⁵⁵⁰ <https://www.ria.ie/library/special-collections/manuscripts/book-of-ui-mhaine.aspx>

⁵⁵¹ See Macalister (1941) for a detailed discussion.

treated with some caution. The form of the name could have been taken from his later namesake and also attests minim confusion, but the *-st* demonstrates that it is ultimately from a Pictish source. There is some reason therefore for cautiously considering the *U-* as relevant to this discussion.

The second entry occurs in the *Durham Liber Vitae*, a memorial book that records the names of kings and clerics who had patronised the church. The form *Unust* is clear in the manuscript (15r 1; Rollason 2007, 91).⁵⁵²

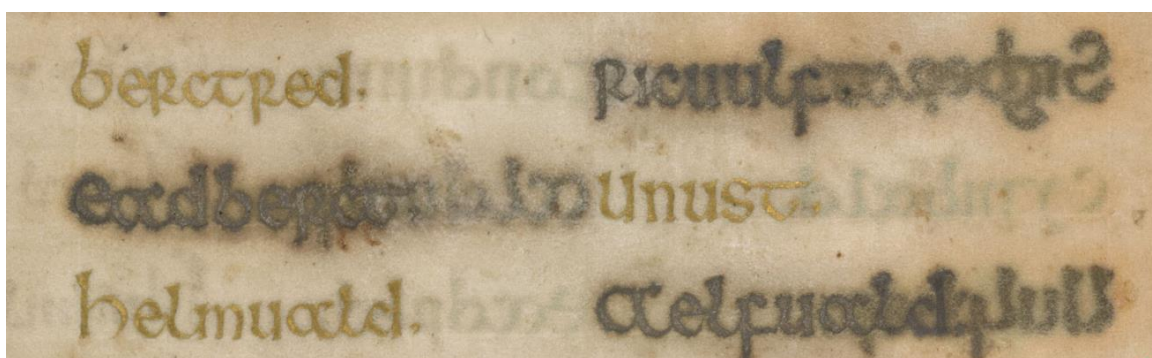


Figure 18 *Unust, The Durham Liber Vitae*⁵⁵³

The section in which this name occurs, *The Original Core*, was written between c. 800 and c. 840. That this refers to the first *Onuist* (†761), rather than his later namesake, is indicated by his position in the list. For example, the name immediately following is *Aelfuald* (†749), and *Eadberct*, the Northumbrian king who reigned from 738-758, occurs three names later in the list (Rollason 2007, 91). If this ordering reflects the historical chronology then it strongly favours the view that the *Unust* referred to is the one who reigned 728-761 rather than the later king who reigned 820-834. We have no direct evidence regarding the details of the transmission of this name from the mouths of Picts to the pens of Northumbrian scribes, but its appearance in a prestigious ecclesiastical collation reflects sustained patronage over several reigns. This entry post-dates the death of ‘*Onuist*’ by some decades and it could be argued that it reflects a pronunciation where /o:/ may have recently become /u:/, but as it stands it does not accord with the late preservation of the earlier form of the vowel.

⁵⁵² The manuscript has been digitised by the British library and may be viewed in high-resolution here: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_domitian_a_vii_fs001r

⁵⁵³ © The British Library

The third source which attests this name is the *Historia Regum Anglorum*, a compilation or historical texts which was probably compiled in Yorkshire c. 1130 and which is attributed in the principal manuscript to Symeon of Durham. The sole surviving witness of the complete text (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 13) was probably written c. 1170, but draws on various older sources (Forsyth 2000, 20-21). The section containing the relevant entries is considered a highly accurate copy of what is basically an eighth-century chronicle. Such material, in all probability, preserves a reliable contemporary record of the name and therefore some reliance can be placed on *Unust rex Pictorum* (§42, s.a. 755) and his obituary *Unust Pictorum rex* (§43, s.a. 761; Arnold (ed.) 1885, 40 & 43). It has been cogently argued by Koch (2000)⁵⁵⁴ & Forsyth (2000) that the *Historia Regum Anglorum* draws on a written Pictish source and consequently there is no reason to question this as good evidence for Pictish phonology. Indeed the Pictish king noted as *Ciniod* in this text bears a form identical to that of the *Poppleton Manuscript* thus agreeing with the likely Pictish provenance of these entries (Forsyth 2000, 32).

The fourth and final reference, *Ungus filius Urguist*, occurs in the shorter so-called ‘A version’ of the St Andrews foundation legend⁵⁵⁵ attested in the *Poppleton Manuscript* (Skene 1867, 138-40). While this name has been ascribed to the later of the two kings (Anderson 1973, 98) Forsyth (2000, 21) noted that there is reason to believe that he may have been confused with Unust (728-61). The longer ‘Version B’ of this legend attests the form, *Hungus* son of *Forso* (Taylor with Márkus 2009, 581). It may represent a form of the Gaelic cognate, *Oengus mac Forgusa* with the first item confused or conflated with *Unust*. On the face of it the name form *Hungus* appears to argue for <u> as the original first vowel, but the gaelicisation evidenced in -s for Pictish -st, F- for Pictish U- and the genitival suffix -a divests it of much of its authority as a reliable witness to the native pronunciation.

While the SL versions of the PKL do attest the form *Onust* (vel sim.) the other forms provide convincing evidence that the Pictish form was *Unust*. So how does

⁵⁵⁴ Koch’s item is an appendix to Forsyth’s chapter. See Bibliography for details.

⁵⁵⁵ For a discussion see Broun (2000).

one explain the variant spelling? Is it an accurate reflexion of a contemporary Pictish pronunciation or could it be due to other factors?

There may be one other instance of confusion between *o* and *u* in the PKL where *Necton* is rendered as *Nectu*⁵⁵⁶ (SL1; SL2 H, *Nechtan*),⁵⁵⁷ but this is quite the opposite of the process required to explain *Onuist* as a misreading of **Unust*. In any case it must be stressed that even SL1 is not always a reliable witness to Pictish phonology. For example, *Talorg* and *Talore* are both attested (from *Talorc*) in SL1, and minim confusion is seen in *Oniust* and *Onuist*.⁵⁵⁸ The patronymic of our *Oniust* is spelt both as *Vrguist* and *Wirguist* and the name appears later as *Wrguist* (x2). Were we to suppose that this text accurately preserved contemporary realisations of Pictish names we would probably need to argue that *Bridu*-⁵⁵⁹ (†c. 587) evolved to *Bridei* within a year or so, to *Breidei* by c. 635-40, reverting to *Bredei* by 693, remaining thus for several centuries and finally to *Bred* by about 840. Orthographic misreading or faded manuscripts can always be called upon as some *deus ex machina* solution to problematic written forms but the conclusion remains that even SL1 has to be treated with extreme caution as evidence for particular features of Pictish phonology.

Apart from a copying error is there another way of explaining this vowel? Forsyth (2006(b), §2(3)) suggested that the feature may be purely orthographic, arising from the fact that Latin ‘*ō*’ had come to be pronounced as *ū* in Brythonic lands.’ Latin internal /*o*:/ generally gives Brittonic /*u*:/ (Jackson 1953, 307) and it is not impossible that an awareness of the correspondence in names such as *Dōnatus* / OW **Dunot* (Pictish ogham **DUnNOD**?; Forsyth 1996, 372) could have caused some orthographic confusion.

⁵⁵⁶ On the other hand one might wish to compare this with the NAHHTV- of the Bressay ogham inscription, the **NxHHTV**- of Formaston and the NET(u)- of Latheron. See Forsyth (1997) for further detailed discussions. Note also that *Nectu* is noted as the ‘nepos’ of Uerb, while the others are noted as ‘filius’. Such complexities require a dedicated investigation, far more than is possible here.

⁵⁵⁷ That all the variants refer to a single ‘Nechton’ is suggested by the similar patronym in the SL1 list: (Necton Morbet filius) *Erip*, (Nectonius magnus filius) *Wirp*, (Nectu nepos) *Uerb*. I will not try to untangle these variants and related issues here.

⁵⁵⁸ Forsyth has ingeniously proposed that the *i* (-*iust*) of the Poppleton may represent the reflex of /*y*/ (2000, 24) but forms in other versions of the king-lists (Calise 2002, Chapter 3, Appendix III, 165-67) are suggestive that this represents a simple minim confusion, the *Lebor Bretnach* version, for example has *Onuist* and *Omust*.

⁵⁵⁹ Manuscript *Briduo* (ablative), unless this corresponds to Welsh *Brydw* (see index of Bartrum 1966; Delamarre (2007, 214, s.v. *britu*)).

Additionally, Vulgar Latin short *u* would have been nearer in quality to long *ō* than to long *ū*, and long *ō* nearer in quality to short *u* than to short *o* (Allen 1965, 48-9). This caused much orthographic confusion in late written Latin and may well have impacted on the orthography of early Welsh. Koch has developed this point, noting the form *lodeo* (?/jɥ:ðew/ < W /jɥ:ð/ 'lord'), in the archaic section of *Canu Aneirin* (B² 27); where the B scribe occasionally employs *o* to transcribe both /ɥ:/ and /w/ (Koch & Busse 2006). Internal rhyme proves that *rector* (B² 36) must be pronounced /rextɥ:r/ again evidencing the same use of *o*. Also, the name of the region *Deur* varies with *Deor* in this text.⁵⁶⁰ In Pictish we can draw attention to *Deo*- and *Diu* in SL1 and also the personal name *Munait* (SL1) and *Moneit* (AU 729.2). Note also *Donuel* (SL1) < **dumno*-. One could also consider a possible contamination by Gaelic *Qengus*.

One other consideration is that the scribe who wrote *Onuist* was employing native Pictish orthography, derived from Brittonic. The scribe of *Unuist*, on the other hand, may have been using a more Latinate orthography. In the orthography of the former the distinction between /ɥ:/ and /u/ was perhaps still being made,⁵⁶¹ hence this could serve as an indication that PrClIt /oj/ had become /ɥ:/ as in WCB. The spelling of the latter form could, speculatively, indicate a weakening or breakdown of Pictish scribal practices in the ninth century.

3.5.3 Conclusion

I know of no other instances where one might expect a reflex of the rare PrClIt diphthong /oj/ in the corpus of evidence, meaning that we are left with a stranded form, *Onuist*, which bears all the weight of this argument. As noted, this conflicts with other attestations which seem to refer to the name of this king. Alternative explanations for *O*- are not elusive, and as noted by Forsyth the evidence for the historical phonology of Pictish is exiguous, to say the least (2000, 32). It is curious, but not unusual, that the Abernethy (?) scribe did not iron-out such orthographic discrepancies, but to base a sound-change on such minimal evidence which is furthermore contradicted by good contemporary

⁵⁶⁰ See also Jackson (1964 passim) for a discussions of this orthographic feature in Northern Brittonic.

⁵⁶¹ This would of course mean that /ɥ:/, /o/ and /ɔ:/ would be represented by <o>.

sources would be placing too much reliance on a single item in one problematic source. It seems reasonable to consider the anomalous *O-* as perhaps due to an individual scribe, but we cannot prove this. If so it is possible, though not demonstrable, the development of PrC /oj/ in Pictland paralleled Brittonic, perhaps even to /u:/.

3.6 Section 6: /xs/ > /s/ in Pritenic

3.6.1 Introduction

The PrClt intervocalic cluster /xs/ gives /s/ in Goidelic and /x/ in Brittonic, for example MidBret *uhel* ‘high’ and the cognate OGael *uasal* (LEIA U-10) are both derived from *owxselo- (Jackson 1953, §125-26, 535-40). Jackson cautiously proposed that this cluster evolved to /s/ in Pictish, ‘exactly as in Irish and Gaulish’ (1955, 136-38 & 165). Koch referred to this as but an ‘occasional change’ (1983, 215 & 216) but the item cited as counter-evidence, the Ochils, can be shown to be irrelevant to this proposal (see 3.7.6. - 3.7.8.). It is not noted by Forsyth in 2006 (2006(a)). Jackson’s proposal is an elaboration of the comments of Rhys (1904, 234) and Fraser (1923, 12), but the view of both scholars was rejected by O’Rahilly (1946) who argued that the single piece of evidence they cited (*Lóksa*) was not relevant to the discussion.

The cluster appears intact in *Argentocoxos* (< **arganto*- + *koxsa*:-, ‘silver-leg’) the name of an early third-century Calidonian leader noted by the contemporary Greek historian Cassius Dio (see 2.2.2.). It is this item which provided Jackson with a *terminus post quem* of about 209 CE for the change, while *terminus ante quem* of 222x235 CE was proposed on the basis of the personal name LOSSIO VEDA on the Colchester plaque. If this dating holds it would indicate a distinct Pritenic phonetic evolution some three centuries before the emergence of Neo-Brittonic and would therefore be significant. Not only does this have implications for the supposedly early bifurcation between Pictish and Brittonic but it is phonemically significant because in both languages the reflex would have eventually fallen in with existing phonemes: /x/ < /kk/ in Brittonic, and /s/ < /ss/ in Pictish. This would, for example, have rendered a Brittonic /u:xel/ ‘high’ as phonemically distinct from a hypothetical Pictish **/u:sel/⁵⁶² and would have had some impact on mutual-intelligibility between the two. However /xs/ is not a particularly common PrC cluster and as so little is known of the lexicon of Pictish it is impossible to objectively gauge the full impact of this proposal. It could have been minimal, perhaps no more than *Alexuandro* (where x = /x/) in

⁵⁶² The quality of the initial vowel in Pictish is uncertain, it could be /u/. See Section 5.

Spanish and *Alessandro* in Italian. As will be seen, however, the evidence adduced in favour of this proposal is highly problematic and it will be argued here that it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions.

Throughout this discussion it must be borne in mind that by 1955 Jackson had accepted the archaeologists' view that the eastern Picts were an 'offshoot of the Gauls', and that he had identified a small number of linguistic peculiarities which he interpreted as confirming this position (see 3.9). Loth in 1922 had noted that historical /xs/ was sometimes written as s in the La Graufesenque inscriptions in Gaul, and this is the origin of Jackson's understanding of this feature of Gaulish. However the corpus of evidence for Gaulish has grown dramatically since then, has been discussed in detail, and the variation between xs, ss and sc is commonplace and not as clear-cut as originally proposed (Delamarre 2003, 209, s.v. *loxso*-). Jackson was already predisposed to seeing 'Gaulish' features in eastern Pictland.

Jackson referred to three items which, with some caution, he noted may evidence this change:

1. The Roman period river name *Λόξα* (*Lóksa*) which is generally equated with the *Lossie* of Morayshire.
2. The Roman period personal name *LOSSIO*, engraved on a plaque found in Colchester
3. *Ar(t)cois*, the patronymic of a certain *Cinioiod*, a postulated Pictish king occurring in the non-historical section of the Pictish King-lists.

3.6.2 *Ar(t)cois*

The third item is the least convincing and will be dealt with first. Jackson interpreted 'Artcois' as deriving from Pictish *art+co(i)s* 'bear-leg' or 'bear-paw'. The second element *cois* was interpreted as a reflex of PrClt **koxsa*: 'leg'⁵⁶³, and therefore evidencing /xs/ > /s/ (Jackson 1955, 137). The expected but

⁵⁶³ See Delamarre (2003, 128, s.v. *coxo*-) for a discussion of this item.

unattested Brittonic reflex of the second element would be ***/kox/*. The Welsh word *coes* ‘leg’ is a borrowing from Latin *coxa* (GPC), evidences the regular Brittonic treatment of this Latin cluster, and is consequently irrelevant to the core issue of the present discussion. The Goidelic reflex is seen in OGael *cos* ‘foot’ or ‘leg’ (LEIA C-214; Zimmer 2002, 295-96; Thurneysen 1946, §221(b), 134). Were a derivation from **arto-koxsos* the only, or most likely, interpretation then this would indeed provide some support for Jackson’s view. However, neither the form nor the etymology is certain.

As previously stressed, the early sections of the Pictish king-lists are highly problematic and challenging sources, and have to be treated with extreme caution.⁵⁶⁴ On the whole they provide but sandy ground upon which to construct any grand theories. Nevertheless, when used with due caution they can provide usable evidence for aspects of the Pictish language. The most important fact to stress here is that the name occurs in the prehistoric section of this list accompanied by numerous corrupt and highly dubious items such as *Blieiblituth* and *Dectotric*. This whole perplexing section is probably a later retrospective insertion placed as prelude to a historical list of actual rulers, and the earlier sections do not represent a reliable and accurate chronology of historical kings of Pictland. None of the individuals noted can be corroborated in other sources, they have reign-lengths as factually implausible as 150 years (Gilgidi), 100 (Tharain), 50 (Vist), 100 (Ru) etc. indicating that some legendary or purely fabricated names have been introduced possibly to flesh out a historical list or to conform to the requirements of an imagined past. Evans (2002) posited that the names of three kings, including ours, were inserted into the SL archetype as late as 842x876. This is a period for which significant Gaelic influence and perhaps settlement⁵⁶⁵ is attested in Pictland and the insertion may well be the work of a Gaelic scribe. This all renders it highly problematic as good evidence.

Artcois, the sole form quoted by Jackson, is not the only attested manuscript variant. He was relying on Whitley Stokes’ 1890 (394) discussion for personal names and here the only forms noted are ‘Art-cois’ and ‘Arcois’. SL1 attests *Arcois*, SL2 H *Airtcois*, SL2 O *Artcois* while in SL2 M it occurs as *Artidis*. Due to it

⁵⁶⁴ For one discussion of the evolution of the longer versions of the PKL see Broun (2005, 245-52).

⁵⁶⁵ See Broun (2005, 234-5), Clancy (2004) and Forsyth (1996, 48).

being a later addition it is absent from SB lists and was therefore not in the original. SL1 is the manuscript that attests least gaelicisation and yet it is not always the most accurate witness to name-forms. For instance, SL1 notes *Talore* whose final consonant is almost certainly better represented by *Tolorc* (SL2 H) as this corresponds to the well-attested *Talorg-* (etc.), and it has *Tharain* for *Tara(i)n*, which is corroborated elsewhere. It is seldom possible to establish the spelling of the archetype with any confidence and this has to be borne in mind when engaging with proposals for the etymology.

To underline, if necessary, the problem with this name note that the name of the individual's son is written as *Cin*io*iod fili*us* Arcois*, most probably a dittographic error for *Ciniod* which is well attested in other sources.⁵⁶⁶ If the name of the son is demonstrably corrupt how certain can we be of the name of his father? While Jackson acknowledged these problems with an understandable sense of despair (1953, 145-46) he still cautiously employed *Artcois* as evidence for his argument. Such worrying issues with this section are perhaps insufficient to fully disqualify it as evidence for early Pictish but certainly they render its testimony of doubtful validity.

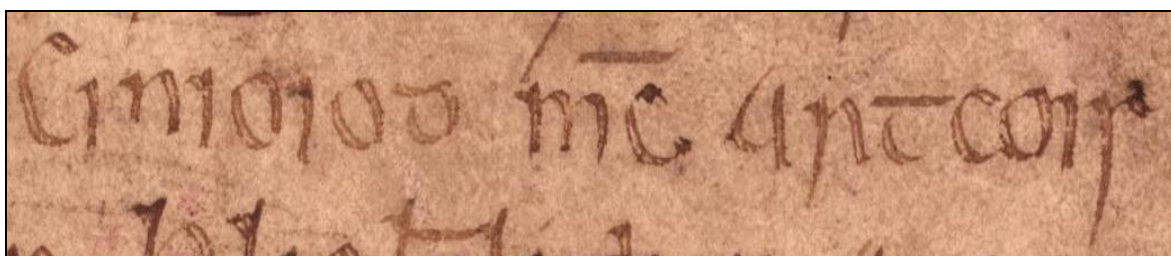


Figure 19 *Ciniod m<a>c Artcois*⁵⁶⁷

It would not be difficult to enter into a very lengthy and detailed investigation of alternative etymologies but this would only result in equally or more speculative suggestions. It is challenging to be brief as an objective non-selective approach to the various attestations invites a great number of explanations. The first element could be either *ar-* or *art-*, the former perhaps

⁵⁶⁶ E.g. AU 713, 768, AC 768 (Calise 2002, 201).

⁵⁶⁷ Oxford Bodleian Laud Misc. 610 (c.1453x4, Folio 87 recto). The Bibliothèque nationale de France has not digitised the Poppleton manuscript and this is the best available witness to a manuscript attestation.

related to *ario-*, *areo-* (Evans 1967, 141; Matasović 2009, 43, s.v. *aryo* ‘free man’) cognate with OIr *aire*⁵⁶⁸ ‘noble; free man’ (LEIA A-42). Alternatively, one could compare with *ari*, *are-*, *ar-* ‘before, close to’ (Delamarre 2007, 211; 2003, 52; LEIA, A-37) and there is also an unetymologised *aru-* (Delamarre 2007, 211). There are a number of names in *Ar-* in Irish⁵⁶⁸ and also in Gaulish (Delamarre 2007). Note also the W names *Arcon* (Evans 1893, 158), *Arguiet* (ibid. 144) *Arguistil* (ibid. 6, 7, 246 etc.) and *Argad* (Bartrum 1993, 23). *Arto-* bear is also well attested as an early Celtic personal name element (Delamarre 2007, 211) and is arguably the most likely candidate.

Regarding the presumed second element, *cois*, the *i* may well represent a gaelicised genitive of *cos*, as it does occur in a suitable position as a patronymic. In Brittonic one could compare with various Brittonic words such as *cosa*² ‘to talk, converse’, an element attested in W *dangos* ‘to show’ (GPC). There are two PNN attested in the Llandaff Charters and which could be derived from such an element *Cosog* (199a) and *Cossog* (202). A Celtic personal name *Arcosus* is attested (Delamarre 2007, 25 & 218, s.v. *coisi-*) but it is proposed that this is from **costi-*, *st* frequently attested as *ss* in Gaulish.⁵⁶⁹ This proposal would of course require a loss of *-t* in Pictish unless a scribal error is proposed. More appealing might be the numerous Gaulish names in *Cos(s)-* such as *Cosso*, *Cossianus*, *Cossillus*, *Cossus* (Delamarre 2006, 74-75) but these again could be from **cost-* or **coxs*. One can at least claim that there are some arguably Brittonic etymologies for the form attested in SL1 and that recourse to Clt **koxsa*: is not the only solution.

Additionally, one cannot rule out, for example, that *co(i)s*, represents actual OGael *cos* ‘foot, leg’ and that the name is not quite as Pictish as previously assumed, perhaps simply a rationalisation by a Gael of an opaque or (partially) problematic form. *Artcos* would itself be an entirely plausible OGael name-form, with which one could compare *Artchorp*, the second element *corp* ‘body’ borrowed from Latin (LEIA C-210). No recourse to P-Celtic is necessary to explain **artcos*, and it is a name retrospectively inserted in what was in all probability a

⁵⁶⁸ See O’Brien (1962) for examples.

⁵⁶⁹ This issue requires further study as there are exceptions.

period when Pictish was increasingly under pressure from Gaelic, if not being rapidly abandoned.

Another option is that this is a Pictish name but that the second element is, like the second element of *Artchorp* above, borrowed from Latin and mirrors the development of *W coes* 'leg'. We should not dismiss this possibility out of hand as the details and date of the divergence of Pictish from Brittonic is not sufficiently well understood to discount this. The fact that 'Brittonic between the walls', which was largely outwith direct Roman rule, probably evidences significant influence by Latin⁵⁷⁰ makes this a plausible scenario. *Artcois* could even be a Northern Brittonic name as we have *Bredei filius Bili* attested in the later historical section, *Beli* being the king of 'Strathclyde' and Jackson was happy to consider names such as *Elpin* a Latin derived name. This may all seem overly sceptical but it is difficult to know where to draw the line with such limited and problematic evidence and the approach here is to highlight possibilities in the hope that further evidence or understanding may enable us to eliminate some possibilities.

Artcos 'bear-leg' remains a plausible interpretation, especially in the light of *Argento-coxos* 'silver-leg', of which it could represent a very corrupt form. One could compare such a survival with case of the Briton *Caratācos*, who opposed the Claudian invasion of Britain and whose name survived to be recorded in Welsh genealogies as OW *Caratauc map Cinbelin map Teuhant* (*Caratācos son of Cunobelinos son of Tasciovanos*; Bartrum 1966, 127, fn 16). The putative attestation of the name as simply a patronymic *filius Arcois* rather than the focus of the name is a poor parallel to the robust Welsh example. It does not inspire confidence in the view that it is a survival rather than a vague coincidental similarity. It is reasonable to note that there is a degree of uncertainty regarding the spelling and interpretation of *Ar(t)cois* not made sufficiently evident in Jackson's article. In any case, can a ninth-century insertion into a purportedly prehistoric section of the problematic king-lists, made in a Gaelic context be accepted as reliable evidence for a Pictish sound-change?

⁵⁷⁰ See Russell (2011).

3.6.3 *Lossio Veda*

The second item Jackson adduced as evidence is the personal name *Lossio Veda* which has been discussed above (2.2.3). As noted this could be derived from a Celtic root **loxsa:* meaning ‘bent’, as proposed for the river Lossie below, but this is not the only possible interpretation. There are issues regarding mediation by Latin, in particular the fact that Latin lacks the cluster /xs/ and that it is regularly written with s or ss. We must also remember that this Caldonian made his dedication in Latin in a Roman colonia to a Romano-Celtic god (Mars medocius)⁵⁷¹ all indicating an overt desire to integrate. It has to be considered as inconclusive evidence for the change of /xs/ > /s/. Indeed only limited weight can be placed on either of the previous two items.

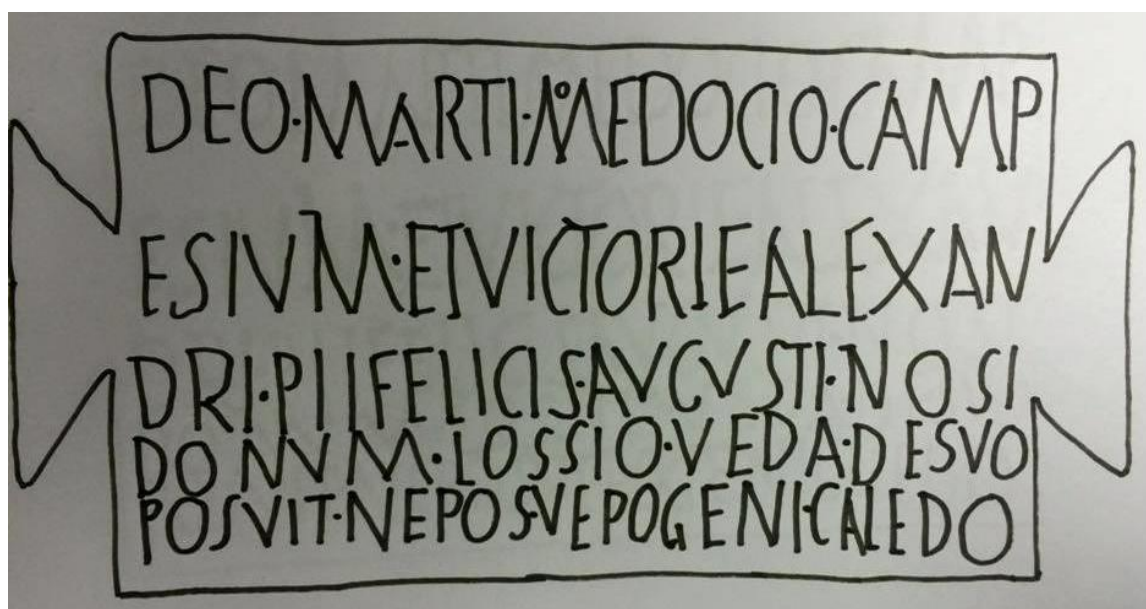


Figure 20 The Colchester inscription (2)⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Various Celtic interpretations of this item could be proposed.

⁵⁷² Image drawn by the author.

3.6.4 The River Lossie



Figure 21 **The River Lossie above Elgin**⁵⁷³

Of all the three pieces of evidence the item of greatest weight, due to it supposedly being attested in early sources as well as possibly having a later medieval reflex, is the river name *Lossie*. In contrast the other two items represent single attestations whose forms cannot be securely corroborated elsewhere. The etymology of *Lóksa* has been discussed above (2.4.6.). If this form is corrupt and does not represent a Celtic *loxs* then the whole argument would collapse, but I shall continue on the assumption that it does represent a cognate of Gk *λοξός* ‘crooked’.

The crucial question then becomes whether the name *Lossie* is indeed a reflex, an issue which has been discussed various times in the past. If the *Lóksa* and *Lossie* refer to different rivers, as proposed by O’Rahilly and Watson, then the linguistic proposal would be largely undermined. The form attested by Ptolemy is *Λόξα*⁵⁷⁴ (*Lóksa* for Celtic */loxs/*; Müller 1883, 11, 88) which is noted as lying between the *Kailios* (Deveron) and *Ouárrar* (Cromarty Firth). However it is located significantly more to the west than the *Lossie*, indeed it is placed where

⁵⁷³ © Iain Macaulay. Courtesy of Geograph.org.

⁵⁷⁴ See Rivet & Smith (1979, 400) for detailed summary of earlier discussions, termed ‘inconclusive’ by Isaac (2005(c), 197).

one would expect to see the Deveron. It is this which suggested to various commentators that this is the river to which it does refer, in spite of the evident formal similarity between the *Lóksa* and Lossie.

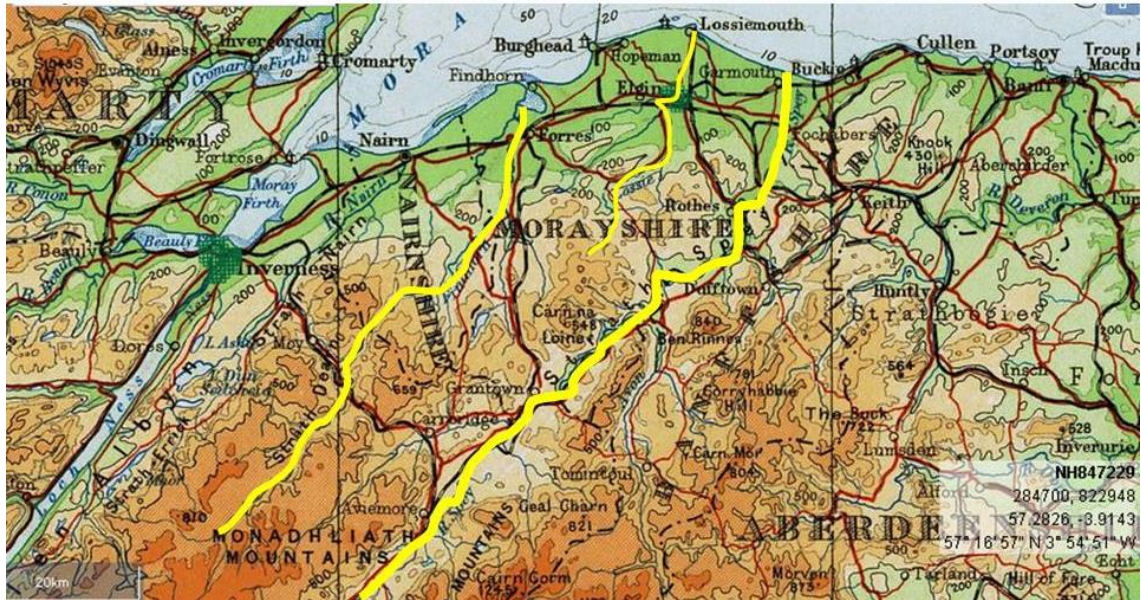


Figure 22 The Findhorn (Lossie) and Spey⁵⁷⁵

One question is how much faith can be placed in this *hapax legomenon* considering that the earliest versions of Ptolemy's *Geographia* occur only in manuscripts dating from c. 1200. There also are various errors of transmission in our area for example *Kailios* is also attested as *Kelniou*, *Taixáloi* as *Taizálōn*.⁵⁷⁶ Corroboration of *Lóksa* may however be found in the Ravenna Cosmography (c. 700) although it does occur in a list of *civitates* not rivers (Rivet & Smith 1979, 399). Ifor Williams (Richmond & Crawford 1949, 38, s.v. *Loxa*) noted that the context of this name would strongly suggest that it is in southern Scotland but the attestation of *Smetri*, plausibly for Ptolemy's northerly *Smértai*, in the same section could partially invalidate this objection. Rivet & Smith (1979, 399, s.v. *Loxa*) speculate that it may be a mistaken first attempt to spell the first part of *Locatreve*, the next name in the sequence. Additionally, name forms in this section include various very dubious items and corrupt forms such as *Cambroianna* for 'Camboglanna'. There are various concerns that *Lóksa* does not

⁵⁷⁵ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=9&lat=57.4885&lon=-3.5040&layers=1250&point=-4.5095,57.6217>

⁵⁷⁶ See Rivet & Smith (1979, 463 & 464) for attestations.

refer to the same item as Ptolemy's *Λόξα* even though we must entertain the possibility that it does. *Lóksa* however does have a plausible Celtic etymology even though it may only be paralleled in one other European river-name, La Losse (Delamarre 2012, 183, s.v. *loXā*).

Of greater importance is the fact that the equation of *Lóksa* with the small river Lossie was not accepted by all. Watson (1926, 49), O'Rahilly (1946, 382, fn 1), and initially Jackson (1953, 536, fn 2,) suspected that it referred to the impressive river Findhorn whose estuary is some fifteen miles to the west of the Lossie. Jackson, by the publication of his highly influential chapter *The Pictish Language* in 1955 made no reference to this possibility, a fact which reflects his new thinking on the Pictish language (see Chapter 1). If *Lóksa* actually refers to the Findhorn rather than the Lossie then the most important piece of evidence for Jackson's argument would be fatally weakened, as there are various alternative interpretations for the name Lossie which do not involve a derivation from an etymon which contains /xs/. Consequently this issue requires a detailed investigation.



Figure 23 Ptolemaic Map noting the location of the *Lóksa*⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁷ Ca. 1480 ff. 58v-59 © The British Library.
<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/unvbrit/p/001hr1000007195u00058vrb.html>

Locating Ptolemy's names with places on modern maps is by no means straightforward, especially in Calidonia. Perhaps the two most relevant points to be emphasised here is that the area was largely outwith Roman control meaning that the location of many places cannot be corroborated in other sources and secondly much of northern Britain appears as if rotated some 90° clockwise in Ptolemy's map (see figure 5., page 141). This issue has been explained as the result of the incorrect collation of smaller maps of varying scales. The turning is deliberate as is the scaling down of the northerly section meaning that one can now ascribe names to locations with less uncertainty, and the position of the *Lóksa*, it has been argued, would agree with the Findhorn not the Lossie (Strang 1997 & 1998). The estuary of the *Lóksa* on the reconstructed Ptolemy map lies almost exactly half way between the *Toúaisis* (Spey) and the *Ouárar* (Moray Firth) which corresponds very well to the position of the Findhorn. The Lossie is only a quarter of this distance from the *Toúaisis*. The relative distance of rivers and headlands in Scotland to each other in Ptolemy seems very accurate and probably reflects good Roman navigational calculations⁵⁷⁸ and elements of Ptolemy's map are probably ultimately based on a coastal itinerary.

Tacitus (Hutton & Ogilvie, 25.1., 72) related that Agricola (c. 83) had explored with his fleet harbours to the north of the Forth-Clyde divide and that infantry conveyed by ship were active militarily during his first campaign. Additionally, after the battle of Mons Graupius a fleet was sent to circumnavigate Britain (ibid. 38.4., 98-99). On purely cartographic grounds the equation of the *Lóksa* with the Findhorn is unproblematic. However caution is advisable as Ptolemy does not even profess to locate anything more accurately than to 1/12 of a degree of latitude and achieves, after inspection, but a quarter of a degree, 16½ Roman miles⁵⁷⁹ (Rivet & Smith 1979, 105). In effect Ptolemy does not provide accurate grid-references but moves each item to the closest line of latitude or longitude. One could compare this with having to place all names precisely on the gridline of a modern OS map. While the position of the Findhorn suits that of the *Lóksa* the Lossie cannot be ruled out.

⁵⁷⁸ I would like to thank Dr Alastair Strang for discussing this issue with me.

⁵⁷⁹ 1 Roman mile = 1,620 yards, 1,481 metres. 1 modern mile = 1,760 yards, 1,609 metres.

If the names *Lóksa* and *Lossie* do refer to different rivers as Watson, O’Rahilly and Strang thought then a discussion of alternative etymologies for the latter is required. If a strong case can be made for an etymology which does not involve the *Lóksa* then there is room for arguing the case that they are not related. As discussed above, the personal name *Lossio* could be derived from a root meaning crooked (< **loc-seh*₂-; Isaac 2005(c), 197) and this is an attractive meaning for a river (King 2008, 4.3.7, 142-44). Note however that the usual Celtic word in such hydronymic contexts is **kambo*-.⁵⁸⁰ The *Lossie* does indeed evidence a dramatic almost right-angle bend some miles upstream from the estuary but the Findhorn evidences many impressive meanders especially in its lower reaches. Due to its disgorging into the sea through fairly shallow mud-flats the river has changed its course many times (Gillen 1993, 19) so that a meaning such as ‘crooked’ would also seem highly appropriate.

Various alternative etymologies for the *Lossie* are possible which do not involve a root containing /xs/. For instance, Watson (1926, 439) posited a derivation from (*Uisge* or *Abhainn*) *Lossa* (gen. pl. of *lus*) ‘water/river of herbs’ but this was termed ‘hardly satisfactory’ by Ifor Williams (Richmond & Crawford 38, s.v. *Loxa*). However, it seems that Williams misunderstood Watson’s proposal thinking that he claimed that *Lóksa* referred to flora. Watson’s suggestion is that the smaller *Lossie*, not the *Lóksa*, refers to plants and his comment on this Ptolemaic name is ‘I offer no opinion as to the meaning of *Loxa*’ (1926, 49). Various lesser rivers do bear similar names e.g. Luce of Wigtown (WIG), Lusragan Burn (ARG), Luss Water (DNB; Watson 1926, 522, fn P., 439), Lussa River (Mull; ARG; Nicolaisen 2001 [1976], 72), names relating to flora only becoming rarer in larger watercourses (King 2008, §4.3.15, 151). The *Lossie* is indeed a slow-moving river in its long lower reaches (see Fig. 21), eminently suitable for water-plants, and Watson’s interpretation is therefore unproblematic. Indeed the *Lossie* only drops 25 metres from Pittendreich some 7 kilometres upstream from the estuary. Note that Kinloss by the mouth of the Findhorn is also derived from the same word (but see below).

⁵⁸⁰ For examples see Delamarre (2003, 100, s.v. *cambo*-).

No earlier discussions engaged with the first attestation of the name which is *Loscyn*, or perhaps *Lostyn*⁵⁸¹ (1189x99; Innes 1837, Register of Moray, §13, 10). The final *-yn* would simply represent a (Pictish?) suffix *-in* cognate with W *-yn* or *-in* as perhaps in *Peffryn* (the burn-name in the place-name Innerpeffray).⁵⁸² The graphemes *t* and *c* in such manuscripts are readily confused particularly after *s*.⁵⁸³ Neither *Loscyn* nor *Lostyn* is easily compatible with *Lóksa* as a pre-form, even though the reflex of *loxs-* is given as Mlr *losc* ‘lame’ (Isaac 2005(c), 197). A change of PrClt */xs/* to */sk/* in Mlr would be unusual. The form *Lossyn* also occurs in the very same charter, a form which is compatible with it being a derivative of G *lus*. There seems to be no easy way of ascertaining whether the *Lostyn* is a mistake or a hypercorrection or whether *Lossyn* represents a slightly unusual historical development of the former. At present there are reasons for keeping an open mind to the original form as a modification of */st/* or */sc/* to */s/* could perhaps be explained by the ongoing language shift in this area in this period.

A reading as ‘Lostyn’ could be interpreted as a cognate of W *llost* ‘tail, spear’ (< PrClt **lustā*, Matasović 2011(b), 25). This is what O’Rahilly proposed for *Lóksa*, in that it was an error for *Lozda*, i.e. *zeta* read as *xi* (1946, 381-2). This would be comparable with various Welsh rivers named after long sharp metal implements such as *Cleddau* ‘sword’, *Nodwydd* ‘needle’, *Taradr* ‘auger’ and *Gelau* ‘blade, weapon, spear’ (GPC) for example. One could also note G *Allt na Snathaid* (DNB) ‘needle’, *Allt a’ Chlaidheimh* (Aldochlay; DNB)⁵⁸⁴ and *Ir fleisc* ‘rod, wand’, attested as the name of three rivers in Ireland (O’Rahilly 1946, f.4, 382). These would provide a plausible semantic parallel and the various rivers of England named *Lostock* (? < Britt **lost* + *-og*) would receive a new etymology. This would be preferable to proposing that *lostog* could have meant ‘beaver’ in Welsh as Ekwall suggested (1968, 260). He did not mention that W *llost* can also mean ‘spear’. Breeze (2005, 68) objected that there is no secure instance of *llost* as a hydronym. This would not represent a fatal flaw as *gelau* of Afon Gele (DNB) is only attested once. However the *Oxford Names Companion* (Hanks et al. 1998,

⁵⁸¹ See also Barrow (1971, 357, footnote, 1224x42).

⁵⁸² See Taylor with Márkus (2012, 407-12).

⁵⁸³ John Reuben Davies (pers.comm.).

⁵⁸⁴ I am grateful to Simon Taylor for these two references.

1114) derives formally identical place-names from OE *hlōse+stoc* ‘outlying farmstead with a pig-sty’. Note also that cognates ONor *ljóstr* ‘trident, E *leister* ‘pronged fish-spear’ (GPC) are semantically similar. In any case a river named ‘tail’, often long and curved, does not strike me as implausible, there is an Otter Tail river in Minnesota.⁵⁸⁵ A name based on **lost-* seems plausible but a change of **Lostyn* to **Lossyn* seems unusual but perhaps not impossible.

Accepting *Loscyn* as the manuscript form would invite a comparison with W *llog* ‘burning’ to be compared with the W RN *Tanat* (?< *tân* ‘fire’, perhaps ‘bright, sparkling river’) and even closer to home perhaps Aberlask (DMF).⁵⁸⁶ The rivers Tennet (ANG), *Teinntidh* (< OIr *tentide* ‘fiery’), *Eibhleág* ‘cinder, ember’ of Scotland (Watson, 1926, 443) are semantically similar. A derivation from PIE **tā-* ‘melt, dissipate, decay’ is not impossible and this has been proposed for various river-names. This would also provide a model to explain the problematic *Lox* rivers of England and also Loxford (ESS; Ekwall 1928, 267). An identical metathesis in OE is evidenced in the nearby Axe (SOM) and Exe (SOM; ibid. 152 & 153) from Clt. **e:sk*. A derivation from **losk* is therefore feasible for a bright river but again the attested *Loscyn* would not regularly give *Lossyn*.

There are therefore numerous ways of explaining the earliest medieval attested forms of the river *Lossie*, a derivation from G *lus* perhaps being the least problematic, as Watson thought. This does leave the early forms *Loscyn* & *Lostyn* as unexplained, and neither of these is easily compatible with a derivation from *Lóksa*. Much rests on whether Ptolemy’s form refers to the *Lossie* or the Findhorn an issue which will now be discussed.

The Findhorn, whose location corresponds well to that of the *Lóksa*, is probably not of later Goidelic coinage as Watson thought (1926, 230). He considered the Findhorn and Deveron to represent the contrastive OGael *find* (white) and *dub(h)* (black) *Éireann* respectively. *Éireann*, the genitive of *Ériu*, was thought to represent one of the various ‘Ireland’ names in Scottish Gaeldom but Nicolaisen (1976, 241) proposed that this and the various other rivers such as Earn Water (RNF) or the river Earn (PER) were possibly from a root **orā* meaning

⁵⁸⁵ I have not been able to confirm the origin of this name so the analogy may not be suitable.

⁵⁸⁶ See Thomas (1938, 20), Ekwall (1928, 391) Falileyev (2010, 211, s.v. *Tannetum*) for numerous comparanda and further refs.

‘to flow’. Clancy (2010) discussed this issue and noted that other Scottish names may indeed refer to Ireland, and that Gaels did indeed interpret Earn in this light. Nicolaisen thought it a pre-Celtic but Indo-European name, but one might consider that it could be derived from PrClt **Iserniā* which gave the Irish river-name Éirne (OGael *Erne*; Mac an Bhaird 1991-93, 5). If so it would suggest that the form *Lóksa* cannot also refer to it as it seems to be an ‘old’ name. However, the fact that the *Kailios* apparently became the Deveron would provide an exact parallel for renaming of this westerly river in some period after Ptolemy’s work. Interestingly the *Toúaisis* also seems to change, to the Spey (but see above). If the *Lóksa* is indeed the *Lossie* then the Findhorn would be entirely absent from the *Geography*. It would be easy to consider the apparent absence of one of the longest rivers in northern Britain as extraordinary. It is therefore necessary to compare these two rivers in order to see whether their particular features can throw any light on this matter.

The coastline of Morayshire has been significantly modified by silting and erosion since it was visited by Roman fleets and troops almost two millennia ago (Gillen 1993, 19). What geologists do know about the coastline at this period is that the Findhorn exited into the sea at more or less the same place, probably more to the east, and its immense bay would have presumably provided usable anchorage. However, the narrow mouth means a very strong outflow that may have deterred early sailors from entering it.⁵⁸⁷ It would also have provided a major obstacle to land troops while the Lossie would have been easily fordable. The Findhorn would have represented an excellent navigational feature. There would therefore be good reasons for expressing surprise were the Findhorn absent from Ptolemy, but the same may be true of the Lossie. There is one issue I would like to briefly add to this discussion, before turning to discuss this more easterly river, and that is the name Kinloss (G *Cinn Lois*), a settlement with an abbey on the eastern bank of Findhorn Bay. Watson (1926, 439) interpreted this as ‘herbacious head’. It is tempting to speculate that this could preserve a memory of the original *Lóksa*. If it did it would again suggest /xs/ to /s/ but such speculation would face various objections.

⁵⁸⁷ Pete Drummond (pers. comm.).

The river Lossie, which flows through the town of Elgin, is some 50km long and would be one of the shortest and least significant watercourses attested in Ptolemy's Scotland, indeed it would be one of the shortest rivers from Britain. However, in the Middle-Ages it flowed into the Moray Firth through Loch Spynie⁵⁸⁸ and this body of water was previously significantly larger. Gillen (1993, 19) noted that it was 'once an arm of the sea, resulting from flooding of the coastal area in post-glacial times.' Prior to the mid fifteenth century ships were able to navigate the Lossie as far as the impressive bishop's palace at Spynie. Were this indeed open to the sea two millennia ago it would, as a harbour, constitute a feature of significant interest to Roman military cartographers. Perhaps the estuary was known as the *Lóksa*, and Spynie represents a later Pictish name of the lake, perhaps transferred from a settlement (see above).

The absence of the Findhorn from Ptolemy's survey is still not without complexities, but then again the Esk and Montrose Basin are also absent. The latter was an important port from the medieval period. We might simply have to attribute this to failures of transmission, perhaps related to the various maps or documents employed. The earliest forms of the Lossie, *Loscyn* and *Lostyn*, are not easily compatible with a derivation from *Lóksa*, but perhaps we could consider these to be copying errors, especially as *Lossyn* also occurs in the same charter.

If we accept that the *Lóksa* is the Lossie, then is this good evidence for Jackson's view that /xs/ gave /s/ in Pictish? Rivet & Smith proposed that mediation by Gaelic would explain the change of /xs/ > /s/ in that *Lóksa* was borrowed early enough to undergo a Goidelic sound-change. They misinterpret Jackson's argument, noting that this 'occurred within later Goidelic speech' while Jackson's proposal is that it indicates a parallel Pictish sound-change. Sims-Williams (2003, §9, 302) argued that /xs/ > /ss/ was completed in Irish 'before the extant inscriptions' i.e. the fourth century or so. It is questionable whether the name would be borrowed this early so that it would undergo this change in OGael itself. Jackson was uncertain as to when /xs/ fully developed to /x/ in Brittonic noting that it may have been as late as the seventh century (1955, §126, 539). There is no direct evidence for this and the vague dating is only

⁵⁸⁸ <http://maps.nls.uk/view/00002341>

proposed on the basis that it should have occurred before the separation of WCB. It certainly goes to /x/ in northern Brittonic as evidenced by the various names containing *uchel*, such as Ochiltree (AYR). *Lóksa* would regularly give *lox* in Neo-Brittonic and had such a form been borrowed into OGael after its own /xs/ > /ss/ then one would indeed expect the Gaelic form to be ***Loch*. On the other hand if it remained in Pictland as /loxs/ as late as Jackson allowed for Brittonic (300-600 CE) then this cluster would certainly be audible when OGael was making significant inroads into northern Pictland after Columba's mission in 565. The cluster would almost certainly be modified in line with Gaelic phonology, which had not possessed such a cluster for some centuries. A modification to /lox/ would cause a homophonic clash with *loch*, while one to *los* might be interpreted as related to *lus* & *losa* (gen. sg.) 'plants'. This would require the contemporaneous use of two forms, /lox/ among the Waerteras and *Loss* among Gaels, but such situations are very common. Consider Denbigh and Dinbych in Wales, for example, which have co-existed for at least seven centuries. It may be that the harbour provided by Loch Spynie brought it to the attention of speakers of Gaelic or perhaps there was some administrative forerunner to Spynie Palace on its shore. Spynie was one of the sites of the cathedral of Moray before it finally settled at Elgin in the early thirteenth century.⁵⁸⁹ If so the form could indeed be due to the mediation of Gaelic, and tell us little about Pictish phonology apart from suggesting that it preserved /xs/ up to a period of significant contact between these linguistic communities.

3.6.5 Other attestations of /xs/

This discussion would not be complete without having investigated the evidence for items which could provide further indications of the fate of /xs/ in Pictland. Unfortunately, it is a rare cluster in PrClt and the words which attest it are generally unlikely to appear in place- and personal names. For example, I count nine items which have Brittonic reflexes in Matasović (2009): **axsilā* 'axis' (50), **dexsiwo-* 'right, south' (97), **exs-obno-* 'fearless' (119), **krixso-* 'curly-haired', **laxsaro-* 'burning, shining' (235), **nexso-* 'wound' (290), **owxs-anatā* 'sigh' (302), **swexs* 'six' (364) and **truxso-* 'trunk, broken apart' (391). Cognates of the common Brittonic adjective *uchel* seem to be absent. Jackson noted counter

⁵⁸⁹ I am grateful to Simon Taylor for drawing my attention to this.

evidence for this change in the form of the st (CLA, FIF, KNR, PER, STL), which he derived from a cognate of *uchel*, but this almost certainly derives from another root (see 3.7.6. & 3.7.8.). It is not impossible that some river-names such as Burn of Lochy (MOR) and River Lochay (PER) represent reflexes of *loxs-* but King (2005) has demonstrated that these could also represent either OGael *lóch* ‘shining’ or *loch* ‘black’.

3.6.6 Conclusion

The numerous problems with the limited evidence and unresolved, perhaps unresolvable, issues with the interpretations make it impossible to come to a firm conclusion regarding Jackson’s proposal. *Lossio Veda* may well have latinised his name, *Ar(t)cois* is very possibly corrupt or gaelicised and it is uncertain whether Lossie is derived from Ptolemy’s *Lóksa*. If relevant place-name evidence were to come to light in the future, it might be possible to construct a less inconclusive argument, which might well impact on the interpretations above. There are however grounds for questioning this supposedly distinctive evolution and maintaining an open mind as to the fate of the cluster /xs/ in Pictish.

3.7 Section 7: Preservation of /o:/ (< /ow/)

3.7.1 Introduction

According to Jackson /o:/ (< /ow/) was raised to /u:/ in Brittonic in the later third century⁵⁹⁰ (1953, §18, 305-7 & §22, 312-17), while in Pritenic it remained unmodified (ibid. 1955, 165). The view that Pictish was conservative in this respect was repeated by Koch (1983, 215 & 216), Forsyth (2006(b), §2(2)) and James (BLITON, s.v. **ūchel*). James (2013) commented that this '[i]f correct is a strong plank in Jackson's case for the distinctiveness of Pritenic from Brittonic from a very early date' i.e. 275-300.

	Proto-Celtic	75-100	275-300	500-550	>1000 ⁵⁹¹
Pritenic / Pictish	ow	o:			
Brittonic		o:	u:	u:	

Jackson's argument is based on a single lexical item supposedly attested in one place-name - *The Ochil Hills*. In this etymological proposal he followed Watson (1926, 209) who in turn followed Stokes (1890, 411). All saw this prominent range of hills of south-eastern Scotland as reflecting a Pictish cognate of W *uchel* 'high, elevated',⁵⁹² (< PrClt /owxselo-/; cf. MidCorn (*h*)*uhel* and Mid-ModBret *uhel* (GPC)). Jackson's Pritenic reflex would therefore have been */o:xel/ (or /o:sel/, see below), contrasting with Neo-Britt */u:xel/. Here, it will be argued

⁵⁹⁰ Koch (1983, 216) dates the raising of the Brittonic vowel somewhat earlier to the middle of the second century CE noting forms such as Ptolemy's *Oὔξελα*, but on the following page follows Jackson's dating. The only impact of this is that Brittonic would be seen as innovating a century and a half earlier than Jackson supposed. It is curious that Jackson did not discuss the numerous Latin forms in *Uxel-* in this context despite employing them in other arguments. Latin, lacking an /ow/ diphthong (Allen 1965, 2(ii), 60-63) usually represents this diphthong with *u*. Jackson's dating for this change is accepted by Schrijver (2011, 12 (1)).

⁵⁹¹ This date simply indicates a rough estimate for the demise of Pictish.

⁵⁹² See Matasović (2009, 303, s.v. **owxselo-*) for further discussions. For a discussion of Gaulish forms see Delamarre (2003, 330, s.v. *uxellos*, *ouxellos*).

that this etymology is incorrect and that a far simpler solution is available that allows for Pictish to be co-evolving with Brittonic.

Jackson overlooked the similar items which Watson believed to be also derived from a Pictish cognate of *W uchel* - Rossie Ochill, Catochil and Oykel (1926, 209). Such an omission is significant, and underlines the fact that his 1955 article was not intended as a comprehensive and in-depth investigation. Koch noted all Watson's items, and further supposedly cognate examples are discussed under one heading by Taylor (2011, 89-93 & 94-95).

In order to justify this proposal Jackson (1955, 165) had to resort to a remarkable piece of special pleading as he had just argued that Brittonic /xs/ had evolved to /s/ in Pictish hence the Pictish reflex of */owxselo-/ ought to have been */o:sel/. The fricative of *Ochil* he explained as due to Brittonic intermediaries. Thus it is argued that Brittonic speakers who provided the Anglo-Saxons with the form would have maintained the Pictish vowel but sound-substituted the Pictish sibilant /s/ with their own cognate fricative /x/. For this to work Britons would have had to have been oblivious to the cognacity of the two items (Pictish /o:sel/ and Britt /ɥ:xel/), which represent one of the most common and basic adjectives in Brittonic. It is impossible that people living in the Lothians did not have a name for the Ochils, as this long ridge monopolises much of the visible northern skyline. Why would local Britons not simply employ their own cognate, */ɥ:xel/, or the fully-blown Pictish equivalent */o:sel/? Blending the two forms seems perversely confusing.

Pictish	Brittonic	Brittonicised Pictish
** <u>o</u> :sel	*ɥ:xel	** <u>o</u> :xel

In any case it has been argued above that the Pritenic change of /xs/ > /s/ rests on uncertain evidence therefore making /o:xel/ a plausible Pictish outcome. This would help Jackson's case as Ochil could consequently simply reflect the Pictish pronunciation, i.e. /o:sel/ is spurious, and no Britt mediation would be required. As with various other proposals regarding the particulars of Pictish

phonology it rests on minimal amounts of evidence, and is largely impressionistic rather than representing a thorough investigation of the whole corpus of evidence. The aim here is to remedy this issue by scrutinising all the material that is currently available, but firstly some linguistic issues require commentary.

3.7.2 *Linguistic Background*

The proto-form of W *uchel* is amply attested in Roman period place-names such as *Uxello-dunum* ‘high-fort’ in Gaul (Delamarre 2012, 280) or *Οὔξελλον* in Britain (Rivet & Smith 1979, 483, s.v. *Uxelum*). It is well attested in neo-Brittonic languages as the specific of close compounds such as W *Ucheldre* (MTG; ‘high settlement’; Morgan 2001, 181), Corn *Hugus* (‘high-wood’, < *ughel*+*cos*; Padel 1985, 135), Bret *An Uhelgoad* (Fr *Huelgoat*, < *uhel*+*koat*, ‘high-wood’; Deshayes 1999, 553) and also in the Old North as *Ochiltree* etc. (AYR; analogous to ModW *uchel*+*tref*) formally identical to the W place-name above (Watson 1926, 209). It is also common in phrasal place-names such as ‘(y) Bont Uchel’ (DEN; ‘high-bridge’). It is only in Breton that this item has been substantivised, very probably calqued on the parallel development of *haut* in French. In other variants of neo-Brittonic it has remained exclusively an adjective. A small number of early Celtic place-names attested as a simplex *Uxella* (vel sim.) could be claimed as evidencing a similar early process, (Delamarre 2007, 330). There are also examples in Britain (*Uxela* (x2) & *Uxelum*; Rivet & Smith 1979, 482 & 483) but these may represent Latin adaptations or simply have an unstated noun (Rivet & Smith 1979, 482). Note that one apparently refers to a river, perhaps meaning ‘noble’ or referring to a divinity (ibid.). Presumably cognate forms in Gaul, attested only centuries after coining, have an alternative etymology as ‘estate of an individual named *Ux(i)os* / *Uxellos*’ (Delamarre 2012, 280, s.v. *uxellā* & *uxellon*). It seems safer to consider *uchel* as primarily, if not exclusively, an adjective in all variants of Brittonic / P-Celtic apart from later Breton (see further below).

Incidentally, this conservatism would imply that the phoneme would eventually have fallen in with the reflex of Britt /oj/ as /o:/ in late Pictish as proposed by Koch, but see also above (3.5.) on this issue. As /ow/ is a fairly common diphthong in PrClt a distinct reflex in two derived languages would have had a non-trivial impact on the lexicon. However, the realisation of the two supposed

outcomes is not dramatically distinct, and the utilisation of two forms such as **kro:g* and **kr̥:g* ‘mound’, may not have hindered mutual-intelligibility to any greater degree than various examples of vocalic distinctiveness in the dialects of modern Brythonic languages. This issue is therefore more one of dialect or rather accent than language variance.

Before engaging with the actual evidence upon which this hypothesis rests it should be stressed that only a limited number of items which contain this diphthong are likely to be attested in the surviving evidence. For example, Matasović (2009) notes the following items:⁵⁹³ **bow-* ‘cow’, **bowdi-* ‘booty, victory’, **bowd-ro-* ‘dirty’. **fowtu-* ‘fear’, **growdos-* ‘cheek’, **klowni-* ‘meadow’, **klowsta-* ‘ear’, **kowdo-* ‘hiding place’, **kowna-* ‘pack of dogs’, **krowko-* ‘heap, hill’, **lowdo-* ‘obstacle’, **lowko-* ‘bright, light’, **lowtu-* ‘ash’, **rowdo-* ‘red’, **rowk(k)-* ‘tunic, mantle’, **rowtro-* ‘assault’, **slowgo-* ‘troop, army’, **snowdo-* ‘mist’, **sowk-n-o-* ‘suck’, **sowno-* ‘sleep’, **srowman-* ‘stream’, **trowgo-* ‘sorry’. The noun **bowdi-* ‘booty, victory’ is attested in Celtic names such as the famous Boudica, but this it is absent from the Pictish personal name corpus. In place-names attestations of the following would not be unusual, **bow-*, **bowd-ro-*, **klowni-*, **krowko-*, **lowko-*, **rowdo-*, **srowman-*. The only ones which actually may be attested are **krowko-* ‘heap’ and **rowdo-* ‘red’ and these will be discussed below, where it will be argued that they are probably Gaelic or gaelicised. This places the burden of the argument squarely back on the *Ochils* and the other supposedly cognate items.

3.7.3 Evidence

Twelve place-names have, in recent studies, been noted as perhaps containing a Pictish cognate of *W uchel*. It is, however, probable that items of distinct origins have been conflated. It is highly unlikely that a cognate of *W uchel* underlies any of these toponyms, and that this adjective seems to be curiously absent from Pictland. *Uchel* is indeed well-attested in the Old North (see below & BLITON s.v. *ūchel*), as may be cognates of *uwch* ‘higher’ (BLITON s.v. *ūch*). Items which may represent river-names are underlined.

⁵⁹³ I.e. the ones which have robust reflexes in Brittonic. Items which survive into Goidelic alone have not been noted. Due to time constraints issues relating to verbs etc. have not been investigated. Neither have a small number of derivatives of the above been included.

ogel ⁵⁹⁴	/ɔ:g/ 'swift, energetic'	<i>uchel</i> < /owxselo-/
<u>Ogle Burn</u> (ELO)	<u>Gleann Òguil</u> (Glen Ogle) (PER)	
(Braes of) Ogilvie (PER)	<u>Ogle Linn</u> (DMF)	
Ogilvie (ANG)	<u>Strath Oiceil</u> (Eng Oykel) (ROS)	
(Hill of) Ogil (ANG)		
Ogle Hill (PER)		
Oglegarth Wood (PER)		
Ogle (CLA)		
Ogilface (WLO)		
The Ochils? (FIF / KNR)		

The following section will investigate these items of evidence and explain the reasons for leaving the 'uchel' column empty. Firstly the element **ogel* will be discussed and then the alternative proposals for the items of the second column. If it can be demonstrated that none of the above represent *uchel* then Jackson's argument will collapse, unless additional evidence can be adduced.

⁵⁹⁴ There is also Ogle (NTB), but this is on a very low rise between two streams and may derive from *Ocga* an AS personal name (Mills 2003, 354). Note also that Hanks, Hodges, Mills & Room (2002, 461) state that 'Ogle' is a 'Scots and N Irish' habitation name.

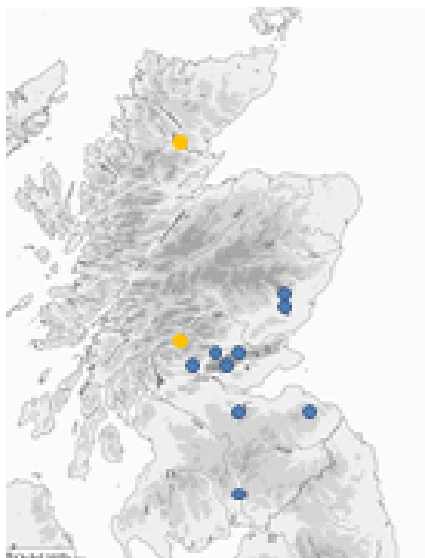


Figure 24 Ogel names

3.7.4 *Ogel*

3.7.4.1 Introduction

In ‘Pictish Place-names Revisited’ Taylor reconstructed the Pictish form of *uchel* as ‘ogel’ and saw this element as evidenced in a total of some ten place-names (2011, 89-93 & 94-95). Such a reconstruction is highly improbable as PrClt would have realised the cluster of the etymon as /xs/, and there is no simple phonetic route from this cluster to /g/, even if mediated by Gaelic or dialects of English/Scots.⁵⁹⁵ Various commentators employ the grapheme *x* for this cluster and it may be that this is misinterpreted as /ks/. Others, such as Deshayes employ *ks*, which is misleading as the stop would have been spirantised early in the history of Celtic, indeed before the loss of /ϕ/ (Isaac 2007, 62, point 15).⁵⁹⁶ It may well be that such ambiguous or inaccurate representations seed confusion.

Following a suggestion by Clancy,⁵⁹⁷ Taylor noted as an afterthought to his discussion, the possibility that a distinct item **ogel* ‘headland, promontory, spur’ may be involved in some names, but the issue was not developed. Watson (1926, 378) had already flagged the problem of an element similar to **ogel* when discussing Glen Ogle (G *Gleann Òguil*), but admitted that it was ‘obscure’ to

⁵⁹⁵ The most economical suggestion might be the rather tortuous /xs/ > /xh/ > /x/ > /ɣ/ > /g/, for which there is no evidence and goes against usual principles of phonetic changes.

⁵⁹⁶ This is conventionally accepted as one of the changes which defines Celtic as a separate branch of PIE

⁵⁹⁷ See Taylor (2011, 92, fn 46).

him. James when discussing *ūchel* (2012) referred to *ogel*, but did not see this as underlying any post-Roman place-names in northern Britain. He added that the supposed Pictish reflex of **owxselo-* would be **ochel* or **osse*⁵⁹⁸ and drew attention to the fact that the vowel /o:/ could also be evidenced in three names south of the Forth, *Ūchiltree* (AYR, WIG & WLO).⁵⁹⁹ He also commented that early forms for the latter two vary between *o* and *u* (ibid.). In his later article ‘P-Celtic in Southern Scotland and Cumbria’ (2013) he speculatively postulated the pre-form of inter-mural Brittonic⁶⁰⁰ of *uchel* as **okel* or **ogel* (ibid. fn 133),⁶⁰¹ but apart from noting the voicing of the velar in *Ogilface* (WLO) as ‘curious’ he did not elaborate on this anomaly and made no connection to **okelon* which was also discussed. He noted that ‘no words directly derived from it [**okelon*] are recorded in any Celtic languages’ (BLITON), but this view will be questioned here.

3.7.4.2 Ogel - Linguistics & Context

Most of the place-names similar to **ogel* can readily be explained as regular Brittonic reflexes of Celtic **okelon* ‘headland, promontory, spur’ with the expected voicing of an intervocalic stop i.e. PrClIt **okel-* > Neo Britt **ogel*. The unattested, Gaelic cognate would be ***ochel* (/’oxəl/) (see below). This item is well attested in Continental toponymy such as *Ocelum* (Portugal) or *Okela* (Spain; Sims-Williams 2006, 31-32, s.v. *Ocel*; Falileyev 2010, 174; Delamarre 2012, 43 & 55). There are also numerous personal names such as *Ocellio*, *Ocelus* (Delamarre 2007, 143 & 228, s.v. *ocelo-*; 2003, 237)⁶⁰² which are formally identical to this etymon, but the interpretation of these in such context is obscure. **Okelon* is derived from a PIE root **h₂eḱ* ‘sharp, pointed’⁶⁰³ seen also in Ir *ochair* ‘an edge, border, side’ (eDIL; LEIA O-6) and Lat. *acus* ‘needle’ (Hamp 1999, 276).

⁵⁹⁸ This is a reference to Jackson’s proposed ‘Pritenic’ change of /xs/ > /s/. See Section 6.

⁵⁹⁹ Black (1946, 634) notes *Vchiltree* (1399), *Wchyltre* (1424) *Wchiltre* (1459) etc.

⁶⁰⁰ I.e. the area between the Antonine Wall and Hadrian’s Wall.

⁶⁰¹ This voicing is based on the assumption of the pre-form **okel* but leaves the stopping of /x/ > /k/ unexplained.

⁶⁰² Delamarre does not provide an interpretation of the name.

⁶⁰³ For a discussion of this root see Watkins (2000, 2, s.v. *ak-*).

More importantly **okelon* may be attested in as many as four place-names in Roman-period northern Britain: *Ocelum* (Flamborough Head or Spurn Head) and perhaps **Alaunocelum* (*Alauna* + *okelon*; ‘apparently in SE Scotland’, Rivet & Smith 1979, 246), **Cintocelum* (< ?**kinto*- ‘first, foremost’ + *okelon*; ‘unknown but apparently in southern Scotland’, Rivet & Smith 1979, 308) and **Itunocelum* (*Ituna* + *okelon*; probably in north-west *Britannia*, Rivet & Smith 1979, 380). Some caution is required with the last two items as their attested forms appear somewhat corrupt. The only secure attestation seems to be the first. Now that the presence of this Celtic item in Roman Britain has been ascertained let us turn to possible attestations in later periods.

3.7.4.3 Ogel - Geographical Context

In order to confirm the interpretation of a descriptive place-name it is crucial to establish that its location corresponds to its proposed meaning, certainly beyond any context which could be explained by coincidence. For example, for the case being made here to hold we would not expect *ogel* to be attested on grassy plains, and given the hilly terrain of Pictland the correspondence between name and place must be fairly precise. It is therefore necessary to examine the geographical context of each of the items which will be employed in this argument to see whether a reflex of **okelon* may actually have continued in use in northern Britain. One must also keep a wary eye on other possibilities such as the transference of names.

There is a two kilometre long, distinctive escarpment to the north of the Ogle Burn (ELO; NT 722 722) rising to 320 metres but which no longer has a known name locally. This westward flowing stream is known locally as a slow and unimpressive watercourse and it is not therefore a prime candidate for survival from Brittonic a millennium or so earlier. Despite a sharp drop at one point it is a sluggish rivulet that is unlikely to represent a name from Britt /ɔ:g/ ‘lively’. It is almost certain that it is this prominent ridge which gave its name to the nearby stream.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁴ I am grateful to William Christison of Lawfield Farm (ELO), who notes himself as probably one of only five locals who would know the name of the stream, for discussing this issue with me. He confirms the local pronunciation as /og^əl/, describes it as a ‘slow stream’ and noted that he was

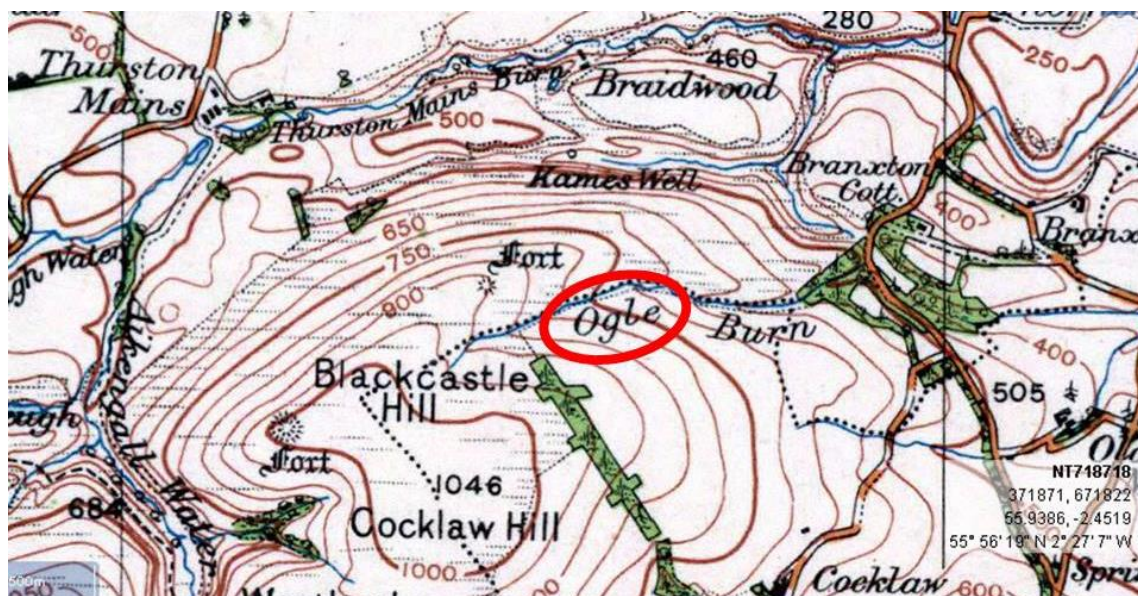


Figure 25 Ogle Burn⁶⁰⁵

Braes of Ogilvie (PER; NN 893 078) is located near to various ridges running northwards from the Ochil hills. This is evidently derived from an original settlement-name whose earliest attested form is *Oggoueli* (1172x1173, Barrow with Scott 1971, no. 136, 210).⁶⁰⁶ Watson (1926, 378) also notes *Ogeluin* (c. 1172). The first section may refer to the original Pictish / Brittonic realisation of the name of the Ochils,⁶⁰⁷ i.e. **Ogel*. Watson (loc. cit.) suggested that the second section represents a lenited form of /may/ 'open land', but this is not easily compatible with the first attestation noted above, unless it is particularly garbled. Minim confusion may be suspected in *Ogeluin* and this could, arguably, represent a fossilied(?) form of the dative of /may/, which would be /me(y)i/ or similar. Further research into the second section is required, but despite this uncertainty the location is at least quite compatible with a derivation from **ogel*.

very comfortable with the view that the stream may well have taken its name from the ridge (pers. comm. 6 November, 2012).

⁶⁰⁵ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=14&lat=55.9421&lon=-2.4456&layers=1250&point=-4.5095,57.6217>

⁶⁰⁶ Alternatively see Lindsay, Dowden & Thomson (1908, Appendix I, 153).

⁶⁰⁷ See below for the proposal that *Ochil* represents the Gaelic reflex of **Okelon*.

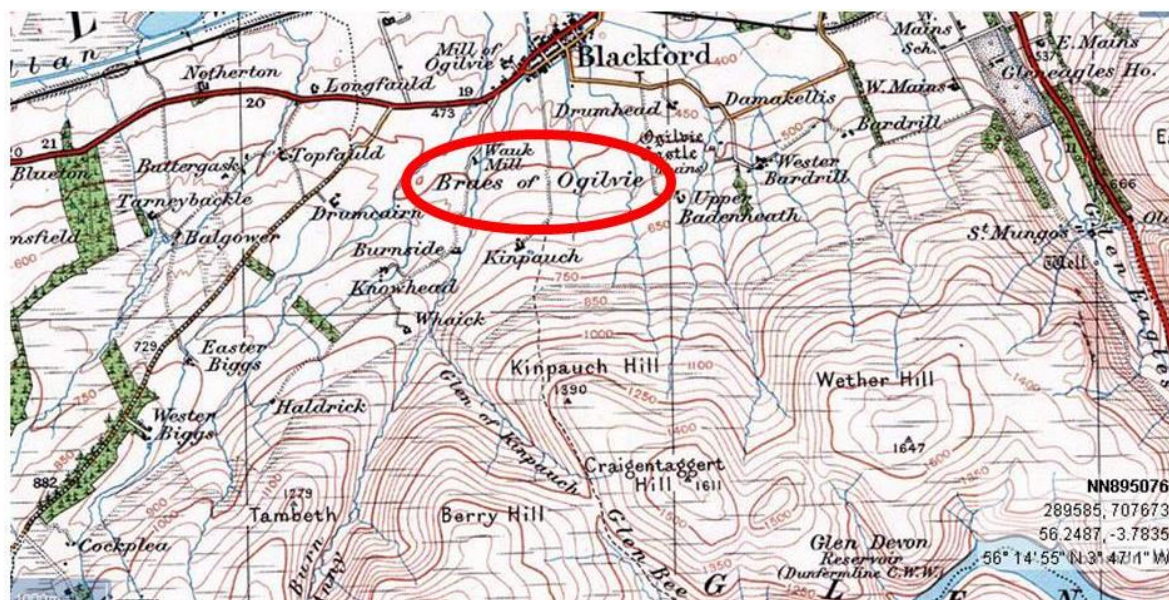


Figure 26 Braes of Ogilvie⁶⁰⁸

To the south of Glamis in Angus, there is (Glen) Ogilvie (NO 388 449). This would appear to be a secondary settlement name, the presumably referring to what is now noted as Carlunie Hill, a prominent elongated hill. The meaning of the second element is uncertain, but as above a fossilised dative form of /may/ is one candidate.

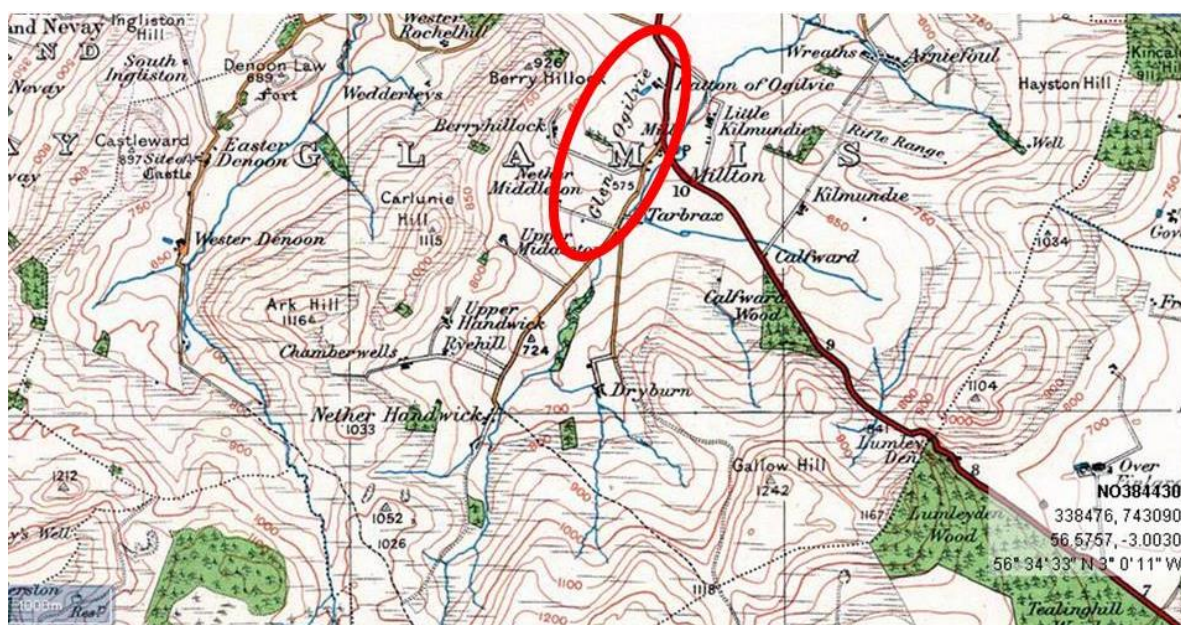


Figure 27 (Glen) Ogilvie⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=13&lat=56.2426&lon=-3.7808&layers=1250&point=4.5095,57.6217>

⁶⁰⁹ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=13&lat=56.5634&lon=-3.0197&layers=1250&point=4.6715,56.3482>

Also in Angus there is a Hill of Ogil (also Glen, Easter etc.; NO 440 610) a two-kilometre long hill rising steeply to twin peaks, the highest at 260 metres. On its eastern flank is the large farm of Soutra, possibly a Pictish name containing Pictish **trev* 'settlement'. This would appear to be a secondary name, the original presumably referring to a settlement.

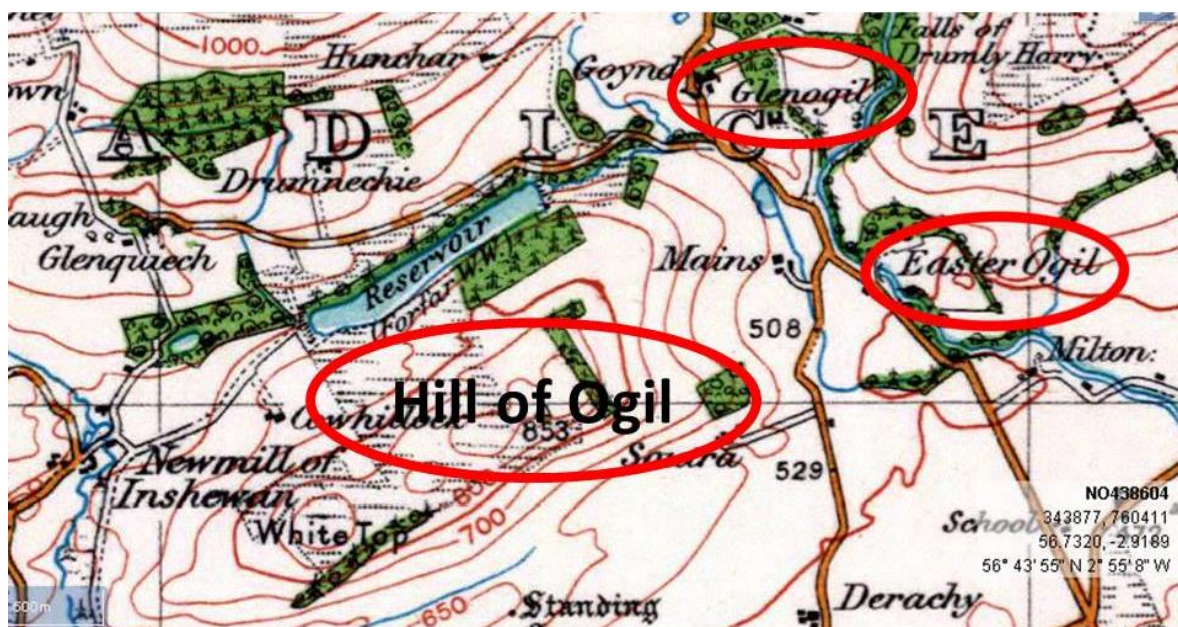


Figure 28 Hill of Ogil⁶¹⁰

Ogle Hill⁶¹¹ (PER; NN 969 114) is an elongated one kilometre long spur, which has evidence of an early defended site on it.⁶¹² It rises steeply to 306 metres.

⁶¹⁰ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991.
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=14&lat=56.7413&lon=-2.9163&layers=1250&point=-2.9125,56.6159>

⁶¹¹ Thomas Clancy informs me that this item and the Hill of Ogil (ANG) discussed below are both first attested very late, the former not even on the 1st edition OS maps where the latter occurs for the first time.

⁶¹² <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/26068/details/ogle+hill/>

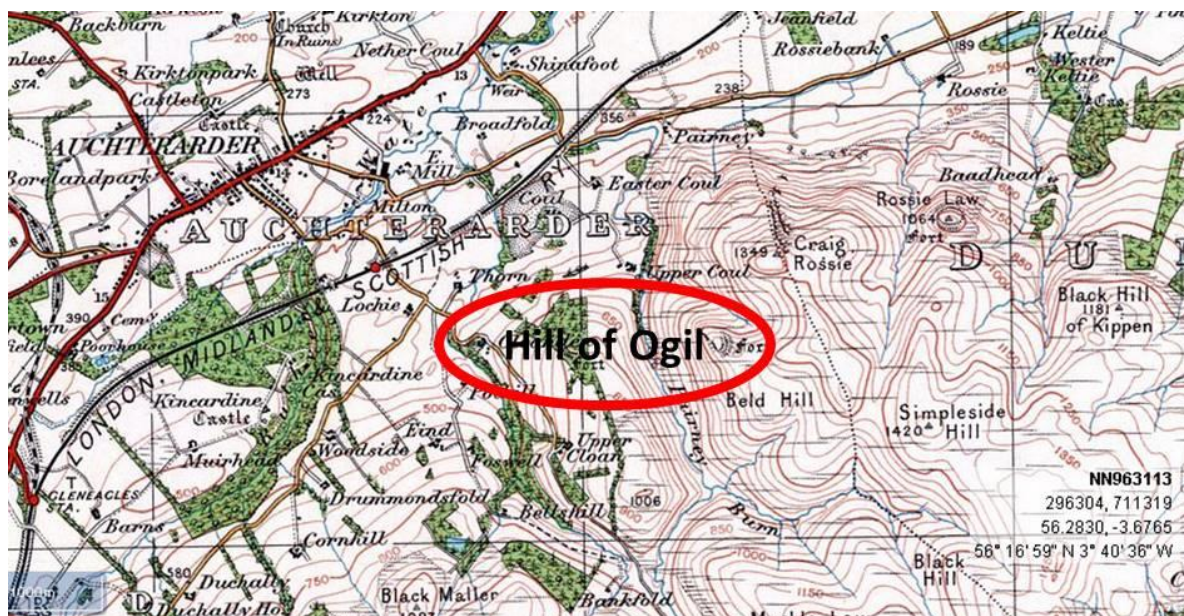


Figure 29 Ogle Hill⁶¹³

Oglegarth Wood (PER; NN 678 017) is located on a long, low but prominent three-peaked ridge rising to 115 metres.

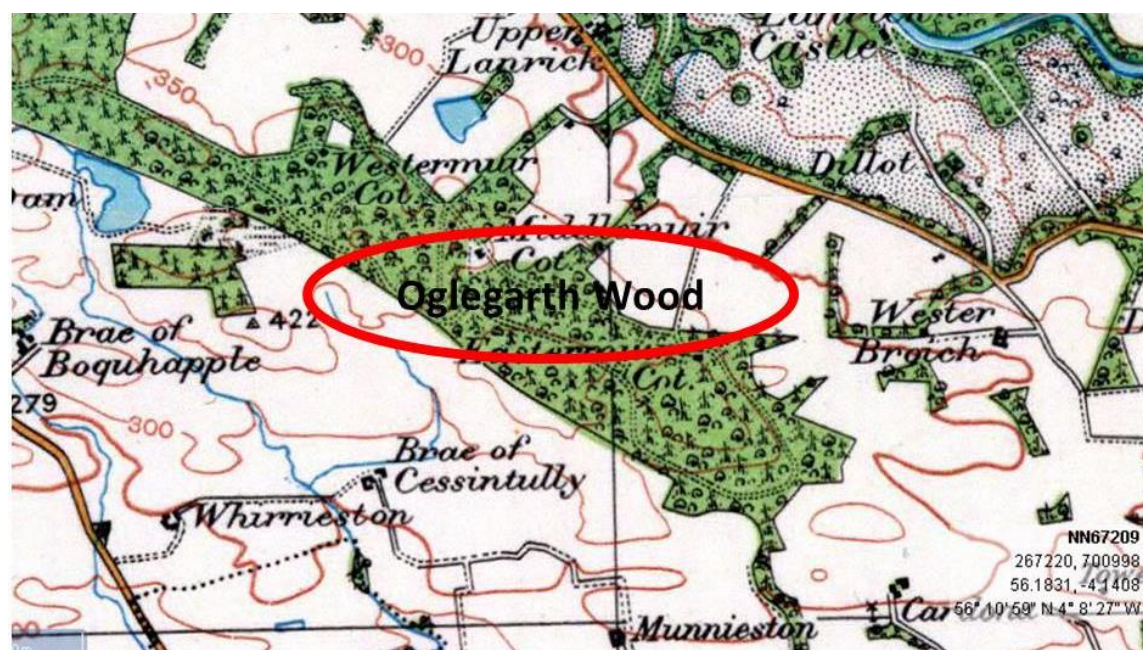


Figure 30 Oglegarth Wood

Ogle (CLA; NS 885 992) is the name now attached to the southern shoulder of Craighorn in the Ochils which rises steeply to 583 metres (Taylor 2011, 95).

⁶¹³ National Grid - 1:1250 - 1944-1991,
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/#zoom=13&lat=56.2886&lon=-3.6672&layers=1250&point=0,0>

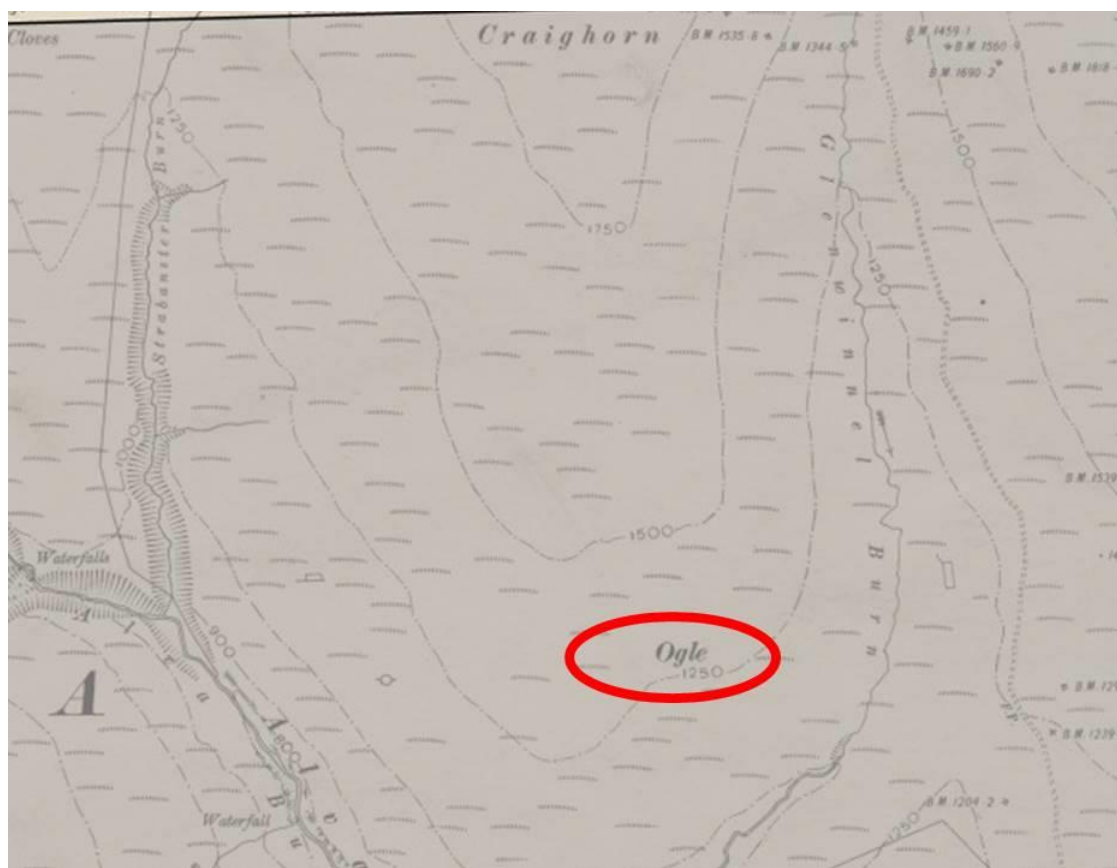


Figure 31 **Ogle (Ochils)**

Gleann Òguil (Glen Ogle; PER; NN 575 265) may derive its name from the Ogle Burn which flows southwards into Loch Earn in the Highlands but, unsurprisingly for a Highland glen, there is a long ridge to the east. Watson notes the first vowel as long - *Gleann Òguil* (Watson 1926, 378) and *Gleann Ògail* (ibid. 485) which would argue against a derivation from **Ogel*. A derivation from a suffixed river-name containing **og* 'lively' would be apt here, and glens frequently take their names from the rivers that flow down them. The earliest attestation discovered so far is *Glenogil* which occurs in the Exchequer Rolls (1456; vi, 277). See Watson (2002, 79-80) who notes various other forms. The phonetic transcription (in the digitised version) is /'og l/, with a space between the two consonants, which I assume that to represent a problem with the digitisation process. There is no indication, however, that the first vowel is long and this would support a derivation from **ogel* 'ridge'. Note that Watson follows earlier commentators, seeing this as from the Celtic /uxselo-/ 'high'.

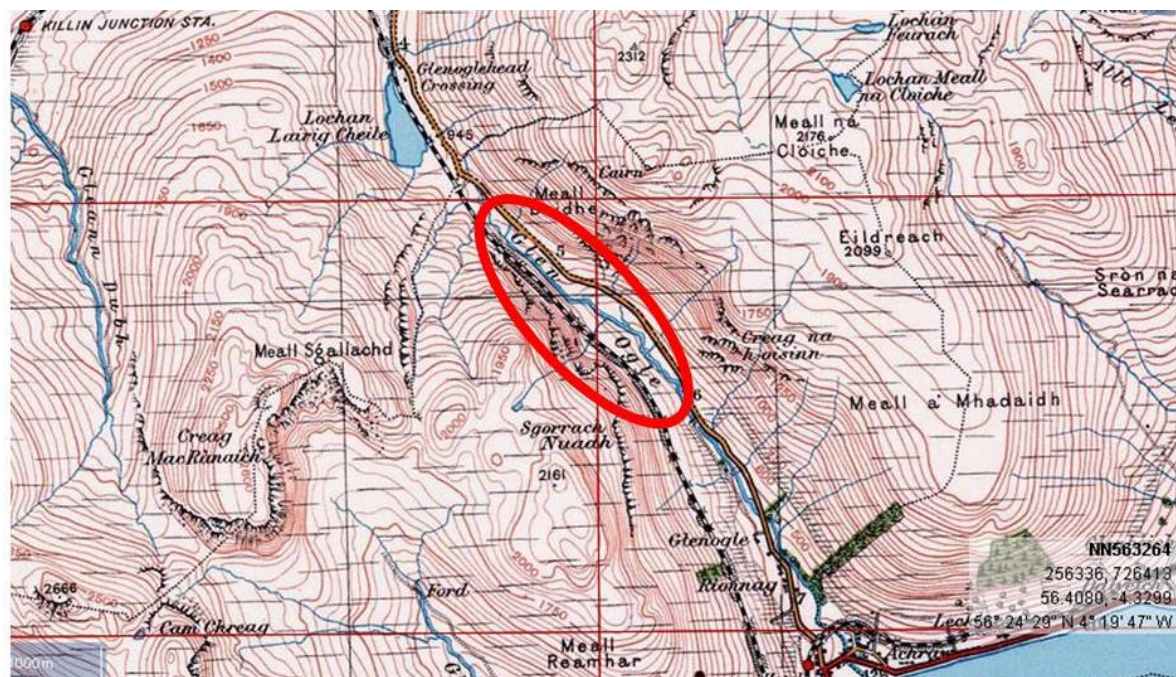


Figure 32 Glen Ogle

Ogilface Castle (WLO; NS 927 690) is on a sharp raised spur in an angle formed by a river and a stream and boasts a medieval castle which takes advantage of the steep slopes on two sides.



Figure 33 Ogilface Castle⁶¹⁴

⁶¹⁴ Wikimedia Commons.

Ogle Linn (DMF; NY 045 955) is itself in hilly country but could evidence *og.



Figure 34 Ogle Linn

Watson noted an ‘Ogilvie’ in Banffshire as occurring in the *RMS*⁶¹⁵ (1904, §395, 172). However, the *RMS* reference in 1655 is a grant to Patrick Lord Deskford and his heirs male ... of the lands and barony of Ogilvie. Sir Walter Ogilvie was created Lord Ogilvie of Deskford in 1616. This seems to be how the name Ogilvie became applied to this barony in Banffshire⁶¹⁶ and there seems to be no geographical feature immediately identifiable as a ridge. In fact it should be stressed that place-names commonly develop into surnames, some borne by eminent members of society and which may, in a worrying feedback loop, modify the spelling of the original place-names or coining new names. Ogilvy is a good example of such a surname.⁶¹⁷

There is also an Ogle Hill Head (& Ogle Dean) in Northumbria, but despite the possible attraction of the qualifying ‘Hill’ this is best rejected as Brittonic. It is admittedly on a longish piece of slightly raised ground between two streams but Ekwall derives it from a personal name ‘Ocga’s Hill’ (1960, 349) i.e. with the original name first contracted to *Hoggel* (1170) and *hill* reapplied later.

⁶¹⁵ *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum* ‘The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland’ (Stevenson & Dickson 1904)

⁶¹⁶ I am grateful to Gilbert Márkus for this information.

⁶¹⁷ See Black (1946, 635) for a discussion of this issue.

What is noticeable about many of these hills is that they are quite distinctive, steep-sided, stand-alone ridge-like hills with a narrow neck running between two or three well-delineated peaks. Also of some significance is the fact that two of the modern forms contain ‘hill’, Hill of Ogil and Ogle Hill, lending support to the view propounded here (though, of course, hills are also high!).

While not all of the above necessarily represent **ogel* they are phonetically inconsistent with a regular development from PrClt /owxselo-/, and are in clear conflict with the expected fricative reflex attested in *Ochiltree*. Note also that *Ochiltree* (WLO) is only about eleven kilometres away from *Ogilface* and two distinct reflexes of the same word within such close proximity to each other would require an explanation. This is therefore a strong indication that distinct lexical items are represented here, even though such a scenario is not conclusive evidence as differing trajectories can modify identical lexical items in distinct ways. Compare Cardiff, the standard form *Caerdydd* and the original *Caer-dyf* still known in the nearby valleys until recently (Owen & Morgan, 2007, 70). Thus at least three distinct forms were current a couple of generations ago in the same region. One also has to bear in mind that, given the Cumbrian expansion of the tenth century, we could very well have one early dialect variant attested side-by-side with a later distinct reflex.⁶¹⁸

Thus we have good evidence that an item, **ogel*, was almost certainly productive between the Lammermuir Hills and the Mounth in Brittonic / Pictish in the early medieval period, and that it is geographically consistent with a meaning ‘ridge’ or ‘spur’. In order to confirm this I would like to briefly explore the names in which **ogel* appears, as some occur in conjunction with another non-Germanic element.

3.7.4.4 Etymology of Accompanying Elements

The etymology or meaning of the accompanying elements of *ogel* names will not be discussed in great depth at this point, as these are not central to the current argument, but previous proposals will be summarised. A robust Brittonic

⁶¹⁸ See James (2008) for a discussion of the Brythonic linguistic impact of the Cumbrian Expansion.

etymology is clearly preferable in establishing that the generic represents Neo-Britt **ogel*.

The second element of Ogilvie (PER) may correspond to W *ma* (Neo-Britt **may*) ‘a piece of open land, a plain’ but it is not straightforward to square with the vowel and the 1239 form ‘Ogeluin’ (Watson 1926, 378).⁶¹⁹ This early attestation may evidence minim confusion and the it is thinkable that *-vie* could preserve a dat. form of **may* i.e. **mei* (vel sim.).⁶²⁰

(Ogel)garth⁶²¹ presumably corresponds to W *garth*² ‘field, close...; fort’ (GPC).⁶²² The second element in Ogilface (WLO) may represent lenited *maes* (< **mayes*) ‘open land’ even though the devoicing of the fricative (/v/ > /f/) is curious. Influence from Eng ‘face’ may be suspected.

There is no pressing need to resort to any language but Brittonic/Pictish to explain these names. Apart from Oykel these all attest a voiced intervocalic stop, consistent with Brittonic voicing in such contexts. The distribution of this element is interesting in that the northerly outlier, Oykel, is the only item with a voiceless velar. It may well reflect temporal or geographical variation in Gaelic, or it may be unrelated. It is noticable that four of the eleven items refer to watercourses and alternative etymologies for these will be considered below.

3.7.5 Oykel etc.

Let us now turn to the three items noted in the second column of the table above: *Strath Oiceil* (Oykel; ROS), *Gleann Òguil* (Glen Ogle; PER) and Ogle Linn (DMF). For various reasons a derivation from **ogel* ‘ridge’ is less appealing here. For example, they are closely related to river-names and there are some issues with both the intervocalic consonant and the vowel length.

⁶¹⁹ Black (1946, 635) notes *Ogguluin*, 1272x77. See above for other early attestations.

⁶²⁰ I’m grateful to Paul Russell for this suggestion.

⁶²¹ Note that the final fricative would conflict with Jackson’s view that stops following liquids were not lenited in Pictish. *Gart* > *garth* could represent post-Pictish development.

⁶²² For a discussion of the element *gart(h)* see McNiven (2007). The earliest attestations are at the end of the nineteenth century (Peter McNiven, pers. comm.). Note also that there is a homophonous W *garth*¹ ‘mountain ridge...; wooded slope’ (GPC) which could be relevant here.

It is highly unlikely that Strath (& River) Oykel represents a Pictish form of *uchel* as /k/, even if from /g/ is, as previously noted, an unlikely reflex of the PrClt cluster /xs/. It seems that Koch may have interpreted the early written form Strath-ochell (1490; Watson 1926, 209) as indicating an intervocalic fricative, /x/. The modern Gaelic form *Strath Oiceil*, the Norse *Ekkjall* and ‘Strath-okell’ of 1582 (Watson 1926, 209) demonstrate that the *ch* in non-Gaelic sources, as in Koch’s example, is ultimately a representation of /k/ or more accurately Gaelic [çk] (preaspirated /k/). There are no indications that Celtic /x/ or /xs/ would give /k/ or /g/ in Pritenic even if mediated by Gaelic or even Norse.

Counting against *uchel* is the fact that the river is no higher than most other highland rivers of comparable length. Indeed, it drains into the North Sea via the Kyle of Sutherland, as low as possible for a river. Neither does it seem to stand in apposition to any lower river. The river *Uxela* noted by Ptolemy might provide a precise parallel and Rivet & Smith do suggest that the meaning could be ‘noble’ or that the name refers to a divinity. ‘High Strath’ at first glance seems an eminently plausible toponym lending support to the proposal that this might indeed represent *uchel* but analogies make it more likely that the valley would take its name from a river than the reverse, as with *Dyffryn Ogwen*, *Cwm Rhondda*, Strathspey for example. Additionally, there seem to be no similar names in Wales or Brittany, with *uchel* used to qualify a term for a valley, such as *Cwm* or *Ystrad* or *Dyffryn Uchel*. The only fairly close analogue I am aware of is Strathmore (ANG; < G *mòr* ‘big’), and Strathmartine (ANG; < *Mártunn* ‘Martin’, Watson 1926, 291)⁶²³ which do provide examples of valleys which do not take their names from a river. Nevertheless, these issues probably allow us to discount this as a cognate of *uchel* and therefore it has no bearing on the vowel development under consideration here.

Whether or not Oykel represents a reflex of **ogel* is another issue as it seems less evident why a significant valley or a river which flows for over thirty five miles would take its name from a ridge. This is less problematic for the lesser streams, which often take their names from minor local features, and indeed it is almost certainly the explanation of the Ogle Burn of East Lothian. A convincing

⁶²³ I am grateful to Simon Taylor for reminding me of the relevance of these names.

alternative etymology to such items would help to dispel any lingering doubts that they could represent /owxselo-/.

A speculative alternative to some of these stream names is that they could be derived from Britt /ɔ:g/ ‘lively’, as in its antonym *diog* ‘lazy’ (*di-*, a negative prefix; OW *diauc*, GPC). This element is probably attested in *Afon Ogwen*⁶²⁴ (< *og+banw ‘pig(let)’, Owen & Morgan 2007, 354) and probably in various other rivers primarily in Wales such as *Oge*, *Ogwd*, *Ogwr*, (*Aber*)ogwrn and perhaps *Okement* in Devon⁶²⁵ (Thomas 1938, 81, s.v. *Ogwan*). One could propose the ‘diminutive’ suffix *-ell*, which is well attested in Welsh river-names e.g. *Ariannell* (DNB), *Budrell* (CVN) and also on the continent e.g. *Indella*, *Timella* (Thomas 1938, 92-102). In fact this would better correspond to the long vowel of *Gleann Òguil* (PER; Watson 1926, 378) as the vowel of a Neo-Brittonic /ɔ:gell/ would also have been long given the derivation from /a:k/.⁶²⁶ As Watson never places a length mark above the vowel of *Oiceil* (gen) this would count against a derivation from W *og (1926, 209; 2002, 57) and this is confirmed by *Oiceil*, the form in Dwelly’s dictionary (1911, 1024). One would also not expect either *ogel or /owxselo-/ to give the attested palatal velar. It might be wise to leave the etymology open, while maintaining scepticism as to this item’s derivation from /owxselo-/ and to reject it as valid evidence for the fate of /ow/ in Pictish.

The only other item to be considered is Ogle Linn (DMF; NY 045 955).

Unsurprisingly, there are numerous suitable hills or ridges in the vicinity and the specific *linn*, probably Scots for ‘torrent’, might support the notion that this could be *ogell ‘lively stream’. A derivation from Gaelic might be preferable, especially for a lesser watercourse, and two possibilities present themselves. Firstly, one might compare with *Allt Ogline*⁶²⁷ (PER) which King (2008, 137) noted as possibly derived from G *ògail* ‘adolescent, youthful’ (Mark 2004). Secondly, it might be worth considering a possible derivation from OGael *ocal* (& later *ogal*)

⁶²⁴ The e of *Ogwen* is a hypercorrection due to analogy with W *gwen*, the feminine equivalent of *gwyn* ‘white’.

⁶²⁵ Watts (2010, 450) notes this as ‘uncertain’ tacitly rejecting the interpretation of Ekwall who saw it as derived from Britt. /ɔ:k/ (1928, 308).

⁶²⁶ The final (post-tonic) vowel <u> of the Gaelic form simply represents schwa and is not an indicator of the Pictish vowel. One might have expected a palatised intervocalic velar, as in *Strath Oiceil*, but this may have been borrowed late enough to avoid this process.

⁶²⁷ Further research is required to explain the *-ine*.

‘impetuous, violent’ (LEIA O-5). The former would provide an appealing explanation of the long vowel in *Ògul* (genitivised in *Gleann Òguil*). This could also provide an explanation for Glen Ogle.

If all of these items refer to **ogel* ‘ridge’ then the distribution of **ogel* would encompass areas from the Moray Firth eastwards to south-west Scotland. If one disallows the names of watercourses, which could have an alternative etymology, **ogel* would be exclusive to areas south of the Mounth down to the Lothians an area straddling the Ochils. It is clear that **ogel* ‘promontory’ was not used exclusively in Pictland, and can not be termed an exclusively ‘Pictish’ word. How many other examples of **ogel* have been lost cannot be established, therefore any comments regarding the distribution of this item rests on incomplete evidence. We have no information on where ‘early Pictish’ may have been spoken and we cannot disprove a consideration that the area from the Lammermuir Hills to the Mounth may have constituted a dialect area in the early sixth century or so. The core issue here is that these do not represent cognates of *W uchel* and consequently they cannot be used as evidence for the sound change under discussion. The crux of this discussion is the name *Ochils* which, as it stands, might seem closer in form to /ʊ:xel/ ‘high’ but perhaps closer in meaning to **ogel* ‘ridge’.

3.7.6 Ochil

3.7.6.1 Introduction



Figure 35 **The Ochils (1)** ⁶²⁸

The Ochils are, at some fifty miles long, ‘one of the most dramatic and conspicuous hill-ranges in southern Scotland’ (Taylor 2010, 53). Drummond notes that ‘[f]rom a distance they rear up from the Forth plains with the steep line of an approaching ocean breaker’ (2007, 168).

⁶²⁸ Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 36 The Ochils from Stirling Castle⁶²⁹

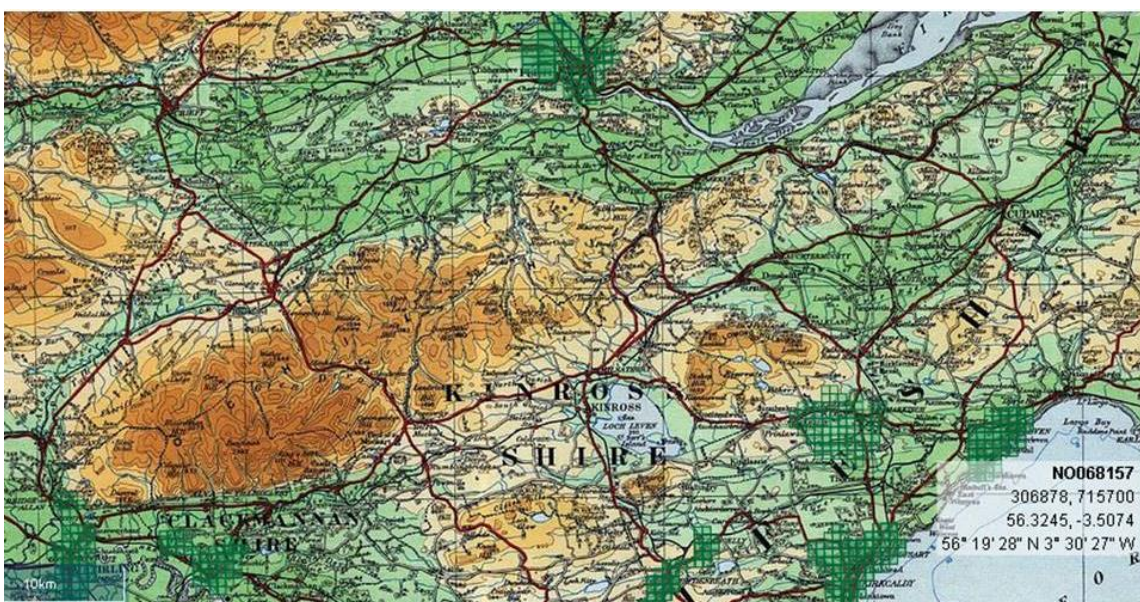


Figure 37 The Ochils (2)⁶³⁰

The first to equate *Ochil* with *uchel* seems to have been Johnston in the first edition of his *Place-names of Scotland* (1892, 192, s.n. *Ochil Hills*). A fuller discussion is to be found in the significantly updated edition of 1934 where it was erroneously claimed that the Ravenna Geographer refers to the Ochils as ‘Cindocellun’ (1934, 264), the location of which is still uncertain though it may be in Scotland (Rivet & Smith 1979, 208). Importantly, Johnston recognised that on the continent there were ‘hill-ranges called by the Romans *Ocellum*, which must be Celt.’ (1934, 264). However, he did not reach the conclusion that this could represent a different word from *uchel*. His derivation was followed by

⁶²⁹ Wikimedia Commons.

⁶³⁰ From Google Maps.

Watson (1926, 209), Watson (1995), Drummond (2007, 167-8) and also by Taylor with Márkus (2010, 53-54). The latter also noted a possible derivation from **ogel* (Taylor with Márkus 2011, 92 & fn 46). There are however various non-trivial objections to a derivation from */owxselo-/*.

Jackson (1955, 165) considered the */x/* of *Ochil* problematic as he had proposed that the reflex of Brittonic */xs/* in Pictish may have been */s/*, hence the expected form would have been **o:sel*. As noted above, he gets around this discrepancy by proposing that the name had been mediated by speakers of Brittonic, but this would leave a dubious hybrid form with a Pritenic vowel but a Brittonic consonant. Koch got around the problematic */x/* by positing this as an ‘occasional change’, an unsatisfactory and *ad hoc* solution (1983, 215). In any case the proposal that */xs/* evolved to */s/* in Pritenic can be questioned. The equation with *uchel* however does require a distinct treatment of PrClt */ow/*, and as this seems not to be convincingly or consistently confirmed elsewhere this is reason enough to justify further research.

A significant non-phonemic objection is that, as it stands, the oronym *Ochil* would represent a simple, monothematic adjective. Two possible solutions which would allow the maintenance of a derivation from **owxselo-* will be discussed below.

A place-name consisting of a simple adjective would be highly suspect in Brythonic toponymy. There are no examples of such a phenomenon in BLITON and I know of no similar examples in Welsh, Breton, Cornish or in Brittonic names in England.⁶³¹ There seem to be no instances of a Brittonic adjective, such as *isel* ‘low’, *mawr* ‘big’, *bach* ‘small’ or *hir* ‘long’ surviving into English or Gaelic as place-names unaccompanied by a generic element. It is not difficult to imagine why, as referring to a feature as ‘the big’ or ‘the windy’ would invite provision of a generic i.e. ‘The windy what... hill or hollow?’. Such qualifiers are usually contrastive but why would such a unique feature as the Ochils require disambiguation by an adjective meaning ‘high’? Would *uchel* not be obsolete in such a context?

⁶³¹ There are none in Padel (1985), Owen & Morgan (2007) and I cannot find any examples in other works on Welsh toponymy.

The two possible solutions are that either *uchel* did become substantivised in Pictland, or that a generic such as a Pictish cognate of *mynydd* or *drum* has been lost at some point. As discussed above there is no evidence whatsoever to justify a claim that *uchel* shifted its lexical category to a noun and any theory that argues this without further evidence would appear as special pleading.

It is possible that *uxelum* (Ptolemy & Ravenna), perhaps the name of Ward Law (DMF), represents a substantivised adjective and would lend support to the *uchel* argument. However, we cannot be sure that this represents the full local Celtic name, rather than a form modified by or for a Roman audience (Rivet & Smith 1979, 483-84). As previously noted the adjective *uhel* has been substantivised in Breton where it is commonly used for ‘a high place’. Therefore, it might be wise not to entirely lose sight of this possibility. We must therefore focus on the second consideration, the loss of a generic and see whether there are sufficient parallels to enable us to argue this case.

Thomas Clancy (pers. comm.) has cautiously noted the similarity of the Scottish territorial names Buchan and Marr to the specifics of the contrastive Welsh commote names *Cantref Bychan* and *Cantref Mawr* (the adjectives *small* and *large* respectively). Such forms would have had to have lost their generics at some point. However this appealing proposal can be questioned due to the earliest forms of Marr being inconsistent with the probable Pictish reflex of PrClIt /ma:ro-/ (W *mawr*) which would probably be /mɔ:r/. For example, the same vowel is attested in PrClIt *pɔ:r ‘pasture’ (W *pori* ‘to graze’)⁶³² which gives Gael *pòr* ‘seed, grain, crops’ indicating that the Pictish form at the time of borrowing was /pɔ:r/. Additionally, there is a Pictish epithet *Morleo*⁶³³ attested in the PKL which might represent *mawr+llyw* ‘rudder’, metaphorically ‘leader’ (MidW (l)yw, OC *leu*; Falileyev 2000, 105, s.v. *liuou*). Alternatively this may evidence OGael *leo* ‘limb’ (eDIL). The Gaelic term *mormaer* is apparently a survival from Pictish /mɔ:r/+ /majr/⁶³⁴ ‘great steward’ (Jackson, 1972, 102-9) unless it does derive from /mor/ ‘sea’, a proposal which has recently been revived by Dauvit

⁶³² James (2012, s.v. *pōr*) notes this as a borrowing from Lat *pars* which is phonetically irregular. Pokorny (1956, 87).

⁶³³ I suspect that the epithet *Morbet* is irrelevant as it may be Gaelic containing *beud* ‘mischief, hurt’ (Macbain 1911, 34), OGael *bét* (LEIA B-44).

⁶³⁴ Note that this is credibly seen as a borrowing from Lat *major*, also borrowed into Irish.

Broun (forthcoming). It seems preferable on phonetic grounds to seek an alternative to this consideration. Due to the above discussions it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the interpretation so far proposed for Ochil must be considered somewhat suspect.

On the other hand, the survival of simplex nouns is mundane as such items disambiguate places in a local context e.g. *bryn* ‘hill’ (Bryn; LNC), *craig* ‘rock’ (Crake; LNC), *drws* ‘door, gap’ (Truss Gap; WML), *Dyffryn* (GLA), *pant* ‘hollow’ (Pant; AYR), *afon* ‘river’ (Avon; numerous) or *mynydd* ‘mountain’ (Mounth; Scotland). From an analogical point of view it would be preferable to derive Ochil from a noun. Let us now turn our attention to an alternative explanation which might enable derivation of Ochil from the noun **okelon* and investigate this place-name thoroughly.

Koch noted three of the earliest attestations of Ochil:

1. Okhél (Latin *Life of St Serf*; Macquarrie 1993, 140; 13 cent.).
2. *sliab n-Ocel* (*Book of Ballymote*, RIA MS 23 P 12, 214b; c. 1400).⁶³⁵
3. *Catochil* (Watson 1926, 209; 1507).

Taylor (2011, fn 45, 92) suggested that the second element of *Catochil*, which is on the northern flanks of the Ochils, may in fact contain the name of the hills themselves. At the very least it is possible that whatever the underlying form, it has been influenced by the name Ochil and therefore cannot be considered an independent witness to a reflex of PrClt /owxselo-/. The same can be said for Rossie Ochil, also nearby, which Watson (1926, 209) noted, but was not discussed by Koch. Consequently, the evidence for this proposed Pritenic conservatism rests on one place-name alone, but the two earliest attestations *Okhél* and *Ocel* require commentary as their actual forms are crucial to this discussion.

⁶³⁵ <http://www.isos.dias.ie/english/index.html>

3.7.6.2 **Okhél (Latin *Life of St Serf*)**

Okhel occurs in the *Vita Sancti Servani* (Macquarrie 1993, 140), a Latin saint's Life composed in the thirteenth century, and probably copied from an earlier Life penned in Glasgow before c. 1180 (ibid. 122). It certainly refers to the Ochils as the latter part of the Life is centered on Fife, it notes various other place-names in the vicinity and this is conclusively confirmed by references to the actual location of the hills. Many names in this work, such as *Fif* (Fife), *Kinel* (Kinneil), *Tuligbotuan* (Tullibody), are close to their Gaelic forms and *Okhel* is best understood as a name from such a linguistic context. This is not problematic given the probable predominance of Gaelic in the Glasgow area and in its ecclesiastical organisation in the twelfth century,⁶³⁶ not to mention the region where the Life is located. It is only in this place-name that the grapheme *k(h)* occurs for this name and it is not possible to ascertain whether this represents /k/, /x/ or even /g/. It may be just possible that this represents an underlying *ogel.

3.7.6.3 **Sliab nOcel**

Sliab nOcel is attested in some versions of an Irish genealogical tract concerning *The Mothers of the Saints* (Macquarrie 1993, 124) and would appear to represent the authentic early Goidelic name for the Ochils. The form noted above occurs in the *Book of Lecan* (fo. 43 bb; Anderson 1922, 127) and is confirmed by the Book of Ballymote. It is in the accusative following OGael *eter* 'between'. In the word *Cruithnech* 'Picts' which occurs in the same sentence /x/ is represented by *ch* and it seems very probable that the *c* represents /g/ which is the usual representation of the phoneme in OGael (Thurneysen 1946, §31, 22). A plausible interpretation is that this could well represent an early Goidelic form for this place-name, phonemically practically identical to a Pictish *ogel. Some caution is appropriate when relying on a place-name embedded in a hagiographical work copied into an Irish manuscript composed c. 1390, however the preservation of the accusative marker 'n-' is indicative of copying from an old source.

To conclude it seems possible that we may have here the attestation of a form which represents Pictish/ Brittonic *ogel 'ridge,' rather than /o:xel/ 'high'. If

⁶³⁶ For a discussion of such issues see Broun (2004).

this were the case then the previously adduced evidence for Pritenic /ow/ > /o:/ would vanish. How then could one reasonably explain the modern form with a voiceless velar fricative /x/?

3.7.7 The Ochils - New Proposal

It is the medial fricative of Ochils which attracted a derivation from the proposed ‘Pictish’ /o:xel/ ‘high’. This is realised today as /(ðə)ˈoxəlz/ (Taylor 2010, 54) and reflects a medieval Scots pluralisation (Simon Taylor, pers. comm.) presumably due to envisaging the feature as a series of separate hills. Indeed, Walter Scott uses the older form ‘Ochill Mountains’ in *Rob Roy* published in 1811.⁶³⁷ It may well be that *Ochils* is a contraction of such forms with the plural of the generic being transferred to the contracted form *Ochil*.⁶³⁸ Close parallels would be the Cullins (Skye)⁶³⁹ and the Cairngorms, the former vacillating between a pluralised form and the latter not used as a singular.⁶⁴⁰

Explaining the first vowel of Ochils and its historical attestations as a reflex of Clt */owxselo-/ requires the positing of a distinct but plausible vocalic conservatism, whereas an origin from */ogel/ is straightforward as it requires no such change. The attested short initial vowel corresponds better to * *ogel* but this is probably of no consequence here as a long /o:/ would have been shortened in initial position in Scots.

The Ochils represent the stand-alone ridge *par excellence* of Scotland, if not Britain. Let us assume that it was generally known as *Okelon* in the Roman period i.e. ‘The Ridge’. As it is such a significant feature in terms of both its visual impact and its geographical and territorial relevance it would undoubtedly have been familiar to groups at some distance. Whether or not Goidelic represents an indigenous development in Argyll is uncertain but it is likely that this place-name would have been known there and further afield. There are various routes from Argyll to Fife either along the Forth-Clyde divide or along the low pass of Glen Dochart to Loch Tay for example. Were this form current in

⁶³⁷ I am grateful to Pete McNiven for drawing my attention to this.

⁶³⁸ Quoted from Duncan (1998, 370).

⁶³⁹ See Drummond (1991, 82) for attestations and a brief discussion of this issue.

⁶⁴⁰ I am grateful to Richard Cox for drawing my attention to this.

Goidelic before Brittonic lenition (second half of the fifth century) and Goidelic spirantisation (beginning of the fifth century, McCone 1996, 91) the regular reflex in Goidelic would be **oxel*, eventually spelt ‘ochel’ etc. It may have been borrowed simply as a place-name much as ‘The Cefn’ (‘ridge’; GLA) in Wales or ‘The Ben’ for Ben Nevis’. In educated circles, and perhaps colloquially, Britons and Gaels regularly substitute their native forms for cognate names such as *Fergus / Urgust* or *Oengus / Vngust*, *Feradach / Wredech*. The multi-ethnic and multi-lingual environment of various monasteries, where ecclesiasts would be exposed to speakers of Old English, Pictish, Old Gaelic, Brittonic and familiar with numerous and diverse Latin texts would provide an appealing context for such an awareness to develop and be maintained.

Interestingly however Paul Tempan⁶⁴¹ has recently drawn my attention to names of hills in Ulster which resemble *W uchel*. I suggest that these could represent Goidelic reflexes of **okelon* and if so then the Ochils could indeed represent a true cognate rather than an adaptation. Another place-name that might be relevant here is Achail (Eng *Aughils*) in County Kerry (Ireland) which is indeed located on the south side of a very prominent ridge stretching along the isthmus of the Dingle Peninsula.⁶⁴² Moreover, the meaning is noted as ‘unclear’ by Logainm.⁶⁴³ One might also wish to further investigate the island Acaill⁶⁴⁴ (Eng *Achail*; Mayo) which is also characterised by a distinctive long ridge.

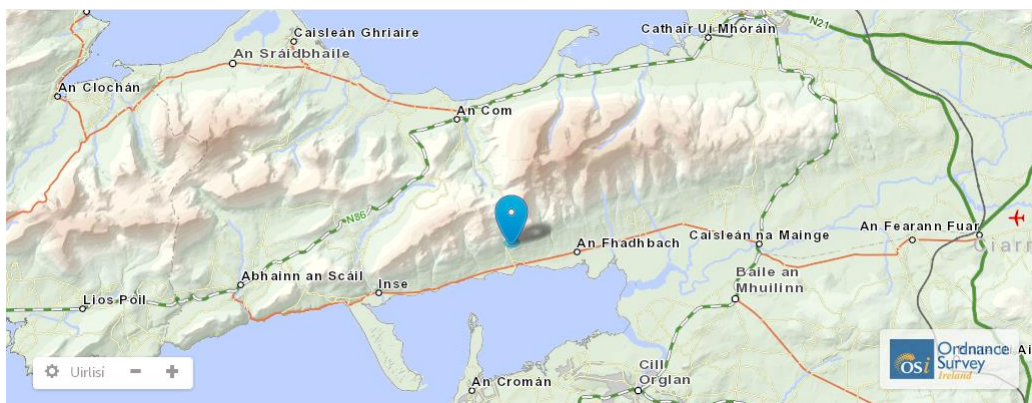


Figure 38 Achill (Aughills). The Dingle Peninsula, Éire

⁶⁴¹ It is hoped that this issue will soon appear in print or on-line. Dr Paul Tempan is a Research Fellow working part-time at the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project, maintaining and editing the online database: <http://www.placenamesni.org>.

⁶⁴² I am grateful to Muiris Mag Ualghraig for drawing my attention to this place-name.

⁶⁴³ <http://www.logainm.ie/en/22727?s=achail>

⁶⁴⁴ <http://www.logainm.ie/en/36851>

No comment is here made on an etymology.

Alternatively, the spirantisation could reflect a similar process perhaps attested in names like *Keith* < /kɛ:d/ ‘wood’ or *Muireabh* (cf. *W moreb* ‘sea-shore’) where P-Celtic stops appear as fricatives in their Gaelic reflexes. It is uncertain whether this is a process which occurs in Pictish, during transmission or later in Gaelic. To conclude we may have two competing forms for the Ochils. Firstly *Ogel*, attested in early sources which could be a faithful reflex of Pictish or Brittonic **ogel* and secondly a Gaelicised alternative **Ochel*.

As a further indication that the Ochils simply mean ‘Ridge’ one could note the similarity with the ‘Mounth’, the central massif of the Highlands, whose name is derived from a Brittonic/Pictish **/monið/* ‘mountain’. In fact, it is conceivable that the names of Mounth and Ochils were defined in relation to each other, referring to the ‘mountain’ and the ‘ridge’ respectively. Additionally, recent research in Kinross-shire indicates that the large plain which forms the core of that county was originally designated as ‘Maw’⁶⁴⁵ < PrClIt **magos* ‘plain’, attested in Mawcarse, Mawhill and Mawmill.⁶⁴⁶ We may have a third generic contributing to this trio: Ridge, Plain and Mountain.⁶⁴⁷ It is only when there are no equivalent or competing geographical features that a simplex noun requires no disambiguating specifier. The Ochils represent a Gaelic form derived from PrClIt **okelon* and therefore do not provide evidence for a Pictish development of /ow/ > /o:/.

3.7.8 Other Attestations of /ow/

All this may be very well, but the argument could fail were other items demonstrated to evidence /o:/ from /ow/, therefore we move into the second part of this discussion. Assured attestations of PrC /ow/ in Pictland are hard to come by and open to questioning due to issues of orthographic interpretation and transmission. Of the items noted above one might note the Latheron *ogham* inscription DŪnNOD- if it represents a borrowing from the Latin PN *Dōnatus*, as Lat *ō* fell in with Britt /o:/ from /ow/. This could be interpreted as indicating

⁶⁴⁵ Presumably gaelicised.

⁶⁴⁶ See the *Place-names of Kinross-shire* (Taylor with McNiven and Williamson), forthcoming.

⁶⁴⁷ I am grateful to Pete McNiven for discussing this item with me and to Thomas Clancy for suggesting the relationship.

/o:/ > /u:/ but our limited understanding of the *ogham* inscriptions of Pictland necessitates extreme caution with any conclusions, in particular as there are alternative approaches to this item (Forsyth 1996, 372).

The only items that I am aware of that probably contain one of the relevant items listed above are the three river-names Lunan Water (ANG, *Inuerlunan*, 1250x1259), Lunan († PER, *Lownan*, 1372; *ow* = /u:/) and Luan (NAI, *Lunnin*). King (2007) has argued that these ultimately derive from PrC **lowk-*, a root which is very common in Britt river-names. These better correspond to /u:/ rather than to the supposed Pictish /o:/ but issues of linguistic mediation and complications with the proposed phonetic evolution of these suffixed roots make caution advisable. Also at issue is whether these could have been coined in Gaelic.

The personal name *Bubon* which occurs in *Canu Aneirin* (B².27; Williams 1938, 339) may represent a personal name derived from **bow-* (Koch 1997, 136) and as he is noted as from *tra merin iodeo* ‘over the Firth of Forth’ he is presumably from an area which was later understood as Pictland. The *u* is consistent with Neo-Brittonic /u:/ but, as the name occurs in a Brittonic text, assimilation to local Brittonic phonology would be expected.⁶⁴⁸ There are also various scholars who argue that this text is a later Welsh composition rather than an authentic sixth-century Northern Brittonic work (e.g. Padel 2013).

There are various names in Pictland such as Rothket (ABD) or Rothmaise (ABD; + **mayes* ‘plain’; Watson 1926, 377), Rothas (BNF; Taylor 2011, 107) and Rothie (ibid.) which might be considered as evidencing PrClt **rowdo-* ‘red’ but a derivation from OGael *rá(i)th* ‘mound, fort’ (LEIA R-9), or a Pictish cognate seems equally plausible, as suggested by Watson and Taylor. If from **rowdo-* (> OW /r̥u:ð/) ‘red’ then the vowel would lend some support to /ow/ > /o:/, but note that the expected /ð/ appears as /θ/ and the vowel appears to be short.⁶⁴⁹ This derivation is therefore uncertain.

⁶⁴⁸ Note that this name occurs in a line where /u:/ is also represented by *o iodeo* which is probably derived from Neo-Britt /j̥u:ð/ ‘lord’.

⁶⁴⁹ I have not yet been able to access native or local pronunciations of these names.

A derivation from a Pictish cognate of OGael *rá(i)th* (LEIA R-9) would not be straightforward, as one would expect /rɔ:d/.⁶⁵⁰ A voicing of a final fricative could be attested in the numerous Keith names (< /kɛ:d/). OGael *roth* ‘wheel’ is formally appealing but semantically less so. Watson (1926, 387-88) noted the similarity between the numerous variants of Ruthven and W *rhuddfaen* ‘redstone’ but concluded that ‘the name is almost certainly G. *ruadh-mhaighin*, ‘red spot,’ ‘red place’. If so such names would be of no consequence here. On the other hand if they are P-Celtic then they would appear to support a similar development.⁶⁵¹ The interpretation of names in *Roth-* is unclear, but a variant of G *rath* seems the least problematic in most cases perhaps influenced by P-Celtic /rɔ:d/.⁶⁵² The least evident is Rothmaise which appears to have a Britt specific.

It is also necessary to mention the place-name *Crog Reth* (VC 47a) which occurs in Adomnán’s early eighth century *Life of Columba*. This is almost certainly the *Cruach* on the boundary of Argyllshire (Watson 1926, 78). The first element is a derivative of PrClt /krowko-/ ‘heap, hill’ and the spelling as *Crog* could therefore be taken as supporting Jackson’s suggestion. Anderson & Anderson (1961, 159) argue that this ‘would show that a N.B. [Northern British] *crōg* then retained the long *o* that before Adomnán’s time had in South British changed to long *ū*’ (/u:/). This is seen as confirming Jackson’s view.

An objection to this interpretation, which the authors note, is that ‘this would be the only instance in the *Life of Columba* of a non-spirant *g* preceded by a vowel’ and that the ‘spelling with *g* instead of *c* is unusual.’ Indeed *g* is often employed for a fricative /x/ as in *feradaig* (ms A), which in the manuscript B₂ is attested as *feradachi* (VC 5b, 190 fn 7), the *-i* here representing the Lat. gen. sg. suffix. *Feradach* was a relatively common name throughout the medieval period (Ó Corráin & Maguire 1981, 96) and is composed with the suffix *-ach* /-ax/ (Russell 1990, 146). Note also that the second element *reth* evidences a final consonantal digraph which is difficult to square with a Pictish /-d/ unless one wishes to propose /-t/ > /-θ/ in Pictland by the early eighth century.

⁶⁵⁰ Probably not ‘roth’ as noted by Taylor (2006, 93).

⁶⁵¹ Note that names of the ‘Rother’ type in the Old North (e.g. Rutherglen, LAN) may be from the intensifying prefix **rō-* + *duβr* ‘water, river’ (James, 2012, s.vv.) rather than from **rowdo-*.

⁶⁵² See LEIA R-9 (s.v. *ráth*), Matasović (2009, 139, s.v. **frāti-*) and James (2013, 48, fn 136) for further discussions.

Alternatively, if indeed this is a form derived from PrClt /ratis/ ‘heather’ (LEIA R-5, s.v. *raith*), as is almost certain given the nearby Rannoch Moor (Gael *Raithneach*), this might indicate that the spelling owes more to Gaelic than to P-Celtic. In that case *crog* is in all probability a representation of prediphthongised Goid /kro:x/ and is therefore irrelevant to our discussion. Perhaps the authors were, in this instance, drawn to a different conclusion due to Jackson’s proposal.

3.7.8.1 Counterarguments

It could be argued on the basis of the three Ochiltree names that the preservation of /o:/ was a more general northerly conservatism.⁶⁵³ However, as the historical attestations of these place-names vacillate between *o* and *u* this is tricky to employ as evidence either way. The consistency in the modern forms of these three place-names may be due to the fame of the prestigious bearers of the title Lord Ochiltree, a peerage now extinct. One prominent bearer was, Michael Ochiltree (d. 1445x7), bishop of Dunblane (DNB).⁶⁵⁴ Such issues are reminders that place-names need to be approached cautiously when mining them for precise phonetic issues.

James (2013) discussed the fate of this diphthong in Northern Brittonic drawing attention to apparently conflicting evidence such as Logie Braes and Luggie Burn (WLO; < PrClt /lu:g/). The former, however, may rather reflect a Pictish word for a church, adopted from Lat *locus* (Taylor 2012, 429, s.v. *loc*; Clancy 2008, 377-8). The two items containing *och*, noted above which may contain /u:x/ (W *uwch*) ‘higher’ are too uncertain to provide more than cautious supplementary evidence.

3.7.9 Conclusion

The case presented here is that there was a common noun **okelon* used fairly extensively in Celtic place-nomenclature. The ridge *par excellence* of northern Britain was at some early point known as **Okelon*, and the name of this imposing feature would have been familiar to groups at some distance. This common noun

⁶⁵³ See BLITON (s.v. *ūchel*), James (2013) and Black (1946, 634) for attestations.

⁶⁵⁴ Note also that there are both a county and town in Texas named after a prominent settler and judge of the name William Beck Ochiltree

fell out of use in Early Medieval Celtic languages apart from some areas of Northern Britain where it continued in use as *ogel*. It may have survived into the OGael period in northern Ireland. Amongst speakers of Goidelic the name survived as *Ochel* (i.e. the Ridge). This remained the name of this massive spur during the expansion of Goidelic and was the form which was ultimately borrowed into English / Scots. What the Britons and Picts called it is uncertain but it may well have been the *Ogel*.⁶⁵⁵ The evidence adduced by Jackson for this sound-change is invalid, but there is little good evidence for the fate of this diphthong in Pictland.

⁶⁵⁵ A cautious approach is taken here primarily due to the fact that a satellite ridge of the Craighorn (CLA) on this range is called 'Ogel', and it would be puzzling to find an *ogel* on the *Ogel*.

3.8 Section 8: /-jos/ > -ei

3.8.1 Introduction

Koch proposed that the PrClt stem suffix *-jo* developed in Pictish to *-ei*, contrasting with Brittonic where all such case endings were lost c. 450 (Sims-Williams 1990, 245-48):

I note finally that the Pictish personal name which appears as *Bru(i)de* in Irish sources, *Bridius* in Bede, and *Bridei*, *Bredei* in the least Gaelicized portions of the King List. Anderson and Anderson have plausibly derived this from a *io*-stem formation **Brodios* or **Brudios*, in which case the termination evolved in Pritenic through *-ejos* (or *-ejas* or *-ejəs*) to *-ei*. Such a development is most reminiscent of Irish and sharply unlike Britt. The ‘umlaut’ of the vowel in the first syllable *does*, however, look rather like a Neo-Britt. vowel affection. (1983, 217)

The proposal that Pictish, like Goidelic, maintained a reflex of a stem suffix and therefore a remnant of case-marking is of some importance. Koch rightly noted that it would fall well ‘outside the common parameters defining Brittonic’ (1983, 217) and such a morphological conservatism could have significant bearing on the categorisation of Pictish as a distinct language. Here I will argue that there is no need to resort to a preserved stem suffix to explain the final two vowels and that this name, rather than indicating distinctiveness, could suggest significant co-evolution with Brittonic.

3.8.2 The Personal Name *Bredei*⁶⁵⁶

The evidence adduced for this proposal was limited to a single personal name, *Bredei* (& *Bridei*), attested in its (presumably) Pictish form several times in the fourteenth-century ‘Poppleton’ manuscript (SL1). This is extremely thin for generalisation and no corroborative evidence was called upon. In fact, the development *-jos* through *-ejos* to *-ej* seems to be a somewhat *ad-hoc* rule

⁶⁵⁶ One note of caution to be sounded is that this name may not be as Pictish as generally assumed. It is true that the first attestation is in Pictland, as the name of the king visited by Columba, but this occurs in gaelicised form. Interestingly the name also occurs as the son of a king of Strathclyde *Bredei son of Beli*, the victor at the Battle of Nechtansmere. Perhaps the name was simply a general northerly Brittonic one.

designed to account for the discrepancy between corresponding forms in different languages: Goidelic *Brude*, Pictish *Bredei*.

One further and striking difficulty with the argument is that the personal name used as evidence lacked an etymology, indeed Jackson had twice stated that he considered it probably non-Celtic (1955, 143 & 144). If this view was correct, and no robust Celtic etymology could be provided, then surely the argument would fall at the first hurdle. It would be difficult to consider the form of a single non-Celtic personal name as valid evidence for the anomalous development of a stem-ending in a *Trümmersprache*. Thus the first issue to be probed is whether or not a Celtic interpretation of this name is possible, then and only then would we have good reason to proceed to examining the final segment.

Evans (2006) cautiously suggested a derivation from the Celtic root **brud-* ‘reject, repel’.⁶⁵⁷ This is found in OGael in composition with the preverb *frith-*, for example *indí frisbrudi* glossing Latin *renuentis* (LEIA B-102), which is from *renuō* ‘deny, oppose, disapprove, reject’ etc. He interpreted the name as ‘opponent’ and this seems semantically plausible despite an acknowledged absence of this word in other Celtic languages and its rarity in OGael. Slightly more disquieting is its absence from Celtic personal name nomenclature either in neo- or ancient languages,⁶⁵⁸ though this is not a fatal flaw as a great many OGael personal names do not have equivalents in earlier sources (Ó Cuív, 1986 *passim*). Indeed innovation in coining new personal names is common also in Neo-Brittonic languages (Cane 2003, 327-31) and only a small percentage of the personal names attested in earlier Celtic have later reflexes.⁶⁵⁹ This should therefore not cause undue concern.

Evans did not engage with the details of the phonetic developments of the name

⁶⁵⁷ IEED (509) derives this Irish word from *bhreui-* ‘to pierce, break’. An alternative would be a derivation from *bhreui-* ‘to swell, sprout’ (ibid. 506; Pok 169). A derivation from the zero-grade would be required to give the short vowel attested in OGael. The full-grade would have evolved as follows in Britt. /ew/ > /ow/ > Britt. /u:/ > neo-Britt. /u:/.

⁶⁵⁸ The only vaguely similar items seem to be *Ala-brodiios* and *Brodionti* noted by Falileyev (2007, 214, s.n. *brodio-*) as very doubtful.

⁶⁵⁹ See Delamarre (2007 *passim*) where it is evident that only a portion of the attested early names have precise reflexes in neo-Celtic languages. The relationship between the early and the post-Roman personal name nomenclature has yet to be subjected to detailed scrutiny.

but **brudjos*, as a *jo*-stem noun, would indeed give OGael *bruide*.⁶⁶⁰ However the Irish final vowel may simply be an adaptation of Pictish *-ej*, as with *Derile* (AU 706.2, 713.4 etc.) for *Derelei* (SL1)

The Brittonic reflex would be **/brið/*, due to final *i*-affection, cf. **/brunnjo/* > Britt **brinn* ‘hill’ (Jackson 1953, §157, 581). The vowel would be lengthened in Neo-Brittonic at the operation of the New Quantity System c. 500-50 (Sims-Williams 1990, 260) hence */bri:ð/*. Whether this occurred in Pictish is uncertain.⁶⁶¹ Jackson (1953, 162) questioned the occurrence of *i*-affection in Pictish, albeit on extremely limited evidence. All three items he noted are open to serious challenge. The personal names *Constantin* and *Alpin* (W *Cystennin* & *Elffin*) are both borrowings from Latin (possibly late) and open to influence from written texts. The ‘Brun’ (< **brunnjo-*) he noted (*De Situ Albanie*; Anderson 1973, 243) was extrapolated from ‘bru(m)alban’ which is probably simply a copying error for ‘drumalban’ (< G *druim Alban*; *ibid.* fn 24) i.e. ‘The Ridge of Scotland’,⁶⁶² the mountainous area which runs down the centre of the country from north to south. It is therefore not a cognate of Britt **brinn*.

Jackson admitted to the operation of *i*-affection in the personal name *Elpin* (SL1) but gets around this anomaly by claiming that it may have been influenced by the ‘Strathclyde Brittonic’ form. A lack of *i*-affection may also be indicated by the form **brunn* ‘hill’ (rather than *i*-affected */brinn/*) in place-names which seems to be attested in Pictland and also perhaps in the Northern Brittonic (James 2012 s.v. *brinn*, c2) & 2013).⁶⁶³ For example Cameron (FIF; *Cambrun*, 1198x1199), Cameron (MLO; *Cambrun* 1264x1288), Trabrown (BWK; *Treuerbrun*, c.1170) contrasting with Newburn (FIF; *Nithbren*, 1150) and Burnturk (FIF; *Brenturk*, c. 1245; see Taylor 2010, 84). The former of these could also represent *prenn* ‘timber, tree’. The issue of *i*-affection in Northern Brittonic and Pictish must therefore remain open for the present.

⁶⁶⁰ The intervocalic */d/* would be lenited to */ð/* and the suffix would evolve as follows: *ijos* > *ijah* > *ejah* > *e*.

⁶⁶¹ My suspicion is that it didn’t hence the short vowel in words of probable Pictish origin in Gaelic such as *preas*, *dail* and *bad* whose cognates in Brittonic (W *prys*, *dôl* and Breton *bod*) have long vowels. This issue requires further investigation and I hope to publish on this in the near future.

⁶⁶² Note that *Alban* (the gen. of *Albu* / *Alba*) could mean or could have originally meant Britain rather than ‘Scotland’ here. See Koch (2006(m)).

⁶⁶³ Note that we would therefore have Neo-Brittonic phrasal place-names curiously containing a phonetically conservative noun i.e. *Trev-ir-brinn* for Trabroun (etc.).

Without *i*-affection we would expect Pictish ***Brud(ei)*. While this does at first glance seem incompatible with the SL1 forms with *e* or *i* there may have been a more general and unconditioned loss of distinction of /u/ in Pictish, which could account for this without having to resort to vowel affection. For instance, the Pictish equivalent of OGael *Drust* is *Drest* (SL1; Jackson 1955, 162) a good parallel to *Bruide* and *Bredei*.⁶⁶⁴ This unconditioned change could also be mustered to explain some of the forms derived from **brunnjo-* which sometimes appear as *bren* (see below).

Another option would be that the change in the quality of the vowel could be ascribed to pretonic reduction i.e. **Brudei* > /brə'ðej/ (or similar) but it is uncertain whether this occurred in Northern Brittonic or Pictish, and this of course wouldn't account for *Drest*. Neither has it been established where the accent lay in Pictish.⁶⁶⁵

The upshot of this discussion is that a PrClt **brudjo-* 'deny, oppose' (etc.) could, with little difficulty, give both the attested OGael noun and the root of the Pictish personal name *Bredei* / *Bridei*. What then of the final segment? Is there an alternative, and ideally, more convincing, way of explaining these two letters, in particular by investigating the closely related⁶⁶⁶ Brittonic languages? I believe that there is.

If we investigate the lexicon and personal names of the Brythonic languages we do indeed encounter many items which attest the shape *-ei*.⁶⁶⁷ Differences in context and use suggest that they do not all represent the same ending or suffix (cf. Thomas 1938, 22). There seem to be at least two suffixes involved but it is

⁶⁶⁴ Unless the New Quantity System did not operate in Pictish. I hope to publish on this issue in the near future. However, this would conflict with names derived from **gustu-* (*Unust* & *Uurgust*) where the vowel remains modified. This anomaly remains to be explained satisfactorily.

⁶⁶⁵ Gaelic *monadh* 'uplands' (etc.) indicates that the Pictish donor form was **mon ið* (or similar) and as the interdental voiced fricative only evolved under the accent it could be argued that the development was /mo'nijo-/ > /mo'nið/ and that the accent would, after Pictish apocope (which seems probable) lie on the final syllable. Whether or not it remained there or later shifted to the penultimate as in Brythonic languages (apart from Gwenedeg / Vannetais) has not been investigated satisfactorily.

⁶⁶⁶ I keep an open mind as to how close Pictish and Brittonic were to each other as the restricted nature of the evidence does not permit confident statements on this issue, only vague open-ended, non-committal declarations of proximity. There is much to be said about early medieval Pictish and I hope to investigate this field in future publications.

⁶⁶⁷ The medieval Welsh form is employed as a referent throughout this discussion. In non-tonic position this becomes *-ai* as in *Menai* (< Mid W *Menei*), *llatai* (< MidW *llatei*).

not straightforward to identify which is attested in each word. There may well have been some conflation and confusion, and this issue would benefit from an in-depth investigation which I will not attempt.

I will note such examples here and then briefly try to make some sense of the possible origins and semantic functions of the *-ei* lexemes to see whether there is a meaning and usage that would work well when suffixed to Pictish **brīð*, and provide a more attractive alternative than an origin in *-jos*.

The first port of call must be personal names. The closest, ethnically, is *Der-elei* attested in the Pictish king-lists,⁶⁶⁸ the *Annals of Ulster*⁶⁶⁹ and the guarantor list to *Cáin Adomnáin* (Meyer 1905, 22). This individual is noted as a parent of both *Bridei* and his famous brother *Nechton*, the balance of opinion favouring it being a female name (Clancy 2004, 128; Anderson & Anderson 1973, 175-76). If we turn to personal names ascribed to the adjacent northern Britons we find *Dwywei* and *Uruei* and perhaps *Affrei*.⁶⁷⁰ The first is attested as a parent of the poet *Aneirin* (Williams 1938, 232) and attests the root *dwyw* ‘god’. The second, *Uruei*, is derived by Koch from PrClt **Orbejos*, which he interpreted as ‘orphan, legacy’ (1997, xlvii) while Matasović (2009, 299) notes the root as ‘heir, inheritor’. Thomas (1938, 22-33) noted that *-ei* may also be attested in W personal names such as *Clydai*, *Gwibei*, *Llewai*, *Mederai*, *Pabai* (etc.),⁶⁷¹ but these are probably fictitious⁶⁷² and may be later medieval coinings not directly relevant to the period discussed here.

A lexeme of identical shape is also attested in plant names *amlaethai*, *brefai*, *meddalai* etc. as well as in the river-names †*Gwnnai*, †*Halai*, *Melai*, *Menai*, *Sawddai* etc. There are also W nouns such as *buddai* ‘churn’ and *irai* ‘goat’. There are a group of names where the meaning of the suffix corresponds to ‘seeker’ as in *blotai* ‘beggar of meal’, *cardotai* ‘beggar’, *gwestai* ‘guest’ (i.e.

⁶⁶⁸ For an in-depth investigation of this name see Clancy (2004). Caution would be wise here as there are numerous variant spellings of this name.

⁶⁶⁹ Derile 706.2, 713.4, & 726.1.

⁶⁷⁰ See Williams (1938, line 216, 132).

⁶⁷¹ The difference in spellings is due to the change of /ej/ to /aj/ in early modern Welsh.

⁶⁷² See Bartrum (1993) for discussions and further refs.

seeker of hospitality) and *llatai* ‘love messenger’. GPC notes as attesting *ai*², -*hai*, an agent suffix. What are we to make of such a profusion of items?

One item that is securely attested in the ‘seeker’ group is a reflex of PrClt **sagjo-*, a *-jo-* derivative of the verbal root **sag-* ‘seek’ (Matasović 2011, 318, s.v. **sag-yo-* ‘seek’).⁶⁷³ This is well-attested in early Celtic nomenclature in personal names such as *Curmi-sagius* ‘beer-seeker’ and *Depro-sagios* ‘food-seeker’ and in the group name *Tecto-sages*.⁶⁷⁴ This may be cognate with *-aige* in Irish (Evans 1967, 251, s.v. *sag-*).

If this is the suffix attested in *Bredei* then it would provide evidence for both *i*-affection (by *-jo-*) and the loss of /-s-/ relevant to sections below. *Dwywei* ‘seeker of the divine’ is workable as is *Uruei* ‘legacy seeker’ but *Bredei* as ‘repulse-seeker’ or ‘repulse-striver’ jars a little. However, PrClt **sagjo-* begins as the second element of a verbal governing particle⁶⁷⁵ and by the time of Neo-Brittonic it has developed into a suffix. In early Welsh attestations of this suffix the meaning ‘seeker’ is apparent but with time it decays into a general personal/agent suffix (Russell (1989, 38). If a parallel semantic development to an agent suffix had also occurred in Pictland then a meaning ‘repulser, defender’ for *Bredei* would seem plausible. I will not attempt to engage with *Der-elei* here as the meaning of *el* is too uncertain.

If one feels that a derivation from **sagjo-* is unsatisfactory then all is not lost as we can turn to the *-ei* attested in the river-names. The origin of this suffix is uncertain⁶⁷⁶ but it seems to be broadly adjectival: †*Gwnnai* (< *gwyn* ‘white’), †*Halai* (< **hal*² ‘filth’⁶⁷⁷), *Melai* (< **mel* ‘yellow’ or honey’⁶⁷⁸), *Sawddai* (< *sawdd*¹ ‘sinking’). This might provide a more compelling interpretation of *Bredei* as

⁶⁷³ See Russell (1989, 38), and for further references see fn.7.

⁶⁷⁴ For further examples and refs see Delamarre (2003, 265, s.v. *sag(i)-*) and (2007, s.v. *sag(o)-*).

⁶⁷⁵ See Uhlich (2002) for a discussion of such forms.

⁶⁷⁶ Thomas (1938, 22) refers to Morris-Jones (1911, 100) noting various speculative possibilities.

⁶⁷⁷ Here I modify the proposal of Thomas (1938, 27).

⁶⁷⁸ See Matasović (2011, 263 svv **meli* ‘honey’ & **melino-* ‘yellow’.

‘repulser’,⁶⁷⁹ and *Dwywei* as ‘godlike’, but either way it would not affect the meaning greatly.

The conclusion is that the name *Bridei* can, with little difficulty, be interpreted as ‘repulser, defender’ or similar, and benefits from a plausible Brittonic / Pictish etymology. A derivation from *-jos* is not appealing. The next question is whether there are any other items which might throw further light on the reflex of *jo*-stem nouns in Pictish?

3.8.3 Further Evidence of *jo*-stem Nouns?

By way of supporting the presence of *jo*-stem nouns in the lexicon of Pictland, we might point to **brunnjo*-⁶⁸⁰ ‘hill’, ModW *bryn* (Delamarre 2003, 92; BLITON s.v. *brinn*). Taylor (2011, 84, s.v. **Bren*) noted that this element is probably attested in a number of place-names in Pictland: *Cameron* < **kamb+brinn* ‘crooked hill’⁶⁸¹ (FIF) *Burnturk brinn+turk* ‘boar-hill’ (FIF; *Brenturk*⁶⁸² c. 1245), perhaps *Newburn* (FIF; *Nithbren* 1150), *Burnbane* (PER; *Brinbane* c. 1419). Here there is no trace of a final vowel that would corroborate Koch’s proposal, but consider *Kinpurney*⁶⁸³ (ANG; *Kylprony* 1317) *Pronie* / *Tillypronie*⁶⁸⁴, *Prony*⁶⁸⁵ and,

⁶⁷⁹ An indulgent, flight of fancy, consideration is that this was a by-name applied to the *Bredei* who encountered, and perhaps *rejected*, Columba. After all the *Life* does not explicitly note that Columba succeeded in converting him. Perhaps the Gaels were also originally aware of this meaning, ‘brude’ (repel, reject), despite being a rare word, may have been readily understood. This may not be as fanciful as it seems. The killing of St Donnán of Eigg burnt to death with 150 of his men in 617. It is generally suspected that Picts were responsible and were objecting to Irish interlopers into what was probably Pictish territory. Yorke (2006, 131) notes that ‘[t]hey may have suspected (perhaps with good reason) that Irish religious encroachment was linked with political ambitions.’

⁶⁸⁰ Note that there is no certainty whether this is a *jo*- or a *ja*:-. Schrijver has argued that *-ja*: did not cause *i*-affection (1995, 2.1.3, 263-4), hence the use of *-jo* here.

⁶⁸¹ Note that there are no attestations of a Welsh cognate *Camfryn* in AMR and it might be beneficial to investigate alternative derivations for this place-name.

⁶⁸² Note that this, despite being in genitive position, seems to attest a nominative form. This is of some interest because the form *Pentyrch* in Wales may attest a (fossilised) genitive i.e. **tr̥x* < **turki*-. However, *-tyrch* could simply attest the plural. There are a number of names in *-tyrch* in Wales, including *Ynys-y-tyrch* (GLA). In any case, if the interpretation is correct it would suggest that Pictish in this area did not mark the gen. (in *o*-stems at least). On the other hand if *i*-affection had not occurred in Pictish then this would be the regular reflex of the PrClIt gen... Another issue is the quite possible replacement by the Gael gen. of the cognate *torc* which is *tuirc*. Assuming, of course, that the name is Pictish. For further discussions of such fossilised genitives in W see Koch (1982, 209-10) & Jackson (1938, 52).

⁶⁸³ Perhaps referring to Kinpurney Hill (NO 323 417).

⁶⁸⁴ Perhaps referring to Baderonoch Hill (NJ 434 088).

⁶⁸⁵ Perhaps referring to Craig of Pronie (NO 352 988).

Pitpronie (all ABD; Taylor 2011, 97). However, an alternative etymology has been proposed, from G *pronn* ‘crumbly soil’, but see Dwelly (1901-11) and Macbain (1911) for discussions of this word. Consideration of W *bron* ‘breast’ would also be wise and topographically appropriate in some instances. It is unlikely that the final vowels of Kinpurney (etc.) represent a reflex of *-jo* as they are more likely to attest the widespread Scottish *-in* which generally evolves to *-ie* or similar (Ó Maolalaigh 1998, 30-38; Taylor with Márkus 2012, 407-11).

3.8.4 Conclusion

We can conclude that the personal name *Bridei* does not indicate the survival of a case ending in Pictish, a view confirmed by place-names. Additionally, this name may attest *i*-affection and a suffix well-attested in Neo-Brittonic. Were it a derivative of PrClt **sagjo* this would confirm *i*-affection, and perhaps also /s/ > /h/, but an alternative suffix is also possible.

3.9 Section 9: The Gaulish Question

3.9.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, various influential archaeologists, including Jackson's colleague and friend Stuart Piggott, had argued that the 'eastern Picts' were largely descended from 'Hallstatt Gauls'. In his 1955 chapter Jackson identified four linguistic features which he suggested could be understood as confirming this. In other words, it was proposed that Pictish was more closely related to Gaulish than to the Brittonic language assumed to have been spoken south of the Forth-Clyde divide.⁶⁸⁶ Koch (1983, 215) also lent his support to this view. For some decades this proposal, though often misinterpreted, became a standard feature of most scholarly comments on the language. The archaeological model which supported this thinking collapsed during the 1960s but the specific linguistic points made by Jackson have not yet been investigated or evaluated.

The four points are as follows:

1. The associations of the group-name 'Smertae' 'seem to be Gaulish' (Jackson 1955, 136).
2. Celtic /xs/ went to /s/ in Pictish and Gaulish, rather than to /x/ as in Brittonic (ibid. 137).
3. /xt/ went to /jt/ in both Gaulish and Pictish, and not to /jθ/ as in Brittonic (ibid. 145).
4. The supposedly identical usage of *pett* as a landholding term in both languages (ibid. 148).

In this section I will investigate the evidence for these proposals and discuss two further issues. One is another phonetic change supposedly shared by Pictish and Gaulish and the other is the ethnonym *Picti* itself, which resembles two group-names in Gaul.

⁶⁸⁶ Whether or not terms such as 'Brittonic', 'Gaulish' etc. are valid, useful or misleading is debated. See Chapter 1.

3.9.2 *Smertae*

The first point noted by Jackson is the Gaulish ‘associations’ of the northerly group-name *Smertae*, a correspondence which had already been mentioned by Watson in 1926 (17-18). Jackson’s wording is imprecise and he does not specify which cultural or historical aspect he had in mind. Presumably, like Watson, he was thinking of the goddess *Rosmerta*, whose cult is well-attested in parts of Gaul (Mackillop 1994, 37). But such a vague correspondence is intrinsically weak as evidence for shared origins.

There is an unresolved debate as to whether these two names represent derivatives of PIE **smeru-* ‘grease, fat’ (Pok 970-71)⁶⁸⁷ or **(s)mer-* ‘to remember, to care for’ (ibid. 969-70),⁶⁸⁸ meaning that the two items may not even be etymologically related (see 2.3.16). The theonym *Rosmerta* probably contains the latter as she seems to function as a provider (Coe 2006). It is now thought that her cult was also practised in Britain (Mackillop 1994, 37; Coe 2006), therefore the connections are not necessarily exclusively with Gaul. A more significant flaw in the argument is that the *Smertae* are located precisely in the middle of the area that Jackson ascribed to his ‘La Tène’ Brittonic-speaking Picts,⁶⁸⁹ not the Gaulish-influenced east. There is consequently little to support the view that the group-name *Smertae* indicates any close linguistic or cultural relationship between Picts and Gauls.

3.9.3 /xs/ > /s/

The putative Pritenic development of /xs/ to /s/ is discussed above (3.6), but only three items were adduced as evidence, and the issue is open to question. A logical flaw in Jackson’s argument is that the cluster is preserved in the Calidonian personal name *Argentocoxos* (c. 209 CE) indicating that in the third century its realisation was identical to Brittonic. Even if /xs/ did change to /s/ at some later point in time this would at best be an analogous change which occurred many centuries after the supposed separation of Gaulish and Pictish

⁶⁸⁷ See also Mallory & Adams (2006, 96 & 260 & 261).

⁶⁸⁸ See also Mallory & Adams (2006, 322 & 323).

⁶⁸⁹ The precise location of any groups cannot be determined with any certainty but Ptolemy is quite clear that this group is to the north (right) of the Moray Firth.

which evidently has to be placed after Gaul was conquered by Rome c. 50 BCE.⁶⁹⁰ Additionally, it seems probable that attestations of Celtic /xs/ as s(s) in Gaul are due not to a change in Gaulish but rather to mediation by Latin which lacked this cluster.⁶⁹¹ The change is attested in the ancestor of French, hence *cuisse* from Lat *coxā* (Bonnard 1982, 4-2-2., 33), and in the earlier part of the 20th century it was assumed that this was a change in Gaulish (see above).

3.9.4 /xt/ > /jt/

Jackson claimed that the development of /xt/ > /jt/ was a specifically Pictish and Gaulish sound-change, as /xt/ developed to /jθ/ in Brittonic c. 600. As with /xs/ > /s/ this would have to be considered a later and analogous change as there is no evidence whatsoever that any Celtic language had undergone this change when Gaulish and Pictish could have formed a single speech community. Prior to the Brittonic change of /xt/ > /jθ/ the sound would have been identical in Gaul, Britain and Pictland. Another difficulty with this issue is that we are not certain how /xt/ became /jθ/ in Brittonic and this impacts on how we are to interpret the written evidence. I see two possible routes:

1. /xt/ > /jtt/ > /jθ/.
2. /xt/ > /xθ/ > /jθ/.

The only pieces of evidence Jackson adduced for this change were variants of the Celtic personal name **Nechton*, which is probably derived from Clt **nexto-* ‘clean, pure, white’ (Delamarre 2007, 228), cf. OGael *necht* (eDIL; LEIA N-6). He saw the Pictish reflex as *Neiton* which would contrast with Brittonic **Neithon*. This name, or variants of it, is attested in various sources such as the Lunnasting *ogham* inscription as **NEHHTON** (Forsyth 1996, 402-419). This was inscribed c. 800+ and seems to represent the form *Nechton*. Bede’s version, *Naiton* (HE V, 21), can be dated to about a century earlier but suggests a linguistically later form, where /xt/ has become /jt/. This chronological discrepancy could be due to dialectal variance, language mediation or orthographic conservatism for

⁶⁹⁰ Unless one were to propose that Belgic groups assumed power a part of Calidonia, which is not absurd as the Manapii (cf. the Belgian Menapi) in Ireland could indicate such a situation.

⁶⁹¹ Pierre-Yves Lambert (pers. comm.) confirms this.

example. This cluster also may be attested as /xt/ in the Burrian *ogham* inscription, if **URRACT** does represent Neo-Brittonic /wraxt/ ‘made’, and in *Nectu* of the king-lists (SL1). The stage /xt/ seems to be well-attested and the development to /jt/ by 731 in one context seems probable. So far we have the spellings *HHT*, *it*, and *ct* for reflexes of this cluster, to which we can add the later and probably corrupt *cth* of *Necthon* (SL1).⁶⁹²

However, one must also bear in mind that early *ogham* had no grapheme for /θ/ and in early Brittonic orthography this fricative was usually written with *t*. Consequently, one cannot exclude the possibility that this is the phoneme represented by *t*. Items such as those noted by Jackson could have been realised as *Nechthon* and *Neithon*. This could be interpreted as speculative but there are three place-names which may support the view that /xt/ developed to /jθ/ in Pictish as in Brittonic. The two rivers named Nethy (PER & INV) and the Ythan (ABD) may bear witness to this change. The three are pronounced with /θ/ and were almost certainly coined in Pictish. Nethy is very probably derived from **next*- ‘wash, clean’, while the *Ythan*⁶⁹³ is from /jext-/ ‘speech, language’ which may be compared to the W river-name *leithon* (RAD), cf. MidW *ieith*. These river-names were discussed by Jackson in his 1980 Appendix (176, 165) as further attestations of the fate of /xt/ in Pictish, and here he suggested that they could indeed indicate that this cluster evolved to /jθ/.

If Pictish did evolve on a par with Brittonic then the fate of this cluster in Gaulish is of little consequence. Even if Jackson’s view on Pictish sound-change were demonstrated to be correct, the Gaulish component can still be shown to be questionable. The change of /xt/ > /jt/ is indeed attested in proto-French, as in Fr. *lait* < Lat. *lact*-, *fait* < Lat. *factu* (Bonnard 1982, 4-2-2., 33) which may well be influenced by Celtic (Jackson 1953, 408). However, it cannot be claimed that this is a homologous or contemporary change as the cluster /xt/ is preserved in Roman-period Gaulish items such as the theonym *Brixtae* (Delamarre 2003, 90) which is from the root **brixtu*- ‘magic’, cf. W *lledrith* < *lled+brith* (GPC). Another example from Gaul is the personal name *Caxtos*

⁶⁹² It seems that some scribes were in the habit of updating early G orthography which noted voiceless fricatives with *p*, *t* and *c* by inserting a following *h*. Sometimes the updating is erroneous but this issue would benefit from further research.

⁶⁹³ If not another *Ituna* river-name.

‘slave, servant’, cf. *W caeth*. There is ample evidence of the preservation of /xt/ in a host of other place- and personal names, and as yet no secure evidence that this is a Gaulish change rather than one that occurred in Gallo-Latin.

In effect, what Jackson was claiming is that a sound-change in seventh or eighth century Pictland could be equated with a change attested in Roman Gaul some five centuries earlier. It has been demonstrated that it is not certain that this change occurred in Gaulish, and in Pictland the evolution of the cluster may have been identical to Brittonic. Consequently, there is nothing in this issue which would indicate any particular linguistic relationship between the two languages.

3.9.5 *Pett*

Finally, Jackson claimed that the word *pett* could mean a ‘unit of land’ in Pictish and in Gaulish, while its meaning in Brittonic was primarily ‘thing’. Furthermore, he noted that it occurred with this meaning in the *Book of Deer* and also in Vulgar Latin in France as *petia terrae* ‘a parcel of land’ (1955, 148). He added that it never occurred in place-names south of the Antonine Wall apart from in some scattered offshoots, whose problematic presence was dismissed. He concluded that *pett* was ‘part of the vocabulary of a P-Celtic people who were distinct from the Brittonic tribes south of the Wall and it may perhaps hint that their connexions were with the Gauls at least as much as with the Britons’ (1955, 148). This view was repeated in *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (1972, 114). Here it was argued that it ‘was *not* borrowed into Gaelic as a common-noun, any more than *ville*, so common in forming American village names, has really been borrowed into American as such, though the *meaning* is known’ (ibid. 115, fn 2). As with other issues Jackson, in his 1980 Appendix (174), seems to retreat from this viewpoint, noting the possible uncertainty regarding the language in which *pett* names were actually coined. Jackson’s original view that *pett* was a distinctive Pictish place-name element was reaffirmed by Hamp (1958), Koch (1983, 214) and Nicolaisen (2001, 196). Considering that there may be up to a thousand names in Scotland with *pett* as

their generic,⁶⁹⁴ evidence for a similar situation in Gaul would be of some significance due the absence of this element in intervening areas.

The word *pett* is ultimately derived from P-Celtic **pettja*: (Schrijver 1995, 261) which gave Welsh *peth*, Cornish *pyth*, Breton *pezh* ‘a thing, an amount, a part of’ (Hamp 1958), more distantly related to OGael *cuit* ‘share, part, portion’ (eDIL; LEIA C-280).⁶⁹⁵ Contrary to Jackson’s claim this word was borrowed as a common noun into Gaelic (Watson 1904, xlvii & 1926, 408; Nicolaisen 1972; Cox 1997; Taylor 2011, 77-80 & 103-5). It may remain in current usage in Lewis as *peit* for ‘a small area of ground’ (Cox 1997), although this is not certain.⁶⁹⁶ It is curious that Jackson went against Watson’s view of 1926, but as discussed by Taylor there may have been some reluctance by many parties to lose what was seen as one of the most important pieces of toponymic evidence for the extent of Pictland.

However, we have no certain examples of *pett* (or *Pit-*) place-names coined in Pictish.⁶⁹⁷ They are plausibly all coined in Gaelic with specifics which are overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, Gaelic (Nicolaisen 2001, 201). For example, Pitcorthie (FIF), *Petcorthin* 1128 < *pett* + Gael. *coirthe* ‘pillar / standing stone’ + *-in* (Taylor 2006, 350). On a few occasions they attest other lexical borrowings from Pictish e.g. Pitferrane (FIF), *Petfuren* 1240 x 1250 < *pett* + Gael. *pòr* < /pɔ:r/ ‘pasture’ (Taylor 2006, 351). It could be argued that numerous names represent superficial gaelicisations of underlying Pictish forms e.g. Pittowie (FIF) *Pettollin* 1153 x 1178 < *pett* + Gael *toll* ‘hollow’ + *in*; or Pictish + *twll* [Welsh orthography] ‘hole’ (Taylor 2009, 223). Or Pitcairn (FIF), *Petcarn* 1250 < *pett* + Gael *cárn* ‘cairn’, or Pictish + *carn* ‘cairn’ (Taylor 2008, 381). But a Gaelic derivation is equally if not more attractive. Some with unetymologised or problematic second elements e.g. Pitcoudie (FIF; Taylor 2008, 382) could plausibly represent Pictish forms, but this is speculative and weak as evidence. A name such as Pitpointie (ANG) *Petponti(n)* 13th cent < *pett* + *pont* (Nicolaisen 2001, 197/200) despite containing two diagnostically P-Celtic elements probably

⁶⁹⁴ Simon Taylor (pers. comm.).

⁶⁹⁵ Derived from PrClIt **k^wezdi-* ‘piece, portion’ (Matasović 2009, 179; Watkins 2000, 46, s.v. *k^wezd-*).

⁶⁹⁶ Thomas Clancy suggests that this may be an adaptation of Eng *patch*.

⁶⁹⁷ For a discussion of names in *pett* in Fife see Taylor with Márkus (2012, 217-25).

(in my view at least) contains an existing name **Pant*⁶⁹⁸ ‘a hollow, a valley’. Pitbladdo in Fife is another candidate which may attest a Pictish specific (/blo:d/ ‘flour’ or ‘flower’) but early forms with *th* (e.g. *Petblathouch* c. 1353, Taylor with Márkus 2010, 304) are more consistent with a derivation from G *blàthach* ‘buttermilk’ (Macbain 1911) or ‘flowery’ (Dwelly 1901-11). No recourse to Pictish coining is necessary to explain place-names containing *pett*, and it appears that by 1980 Jackson was coming round to this view.

Were it truly a common Pictish term for some sort of land division one would expect some significant number of diagnostically Pictish place-names containing it to have survived into the written records, especially considering that the demise of Pictish is perhaps only some three centuries prior to the widespread attestation of place-names in what was Pictland. As Taylor (2011, 79) has demonstrated their distribution informs us of ‘the extent of Gaelic-speakers in the tenth century, as Alba is beginning to expand into areas outwith its core lands’. The upshot of this is that we have direct evidence for the meaning of *pett* in Gaelic, but this does not inform us of its precise meaning in Pictish. The meaning of words is often modified during the process of adoption, as with the well-known examples of English *pork* & *mutton* which are from ‘French’ *porc* ‘pig’ & *mouton* ‘sheep’. In these instances the meanings have been narrowed. We now need to investigate whether the Pictish word could simply have been similar or even identical to its Brittonic cognate.

A ‘thing’ is the primary meaning of *peth* but the meaning ‘a part of’ is by no means absent from Welsh (Hamp 1958, 158; GPC; Evans 1964, §104, 96). This meaning is also attested in Bret. *pezh*, ‘a part of something which has been removed from it’ (Menard & Kadored 2001). It could be argued that the Breton meaning has been influenced by French *pièce*, as in the use of *pezh* for a coin, cf. French *pièce de monnaie*, but the Welsh examples indicate that this usage goes back to the common root, and this is confirmed by OGael *cuit* ‘share, part, portion’ (O’Rahilly 1946, 356, f.3; LEIA C-280). The meaning of *pett* in Pictish may well have been ‘thing, part of’ as in Brittonic and the modification of its

⁶⁹⁸ While formally more similar to W *pont* ‘bridge’ the location offers no watercourses which would require a bridge of any significant size while the area is in a depression (W *pant*).

semantic range to ‘part of (an estate)’ may be due to narrowing during the process of adoption into Gaelic.

This argument could be reinforced by various parallels. For example, the Brittonic word **rann* ‘part, piece’ etc. (Deshayes 2003, 612), which is cognate with *W rhan* and *C ran*, both of almost identical meaning, came to mean ‘a parcel of land’ in Breton. Brittany is peppered with place-names in *Rann-* (Deshayes 1999, 139). It is common for words meaning ‘piece, part of’ to come to mean a ‘piece of land’ as in *B parzh* (Deshayes 1999, 139), *W dryll*, *clwt* (Williams 1945, 81) and *patsh* < Eng. *patch* (GPC). We could also note the French word *darne* ‘a piece of a large fish’, which is a borrowing from Breton *darn* ‘a piece’ (Dubois, Mitterand & Dauzat, s.v.).

Let us turn now to Gaul to see whether it can be established whether **pettja*: also specifically meant ‘a portion of land’ as Jackson argued. This claim is repeated not only by Schrijver in *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology* (1995, 261, V.2.1 (7)) but also by Matasović in the *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (2009, 179) indicating how deeply this notion has penetrated the accepted view. The first attestation of this term is c. 730 in a ‘French’ Latin text *et alia petia* ‘and another piece of land’ (Rey 1992, 1513)⁶⁹⁹ penned some centuries after the probable death of Gaulish (Lambert 2002, 9-10). Later medieval texts also attest usage in relationship to land where *pièce de terre* (1176 x 1184) is noted as designating *une surface de terre cultivable* (Rey 1992, s.v. *pièce*). Before leaping to the conclusion that this is evidence that the Gaulish etymon was used for a unit of land alone there are certain issues to be considered.

**Pettja*: was not borrowed solely into ‘Vulgar Latin in France’ as stated by Jackson (1953, 148) but clearly into much of Early Romance as demonstrated by its reflexes in Spanish *pieza*, Provençal *pesa*, Italian *pezza* (Delamarre 2003, 249) all denoting ‘a piece, a part of’, the French form being the origin of English *piece*. In French it does not mean a ‘piece of land’ alone, it can refer to lesser parts of many things such as ‘a coin’, ‘a room’ or a *pièce de théâtre* ‘a play’. Many of the early attestations are used in conjunction with *terra* which would

⁶⁹⁹ Rey does not specify the precise origin or date of manuscript composition of attestations. I have not been able to verify sources beyond modern dictionaries.

imply that *pettia* could not easily stand alone, again indicating that its meaning in this context was simply a more general ‘piece of something larger’ not exclusively a land unit. Despite rigorous searching no examples of the precise term *petia terrae* have been identified in any French etymological dictionaries. An internet search of these words brings up the occasional attestation in medieval Latin, primarily but not exclusively in Italian charters.⁷⁰⁰ The only place where I have seen this noted is in Fraser’s article, ‘Pet(t) in Place-names’ (1942, 70) where he is simply combining the two Latin words *petia* and *terra* in order to illustrate the sense of *pett*, making no claim that it is a historically attested collocation. Jackson did not note his source for *petia terrae*. Is it possible that he obtained it from Fraser’s article? A plausible trajectory for this word is that it was indeed borrowed into Vulgar Latin from P-Celtic, but this could have occurred anywhere from Gaul to Calidonia to Dacia. Its meaning was a *part* or a *piece of* something but not exclusively a parcel of land. Even if it was used as such in eighth-century France this is not good evidence for its meaning in ‘Gaulish’ many centuries earlier.

Gaelic Scotland is peppered with *Pett*- names, however **pettja*: does not occur anywhere in the vast corpus of Continental Celtic or later French place-names. There appear to be no examples in *Dictionnaire des Noms de Lieux de France* (Dauzat & Rostaing 1963) or in *Dictionnaire de la Langue Gauloise* (Delamarre 2003, 249). It is also noticeably absent from *Ancient Celtic Place-names in Europe and Asia Minor* (Sims-Williams 2006), *Dictionary of Continental Celtic Place-names* (Falileyev 2010) and *Noms de Lieux Celtiques de L’Europe Ancienne* (Delamarre 2012). Were this a common Gaulish landholding term one would expect numerous examples to survive the admittedly harsh environment of language shift to Romance. There is therefore no evidence that would support the view that **pettja*: was used as a landholding term in Gaulish.

Before concluding there is one further point to be discussed. Jackson noted that *pett*, or its cognates, are never used in Brittonic place-names. Advances in the study of Breton toponymy allow us to slightly modify this statement. There

⁷⁰⁰ <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=yu4-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA2-PA408&lpg=RA2-PA408&dq=petia+terrae&source=bl&ots=vIFCGhzd5U&sig=96w5xcu6GrVbASjecIECdXuS4P8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=kFyYUpWcJlaV0AXguoHIDw&ved=0CD4Q6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=petia%20terrae&f=false>
http://www.cassiciaco.it/navigazione/cassago/archivistorico/cinquecento/1588_delfinoni.html

appear to be four place-names in Brittany containing this element: Pérounel (Plougar, *Pezronnel* 1787), Besquélen (Bourg-Blanc, *Pezquélen* 1493), another Besquélen at Plabennec, and Bizernig (*Pezernig*, 1696; Deshayes 1999, 139, s.v. *pezh*). The first three are located in Leon (north-west Brittany) and the last in the centre. It would be extreme to suggest that this tiny number of names preserve an ancient Brittonic usage of *pett* for landholding. More realistically they illustrate how easy it is for a word meaning ‘an amount of’ to be applied secondarily to land-units. To conclude, it seems improbable that the sole historical meaning of **pettja*: was ‘unit of land’ in either Pictish or Gaulish.

3.9.6 Further Issues Regarding the Gaulish-Pictish Link

I would now like to discuss two further points which could be employed to argue for a *Gallo-Pritenic* node in the Celtic *stammbaum*:

1. The ethnonym *Picti* which has been compared by many to the Gaulish tribal names *Pictavi* and *Pictones* (Falileyev 2010, 182).
2. Koch’s proposal that /u/ was sometimes lowered to /o/ in Pictish as in dialects of Gaulish (1982, 88; 1983, 215)

3.9.6.1 *Picti*

From the late 3rd century the term *Picti* (Rivet & Smith 1979, 438-40) is regularly applied by Romans to peoples beyond Hadrian’s Wall. Other terms such as *Uerturiones* are also used and it is quite possible that *Picti*, Latin for *Painted Ones*, represents little more than a depreciatory nickname for peoples who may well have tattooed⁷⁰¹ or occasionally painted themselves. In addition to the two Gaulish group-names noted above there are various personal names which may attest the same root e.g. *Cuno-pectus* (Delamarre 2007, 229, s.v. *pecto-*) or *Pixti-cenus* (ibid. s.v. *picto-*). These are compared to OGael *cécht* ‘power, strength’ (LEIA C-52) but could also be equated with OGael *cicht* ‘engraver, designer’ (eDIL; LEIA C-97). There is therefore good reason for positing a P-Celtic root /pe:xt-/ or /pixt-/ which could underlie such names. The Welsh *Peith-wyr* noted by Jackson (1953, 411) is of no relevance as this is a Welsh scholarly back-

⁷⁰¹ See MacQuarrie (1997) for Insular Celtic tattooing.

formation first attested in 1894 (GPC). Without specific evidence that *Picti* is based on native usage no connection with *Pictavi* or *Pictones* can be justified, especially as the Latin meaning is transparent.

3.9.6.2 /u/ > /o/

The last point I would like to briefly engage with is Koch's proposal that /u/ may have been lowered to /o/ in both Gaulish and Pritenic. His thinking on this point is derived from his own findings on the supposed lowering of Pritenic /u/ (1982, 88) which he linked to a more general Gaulish lowering alluded to by Evans in *Gaulish Personal Names* (1967, 393). Evans is himself quite circumspect about the veracity of this as an actual phonetic feature. Indeed the evidence he adduced is no more than occasional attestations of *o* where one would expect *u*, as in *dobno-* for *dumno-* and perhaps some instances of *so-* for *su-*. By 1983 Koch had developed this into a weightier proposal:

If this change of *u* to *o* in some contexts was common to Pritenic and dialects of Gaulish... historical and geographical considerations demand that the origins of the change go back well before the Roman conquests of Britain and Gaul, when the ancestors of the Picts and some Gaulish group(s) could have formed a common speech community that did not include the (linguistic) ancestors of the Britons. (215)

The influence of Jackson's 'Hallstatt Picts' proposal of 1955 is clear, but the only pieces of evidence adduced in favour of this change are three variants of **kuno-* 'hound' attested in northern Britain. These have been discussed above (3.2.) and have alternative explanations, particularly in historical Celtic ablaut variation. The lowering noted by Evans does seem to be fairly widespread in Gaul but it is not systematic. Indeed, it seems random, for example the place-name *Durnomagus* is also attested as *Dornomago* (Falileyev 2010, 116). Turning to the two items noted by Evans, *dumno-* & *su-*, a brief survey of the Gaulish attestations make it clear that in both instances forms with *u* by far outnumber those with *o* (Delamarre 2007, 220 & 223). In the case of *su-* 'good' the reduction could be accounted for by suggesting that prefixes bore less stress than other segments and were consequently less distinctly realised. This alternation is indeed closely paralleled in the antonym *du-* 'bad' (Delamarre 2007, 220). Added to the above ambiguity is the attested Late Latin lowering of

/u/ > /o/ which generated widespread confusion between written *u* and *o* (Allen 1965, 48). The fact that there is no systematic pattern demonstrates that this alternation is no more than a trivial alternation between two similar vowels. The only good pieces of evidence for this phoneme in the Roman period is *Doúmnā* /u/ where the vowel is clear. *Uerturiones* probably attests /u:/ and is therefore irrelevant. Attestations of /u/ In later Pictland seem to be *u* as in *Burnturk* (FIF) < /turk/⁷⁰² ‘boar’ and in names in the king-list we have -*gust* (< PrClt **gustu*- various times. The attestations of this alternation in Gaul are too irregular to formulate a rule and in Calidonia/Pictland the evidence, apart from **kuno*-, indicates the preservation of /u/.

3.9.7 Conclusion

There is no good evidence for a Gallo-Pritenic node in the Celtic language tree. Perhaps the most relevant and interesting aspect of the original proposal is that it reflects an earlier conviction that Pritenic and Brittonic represented distinct branches of Gallo-Brittonic which had been diverging in the late Iron-Age - a view ultimately based on archaeological proposals developed in the 1930s.

⁷⁰² This could of course have been influenced by G *tuirc* (gen. sg.; eDIL).

Conclusion

It is intended that the historiographical investigation will illuminate the context in which linguistic proposals were developed, highlighting various cases where extra-linguistic motivations impacted on perceptions of the language. This chapter also demonstrates how various views are predicated on earlier theories rather than on an intense scrutiny of the evidence. Additionally, it provides an updated overview of which hypotheses hold the field and which ones have been challenged or refuted. This will permit a fresh approach to the subject, unhindered by the necessity of scrutinising a great many scholarly works published in the past centuries.

The Roman period evidence suggests a Calidonia that was overwhelmingly Celtic, but perhaps with a trace of a pre-Celtic Indo-European language in one river-name. Various island-names, primarily attested in the medieval period, may be of non-IE origin, but this does not demonstrate that such a language was spoken in the Roman period, even though it may be wise to remain open to such a possibility. No strong case can be made for the closer proximity of a non-Indo-European language on the mainland. The items adduced as evidence for such a scenario can either be shown to be Celtic, or at least benefit from plausible Celtic interpretations. Those items which resist a straightforward explanation by means of Celtic occur in late and demonstrably corrupt texts.

There is only minimal evidence that would allow the categorisation of the spoken form(s) of Celtic in Calidonia to either P- or Q-Celtic branches, if these are valid classificatory terms for this period. This is a departure from the earlier view that most of this area spoke Brittonic. The few diagnostic features which exist would suggest that the Calidones, or at least some of them, spoke P-Celtic, in the sense that the sound-change /kw/ > /p/ had occurred here as it had in Lepontic, in Gaul and apparently in most of Britain.⁷⁰³

Pictish is not a dialect of Gaulish. Or at least the evidence previously adduced for this view can no longer sustain it.

⁷⁰³ As far as I'm aware the Roman-period evidence has not been scrutinised to ascertain whether this change can be claimed for all of the province of Britannia.

The specific proposals seen as evidence that Pictish was diverging from Brittonic before the emergence of Neo-Brittonic c. 550 are either demonstrably incorrect, most uncertain or of trivial linguistic impact. With such obstacles removed the door is open to the view that Pictish was indeed the most northerly dialect of Brittonic – a view which has generally held the field in recent decades. While it is not possible to demonstrate the proximity of Pictish to Brittonic prior to the seventh century, the lack of evidence for distinctiveness renders the term ‘Pritenic’ as redundant for the present.

However, as repeatedly stressed in this study, the limited nature of the evidence does not allow us to approach crucial issues such as the Pictish verbal system, pronouns, prepositions, lenition, vowel quantity, gender or syntax. Phonemic and lexical similarity are inadequate as proof of mutual-intelligibility. Consequently, despite copious evidence for Pictish proximity to Neo-Brittonic in regards to many core issues, it is not at present objectively possible to classify the former as a dialect of the latter.

Nevertheless, I would still argue that even the term Pictish relies on minimal evidence, and that most of the supposedly distinguishing features cannot be demonstrated to be restricted to Pictland alone. Such features, including both phonetic features and lexical items, occur also to the south. There is much evidence for late co-evolution with Brittonic, for instance phonetically and in regards of syncope and apocope. No evidence can be adduced to support the view that the linguistic isogloss was where Bede placed it.

A detailed study of many hundreds of items (lexical borrowings, place and personal names etc.) was conducted in order to engage with the issues discussed in this thesis, and there are only a small number of items that suggest significant differences. The paucity of phrasal place-names is one concern. Another is the lack of phrasal place-names containing the definite article, but would such multi-syllabled items have survived mediation by two languages to be recognisable in the earliest attestations? If these are later developments in Neo-Brittonic then Pictish may already have been on the wane at the period they were being coined. Note however that they are well-attested in Northern Brittonic, which would therefore have to represent an analogous development.

My current thinking leans towards the view that much of Pictland partook in the ‘Neo-Brittonic revolution’, or at least very significant aspects of it. That is, in the post-Roman centuries, areas to the north of not only Hadrian’s Wall but also the Antonine Wall evolved linguistically on much the same path as areas to the south⁷⁰⁴. Whether this change was abrupt, episodic or cumulative is uncertain and neither can the socio-linguistic or political processes which generated this be identified with any certainty.

Advances in toponymic studies or the discovery of new evidence may well allow us to refine, modify or challenge the conclusions reached in this thesis and to make progress with other aspects of the language. We are, at present still faced with challenging inscriptions, primarily but not exclusively in the *ogham* alphabet, a good number of curious name-forms ascribed to historical Picts in various sources, and of course Bede’s explicit statement on the distinctiveness of Pictish.

Much work remains to be undertaken on the details of the language. First and foremost, Pictish personal names require a dedicated study, collating and comparing the many variants. This is a project which can be approached confidently at the present time as, in contrast to place-names, it is unlikely that much new evidence will emerge. There is a substantial corpus here that has hardly been discussed, and much which requires specialist involvement from various fields. There are nearly one hundred items which have some claim to be labelled ‘Pictish’, and which may provide important information on the language. These range from many items (names, epithets and lexical items) in the Pictish king-lists, inscriptions, and lesser numbers of items in Irish Annals, English texts and later sources such as the Book of Deer and place-names.

A longer term project, or rather a series of projects, is to complete the county surveys of Scottish place-names, in particular those in the east where we already have significant evidence for Pictish. Ensuring that linguists have access to early forms is crucial, as is approaching numerous other issues which will throw light

⁷⁰⁴ However I hope to publish material soon which will argue that the New Quantity System may not have operated in Pictish.

on the shift from Pictish to Gaelic⁷⁰⁵ and which will enrich our understanding of the linguistic history of such areas. Even without such research there is a substantial body of primarily toponymic evidence to be amassed and discussed which will place our understanding of Pictish on a firmer footing.

⁷⁰⁵ One printed discussion is Nicolaisen (2007), but this linguistic and ethnic shift remains poorly understood.

Bibliography

The year noted for entries from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* represents the latest revision, and were accessed from the online version in 2013-14. Irish names in *O* and *Ó* are placed at the beginning of the section as are names in *Mac*. Preposed elements such as *le* or *Van* are ignored when it comes to placing a name in alphabetical order, unless this conflicts with the practice of the author. When a work is co-authored and the main author is already cited, the entry is placed immediately afterwards.

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Pictish is a
distinct
language I
tell you!

Look, it's just a
dialect of
Brittonic!

