Ireland and Wales
in the
Middle Ages

Karen Jankulak and Jonathan M. Wooding *Editors*

Welsh ogams from an Irish perspective

Catherine Swift

The study of ogam stones in Ireland has been revolutionized in recent years by the publication of Damian McManus' *A Guide to Ogam* which provides the linguistic framework for a relative chronology of Irish inscriptions.[1] The three stages in this relative chronology are pre-apocope, pre-syncope and post-syncope. Apocope is a term meaning loss of final syllables and tends to be dated towards the end of the fifth century AD. Syncope refers to the loss of the middle vowel in words of three syllables and is thought to be witnessed on ogam stones sometime around the last quarter of the sixth century AD. Post-syncope stones are thought to range in date from the end of the sixth century to approximately the mid-seventh century AD.

Using this relative chronology as a tool, one can identify the majority of Irish ogam inscriptions as being pre-apocope in style:

> Owing to the fragmentary nature of many inscriptions it is impossible to give exact figures but the bulk appears to belong to the Late Primitive Irish period with a substantial but decreasing proportion in Archaic Irish and a very small number in Early Old Irish. No orthodox ogam inscription bears diagnostic criteria which would assign it either to the Early Primitive Irish or the Classical Old Irish periods.[2]

This conclusion is amplified elsewhere by a statement that 'the main period of the ogams should be placed in the fifth and first half of the sixth century'.[3] McManus also points out, however, that the uniformity of the script throughout the country, the overall agreement in the formulae used, and the consistency of orthographical practice all suggest the establishment of norms by a learned class, 'sufficiently mobile to account for the distribution of the monuments'; though in his view, this does not imply that they were erected by druids as postulated at the beginning of the twentieth century and as recently reiterated by Koch.[4] Thus, the use of a specific writing convention belonging to the Late Primitive Irish or

pre-apocope period may disguise the true date of the erection of the monument and may simply reflect the good 'training' by this 'learned class' which the carver has undergone. As against this, however, McManus also points out that such expertise would rarely extend to personal names which are more accurate barometers of the developments in the language:

> Ogam comes close to such a standard in its formula words and in recurring morphological elements such as case-endings. But rigid adherence to a convention could not be expected in the spelling of individual names, many of which occur only once in the entire corpus of inscriptions. It is in these, therefore, more so than in the formula words that we should expect to find reflexes of what was going on in the spoken language and this is the case.[5]

Welsh ogam stones are not discussed in detail in McManus' *Guide* but he does draw attention to some of their key features in the course of a discussion of British ogam stones in general. The most obvious of these is the existence, on the vast majority of the stones, of transcriptions of the individual's name in Latin characters as well as in ogam, a feature which is unknown in Ireland. Where the transcriptions differ substantially, this is normally because further detail is added in the Latin version, such as the HIC IACIT burial formula, an indication of filiation or a title. This is not to imply that the Latin inscriptions are necessarily secondary: in one case, the stone from Llanwinio, McManus identifies the ogam inscription as post-dating the Latin, presumably on the basis that one of the ogam scores appears foreshortened in order to accommodate the letter E.[6] In terms of the ogam alphabet used, there appears to be no use of the supplementary characters or *forfeda* in Wales although these are a feature of Irish ogam stones from the earliest period.[7] The distribution of the formulae used is also distinctive: there is only one example of the MAQI MUCOI formula (at Bridell in Pembrokeshire) while the formulaic words ANM, KOI, and CELI do not appear. Instead, there is a marked preference for single-name inscriptions. There is also a single Welsh example of an ogam inscription commemorating a woman (at Eglwys Cymmin in Carmarthenshire), unparalleled in Ireland.[8]

---

1 For summary of the most recent linguistic discussion see: McManus, *Guide*; Swift, *Ogam stones*; Moore, 'Munster ogam stones', pp 23–32. [This chapter is printed as received in 2002. Pressure of time prevented the author from revising the text in the light of more recent publications.] 2 McManus, *Guide*, p. 96. 3 Ibid., p. 97. 4 Ibid., p. 81; Swift, *Ogam stones*, pp 49–52; on druids as carvers of ogam, see Koch, 'The conversion and the transition', p. 40

and for discussion of earlier theories, Swift, 'Irish monumental sculpture', pp 49–60. 5 McManus, *Guide*, p. 83. 6 Ibid., p. 63. 7 This statement takes no account of the attempt on the stone from Crickhowell (north-east of Abergavenny) to represent the letter 'p', with a St Andrew's cross to the right of the stemline; *ECMW* 43. Macalister argued that the same supplementary character (with the same phonetic meaning) exists on an ogam inscription from Cool East in Co. Kerry. See *CIIC* 231; Macalister, 'The inscriptions and language of the Picts', pp 221–2. For further discussion, see Sims-Williams, 'The additional letters', pp 39–44. 8 McManus, *Guide*, pp 62–4.

Most importantly, however, McManus draws attention to the fact that the epigraphical dating of the Latin inscriptions is frequently at odds with that of his own linguistic dating of Welsh inscriptions containing Irish words.[9] He explains the discrepancy as being due to conservatism on the part of Welsh ogam-carvers and a determination to adhere to the long-established conventional orthography despite the fact that the actual sound of the name being transcribed would have evolved into something quite different by the time the inscription was being carved.[10] It should be noted that this is somewhat inconsistent with his view that personal names are less susceptible to the creation of such norms.

In my view, explaining the discrepancy in this way is to accord a primacy to the epigraphical dating which is undeserved. The dating of the epigraphy of Latin inscriptions by both Kenneth Jackson and V.E. Nash-Williams is extremely generalized in nature and depends heavily on the notion that letter-forms evolved in a regular and systematic fashion from the late Roman period onward. In the absence of early Welsh manuscript parallels, both scholars believe that inscriptions in Roman capitals are fifth century; inscriptions with a small number of half-uncial letters imply an earlier sixth-century date whilst inscriptions with a larger number of half-uncial letters belong to a late sixth or seventh-century date. This presupposition is inconsistent with the fact that Nash-Williams believed that the majority of the stones were earlier than AD 550 while Jackson, using similar criteria, believed a number of the stones might be as late as the late seventh century.[11] It is also worth bearing in mind the somewhat subjective terms in which Jackson then qualified his conclusions:

> After a careful study of the typology of the British inscriptions I have come to the conclusion that it is generally possible to define a narrower dating for any given monument than these wide limits. It is not easy to lay down any precise principles: the dates assigned throughout this book have been reached, within the broad framework, by comparing all of them one with another and constructing a relative typological sequence which makes it possible to say, for instance, roughly 'late fifth century' or 'mid-sixth century', etc. of any given monument. I believe that few epigraphers would be disposed to assert positively that in any one example these datings are inaccurate by more than half a century.

A possible discrepancy of half a century on either side of a given date does not instil confidence in the 'narrower dating' which Jackson proposes, particularly as

he cites no particular criteria other than his own knowledge of the material. The arguments are further weakened by his comments on the Llangadwaladr stone which he believed was erected to commemorate King Cadfan of North Wales, possibly around the year AD 650. It is written almost entirely in what he terms 'pure MS half-uncials'. He felt this stone was *typologically* the latest of all the inscriptions of the early group but could not have been *chronologically* the latest. On the Llangawaladr stone, therefore, as one of the very few stones where historical material provide the possibility of providing an alternative dating, the existence of uncial letters was dismissed by Jackson as a firm basis for dating the monument.[12]

Single-name inscriptions

If McManus' linguistic chronology is applied without reference to the epigraphic theories of Jackson and Nash-Williams, the Welsh stones can be sub-divided as follows. There are nine ogam inscriptions which apparently consist of single names, although it is possible that, at Ystradfellte, some of the inscription may be lost. One, at Nevern in Pembrokeshire, refers to someone with the Latin name of VITALIANI (in the genitive). The others, at Brynkir, Rhuddlan, Castell Dwryan Clydai, Jordanstown, Brawdy and Steynton all show pre-apocope endings.[13]

The latest form in this series of ogam inscriptions is Rhuddlan where TRENACCAT(L)O shows the very beginnings of apocope in the loss of the final S.[15] Since this particular inscription shows the effects of language change, the elements which are seen as fifth-century cannot be dismissed as the result of the use of a convention. On the contrary, in fact, this inscription seems to accord with McManus' principle that it is in the personal names that one is most likely to find the strongest evidence for the relative date of the stone.

On the other hand, if VOTECORIGAS/**VOTEPORIGIS** at Castell Drwryan, is the sixth-century figure *Guo(r)tepir* king of Dyfed named by Gildas as is frequently though not universally assumed, then clearly that would be an

---

9 He includes within this categorization not just Welsh ogam inscriptions but also Irish name forms transcribed in Latin letters. 10 McManus, *Guide*, pp 98–9. 11 Nash-Williams, *ECMW*, p. 6; Jackson, *LHEB*, p. 159.

12 Jackson, *LHEB*, pp 159–62; Nash-Williams, *ECMW*, pp 1–27; Swift, *Ogam stones*, pp 56–62. 13 One of the Brawdy stones, which reads VENDOGNI, instead of the common ending –AGNI, appears to have been influenced by a Latin usage which frequently renders ogam O for A; McManus, *Guide*, p. 93. The statistics in this paper should be regarded as correcting the statement in Swift, *Ogam Stones*, p. 93, that there are only seven Welsh stones with names in the genitive and without patronymics. 14 In this paper, I follow McManus' convention to distinguish between ogam inscriptions (written in capitals) and Latin inscriptions (written in Latin bold.) 15 McManus, *Guide*, p. 88; McCone, *Towards a relative chronology*, p. 120. The L in TRENACCAT(L)O is marked in brackets because, although clearly present on the stone, it does not make sense in terms of the name. This is made up of two elements corresponding to the later Old Irish *trén* (o/ā adj.), meaning 'strong' and *cath* (u stem noun, m.), meaning 'battle'.

Location	Inscription	Reference
Nevern	VITALIANI **VITALIANIEMERETO**[14]	ECMW 354
Ystradfellte	GLUVOCA...	ECMW 74
Brynkir	ICORIGAS **ICORI FILIVS POTENTINI**	ECMW 84
Rhuddlan	TRENACCAT(L)O **TRENACATVS IC IACIT FILIVS MAGLAGNI**	ECMW 127
Brawdy	M[A]Q[I] QAGTE	ECMW 296
Brawdy	VENDOGNI **VENDAGNI FILI V[ ]NI**	ECMW 298
Castell Dwyran	VOTECORIGAS **MEMORIA VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS**	ECMW 138
Clydai	D[O]V[ ]TUCEAS **DOB[ ]TVCI FILUS EVOLENG[I]**	ECMW 308
Jordanstown	DOVAGNI **TIGERNACI DOBAGNI**	ECMW 312
Steynton	GENDILI	ECMW 404

example of the use of the early conventions by a carver of later date.[16] This particular inscription is, however, fraught with difficulty; Gildas' dates are themselves questionable and Thurneysen has pointed out that the earlier form of *Guortepir* would be *Uortiporius* rather than **VOTEPORIGIS** as on the stone.[17] A plausible solution to these difficulties has been proposed by Patrick Sims-Williams who suggests simply that the inscription may be recording a different member of the same dynasty.[18] Such an explanation would also have the merit of placing Votepor[ix]'s title, *protector*, within the late Roman/fifth-century context in which the word is found elsewhere.[19] If this should be the case, it follows that there would be no reason to suppose that the inscription was written in conventionalized form by a later carver and the fifth-century idiom could, therefore, simply reflect a fifth-century dynast.

16 Jackson, *LHEB*, pp 169–70; McManus, *Guide*, pp 52–3. 17 On Gildas, see Dumville, 'Gildas and Maelgwyn', pp 51–9; Lapidge, 'Gildas's education, pp 27–50; Herren, 'Gildas and early British monasticism', p. 571. 18 Sims-Williams, 'Dating the transition', pp 217–26. I would like to thank Anthony Harvey for bringing this article to my attention. 19 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 168; Jones, *The decline of the ancient world*, pp 224–6.

In short, all of these stones with single names (except that of the Latin **VITALIANI** for which the system is not applicable) would, on Irish linguistic criteria, be carved in a fifth-century idiom. One, at Rhuddlan, appears to be late fifth-century in date while the historical grounds for assuming that the Castell Dwryan stone is later are not only dubious in themselves but conflict with the name as actually inscribed.

Turning to the accompanying Latin forms, Brynkir, Castell Dwryan and Clydai all use Latinized genitival endings whilst Rhuddlan has **TRENACATUS** in the nominative. This last provides the only datable form in Latin letters; it has not yet lost the A in the second syllable and is, therefore, pre-syncope and at latest sixth-century in style. As it has been given a Latin second declension ending, the criteria of apocope (involving the loss of final endings) cannot be used. On linguistic grounds, therefore, there is nothing in the accompanying Latin forms to negate the fifth-century dating of these ogam inscriptions.

Welsh single-name inscriptions in Latin writing but without ogam may be rather more diverse in date.[20] One, at Towyn, has the Latin name **PASCENT[I?]** which, if the 'I' was not part of the original, implies a post-apocope date. It is difficult to be certain about this, however, as the stone was recorded in the late eighteenth century and is now lost.[21] Others, at Llannor and Newchurch, show pre-apocope forms of British names: **VENDESETLI** (<*Gwynnhoedl*) and **CUNEGNI** (< Cynin). This suggests that these two stones, at any rate, are fifth-century, in contrast to a fourth example, at St Nicholas in Pembrokeshire, which reads **PAANI**. Again, this appears to be a British name but it is inscribed in a form which suggests that the carver is using the convention seen in seventh-century manuscript sources, of doubling the vowel to indicate that it is long.[22] It is not clear at what point this convention developed; the example of Crickhowell shows a doubling of 'u' in **PUUERI** in an inscription which also includes the pre-syncope (and therefore sixth-century) **DUNOCATI**. Llannor and Newchurch indicate that the convention of single-name inscriptions would seem to have existed in fifth-century Wales but the St Nicholas stone means that the same formula may have continued in use into a later era.

Single name inscriptions also occur on the ogam stones of Ireland but are not as high a percentage of the corpus as they are in Wales. It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of the numbers without an up-to-date catalogue since Macalister does not always make it clear whether the surviving inscriptions are fragmentary. On the other hand, there are also monuments, such as the GOS-SUCTTIAS stone at Lugnagappul, Co. Kerry, where the scores are clear and the boulder rounded and clearly undamaged.[23] My own estimate is that there

20 *ECMW* 10, 96, 143, 172, 399, 400. 21 *ECMW* 286. 22 Thurneysen, *A grammar*, p. 20. The final I would therefore be an added Latin second declension genitival ending. 23 *CIIC* 190; Cuppage et al., *Archaeological survey of the Dingle Peninsula*, pp 255–6.

are approximately twenty-nine of these stones in Macalister's catalogue which includes three hundred and sixteen ogam inscriptions in Ireland. The twenty-nine single-name inscriptions includes stones from the modern counties of Galway, Roscommon, Louth, Wexford, Wicklow, Cork, Kerry and Waterford.[24] Of these, the last three counties are the area where ogam stones are most commonly found and therefore, little can be deduced from the presence of the single-name stones there. However, the fact that this single-name formula also occurs in the south-east and the midlands is of greater interest and parallels the case of the ogam stones with Latin names in Ireland, discussed elsewhere, which can also occur to the east of the main concentration.[25]

Interestingly, the dating of the Irish ogam stones with single-name inscriptions appears confined to the period prior to the appearance of syncope or, in other words, to the earlier phases of the ogam period. The earlier stones include pre-apocope names such as GOSSUCTTIAS, INISSIONAS, IRCCITOS or GAMICUNAS while the later examples include post apocope and pre-syncope names such as VORTIGURN or BRRUANANN.[26] I have identified no examples of post-syncope name forms amongst the Irish single-name inscriptions. Thus, the Irish stones showing this particular type of inscription all appear to be fifth and earlier sixth century. This would tally with the fact that all the Welsh ogam stones, with single-name inscriptions, are written in a fifth-century idiom while at least some of them, such as Rhuddlan, show clear indications that this is not merely the use of a standardized convention. At least some of the single-name stones in Latin writing in Wales are also written in fifth-century style but the doubling of the vowel on the St Nicholas stone may imply that the custom continued into the sixth or even the seventh centuries.

Stones inscribed with the X MAQI Y formula

There are five Welsh ogam stones which definitely use the formula X MAQI Y or X son of Y and a further four where the word MAQI is now missing but where Nash-Williams has postulated its existence. In two cases, the accompanying Latin would seem to justify this conclusion.[27] At Kenfig, the inscription (POPIA[....]ROL[..]N M[..]I LL[.]ENA) bears no obvious relationship to the accompanying Latin **PVMPEIVS CARANTORIVS** but the existence of the ogam letters M and I do mean that MAQI is the most likely reconstruction.[28]

24 CIIC 11, 39, 44, 50, 51, 60, 62, 64, 69, 91, 93, 96, 100 (on which see McManus, *Guide*, p. 66) 133, 134, 151, 155, 161, 168, 182, 186, 190, 191, 226, 242, 253, 284, 297. 25 Swift, *Ogam stones*, pp 92, 94. 26 CIIC 190, 161, 168, 191, 297 & 242. 27 The two fragmentary inscriptions are ECMW 43 (TURPIL[.....]LUNI); TURPILLI IC IACIT TRILVNI DVNOCATI; ECMW 198 (POPIA[....]ROL[..]N M[..]I LL[.]ENA), and ECMW 306 ETTERN[.......]TOR; ETTERNI FILI VICTOR. 28 ECMW 198

In the case of the stone from Caldey Island, however, the Latin bears no relationship to the ogam and Nash-William's conclusion that the original inscription probably read MAGLIA DUBRACUNAS MAQI [..] INB is no more than a supposition.[29] There are, therefore, a maximum of eight examples, of which only five are certain, rather than Thomas Charles-Edwards' figure of nine.[30] The five incontrovertible examples are cited below:

Location	Inscription	Reference
Llandawke	DUMELEDONAS MAQI M[...] **BARRIVENDI FILIUS VENDUBARI HIC IACIT**	ECMW 150
Cilgerran	TRENAGUSU MAQI MAQITRENI **TRENAGUSSI FILI MACUTRENI HIC IACIT**	ECMW 305
Llandeilo	[ ]NDAGELLI MACU CAV[....] **ANDAGELLI IACIT FILI CAVETI**	ECMW 313
Nevern	MAGLICUNAS MAQI CLUT[a]R[..] **MAGLOCVN FILI CLUTORI**	ECMW 353
St Dogmaels	SAGRAGNI MAQI CUNATAMI **SAGRANI FILI CUNOTAMI**	ECMW 384

Using Irish linguistic criteria these stones also appear early although the evidence is slightly more problematic than in the case of stones with single names. In the case of the first example, at Llandawke, the ogam form DUMELE-DONAS is pre-apocope but apparently refers to someone other than the man commemorated in the Latin. At Cilgerran, the first name TRENAGUSU has been given a final ending in U (with three vowel strokes) rather than O (with two strokes) in contrast to other ogam stones ending with the element -GUSO.[31] The second name MAQITRENI has been given a Latin second declension ending. Given mistakes in the final vowel of both words, this might suggest a later

(POPIA[....]ROL[..]N M[..]I LL[.]ENA), *ECMW* 301 (MAGL[..]DUBR[.........]INB) and *ECMW* 306 (ETTERN[.......]TOR). 29 The surviving reading is Nash-Williams, *ECMW* 301 MAGL[..] DUBR[.........]INB. 30 The following catalogue also differs from that of Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh kinship*, p. 149, in the following respects. I classify Nash-Williams, *ECMW* 150 as an example of X MAQI Y whilst Charles-Edwards, following Nash-Williams, categorizes it as X MAQI MUCOI Y. I also identify *ECMW* 296 (MAQI-QAGTE) as a single-name inscription in contrast to Charles-Edwards who believes it to be a fragmentary example of X MAQI Y. 31 The name incorporates two elements which later give rise to the adjective *trén* – o/ā adj. – 'strong' and *gus* – u-stem, m. noun – 'force, vigour'.

carver trying to remember the conventions of his training, rather than one working in a pre-apocope environment. The carver at Llandeilo also made mistakes, MACU being spelt with a U (three strokes) rather than the normal I (five strokes). At Nevern, Nash-William felt only CLUTA was visible but personal examination of the stone produced four of the five diagonals necessary for R. As the stone is fractured at this point, the status of CLUTAR- as pre-apocope cannot be determined but MAGLICUNAS in the same inscription is certainly pre-apocope. Finally, while the stone at St Dogmaels also shows pre-apocope forms, its accompanying Latin shows vocalization of /γ/ before *n* (**SAGRAGNI** > **SAGRANI**). This never occurs on Irish stones before the onset of apocope (where the final I in the ogam would be lost). One must, therefore, interpret the I in the Latin as representing a Latin second declension genitival ending rather than merely reproducing the I of the ogam version.[32] Thus, in this last inscription there is unequivocal evidence of the use of a conventional ogam orthography at a somewhat later date but as the vocalization of /γ/ before *n* begins in the immediate post-apocope period,[33] the gap may not be that long. In short, there is reason to believe that at least two of these MAQI inscriptions, at Cilgerran and St Dogmaels, may have been using a fifth-century style at a somewhat later date although in both cases, there is no reason to assume that the inscriptions are later than the sixth century. In the case of the other three, we have no such evidence and all we can say is that they are inscribed in a fifth-century style.

Of the three fragmentary inscriptions, it can be stated that the stone at Crickhowell incorporates a pre-syncope form in the accompanying Latin **DUNOCATI** but as it has been given a Latin second declension ending, it cannot be assumed to be pre-apocope. The stone at Clydai appears to include a post-apocope form in the father's name in both its Latin and fragmentary ogam forms which lacks the necessary genitival ending: **VICTOR** or ogam [...]TOR. Clydai is thus no later than the sixth century while Crickhowell is certainly sixth-century and may well be fifth-century in date.

The simple X MAQI Y formula (without other formula words such as MUCOI) is the most common type of identification to be found on Irish ogam stones and I have counted approximately sixty-one examples in Macalister's corpus. (The problem of the unfinished inscriptions makes it impossible to be certain.) They are found throughout the island and appear to date to all periods within the time-span of ogam-stone production from the pre-apocope forms such as Ballintaggart's (SUVALLOS MAQQI DUCOVAROS) to the post-syncope TIDONN MAQ DOMNGINN at Dromkeare.[34] It is, however, true that, in common with Irish ogam stones in general, the majority appear to belong to the pre-syncope period or, in other words, to be fifth and earlier sixth

32 McManus, *Guide*, pp 95–6; 107. **33** McManus, *Guide*, pp 88–9. **34** *CIIC* 158, 233.

century in date. In this, their dating coincides broadly with the Welsh stones using this X MAQI Y formula although, in Ireland, unlike Wales, they continue to be produced in the post-syncope period, corresponding roughly to the later sixth century and the early seventh.

X AVI Y

These two categories: single names and X MAQI Y make up the bulk of the identifiable ogam inscriptions from Wales.[35] There are also, however, two interesting examples of a third formula: X AVI Y or X grandson of Y. The first, from Trallwng (Welshpool), reads CUNACENNI [ ]VI ILVVETO with accompanying Latin **CUNOCENNI FILIUS CUNOGENI HIC IACIT**.[36] In other words, the ogam uses a different formula from the Latin; the ogam refers to the man's grandfather while the Latin refers only to his father. On the second stone, from Llanwinio, the ogam reads BEVVU[ ] AVVI BODDIB[ ] and the accompanying Latin, **BIVADI AVI BODIBEVE**.[37] In terms of date, the lack of endings on the ogam inscription at Llanwinio means the only dating evidence is the medial I in BODDIB[ ]/**BODIBEVE**. This indicates that the stone is at the very latest pre-syncope or sixth century in date. The stone from Trallwng has lost the final S in ILVETTO and thus belongs to the late fifth-century phase immediately prior to apocope, paralleling the case of Rhuddlan discussed above. Since it shows a modification brought about by the onset of apocope, it cannot be deemed to be the result of conventionalized training.

Damian McManus has identified the AVI formula ogam stones as being a relatively rare style in Ireland and uncommon in the later period of ogam production.[38] There are roughly twenty inscriptions incorporating the word AVI in Macalister's catalogue of which twelve use the formula of X AVI Y as in the Welsh examples. These twelve include examples from Mayo, Kildare, Kilkenny, Meath, Wexford, Cork and Kerry.[39] As in the case of the stones with single-name inscriptions, this distribution is disproportionately weighed towards the eastern half of the country, outside the focus of the Irish ogam corpus as a whole.

35 Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh kinship*, p. 149, uses a different methodology in arriving at the statement that fourteen of the twenty-four have first name and patronymic. He includes the patronymic if it exists only on an accompanying Latin alphabet inscription; my statistics, in contrast, are solely concerned with the ogam evidence. **36** *ECMW* 70. **37** *ECMW* 161 has a misprint in the accompanying text where the inscription is given as **BIVADI FILI BODIBEVE** despite the clear depiction of **AVI** on fig. 126 on the opposite page. Macalister (*CIIC* 378) reads the Latin inscription but gives the ogam reading as AVVI BODDI[BA] BEVVE. I have followed the most recent reading known to me, McManus, *Guide*, p. 63. **38** McManus, *Guide*, pp 52, 79–80. **39** *CIIC* 3, 19, 30, 37, 40, 43, 63, 66, 162, 189, 230, 282.

Interestingly, no example of this particular formula is found in Waterford, from whence the Déisi are thought to have emigrated to south-west Wales,[40] although Waterford does have three examples of the related X MAQI Y AVI Z, 'X, son of Y, grandson of Z'.

There is another example of the same formula used on a much earlier stone from Roman Britain. This is a votive plaque, erected by a Caledonian, and discovered in a cemetery to the south of Colchester. This reads:

> Deo Marti Medocio Campesium et Victorie Alexandri Pii Felicis Augusti nos(tr)i donum Lossio Veda de suo posuit nepos Vepogeni Caledo
>
> (To the god Mars Medocius of the Campeses and to the victory of our Emperor Alexander Pius Felix, Lossio Veda grandson of Vepogenus, a Caledonian set up this gift from his own resources).[41]

The reference to the emperor dates the stone to between AD 222 and 235. The use of *nepos* as part of the onomastic repertoire is not the norm for Roman inscriptions and I have found no other example in either volume of *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*. Jackson referred to this stone in the course of his study of the Pictish language in 1955, pointing out that the p in Vepogeni indicates that the word belongs to the P-Celtic family of languages which include both Gaulish and British. The word *nepos* he identified as meaning nephew; 'in the sense of "sister's son"'; 'this' he goes on, 'agrees very well with the Pictish system of matrilinear succession under which it would be natural for a man to describe himself as "son of X's sister" instead of "son of Y"'.[42]

I would prefer to interpret *nepos* in its normal Latin meaning as 'grandson' for this is how the early medieval successors to the ogam carvers understood it. Ogam AVI later becomes the Old Irish form *aui* (nominative *aue*) and in its nominative plural form *Uí*, it is normally translated as *nepotes* by both Irish annalists and hagiographers.[43] While acknowledging the implications of the p in Vepogeni, therefore, the AVI ogam stones of Ireland and Wales provide the best analogy for the use of the *nepos* naming formula at Colchester. The existence of Lossio's plaque implies that some British vernacular equivalent to *nepos* was already in existence as early as the third century AD whilst in Ireland, as already mentioned, the formula tends to be used on the earlier ogam stones. Both these facts this would support an early dating for the Welsh stones quite apart from the fact that, in one of the two examples, the loss of final S shows a later fifth-century non-conventionalized idiom.

40 Richards, 'The Irish settlements', pp 133–62; Ó Cathasaigh, 'The Déisi and Dyfed', pp 1–33. 41 Collingwood & Wright, *The Roman inscriptions*, p. 63. 42 Jackson, 'The Pictish language', pp 137–8. 43 The example of the Uí Néill is cited by Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh kinship*, p. 135, but the custom is far more widespread.

Dual names

A similar overlap between ogam formulae and earlier Romano-British usage can also be detected in the two Welsh examples of what Nash-Williams termed 'dual names' amongst the ogam inscriptions:

Location	Inscription	Reference
Trecastle	MAQITRENI SALICIDUNI[44] **MACCVTRENI SALICIDVNI**	ECMW 71
Clocaenog	S [ ] B [ ]L [ ] N[ ] [ ]VISACI **SIMILINI TOVISACI**	ECMW 176

The Trecastle stone shows no trace of apocope in the ogam but the accompanying Latin spelling MACCV shows the delabialization of /kʷ/, turning the original Q of MAQI into MAC[C]I. This is a feature which apparently took place contemporaneously with the period of ogam usage, labialization being first lost before the vowels *a*, *o* and *u* and later before *i* and *e*. Jackson dated the onset of this phenomenon to the mid- to late fifth century on the evidence of the **CUNORIX MACVS MAQUICOLINE** stone from Wroxeter.[45] There is no archaeological support for such a dating, the stone being found in ploughsoil but the pre-apocope endings would suggest a fifth-century style.[46] Thus, even though the **MACCU-** at Trecastle is a later form than MAQI- in the accompanying ogam inscription, the two forms both appear to belong to a fifth-century horizon.

In the case of Clocaenog, Jackson has accepted the earlier case made by Nash-Williams and Ifor Williams that the original name is likely to be *Similinus*, attested in Gregory of Tours and in a Pictish *Simul* whose death is noticed in the Annals of Ulster *s.a.* 724.[47] The ogam carver rendered the M as B, possibly because he mistook the strokes (M is a single diagonal stroke running across the edge of the stone while B is a single stroke to the right) or possibly because, in line with later pronunciation in both Old Irish and Welsh, both M and B would

44 This is to follow Nash-Williams' drawing, *ECMW* (Fig. 57) which gives the linguistically correct form MAQI as opposed to his text which apparently contains a misprint. Jackson, while giving the form MAQITRENI visible on Nash-Williams' drawing, states that the Latin form of the second word is **SALIGIDVNI**; *LHEB*, p. 179. This again contradicts Nash-Williams' illustration. Macalister (*CIIC* 341, n. 2) reads SALIGIDVNI. I have not had the opportunity to examine this stone for myself. 45 Wright & Jackson, 'A late inscription from Wroxeter', p. 299; McManus, *Guide*, p. 90. 46 Swift, *Ogam stones*, pp 54–5. 47 Jackson, *LHEB*, p. 483.

have been pronounced in very similar fashion where they occur after a vowel. As there is no final ending and the vowels are missing, the word is not subject to linguistic dating.

The second word in this inscription, [TO]VISACI would appear to be a common insular form, preceding both Old Irish *toisech* and Welsh *tywysog*, meaning 'first' in its adjectival usage and 'leader' or 'prince' when used as a noun. It is conceivable, therefore, that, as Nash-Williams postulated, the inscription means 'belonging to Similinus, [the] Prince'.[48] Alternatively, [TO]VISACI should simply be viewed as an ordinary personal name without connotations of royalty. In favour of this last, is the fact that this would mean the formula being used parallels that found on Trecastle and others to be discussed below. Otherwise, the stone is unique with no other example of TOVISACI being attested in the ogam corpus or on the Latin memorial stones. In terms of its date, it is a normal pre-apocope form and thus belongs to the fifth-century style. A possible indicator that this is the result of 'conventionalized' usage and that the actual date is somewhat later is the fact that the ogam inscription is not carved in the normal fashion, beginning at bottom left-hand corner and continuing up and around the edge but rather in two lines, running from bottom to top, first on the left and then on the right. This feature, which occurs elsewhere in the Irish corpus, may be a later development showing the influence of manuscript writing but the question has yet to be systematically studied.[49]

D. Ellis Evans has identified dual names of the type represented by MAQITRENI SALICIDUNI and **SIMILINI TOVISACI** as being one of the characteristic naming formulae used in Gaulish and Lepontic sources of the first centuries AD:

> In Continental Celtic sources the old onomastic system shows the use of individual names without a tradition of family name but sometimes with a reference to the individual name of the father. Patronymic adjectives following the name of the son or daughter are commonly formed by the addition of certain suffixes … Also the bare possessive genitive of the father's name is used e.g. Gaulish *Martialis Dannotali* or *Doiros Segomari*, also attested in Lepontic *Alkouinos Aškoneti* or *Esopnos Kepi.*[50]

In the two volumes of *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* – inscriptions which are roughly contemporary with those in Gaul and Italy – there are only a tiny number of such 'bare possessive genitives of the father's name', a mere eight in all.

RIB I 97   DEAE ANCASTAE GEMINUS MANI V(otum) S(oluit) L(ibens) M(erito) (Bitterne, Hants.)

48 Nash-Williams, *ECMW* 6.   49 McManus, *Guide*, p. 78.   50 Evans, 'A comparison of the formation', pp 423–4.

RIB I 105   SUL(u)IS SULINUS BRUCETI V(otum) S(oluit) L(ibens) M(erito) (Cirencester)

RIB I 620   DIS MANIBUS CROTO VINDICIS EMERITO COH(ortis) III GALLORUM ANNORUM XXXX MONIMENTUM FECIT FLAVIA PEREGRINA CONIUNX PIENTISSIMA MARITO PIENTISSIMO TITULUM POSUIT (Templeborough, Yorks)

RIB I 1123   DEO ARECURIO APOLLINARIS CASSI V(otum) S(oluit) L(ibens) M(erito) (Corbridge)

RIB I 2115   D(is) M(anibus) AFUTIANO BASSI ORDINATO COH(ortis) II TUNG(orum) FLAVIA BAETICA CONIUNX FAC(iendum) CURAUIT (Birrens, Dumfriesshire)

RIB I 2213   DIS MANIBUS AMMONIUS DAMIONIS C(enturio) COH(ortis) I HISPANORUM STIPENDIORUM XXVII HEREDES F(aciendum) C(urauerunt) (Ardoch, Perthshire)

RIB II 2503.111 DIVIXTUS METTI LAGON7 (Ospringe, Kent)

RIB II 2503.175 ? *AESRIA LINXI (Colchester) *reading of Aesria uncertain

These eight include some personal names which appear to belong to a 'Celtic' language and others which do not. In RIB I 1123, for example, the root of the father's name, Cassus, is also found on two ogam inscriptions from Ireland[51]. His son's name, Apollinaris, on the other hand, clearly derives from a Mediterranean milieu. Similarly in the case of the Gaulish MARTIALIS DANNOTALI from Alesia, cited by Ellis Evans, or **SIMILINI TOVISACI** in Wales, we see evidence of a mixed Latin/Celtic onomastic tradition. In some cases, such as that from Templeborough these inscriptions may represent Gauls who had settled in Roman Britain but the vessel from Ospringe may imply that this particular naming formula was also in use amongst civilian Britons.

Other examples of 'bare possessive genitives' occur on the curse tablets from Bath. 'Curse tablets' is an umbrella term used by R.S.O. Tomlin to characterize the series of small inscriptions, written on portable objects which were found in excavations in the great pool.[52] As a collection, they are written in both Old Roman and New Roman cursive and thus range in date over the whole period of the Romano-British colony. Three pieces have inscriptions showing the 'bare possessive genitive' formula and Tomlin believes that all three are probably second century in date. This is partly because of the features of the inscriptions; all three are written in Old Roman cursive which implies a pre fourth-century date; No. 10 has elegant rustic capitals; No. 9 has interpunct and word division.

51 *CIIC* 75, 81.   52 Tomlin, 'The curse-tablets', pp 59–270.

and No. 30 has word division.[53] However Tomlin also points out that what he terms 'peregrine nomenclature' is typical of a period prior to the *Constitutio Antoniana* of 212 when Roman citizenship was extended to all members of the empire. Tomlin's description implies that he sees this type of name-form, which in this paper I have called the bare possessive genitive, as dying out in the third century. Another example of the same formula, this time from an altar dedicated to Mercury at Uley in Gloucestershire is unfortunately of little use in clarifying the dating range.[54]

Artefact	Possessive genitive
Bath Tablet No. 9	Catonius Exsactoris
	Cunomolius Minici?
Bath Tablet No. 10	Docilianus Bruceri
Bath Tablet No. 30	Catonius Potentini
	Marinianus Belcati
	Lucillus Lucciani
	Aeternus Ingenui
	Bellaus Bellini
Uley (altar to Mercury)	Searigillus Searigis

t is possible, of course, that these inscriptions refer to Gauls who had settled in Loman Bath and Uley but at the very least, they imply that the formula was :nown in western Britain before the withdrawal of the Romans. They should e compared with a possible eight examples of the same formula known on rish ogam stones – I list the five most convincing here:

:IIC 47 (Castletimon, Co. Wicklow)	NETA-CARI NETA-CAGI
:IIC 120 (Monataggart, Co. Cork)	BROINIENAS ><OI NETA TTRENALUGOS
:IIC 154 (Ballinrannig, Co. Kerry)	CUNAMAQQI CORBBI MAQQ[............................]
:IIC 169 (Ballyeightragh, Co. Kerry)	MAQI-LIAG MAQI-ERCA
:IIC 262 (Seemochuda, Co. Waterford)	ERCAGNI MAQI ERCIAS

The existence of MAQI in these inscriptions do not represent the word for on' but is part of the personal name, later Old Irish deriviatives being *Macc-*

i Ibid., pp 85–90 **54** Woodward & Leach, *The Uley shrines*, p. 96.

Erce and *Mac-Liac*. (Where such names occur on Latin inscriptions in Britain, as in **MAQVICOLINE** or **MACCVTRENI** cited above, the **MAQ** element remains untranslated.) Similarly the word, NETA can also be used as the first element in such compound names and derivatives of this element are found in later personal names such as *Nadcaeir* (in the genitive) from NETTA-CARI or *Nad-Segamon* from NETA-SEGAMONAS.[55] McManus has argued that the MAQ(Q)I– names appear to have become fashionable towards the end of the sixth century but the examples which he cites shows that the type is also extant as a minority style within the group of pre-apocope inscriptions.[56]

In terms of date, these 'bare possessive genitives' from Ireland include three clear examples of pre-apocope inscriptions in fifth-century style, at Monataggart, Ballinrannig and Seemochuda respectively and a fourth, at Castletimon, which is most probably pre-apocope.[57] The MAQI-LIAG form at Ballyeightragh is post-apocope in that it lacks a final vowel and in the accompanying MAQI-ERCA, apocope has also taken place changing the form from the original MAQI-ERCIAS of Seemochuda. To summarize, four of the five Irish examples belong to a fifth-century style and of these, none show characteristics which would allow us to determine whether this merely represents the deployment of a conventionalized spelling. On the other hand, the existence of the same formula in Roman Britain and the pre-apocope stones from Wales (including the non-conventional **MACCV**– on the Trecastle stone) would both tend to support an early dating for the bare possessive genitives in Ireland.

Conclusions

The first point to be made is that there seems little merit in canvassing Jackson and Nash-Williams's epigraphic dates in the absence of concrete evidence with which to back them up. It is possible that more detailed work on the Merovingian epigraphical tradition may elucidate a more precise dating but as currently constructed, it is based on little more than the most general of observations. Given the contradictions which it throws up vis-à-vis the Irish linguistic analysis, it seems more of a hindrance than a help.

Ignoring Jackson's epigraphic dates throws McManus' theory of a conventional orthography in Wales into strong relief. McManus rationalized the discrepancies between the two dating systems, linguistic and epigraphic, by suggesting that ogam carvers in Wales were working within a very conservative tradition and retained an outdated orthography long after the language had

55 *CIIC* 47, 300; McManus, *Guide*, pp 109–10. **56** McManus *Guide*, pp 101, 109. **57** NETA-CARI is certainly pre-apocope to judge from its later Old Irish derivative, *Nadcaeir* (in the genitive) but it is possible that the second element in NETA-CAGI (which has not been identified) may represent an apocapated io-stem: McManus, *Guide*, p. 110.

developed. A careful examination of the details of the Welsh ogam stones, how-ever, suggests that there are other early features to these stones, quite apart from the spelling conventions deployed by their carvers.

Of the nine single-name ogam inscriptions in Wales, one shows fifth-cen-tury developments in the language whilst the others are all in the fifth-century idiom. This corresponds to a similarly early dating for the single-name inscrip-tions from Ireland and indeed, to the evidence of some, if not all, of the single-name inscriptions on the Latin memorial stones of Wales. Of the five definite and eight possible examples of the Welsh X MAQI Y inscriptions, only one stone, at St Dogmaels, shows unequivocal evidence of adherance to an earlier standard. It is also possible that Cilgerran may (but only *may*) be making mis-takes in the final vowels because it is an example of a later carver using fifth-century idioms. Of the others, there is no evidence to tell whether these are contemporary fifth-century stones or simply stones written in a fifth-century style. In Ireland X MAQI Y is the most common formula, occurring on stones of all periods although the majority are of the pre-syncope or fifth and earlier sixth-century in date.

Of the two Welsh X AVI Y stones, one shows definite traces of a non-con-ventionalized fifth-century dating while there is also a third-century Romano-British stone using the same formula. Furthermore, in an Irish context, the X AVI Y formula is thought to be characteristic of the earlier stones. Similarly, both of the Welsh stones showing 'bare possessive genitives' have pre-apocope or fifth-century characteristics; they use a naming formula which is reasonably well attested in Roman Britain and which, where it occurs in Ireland, occurs predominantly on the pre-apocope stones. There is thus a reasonable body of comparative data, in terms of naming formulae, to corroborate the early dates of Welsh stones suggested by the use of Irish linguistic analysis.

If the linguistic dating of the Welsh corpus is accepted, it has historical impli-cations for our understanding of the Irish settlements in Wales. Seventeen of the twenty-one stones (or approximately 81%) discussed in this paper show fifth-century characteristics and this is out of a total of twenty-four readable Welsh ogam inscriptions. If we do not accept the theory that this is due to the use of traditional orthography by carvers of a later date, then it follows that the bulk of the Welsh ogam stones were erected within a relatively short space of time. Rather than the relatively sporadic erection of ogam stones over a two hundred year time-span and more, the picture is one of a relatively widespread custom in fashion for a mere hundred years or so. This in turn, has implications for the number of Irish settlers whom we envisage as settling in post-Roman Wales.

Thirdly, it is a remarkable fact that the Irish parallels for the Welsh ogam stones are not found concentrated in the counties of Waterford and Cork but instead form a high percentage of the relatively small number of ogams found in the eastern half of the island. Examples of the formulae discussed in this paper

occur on stones from Louth, Meath, Wexford, Wicklow, Kildare and Kilkenny in the east and Galway and Roscommon in the western midlands as well as a minority in the ogam-stone heartlands of Cork, Kerry and Waterford. Such a distribution also coincides with the distribution of ogam stones with Latin names in Ireland which are found in Counties Carlow and Kildare as well as Cork, Kerry and Waterford.[58] This provides an important corrective to the picture painted by the later documentary sources which focusses on the emigration of the Déisi of Waterford and the Uí Liatháin of County Cork. Such a discrep-ancy can be explained if we accept that the majority of both the Irish and Welsh ogam stones belong to the fifth century and therefore long pre-date the sur-viving documentary sources. It is quite possible that the more complex realities of fifth-century Irish activity in Wales had been forgotten and were replaced with legends and genealogies glorifying important patrons of the day.[59] If, how-ever, we compare the Irish migrations into Wales to that of late- and post-Roman migration of barbarian peoples into imperial areas, we might expect to find extensive traces of fifth-century settlement by relatively large numbers of people from just outside the frontier zone. Instead of bloody conquests of great swathes of territories by single individuals and dynasties, we might perhaps con-sider the possibility that many Irish settlers were attracted by the possibilities of smaller-scale gains in a land which had benefited extensively from Roman occu-pation but where the native power-structures were now in a state of flux owing to the Roman withdrawal. From an Irish perspective, there would have been much to attract Irish emigrants to Wales in the immediate post-Roman period. A study of the Welsh ogams from an Irish perspective means that patterns in the naming formulae of the stones from both sides of the Irish sea can be exam-ined, yielding new insights into the fifth-century history of both countries.

58 Swift, *Ogam stones*, p. 91.   **59** See Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 164 for a different assessment of the documentary sources.