Introduction

The Background to These Volumes

The focus on Britain in this two-volume anthology is determined by its connection with the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, completed in 2013. This project was initiated in the 1920s at the instigation of the British Academy, under the auspices of the Union académique internationale as part of a plan to produce a series of national medieval Latin dictionaries throughout Europe, based on the extant sources for each country.[1] Several of these national dictionaries are now complete, and once they all reach completion and digital connection, as projected, it will be possible to compare with ease the different senses and uses of words that are recorded in more than one country and to draw conclusions also about those words whose use is apparently restricted to a particular area.

The Sources of British Medieval Latin and the Focus on Britain

Such conclusions are of course dependent on the rather random nature of the surviving evidence, the amount of which varies from country to country. The British sources are unusual in being particularly plentiful, especially for the period after the Norman Conquest. Inevitably, to be sure, there is much for which there is no evidence, much that has been lost, in extreme weather, in fire, in war and in the Reformation. Much of the material included in these volumes barely survived the fire in the library at Ashburnham House in 1731 which destroyed and damaged many manuscripts in the collection of Sir Robert Cotton, after whom they are named, with each manuscript referenced according to the bust of which Roman emperor or empress stood above the library presses where the volumes had been kept. Many of the Scottish charters and records were lost as the result of their removal to London in the early fourteenth century and in the seventeenth century under Oliver Cromwell: on their return to Scotland in 1661, a large number of documents, together with the ship transporting them, sank off the coast of Northumbria.

Nevertheless, there remains an abundance of Latin surviving in manuscripts and administrative documents. Manuscripts rescued after the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century were principally preserved in the Royal Library and in private collections (both of which formed the basis for the British

1 For a history of the project, see R. Ashdowne (2010) '*Ut Latine minus vulgariter magis loquamur*: the making of the *DMLBS*' in *Classical Dictionaries: past, present and future*, ed. C. Stray, London.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316890691.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Library collection) or in colleges in Oxford and Cambridge. Documents relating to royal administration, usually in the form of parchment rolls, had been stored until the early nineteenth century in the Tower of London and at Westminster, when they were moved to the Public Record Office, now the National Archives at Kew, while more local documents are preserved in record offices around the country. Thanks to historians and archivists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the work of the Record Commission, many fine editions were produced, particularly of material of a historical, legal or political relevance, such as the *Statutes of the Realm* and the *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland* or the later Rolls Series editions of historical texts. It is these sources which provide such rich material to assist in the study of the complex history of Britain through this period from the Roman withdrawal in the fifth century to the Reformation. And since most of the historical material is written in Latin, the study of that language as used in Britain is of great importance for an accurate picture of the past. These volumes of selected passages are intended to assist the reader in their encounter with the great plenty and variety of material available.

The wealth of material is definitely a reason for studying the Latin of medieval Britain. Another reason is the way Latin permeated society. Latin was used by the Church as its primary language throughout this period, in other words by priests, bishops, monks and nuns (who included many royal princesses). After the Norman Conquest in 1066 (the period that will provide the material for Volume II of this work), Latin took on an additional life as the language of royal administration. Even in the Anglo-Saxon period, the focus of this volume, the fact that the Church was involved in multiple areas underpinning society, including education, meant that Latin reached into every aspect of society at every level. It thereby also connected with the vernacular languages, whether English, or Celtic languages such as Welsh, or later, Old Norse. In the same period, as the result of trade, mission work, education and travel, Latin also encountered other languages on the continent of Europe, such as the Germanic Frankish language and the proto-Romance languages evolving into French, Italian and Spanish.

And yet it might be considered that to focus on one particular country goes against the current trend towards a broader examination of the global Middle Ages. However, since the information contained in the complete *DMLBS* has only recently become available, in paperback fascicules and online, it seems to be the right moment for more in-depth linguistic study of the British material than has hitherto been possible. This can be regarded as a necessary preliminary not only for more global and international studies but for studies that deal with other aspects of British history and culture.

Medieval Latin: Looking beyond Neglect

If the focus on Britain can be justified by the fact that there are as yet few analyses of British Latin set in a broader context than an occasional summary of the Latin

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of a particular author or of a particular period, this situation might lead one to ask why medieval Latin, and British Latin in particular, have hitherto been neglected, when there is so much of interest still to bring to light and communicate. The answer to this is by no means simple. Whereas the medieval period shared with all ages an admiration for many of the writings of classical antiquity (mostly Latin, as few of the Greek texts were known in the West at that time), it valued even more highly the Christian scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers which were transmitted to it in late antiquity and which permeated medieval culture: the medieval writers believed that possessing Christianity as a key ingredient, they could even surpass the classics. However, by the later Middle Ages, with the growth of humanism and increasing criticism of the Church as an institution, the time had come for a major change of focus during the Renaissance and the Reformation. This was supported by the fact that it coincided with the increasing competence and dominance of the European vernacular languages, allowing these languages gradually to take over from Latin in many areas of life, and leaving Latin to become what the scholars of the Renaissance had chosen to make it, namely a close imitation of the limited amount of Latin surviving from the classical period. Although Latin was still taught as the mark of an educated person, scholars could turn their gaze straight from antiquity to the neo-Latin of the Renaissance, without looking down at what they regarded – according to modern scholars – as the muddy puddle of medieval Latin writings. This attitude has continued apparently unquestioned, into modern times.[2] However, there is further work to be done to assess what the Renaissance really thought about the Latin of the medieval period, given that even Petrarch and the humanists continued to believe that Christianity had brought light and truth.[3] It is true that as the Reformation spread through northern Europe, including Britain, the Latin and the writings of the medieval period were not only overlooked, but actually tacitly tarred with the brush of Catholicism and largely ignored in Protestant countries. Admittedly German scholars, building on the work of historians who were producing the massive series *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, began to study the works of medieval Latin literature related to German history and culture, but from a philological point of view. This was enough to allow departments

2 Examples of works that skim over the medieval despite their promising titles are J. Farrell (2001) *Latin language and Latin culture, from ancient to modern times*, Cambridge; A. Wallace (2020) *The presence of Rome in medieval and early modern Britain: texts, artefacts and beliefs*, Cambridge. On the other hand, G. Pezzini does provide examples from medieval Latin of 'submerged' Latin from the comic lexicon of Plautus, in the book on early and late Latin edited by *Adams and Vincent (2016: 14–26).

3 To gain an idea of the high-register Latin literature produced in the Renaissance, under the influence of the rediscovery of supposedly classical ideals, see L. Houghton and G. Manuwald (ed.) (2012) *Neo-Latin poetry in the British Isles*, London; V. Moul (ed.) (2017) *A guide to Neo-Latin literature*, Cambridge.

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of medieval Latin to germinate in German universities, with Ludwig Traube appointed as the first professor in 1902. The same did not happen in English-speaking universities, where study of medieval Latin was largely restricted to history departments, concentrated on Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and later medieval administrative texts, from manorial records to the Magna Carta. The philological aspect was thereby neglected.

However, an interest in Latin has always survived, and its teaching appears to be spreading both in schools and universities; the recently increasing provision for the teaching of Latin in such schools as have not traditionally had access to it is particularly welcome, through the work of such schemes as the Cambridge School Classics Project, Classics for All, Hands Up Education and the OxLat project. The opportunity now exists to widen the focus on the subject, whatever the direction from which one approaches it, and at whatever level, so that readers can not only learn the language by means of a greater range of literature or documents, but also connect that knowledge closely with other areas of Latin and with the material culture surrounding them. It is intended that these volumes should be useful to students of classical Latin and history, of English and other modern languages and their literatures, of archaeology and sociolinguistics. More profound and extensive study of medieval Latin is required to enable scholars to encounter at first hand material that would make their conclusions and generalisations more accurate and original, whether concerning Latin's relation to the development of the Romance languages or to important genres in medieval vernacular literature, or concerning the role of Latin in sociolinguistic studies. Translations are also important, as they were in the Middle Ages, but if students rely solely on translations, it seems easy to forget that the works were originally written in Latin. The translations in these volumes are intended to correct this and to assist historians and others who wish to engage with the original language but not unaided. The still-expanding bilingual Oxford Medieval Texts series, which includes codicological information, has of course made it possible to read the Latin original alongside the English translation, and indeed some of the passages in this volume overlap with OMT editions, though the translations here are new.

Beyond the interests of students and scholars lie the interests of the wider public in the history of Britain, about which these texts have much to teach, particularly for the Anglo-Saxon period, which has been somewhat eclipsed in the popular imagination by the Romans at one end and the post-Conquest world at the other. The texts can supplement what can be learned from archaeology, successfully presented in such hugely popular recent exhibitions as that of the Staffordshire hoard, or that entitled 'Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms' at the British Library in 2018–19. Such exhibitions put on display many books, coins and treasures of great importance for British history and culture, which also provide evidence of contacts with Europe and beyond, as in the case of the large hoard of gold coins

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found in Norfolk but minted in the Byzantine empire and Merovingian France in the early seventh century.

One would hope that some who have been fascinated by the artefacts on display may become fascinated by the language associated with so many of them: for example, the lyre that is part of the Sutton Hoo treasure, probably dating from the first half of the seventh century, on display in the British Museum, may resemble that mentioned in Bede's Latin account (*HE* 4.24(22)) of Cædmon, the young man of possibly British descent who composed hymns and songs in Old English at the monastery of Whitby, or the harp referred to in the Latin biographies of Dunstan that miraculously played itself while this future archbishop was working on an embroidery design for an ecclesiastical stole. This garment may resemble the tenth-century embroidered stole, given to the shrine of St Cuthbert by King Æthelstan in 934, now in the collection at Durham Cathedral. The massive Codex Amiatinus, brought to England for the first time in 1,300 years for the aforementioned British Library exhibition, was produced at Wearmouth-Jarrow during the time of Bede, as recorded in the early eighth century in the Life of Abbot Ceolfrith, who took it with him to give to the pope, but died on the way to Rome, after which it seems to have remained in Tuscany till the present day. Furthermore, new archaeological discoveries are continually sparking interest among scholars and the public, as in the case of the Viking burial of Anglo-Saxon coins discovered in a field in Herefordshire in 2019, leading to new theories about the Mercian king, Ceolwulf II, mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and by Asser for the year 874, or the relics preserved in a church in Folkestone, which were scientifically identified in 2020 as belonging to St Eanswith, the paternal aunt of the seventh-century king Hlothhere, the donor of land in one of the earliest charters in England, included in this anthology (Section I.3B). And of course, the written evidence – which in the case of BML goes far beyond the fragmentary, if intriguing, evidence from such sites as Oxyrhynchus or Vindolanda – deepens the modern understanding of the period, enriching it in a manner distinct from the view of the past gained from archaeology. It is to be hoped that the texts included in this volume (and in the second volume, which showcases the often very different British Latin of the period 1066–1500), covering a wide variety of genres and styles and educational levels, will also serve to attract not only historians but also linguistic and literary scholars in various academic fields, as well as students and general readers, for whom there is much that will surprise, intrigue and delight.

The Historical Background to the Texts

Before considering in more detail the role and nature of BML, it might be useful to summarise, in the broadest terms, the historical background against which the lives of the individuals who wrote these texts, which we may regard as 'primary

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sources', unfolded. The moment at which we enter this Anglo-Saxon period (for periodisation is indeed hard to avoid) is when the Romans are abandoning Britain after four hundred years, determined that it should now fend for itself. They thereby leave it open to increasing numbers of raiders and settlers from the northern Germanic tribes of Angles, Jutes and Saxons, crossing the seas in about 450 and moving further inland, pushing the earlier native inhabitants, the British speakers of a Celtic language, towards the west and north.[4] Christianity had first arrived in Britain during the period of Roman administration (when Britain was already to some extent a multilingual society, as seen, for example, in evidence from trade and army) and existed side by side with other belief systems, revealing its presence in the iconography of artefacts and mosaics. The British Church was sufficiently well established to send British bishops to Church councils abroad (e.g. the Synod of Arles in 314),[5] and a few years later it produced Pelagius, responsible for beliefs about human free will and God's grace that many found attractive but which came to be officially condemned as the Pelagian heresy at the Council of Carthage in 418. Despite such condemnation, Pelagianism was still sufficiently rife in Britain in 429 to require intervention from the Continent around the time when those leading lights of Christian theology, Augustine and Jerome, died in North Africa and in Bethlehem respectively. According to the Life, written by Constantius of Lyons and used by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre in Burgundy, was sent to combat the heresy, and incidentally helped to establish the cult of St Alban in the city named after the British martyr.

After the Roman withdrawal, Christianity lingered in Celtic areas of Britain, turning now towards Gaul and Ireland – as shown in the writings of St Patrick (Section I.1) in the fifth century and Gildas (Section I.2) in the sixth. However, both secular and ecclesiastical organisation disintegrated somewhat after the coming of the Angles and Saxons. By 597 Pope Gregory the Great, encountering the Northumbrian pagan slaves in Rome, deemed it necessary to send missionaries to England to (re-)introduce the Christian faith, advising them (according to Bede, *HE* 1.30) that the Saxon idols should be destroyed, but not the shrines, believing that the pagans would accept a different belief system if one allowed them continuity of practice. As the result of the work of Augustine (referred to as Augustine of Canterbury (died 604) to distinguish him from Augustine of Hippo (354–430)) and his colleagues, Christianity gradually spread north and west from Canterbury through Britain. Yet it should be remembered that when the contingent from Rome arrived they would have found a church, St Martin's, already in Canterbury, just beyond the city walls, possibly founded as early as the fifth

4 For a survey of their relations in a specific area, see T. Green (2012) *Britons and Anglo-Saxons in Lincolnshire 400–650*, Lincoln.

5 A. Haddan and G. Stubbs (eds.) (1869) *Councils and ecclesiastical documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Oxford, 1.7.

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century, and still in use today: it was being used by Bertha, the Frankish wife of the king of Kent.[6] At the same time Christianity was also moving from Ireland, which already had a rich Christian culture, across Scotland and Northumbria, as the kings of the various kingdoms and their peoples accepted the new faith. The discrepancies between the Irish and the Roman Church were largely resolved at the Synod of Whitby in 664 when the British Church decided to follow the Roman ecclesiastical customs. This led to the establishment of dioceses, minsters,[7] parishes and pastoral care in villages and estates all over the country during the course of the seventh century. These features of the Church were to coexist with elements of Anglo-Saxon secular society, such as forms of local government and laws based on the divisions of hundreds and shires which are still the basis of English administration.[8]

However, religious and secular society alike were to experience high points and low over the next centuries, struggling to revive after periods of strife between kingdoms and the repeated raids, and then settlement, of Vikings from Norway and Denmark following their first attack on Lindisfarne in 793.[9] These vicissitudes continued into the eleventh century, during which Britain was ruled by kings of English, Scandinavian and Norman stock, before being invaded once more, this time by William the Conqueror in 1066. The Viking age was thus brought to an end, by a descendant of Rollo, the first Viking ruler of Normandy.

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6 Bede, *HE* 1.26, for which see Section I.17.

7 Cf. S. Foot (1992) 'Anglo-Saxon minsters: a review of terminology' in *Pastoral care before the parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe, Leicester, decides to use 'minster' instead of 'monastery' for the early Anglo-Saxon period; I have retained 'monastery' to translate *monasterium*, though readers should be aware that the modern idea of a Benedictine monastery does not apply to the monasteries of the seventh and eighth centuries, which had a strong pastoral element.

8 Bede (*HE* 2.1) quotes a rhetorical passage from Gregory's *Moralia in Job* (27.11; *PL* 76.411A) in which he celebrates the recent success of Christianity in Britain: *ecce lingua Brittaniae, quae nihil aliud noverat quam barbarum frendere, iamdudum in divinis laudibus Hebreum coepit alleluia resonare* ('Take the language of Britain! It had only been capable of growling barbarous words, but has now started to sing God's praise with the Hebrew Alleluia').

9 The attack on Lindisfarne, often considered as marking the beginning of the Viking age, is mentioned by several contemporary writers: see Section I.28. The cultural repercussions are lamented by Orderic Vitalis in the twelfth century when he writes of the loss of manuscripts (*HE* 3.282, by volume and page of OMT edition): *in nimiis … procellis, quae tempore Danorum enormiter furuerunt, antiquorum scripta cum basilicis et aedibus incendio deperierunt; quae fervida juniorum studia, quamvis insatiabiliter sitiant, recuperare nequeunt* ('During the terrible disturbances which ruthlessly raged at the time of the Danes, the writings of the ancients were destroyed together with the churches and buildings; later generations, despite their insatiable longing, have been unable to retrieve them, for all their fervent efforts').

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The Confluence of Classical and Christian Culture

As already touched on, but often overlooked in the focus on the Middle Ages as a separate period and on Britain as a separate country, far from the centre of the previous civilisation at Rome, the British Middle Ages were in fact in many ways part of a cultural continuum with the rest of Europe and a continuation of the past, connected with the classical heritage and with the first few centuries of Christianity. By the time the first writers included in this book were writing, Christian and classical culture had to some degree merged to produce an extremely rich source on which the European Middle Ages would draw. Furthermore, this period was to be of great importance, both in Britain and on the Continent, for the transmission of classical literature by means of education and the essential copying of texts.

Admittedly there had initially been problems with the acceptance of the fundamental Christian text by classically educated Romans once Latin began to replace Greek as the official language of the Western Church. The Old Testament had been translated from Hebrew into Greek in the third century BC to produce the so-called Septuagint, initially for the use of Greek-speaking Jews throughout the Mediterranean area. Translations of the whole Bible into Latin were made from the second century AD, to produce various versions collectively referred to as the *Vetus Latina* or Old Latin. This text survives only in part and is still being worked on by textual critics to this day. The problem with these early translations was that the Latin used in them was not the Latin familiar from reading classical Latin literature, but one that was characterised by different, often simpler syntax, sometimes reflecting Greek and Hebrew usage. It was as a result of perceived defects in these translations that Jerome was asked to produce a new translation into Latin, using both the Greek and (once he had studied the language) Hebrew originals. However, the *Vetus Latina* continued to be used during the Middle Ages (and indeed much can be learned about the text of the *Vetus Latina* from quotations included in medieval Latin writings) alongside Jerome's translation, which was only officially accorded the title of 'Vulgata' (i.e. the commonly used version) at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century.[10]

Jerome's work resulted in a version that was closer to the original texts but still retained much of the non-classical Latin. Despite the inevitable clash between the venerated Bible text and the Latin admired by the educated who found the biblical Latin unattractive, Jerome and Augustine realised that the Bible needed to speak to the whole human race, and for this a simpler style was more appropriate. As Jerome writes in his letter discussing the best methods of translation, a more literal Latin translation is more appropriate for Scripture as retaining a

10 Gregory the Great, for example, remarks that he will use primarily the new translation of Scripture in his *Moralia in Job*, but will also cite the *Vetus Latina* to prove his arguments (*PL* 75.516C).

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greater accuracy as well as the mystery of the original (*verborum ordo mysterium est*, *Ep*. 57.5), though at other times he prefers the method recommended by Cicero in his *De optimo genere oratorum* (14), whereby the literal translation is replaced by the general sense. This conviction persuaded him to produce a carefully calibrated Latin version with the minimum of stylistic changes to the older version.[11]

Classically educated Christians may have found the biblical style rebarbative for not being classical enough, but this did not prevent them also having qualms about classical literature for not being Christian enough. Jerome best exemplifies the sense of guilt Christians felt simply for admiring classical writers, when in his *Ep*. 22 he tells of his dream in which he was accused before God of being more of a Ciceronian than a Christian. However, such ambivalence did not prevent the Christian writers of late antiquity, and their medieval successors, from reading what classical literature they could, both for content and style. In modern times it is rather the classicists who have had an ambivalent attitude to Christian Latin literature, tending to disregard it because of its Christian content and thereby missing a great deal of fascinating material of general relevance.

A result of the merging of classical and Christian was that the writers of the Middle Ages, also in Britain, were influenced by very different styles, and by a Latin vocabulary that had expanded to take account of all that Christianity introduced to the Roman culture it was infiltrating: vocabulary relating to Scripture, to ecclesiastical organisation and to the working out of a Christian theology. The Bible had left plenty of opportunity for detailed philosophical discussions, as the Church struggled to find a truth that would convince not only pagans but also those it deemed heretical for not holding correct beliefs about God.

While Christian writers added words to the lexis, they also took from the culture they inherited, as they learned to apply the rhetorical tropes of metaphor and allegory, often evident in classical prose and verse, to the elucidation of Scripture with its difficult imagery, to the point where they could create whole webs of allusion, brilliantly riffing on biblical passages and individual words plucked from across this foundational text.

An early example of a writer drawing on both classical and Christian culture is Gildas. Educated in south Wales but possibly writing his work *The Destruction of Britain* at the monastery he founded in southern Brittany, in the period between the departure of secular Roman rule and the coming of Pope Gregory's Christian mission, he not only inserts quotes from all over the Bible into his text, but constructs lengthy, rhetorical sentences in a style partly based on Rufinus'

11 On the Latin of the Bible, see R. Braun (1985) 'L'influence de la Bible sur la langue latine' in *Le monde antique et la Bible*, ed. J. Fontaine and C. Pietri, Paris; C. White (2015) 'The Latin of the Fathers' in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics*, ed. K. Parry, Chichester, 472–6.

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fourth-century Latin translation of Eusebius of Caesarea's Greek *Ecclesiastical History*, while also adapting phrases from Virgil to weave into the text.[12]

However, there was clearly limited availability of the necessary classical and Christian texts at the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon period, and indeed throughout the Middle Ages we find letters with touching requests for copies of books to be sent from one monk to another, as in the correspondence between the friends of Boniface in the eighth century who send works of Bede from Northumbria or letters of Gregory the Great they have come across in Rome, or when Peter the Venerable (*Ep*. 24) in the twelfth century writes from the monastery at Cluny to ask for a replacement copy of the letters Jerome and Augustine wrote to each other, because his own copy has been eaten by a bear. Throughout the seventh century a great deal of effort was put into the provision of both Christian (Latin and some Greek) and classical Latin texts for the episcopal and monastic libraries being founded at the time. Benedict Biscop, who figures as one of the protagonists in Bede's *History of the Abbots*, founded the illustrious monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow outside Newcastle, travelled many times to Rome to collect books, and established a huge library *ad instructionem aecclesiae necessariam* ('necessary so that the Church could provide teaching') and a scriptorium in his monasteries for the copying of manuscripts. Biscop urges his monks not to allow the library to succumb to neglect, or its contents to be dispersed.[13] By the time Bede was writing at Jarrow, at the end of the seventh century, he could benefit not only from manuscripts of the Bible but also from copies of Pliny, Virgil, Eusebius (in Rufinus' translation), Roman grammarians, Gildas, Gregory of Tours, Gregory the Great and of biblical commentaries by some of the Church Fathers, as well as of less familiar writers such as Orosius, Solinus, Eutropius and Vegetius. The collecting and copying of manuscripts at Wearmouth-Jarrow and at York in the seventh and eighth centuries assisted the Carolingian Renaissance on the Continent after 800, which in turn led to the raising of literary standards in Britain during the ninth and tenth centuries.[14]

To summarise, it might be useful to regard the Middle Ages as a section of the cultural stream flowing down from Greek and Roman antiquity. This stream

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12 Cf. C. Davies (2017) 'The prophecies of Fferyll: Virgilian reception in Wales' in *Proceedings of the Virgil Society* 29: 31–48.

13 Bede, *HA* 11. Biscop's words show that he clearly perceived two of the principal dangers to which libraries are vulnerable; cf. A. Pettegree and A. der Weduwen (2021) *The library: a fragile history*, London.

14 *Reynolds (1983) rather plays down the British contribution to the transmission of classical culture in this crucial period, failing to give due weight to Biscop's role. He does, however, point to the fact that even when the Viking raids were disrupting culture in England in the ninth century, classical texts were being copied in Wales, as evidenced by the Cambridge University Library MS CCC 153, a copy of Martianus Capella's work, and by Bodleian MS Auct. F.4.32 (part IV), a copy of Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (Book 1), both with glosses in Latin and Old Welsh.

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had been joined by various tributaries, such as that coming from Judaism, part of which picked up Christianity along the way, as well as from the Celtic culture of Ireland and pre-Saxon Britain and the Germanic culture brought over with the Saxons. That stream would continue to flow through Britain in the Middle Ages, being joined by new tributaries, for example from Frankish culture and later from Arabic learning, with translations also from the Greek, bringing new material to merge with and transform the old as it flowed towards the modern era.

The Latin Writings of Anglo-Saxon Britain

If the apparently contrasting elements of classical and Christian were often intertwined in medieval Latin writings, the same is true of another contrasting pair, namely ecclesiastical and secular. These did interact closely in many areas, as when kings granted land to the Church. Although the laity, at different levels of society, are visible in Latin writings of this period, it is true that on the whole Latin dominated Church matters, while when secular matters needed to be written down, it was often English that was used. And yet it was under the influence of the Church that English was first written down in the Latin script in Britain in the seventh century. Indeed, the law code of Æthelberht is the earliest dateable work composed in Old English, surviving only in the famous twelfth-century manuscript of the *Textus Roffensis* (annals of Rochester). Apart from the royal law codes, English was used for writs (i.e. letters containing instructions, usually from the king),[15] for wills bequeathing property, and information about land boundaries in the charters: most often these are written in a formal, increasingly standard form of OE.[16] It is clear, therefore, that there was interaction between Latin and English (and indeed the other vernaculars of Britain), as well as between ecclesiastical and secular.

So what are the principal genres in which one may see medieval Latin in action in Britain?

Charters

Prime evidence of the interaction between Church and state comes from the hundreds of charters surviving from the seventh century onwards, in which kings, but also other members of the laity (as for example Frithuwald in Section I.3) as well as bishops and abbots, granted land, often for the building of churches and monasteries. These documents are associated with possession and power, both of Church and state, and yet the fact that all those individuals involved are

15 F. Harmer (1989) *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 2nd ed., Stamford.

16 The Fonthill letter (c.922) provides a rare glimpse of more colloquial OE.

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mentioned by name means that these charters are not impersonal. Moreover, as Monfrin has stressed, charters can be rich sources for knowledge of language development, reflecting geographical and chronological peaks of educational levels and the influx of vernacular words.[17] While charters are principally records of a new contract, they often include a command or a conditional sentence communicating a warning as to the consequences of breaking the contract.

In fact, in general one may notice an unusual number of subjunctives and imperatives used in BML of this period, reflecting the fact that many of the Latin writings do contain instructions of one kind or another, which might support the claim that these works are motivated by a desire for regulation and control on the part of the powerful. However, these syntactical features also occur in more personal writing and works with more obviously altruistic aims. There are many Latin works that do not conform to such preconceptions about the relationship between Latin and power, works in genres that contain instruction and advice, such as educational writings, saints' lives, and letters, rather than commands.

Educational Works

Education could be said to be an area where the Church interacted with the laity, although it was largely within monasteries that lay people could gain an education. As one of the rules pertaining to monastic life at this period largely forbade monks from moving outside their monasteries,[18] lay children or adults who entered monasteries would usually cease to be members of the laity. The principal writers on educational topics in the period 500–1066 are Bede, Alcuin and Ælfric, who dealt variously with the Bible and classical literature, with language and grammar, and with scientific subjects. A good deal of general – and often obscure – knowledge about the world was derived from the encyclopaedic works produced by Isidore of Seville around 600 at just the right moment for British culture to absorb it.[19] Following in the footsteps of Irish writers, British writers like Bede, in his work on ways of reckoning time (*De temporum ratione*) and Byrhtferth, in his *Manual* (part of which is in Latin, part in OE), wrote in greater depth on various scientific subjects including mathematics and astronomy – which was not easy using Roman numbers, before the slightly later introduction of the Hindu-Arabic numerals and the concept of zero. Bede, Alcuin and Ælfric, basing their work on certain late antique grammarians, wrote on Latin grammar in an often lively manner, sometimes using imaginary

17 J. Monfrin (1971) 'Le latin médiéval et la langue des chartes', *Vivarium* 8: 81–98.

18 *Rule of Benedict* 58; cf. the letter of Abbess Eangyth in Section I.21A.

19 An example of a BML word apparently deriving from Isidore, though his source is unknown, is *traco*, which occurs from the mid-twelfth century as an underground tunnel: in his *De differentiis verborum* Isidore distinguishes between *draco: immanis belua* and *traco: hiatus terrae*.

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pupils to convey their teaching. The raising of educational standards in Britain and Europe (following Charlemagne's educational reforms) and the spread of knowledge was assisted by King Alfred at the end of the ninth century using translations of key cultural texts from Latin into Old English and by key figures such as Æthelwold and Ælfric around the end of the tenth century. William of Malmesbury, writing in the twelfth century (*GR* 3.245), mentions another decline in educational standards in the period immediately before the Conquest: *clerici litteratura tumultuaria contenti, vix sacramentorum verba balbutiebant; stupori erat et miraculo ceteris qui grammaticam nosset* ('clerks were content with an inferior standard of learning and could hardly stammer the words of the sacrament; if someone had studied grammar, people were astonished and considered it a miracle').

History and Biography

From the past had also been learned the importance of exploring that past and transmitting it to future generations, in annalistic and chronicle form, with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* the prime example, an imaginative masterpiece of this genre which also contains documents, letters and summary accounts of saints' lives (for which see Section I.17). Bede and many others also wrote freestanding saints' Lives, written to commemorate and inspire, continuing the hagiographical tradition that had begun with Athanasius' *Life of St Antony* in the fourth century, known in Western culture through the Latin translation of Evagrius of Antioch. In Anglo-Saxon England, whether in the seventh and eighth centuries (for which see Sections I.8, 11, 15, 16, 20, 23, 24 and 26) or in the centuries around the millennium (for which see Sections I.32, 35, 40 and 41), saints' lives and biographies tend to be accounts of people contemporary with or even known to the writer, a fact which means these works are less likely to be merely a collection of hagiographical topoi drawn from earlier writers, though familiarity with the early saints' lives from late antiquity is often evident in textual allusions.

Letters

One person who was to be the subject of just such a biography was Boniface, in the work by another south Saxon who also moved to Germany, namely Willibald of Mainz. For Boniface, and other Englishmen like Lul and Alcuin who spent most of their lives working as missionaries, educational advisers, abbots and bishops, or for Englishwomen like Leoba working as abbesses for the Church in Germany during the eighth century, letters were naturally of great importance in maintaining contact also with family and friends across the English Channel. The extant correspondence of Boniface's circle of male and female contacts, and of Alcuin some half-century later, comprise several hundred letters of various

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types, from the more official to the personal and playful.[20] From all of these the modern reader can learn much about contemporary events, the people and their thoughts. Occasionally it is possible to trace the correspondence back and forth between two individuals, but in general one must be satisfied with one letter from a correspondent, without evidence of the response. There is, for example, just a single letter preserved from an unknown woman probably called Burginda to an unknown young man, dated around 700, surviving solely in a manuscript in Boulogne; a single letter on a single sheet from Bishop Wealdhere of London asking advice about a meeting the king is organising at Brentford, surviving only in its original exemplar from 704/5 (for which see the Frontispiece to this volume); a single letter from Abbess Ælfflæd of Whitby to another abbess in Germany, dated 716; and a single letter from Bede to Bishop Ecgberht of York giving advice on the state of the Church, surviving in three later manuscripts and dated to 734. Other letters by, for instance, Theodore of Canterbury, or Abbot Ceolfrith of Wearmouth-Jarrow, survived by being copied into histories and saints' lives.

Poetry

Many letters, especially within the Bonifacian correspondence, conclude with a short poem. Other writers are more ambitious, producing longer freestanding poems, with the prize for length going to Wulfstan of Winchester (for which see Section I.35B) and his hexameter poem on St Swithun. It is clear that verse composition was sometimes on the educational syllabus: this included various types of verse, from these brief, sometimes tentative hexameters and octosyllables written by both men and women, and short personal tributes, like the octosyllabic poem by Theodore addressed to the Bishop of Winchester, to more ambitious poems like Aldhelm's verse version of his prose work *On Virginity* and later examples of this sub-genre, known as the *opus geminatum*, such as Bede's prose and verse versions of the *Life of St Cuthbert* and Alcuin's versions of his *Life of Willibrord*, or Wulfstan's poem based on Lantfred's prose account of St Swithun. There are also long poems about a particular place and the people associated with it, as with Alcuin's poem on the bishops and saints of the church at York and Æthelwulf's poem about his small abbey near Lindisfarne and its abbots.[21] More complex verses are found particularly among some writers of the tenth century who delighted in producing works full of rare and Greek words drawn from glos-

20 Cf. M. Aaij, 'The Boniface correspondence' in *Aaij and Godlove (2020); J. Nelson (2020) 'Alcuin's letters sent from Francia to Anglo-Saxon and Frankish women religious' in *The land of the English kin*, ed. A. Langlands and R. Lavelle, Leiden.

21 Cf. C. Lees and G. Overing (ed.) (2006) *A place to believe in: locating medieval landscapes*, University Park, PA.

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saries, with complicated syntax, as for instance the fiendish Frithegod with his *Breviloquium*, based on the life of Wilfrid.[22] Such challenging works of literature have attracted literary scholars like moths to a flame, but those who enjoy something lighter, if also learned and allusive, might look at the riddles (*aenigmata*) of the early eighth century, or the numerous shorter poems of Alcuin, many of them written for his close friends at the court of Charlemagne, or the begging poem in elegiac couplets from the early eleventh century, written with Alcuin's poetry in mind, partly, apparently, by a French monk but ending with an unhelpful response, conveyed with deadpan humour, from the Abbot of Abingdon.[23] In this anthology more space has been devoted to BML writings in prose than to the Latin poetry of the period, on the grounds that the prose tends to be of greater interest historically and linguistically, whereas the poetic corpus (as will be seen from the examples included) largely consists either of generic compositions in classical metres (often giving a vague version of their denser prose reflections), or of abstruse verses playing with rare glossarial words. Readers interested in BML ('Anglo-Latin') poetry may start by looking at the excellent compositions of Bede, Alcuin and Wulfstan of Winchester.

The above-mentioned genres are just some of the most important ones in BML, supplying many of the passages selected for this anthology. It should be remembered that the texts included in these volumes of course comprise just a small part of those that survive down to the present day, with the amount of Latin writing surviving from post-Conquest Britain being even greater than that of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The Nature of British Medieval Latin in the Anglo-Saxon Period

Texts from many different genres, of which a few are presented in this volume, provide evidence of the characteristics of BML and of how Latin was used in this new cultural amalgamation of disparate ideologies and social groupings. Before reviewing the linguistic characteristics of this Latin and its applications in British society, we offer a brief survey of the linguistic background to BML.[24]

22 On the style of these poems, see M. Lapidge (1975) 'The hermeneutic style in tenth-century Anglo-Latin literature', *ASE* 4: 67–111; for William of Malmesbury's verdict on Frithegod's style, see *GP* 1.15.

23 D. Porter (2011) 'The Anglo-Latin elegy of Herbert and Wulfgar', *ASE* 40: 225–47.

24 For accounts of the character of the Latin language at different periods and in different registers, taking the customary non-British perspective and focusing on the development towards Romance of non-elite Latin in the post-classical period, see e.g. *Clackson (2011) and *Adams (2013).

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The Linguistic Background in Britain

While it is possible that there was some knowledge of Latin in Britain even before the Romans invaded in the first century BC, it was introduced on a firmer footing by the Roman governors and army. It has been suggested that Latin continued to be spoken alongside the vernacular after the withdrawal of the Romans in the fifth century,[25] but it was increasingly the case that Latin was learned as a second language (L2) and used primarily as a written language in Britain, as it had been for a long time outside Italy among people with a variety of mother tongues. Moreover, it was mainly in the Celtic areas along the west coast of Britain that some knowledge of Latin survived in the post-Roman period, possibly fed by contact with Ireland, where scholarly Latin flourished. It is unclear how many Latin works written in Britain in the years between 450 and 600 have been lost, but there were no doubt writings other than those of Patrick and Gildas, alongside Welsh poetry possibly from this period but only preserved in later manuscripts.[26] As a result of this retraction of its linguistic spread, Latin needed to be reintroduced by the Roman clergy, under the auspices of the Church, at the beginning of the seventh century. At the same time, as mentioned, the Latin script gave the Anglo-Saxons in Britain a means of making their native language literate, with the result that there were now three literate languages in Britain – British (applied to the Celtic languages), English and Latin. As a written language Latin had already filled a similar gap when it spread to cultures that had not yet developed a writing system, and when Roman culture introduced a way of life that involved the study of books, written communication and record. This is as true of Gaul after Caesar's conquest as it is of Britain under Roman rule, where Latin complemented the more limited use of the Ogham script among the Celts. It is interesting that Latin did in fact remain so dominant for so many centuries, for it might well have been superseded by one of the other languages, as indeed English did replace Latin as the primary written language in Britain, but not until the fourteenth century. Meanwhile the Celtic languages survived, if at times more precariously, in Wales and Scotland. On the other hand, Latin could perhaps have been reignited as a spoken language in some form and spread to become a lingua franca, a unifying force in a multilingual country.

Certainly, throughout the Middle Ages, Latin in Britain was in close contact with the vernaculars. The so-called Franks Casket, probably made in Northumbria in the early eighth century (possibly at Ripon in the time of Wilfrid, for whom see Section I.15) and now in the British Museum, presents an extreme example of the intertwining of multiple languages, scripts and cultures. Carved out of a whale's bone, the inscriptions round the images (which depict biblical, clas-

25 *Charles-Edwards (2012: 88).

26 The oldest extant inscription in Welsh, the Cadfan stone at Tywyn, written in Latin script, probably dates from the seventh century at the earliest.

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sical and Germanic scenes) switch in and out of the Latin script and runes, and between the Old English and Latin languages, sometimes writing Latin in runes. In the earliest period, before AD 600, Old English (or its Germanic precursor) and the Celtic languages had absorbed certain basic words from Latin, resulting in modern English 'street' from *strata*, or Welsh 'eglwys' from *ecclesia*.[27] At about the same time Latin had taken the Welsh or Irish 'cwrwg' or 'curach' to form *curuca* ('coracle'), and English 'ceol' to form *cyula* (i.e. a flat-bottomed boat).[28] These are both words used by Gildas in *The Destruction of Britain* (for which see Section I.2) already in the mid-sixth century. After 600 English adopted the OE forms of such words as 'altar', 'candle' and 'school' from Latin *altare*, *candela* and *schola*, reflecting the influence of the Church and education after the arrival of Augustine of Canterbury.[29] With regard to Latin of the period 600–1066, it is true that there was less borrowing from the vernaculars than after the Conquest, when Latin, perhaps surprisingly, suddenly began to take in loanwords wholesale, particularly from the French and English in use beside it within Britain. There are, however, already in the Anglo-Saxon period interesting imports such as *clocca* (possibly originally an Irish word) for 'bell' or 'clock', *tubrucus*, meaning a covering for the lower leg, from the Gothic word 'þiuhbruks', and *bacha*, used by Alcuin for a stream, from a Frankish word that was to give not only German 'Bach' but also English 'beck'. More local examples are *polus*, possibly borrowed from Cornish (cf. Welsh 'pwll') in the ninth century, and OE 'hnæp', which Ælfric gives in the Latin form *hanapus* as the equivalent of *calix* ('cup').[30] Latin had of course always existed side by side with other languages (from Oscan and Greek to Semitic, Celtic and North African languages), with a degree of interlingual borrowing. It had, for example, adopted words such as *cervesia* and *raeda* from the Celtic language used in Gaul, and *sapo* from a Germanic form that also gave English 'soap'.

Some have characterised the Latin of Anglo-Saxon Britain as comprising two strands: that of the recondite style, with a penchant for Greek words, made popular by Aldhelm and appearing in a more extravagant form in some compositions of the tenth century; and that exemplified by Bede, with a stronger influence of classical writings (among which are included the writings of the Latin Church Fathers).[31] There is indeed evidence both of the influence of classical texts and of an ability to create neologisms and employ archaisms: sometimes these strands can

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27 See e.g. *Adams (2007: 583–7) on loanwords from Latin into Celtic languages.

28 For *cyula* cf. *OED s.v.* keel n. 2 and the OE text in *ASChr* (MS E) *s.a.* 449: 'on þrim ceolum', translated as *tribus longis navibus* in MS F.

29 Cf. A. Wollman (1993) 'Early Latin loan-words in Old English', *ASE* 22: 1–26.

30 *Hanapus* developed in the twelfth century into the form *hanaperium*, in the sense of a container for cups or documents, related to modern English 'hamper'. *Hanaperium* was also used in a transferred sense as the name of a financial department in Chancery.

31 S. Gwara and D. Porter (ed.) (1997) *Anglo-Saxon conversations: the Colloquies of Ælfric Bata*, Woodbridge, 57.

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be seen in the same texts. This ability was nothing new, for it is evident already in rhetorical writings produced between AD 150 and 250 by three Latin writers, the pagans Aulus Gellius and Apuleius (particularly in his *Metamorphoses*), and the latter's fellow North African, the Christian Tertullian, all of whom introduced unfamiliar words into Latin. However, such a view, reflecting rather the current interests of modern scholars, ignores much of the material. It fails to take account of the richness of the writings of the period and the influence of the rather austere, often syntactically simple Latin of the Bible, sometimes reflecting colloquial Greek and even Hebrew syntax. Many words were absorbed into medieval Latin from the period AD 200–600 when the Bible translations were being made, and this is also the classic era of Christian Latin writing, from Tertullian down to Gregory the Great. The Latin of this period is often termed Late Latin, i.e. late in relation to classical Latin: as such, much of it lies beyond the chronological range of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, but is covered by the multi-volume *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, being produced in Munich. It is important to bear in mind that in the case of words recorded in the dictionaries as 'Late Latin', 'first attestation does not prove first use when much early (and other) Latin is lost'.[32] Only if there is a specific reason to associate a word with a particular historical event or social development can one be sure that the word or particular sense will not have existed earlier – the vocabulary of Christianity being a case in point.

Attempts have also been made to explore the Latin of the classical and late Roman period not according to chronological distinctions, but according to distinctions caused by differences in social status and levels of education in those using the language. In this view, Latin can also be regarded as having had two strands. On the one hand is the classical, largely literary language produced by and for the educated, according to the high standards of the Roman elite. On the other is the Latin of the lower levels of society: if this section of the population was illiterate, it is deemed that one can only search for forms of their spoken Latin, preserved in inscriptions and certain genres of literature; if they could write, their standards are regarded as having been low. It is this second type of Latin to which the term 'Vulgar Latin' is applied. For the post-Roman period in particular, scholarly interest has largely focused on this Latin as being a source of information about the development of the Romance languages.[33]

The Linguistic Characteristics of British Medieval Latin

It is important when judging the language to bear in mind certain aspects of the linguistic situation. The limitations of the material that has survived represents

32 L. Holford-Strevens (2003) *Aulus Gellius: an Antonine scholar and his achievement*, Oxford, 53.

33 For a description of this language, see the chapters by J. Clackson and R. Wright in **The Oxford guide to the Romance languages* (2016).

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one aspect: plentiful though this material may appear, it is only a fraction of what was written at the time. Another is the fact that what has survived is largely Latin that was composed in written form, and though it may record some spoken Latin, the question of the relation between what was written and what was spoken, and indeed, how much was spoken, is controversial. Such factors should make the reader wary of generalisations. The reader needs both to take each text on its own terms, and to try to place it in context, so as to appreciate it as accurately as possible. For this, it is wise to avoid preconceptions, such as the belief that medieval Latin was subject to a one-size-fits-all prescriptive grammar which is – in one view – striving to maintain standards or – in another – perpetually restraining it from the natural changes that languages undergo. From either viewpoint medieval Latin stands condemned, as is clear from many remarks in the scholarly literature of modern times: if language deviates from the rules of the grammarians of the period before 600, such as Donatus or Priscian, or from the perceived conformity of the 'standard' Latin of classical literature, then it is guilty of incompetence and decadence, but if on the other hand Latin seems to keep to the grammarians' rules, then it is quickly certified as a dead language, an empty husk left behind as the Romance vernaculars developed.[34] It is to be hoped that if the reader starts from the individual text, a sense of the language, with all its similarities and differences, will gradually be gained and wider conclusions drawn. Certainly the wealth of material, particularly for the post-Conquest period, should allow the emergence of both a synchronic overview of a number of writers of a particular period, and a diachronic one, noting possible developments or at least changes in the use of language over a period of time. There follow below a few indications as to some of the more common features of the different elements that make up the Latin language of Anglo-Saxon Britain, as evidenced in the passages selected for Volume I.

Lexis

Firstly the vocabulary: what should be apparent from very many of the works preserved in early BML is that the vocabulary which the writers could use adeptly, employing a variety of synonyms and even playing on different senses of a particular word, is far larger than one might imagine from some of the remarks encountered in the scholarly literature. The writers derive their vocabulary from

34 J. Herman (1996) 'The end of the history of Latin', *Romance Philology* 49.4: 364–82. Like many writers on this subject, Herman clings to a dichotomy between a mother tongue which is subject to the laws and mechanisms of diachronic change, and 'a language which has ceased to be the native tongue of living individuals' which does 'not undergo changes in its rules' although 'it may have an external history … which may involve some stylistic variation and artificial lexical enrichment'. The Latin of medieval Britain shows this dichotomy to be a false one, for although Latin was not the mother tongue, it did, however, change in a natural way. See the Introduction to Volume II.

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a wide range of writings, whether they were reading the originals, as for example the writings of the Church Fathers, or came across quotations in other literature or entries in the glossaries. Furthermore, it is clear from the medieval Latin texts that the writers understand how words are formed as derivatives, with the varying senses of different productive prefixes and suffixes, as with the example of Tatwine's list (*Ars de partibus orationis* 1.14) of words formed (at least theoretically) from *mons*, e.g. *montanus*, *montuosus* and *montibilis*. Though there is less evidence of neologisms than in the extremely productive Latin of the later medieval period in Britain, there are examples, particularly in Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* in the early eighth century, such as the epic-sounding *falsivomus* ('spewing lies', for which cf. LL *flammivomus*), or in certain writers around the year 1000, such as Byrhtferth of Ramsay, in whose *Life of St Ecgwine* is found the first and only use of *inusualis* ('unusual'): *sed non inaudita res est, sed inusualis* (1.13), as a synonym of CL *inconsuetus*, *insolitus* and *inusitatus*. Unfortunately, neither of these useful Latin neologisms seems to have caught on with later writers.

A different form of neologism occurs when a vernacular word is given a Latin termination, as in the case of OE 'ceol', which, as mentioned, turns up as *cyula* in Gildas, where the Latin provides the earliest evidence of the English word. A related feature is the glossing of a Latin word with its OE equivalent, continually reminding us of the close connection between Latin and OE in these writers' minds: Byrhtferth (*Life of St Ecgwine* 4.9) describes the huge fish that appears in the River Avon *quem nostrates sealh vocitant* ('which our people call a seal'). He thereby incidentally provides early evidence of the English word. This is another important feature of BML – that it allows access in various ways to the surrounding vernaculars. An interesting reverse case of a Latin term found in an English text before it is documented in a BML text is *Paternoster* to indicate the Lord's Prayer. The Latin occurs in the OE *Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* from the ninth or tenth century, slightly before the earliest evidence of it in a Latin context. BML also occasionally records etymological senses of classical words that do not show up in the extant classical sources. An example from the early period is *statera*, of which the first two senses in *DMLBS* are taken from the Greek original, meaning a weight or a coin, while the CL sense of 'balance' appears in sense 3 of the *DMLBS* entry; from the later period of BML one may cite *proletarius*, which in *DMLBS* appears with its etymological sense of 'who has many children', a sense of 'proletarian' that in fact occurs occasionally in early modern English.

Morphology and Syntax

With regard to the grammatical features of BML, it is remarkable how rarely the language displays the kinds of deviations from the grammarians' prescriptions often mentioned in modern overviews of the nature of medieval Latin, such as a change of gender in nouns or confusions in declension.

A rare example of a change of gender is Byrhtferth's *diadema aurea resplenduit* (*Life of St Oswald* 4.6), where he takes the originally Greek word as feminine

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rather than neuter, but it has been shown that such reassignment of Greek neuters as feminines is common already in early Latin, in the comedies of Plautus.[35] Some criticise medieval Latin for the occasional occurrence of a supposedly deponent verb in an active form as in the case of *consolari*, used not only by Byrhtferth, but also by Eangyth (*Ep. Bonif.* 14, in Section I.21A) writing to Boniface almost three hundred years earlier. It has to be said that Latin's system of deponent verbs and their morphological relation to non-deponents is one of the areas where the language offers likely pitfalls to the Latin students of any period. Again, recent scholars have made it clear that the assignment of verbs to the class of deponent is actually quite fluid in the Latin of every period.[36]

Regarding morphology and syntax, much work remains to be done with respect to BML, but some of the characteristics noted will be mentioned here. One common feature is the combination of forms of *fuisse* rather than *esse* with a perfect participle of the relevant verb to form the perfect and pluperfect passive,[37] as in *servula olim furata fuerat* (instead of *erat* and using the past participle as a true passive, from the LL form *furare*) *in aquilonalibus Anglorum climatibus* ('the servant girl had at some point been kidnapped in the northern regions of England') in Lantfred (*Swith.* 2.20, in Section I.35A). But even this feature is apparent also in earlier Latin.

Another means of expression that is often cited as typical of medieval Latin is the use of *quod*, *quia* or *quoniam* to introduce an object clause, or in reported speech. This is certainly the case, though writers do continue to use the accusative and infinitive for indirect speech, often along with the alternatives in the same work. Furthermore, as *Adams (2013: 743–6) and others have shown, this usage also occurs very early in the development of Latin and throughout the classical period – and unexpectedly, almost exclusively in literary Latin. It is not to be regarded as a sign of decadence or merely as a precursor of Romance constructions such as French 'dire que …', nor is it a sign of a different educational level: after all, even Bede uses *quia* in this way, as at *HE* 3.27, *didicerat … per visionem et quid ille petisset et quia petita impetrasset* ('He had learned in a vision both what the man had requested and that he had obtained what he had requested').

A popular variant is the use of *quatenus* (often in the form *quatinus*) as an alternative to *ut* and the subjunctive, introducing final clauses and indirect statements and commands. This usage only starts to make an appearance in Late Latin: note how a gloss is later added to Aldhelm's use of it with a final clause in his prose work *On Virginity* (33), *tunc ad palatinas ducitur zetas* (i.e. *diaetas*) *et imperialis ypodromi vestibulum quatenus* (gl.: i. (= *id est*) *ut*) *cum rege … altercaretur*.

35 See *Clackson (2011: 271 and 297–8) on change of gender in medieval Latin.

36 See *Adams (2016: 46–7); *Clackson (2011: 115–16, 238 and 298).

37 See *Stotz (1996–2004: 4.334); *Clackson (2011: 300).

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In general participles are widely used, with ablative absolutes particularly popular, principally at the beginning of sentences. Occasionally the syntax becomes dislocated, when the subject of the ablative absolute is also the subject of the main verb (a repeated feature of the work *In Praise of Queen Emma* (Section I.42), for example). Further investigation is needed into the instrumental force of participles and the ablative of the gerund, following the remarks in *Adams (2013: 725–40). Certain aspects of medieval Latin have been associated with usages that developed in Romance languages, though it must be borne in mind that there is also evidence for many of them already in classical Latin. One of these is the use of *habere* in various periphrastic formations. The use of *habere* followed by the infinitive to express futurity is rare: one possible example is in Bede's account of the death of Cædmon (*HE* 4.24(22), in Section I.17), with the poignant words of his companions: *neque enim mori adhuc habes, qui tam hilariter … loqueris* ('for you are not going to die, since you are talking so cheerfully'). *Habere* with the infinitive to imply obligation is more common (e.g. Bede, *HE* 1.7; Eddi, *V.Wilf.* 60), perhaps in line with the fact that this modal periphrasis is found in English, i.e. 'to have to (do something)', and indeed already in OE. *Habere* with a past participle does occur, even in Bede and Alcuin, but it is usually unclear whether this is used as an analytic form of the perfect tense (as in Romance languages). Bede's *signa … descripta habentur a multis* (*HE* 4.7), where the noun and participle agree, is more ambiguous in its precise sense than Alcuin's *non deesse … contradictores probatum habeo* (*Ep*. 289).[38]

Equally rare is the use of *ille* as a quasi-definite, and *unus* as an indefinite article, both of them features often cited as characteristic of the Latin that was turning into Romance. To be sure, Hugeburc (Section I.24) includes uses of both in chapter 4 of her *Life of Willibald*: *unus homo de Ispania* ('a man from Spain') and *ille Ispanus* ('the Spaniard'), while Ælfric's *Colloquy* (95) contains the interchange, '*da mihi unum accipitrem.*' '*dabo libenter, si dederis mihi unum velocem canem*' ('"Give me a hawk." "I will gladly do so, if you give me a swift hound"'). In both cases, the register is colloquial, in that Hugeburc is recording Willibald's oral account of his adventures in the Holy Land, while Ælfric is depicting a conversation between teacher and student. This fact may indeed relate to the controversial link between spoken Latin and the development of Romance languages.

Orthography

One feature of the *DMLBS* is that it attempts to record all variant spellings, necessitating many cross references to the headword. This has the advantage of revealing that throughout the writings of BML there were far more orthographical variations than might be realised by those familiar only with neatly emended, classicising modern editions. To be sure, unless one knows that a particular

38 For analysis of *habere* and the past participle, cf. *Adams (2013: 615–51) and G. Haveling in *Adams and Vincent (2016: 180–201).

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manuscript is an autograph, it is impossible to be certain whether the variations are due to the authors themselves. However, if the manuscript dates from roughly the period when the work was composed, then the fact that the variations may be due to the scribe does not make the variations uninteresting, as they can still provide indications of educational and linguistic background. Moreover, the fact that it is possible to see the same variants occurring repeatedly in many authors during a particular period can give an idea of the orthographical norms at that time. This is not to say that scribes did not make errors through lack of attention or lack of understanding or by over-assiduous emendation – though one Continental scribe in the Leiden glossary wards off potential criticism with the comment, *sicut inveni, scripsi: ne reputes scriptori*, i.e. 'I was only copying what I found in the text, so do not blame the scribe!'[39] Spelling variants, most evident in the period from the seventh to the ninth century, may bewilder, at least at first glance, but are rarely a hindrance to comprehension. It is useful also to compare texts from Merovingian France and from Ireland from the early period with Merovingian texts showing forms such as *aedeficii*, *dereliquid*, *fuaerat*, *ligetimo*, *nonulla*, *possidit* and Irish texts *caena*, *cremen*, *demedium*, *missit*. British texts do occasionally include similar orthographical variations (such as interchange between e/i or o/u, and hypercorrection of the diphthong), yet rarely so blatantly. Examples can be seen in the seventh-century *List of Malalas* (Section I.4A) or in Adomnán's description of the Holy Land (Section I.5A), both of which may have been influenced by non-British orthography.

Unusual spellings, possibly based on regional phonology and often evident from an early stage of Latin, involve the exchange of b and v (e.g. *albeum* for *alveum* in Willibald's *Life of St Boniface* (Section I.23), of e and i (e.g. *relegiosus* and *adoliscentia* in Ælfflæd (Section I.14), and frequent elsewhere) and of u and o, as well as of d/t, c/ch, c/s, h/ch, i/y, mn/mpn, and z- for di- (e.g. *zabulicum* for *diabolicum*); a helpful tool is the *Index rei orthographicae* in the *MGH* volume of Aldhelm's works. There is frequent reduplication of consonants, or conversely, a single consonant where one might expect two. An addition or subtraction of initial h, contrary to expectation, may wrongfoot the reader, as in the admittedly extremely unusual *had* for the preposition *ad* found in a ninth-century charter, and more commonly in such a word as (*h*)*ostium* ('door'). But possibly the most confusing for the reader is the collapse of the diphthong *ae* into *e*, which had occurred in spoken Latin already during the Roman Republic, though the diphthong continued to be written for much longer than it was heard. If the collapsed diphthong represents a change in pronunciation, this does not mean that the exchange only occurs in one direction: there are plenty of examples of -e being written -ae. This spelling can present problems when a word depends for its sense on

39 E. Seebold (ed.) (2001) *Chronologisches Wörterbuch des deutschen Wortschatzes*, vol. 1: *Der Wortschatz des 8. Jahrhunderts,* Berlin, 49; see also the remarks on Latinity in *The Irish Penitentials*, ed. L. Bieler, Dublin, 1963: 27–47.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316890691.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the distinction, as when the adverbial ending -e is disguised as -ae (e.g. *obnixae*, in Ælfflæd's letter in Section I.14).

However, the orthographical variants are usually consistent rather than random errors, and so once the reader understands as it were the new code, confusion can be averted. Place names are a different matter, as for example in charters, perhaps because the writer was not familiar with the written form and tried to spell according to the sound of the spoken word. The place name is sometimes hard to match with the modern form. For example, Selsey in Sussex turns up as *Siolesaei*, reflecting the derivation from the OE words for 'seal' and 'island'.[40]

Pronunciation

Here, reference will be made only to the system of long and short vowels. Ælfric, in the preface to his *Grammar* around the year 1000, mentions the fact that his contemporaries are often confused by the different rules for short and long syllables in verse and prose, resulting in the wrong pronunciation:

> *miror valde, quare multi corripiunt sillabas in prosa, quae in metro breves sunt, cum prosa absoluta sit a lege metri; sicut pronuntiant pater brittonice, et malus et similia, quae in metro habentur breves. mihi tamen videtur melius invocare Deum patrem honorifice producta sillaba, quam brittonice corripere, quia nec Deus arti grammaticae subiciendus est.*
>
> I am very surprised that many people in prose pronounce as short those syllables that are short in metrical verse, even though prose is not bound by metrical rules; for example they pronounce *pater* and *malus* and similar words in the British way, which are considered to be short in metrical verse. I think it is better if we wish to honour God to call on Him as father with a long first syllable rather than to pronounce it short in the British way because God should not be bound by grammatical rules.

With this one may compare Augustine, who suggests in *De doctrina Christiana* 2.13.19 that one should not worry about such barbarisms (i.e. getting long and short syllables muddled) as long as one can understand the meaning: *utrum autem ignoscere producta an correpta tertia syllaba dicatur, non multum curat qui peccatis suis Deus ut ignoscat petit* ('whether the word *ignoscere* (to forgive) should be pronounced with the third syllable long or short, is of little concern to the person who is asking God to forgive his sins') or the more general pronouncement by Gregory the Great in his letter prefacing the *Moralia in Job* (*PL* 75.516B) where he writes, *non metacismi collisionem fugio, non barbarismi confusionem devito, … praepositionum casus servare contemno, quia indignum vehementer existimo,*

40 *BACS* 6 (Selsey) no. 11 (S 1184); cf. *Gelling (1997: 190–1). In *HE* 5.18 Bede gives the form *Selaeseu*.

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ut verba coelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati ('I do not shun collisions caused by overuse of the letter m, nor do I try to avoid the confusion of barbarisms, and I refuse to stick to … the cases of prepositions; for I consider it totally inappropriate to force the words of the divine Oracle to follow the rules of Donatus'). Such rebellious statements do not in fact result in the Latin of either Augustine or Gregory being of a dire quality. However, such striking statements made by authoritative Christian writers may have had some influence on medieval Latin writers in their occasionally ambivalent attitude to grammatical rules.

A further point regarding pronunciation is that written Latin at times appears to reflect the pronunciation of the spoken word at the period in question and may therefore be useful in research. An example is *sirograph-* for *chirographus*, where the spelling of this word for manuscript, deriving from Greek, seems to have dropped the h (as was common with Greek words beginning with ch-, like *charta*), and then been pronounced with a soft c to give the spelling sir-.

Rhetoric and Literary Style

A writer's style in any given work may be influenced by the nature of the text and its genre, by the author's personality, educational level and aims in writing. A single writer may of course display various styles in different works, as Bede does in his historiographical, educational, scientific and exegetical writings, or even within a single work, as in the case of Hugeburc with her more rhetorical passages sandwiching the section of 'diary-style' Latin dictated by Willibald (Section I.24). Many of the rhetorical devices found in BML were familiar from earlier writers, such as antithesis, hyperbaton, anaphora, asyndeton and polysyndeton. Extremely popular, even over several centuries in this period, were alliteration, assonance and the inclusion of one or more feet from the end of a hexameter into the prose, especially at the end of a sentence. Many writers also took delight in creating a concatenation of syllables, whereby a certain syllable will recur through several words, or syllables, contrapuntally, as it were, as in the seventh-century Anonymous *Life of Gregory* (4): (*signa*) … *vel* ***fide****lium aliquando* ***fide****m in****firm****am* ***con******firm****andam* ***con****cessa sunt* (Section I.8).

In short, the Anglo-Saxon period reveals certain characteristics in the Latin that may at first glance appear unfamiliar to readers of classical literature. Some of these are peculiar to a particular author, like the idiosyncrasies of Byrhtferth's writing, others are found in many authors at a particular time, as for example the spellings of the period from the sixth to eighth centuries, or the Greek-derived vocabulary popular in the tenth century. Recent research has, however, shown that many of the syntactical features regarded as typically medieval were actually present in early and classical Latin, even if they increase in frequency in the later period.

Applications of Medieval Latin in Anglo-Saxon Society

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316890691.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This review of the linguistic characteristics of Latin in the Anglo-Saxon period in Britain suggests that, in broad terms, the language drew on a variety of sources for its vocabulary, while in its syntax it remained relatively consistent across the genres. These linguistic conditions allowed for differences of register in the writings, and of educational level in the writers. On the whole the Latin of Anglo-Saxon Britain was more homogeneous than the Latin that developed in post-Conquest Britain, as will be evident in Volume II. A similar picture can be seen with regard to two of the major uses to which Latin was put, namely for education and for communication and record: in Anglo-Saxon Britain, Latin continues to be the primary language of the Christian Church, as it had been in the West from the fourth century, and it is the Church that provides the necessary education in the language for a wide variety of genres, from biblical commentaries and theological works to the documents needed for Church administration. There is also some use of Latin within secular administration. After the Conquest, however, the language undergoes unexpected developments, altering its social and linguistic characteristics, but retaining its importance in the areas of education, communication and record.

Education

As a non-native language in Britain in this period, Latin is inevitably produced by and for people with a degree of formal education. This did not necessarily mean that those with a Latin education were from a higher social background, but the fact that they were educated did place them in a minority with possible social advantages. At certain times and places, the education was of a high standard, as at Canterbury or in East Anglia or Northumbria in the seventh century, at Wearmouth-Jarrow or York in the eighth century, at Lichfield in the ninth century and at Winchester and in monasteries such as Ramsey and Glastonbury in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. On the other hand, the lack of surviving texts, the linguistic confusions of certain charters, and Alfred's insight into the need for educational reform demonstrate that the early ninth century was a period when there was less confidence in the writing of Latin. In other words, across this period there exists a spectrum of competence in Latin, on which each writer has his/her unique position depending on his/her educational experience, talent and imagination, for there is more to writing than integrating different forms of prose rhythm or conforming precisely to the sequence of tenses. So how did these writers acquire the tools with which they produced these compositions?

Since Latin was not a mother tongue,[41] children might start to learn the language after about the age of five, and at seven they might be sent to a monastery, as Bede was to Monkwearmouth near Newcastle. However, it was also possible to

41 Cf. Augustine's description in his *Confessions* (1.14) of his experience of learning Latin as a first language in comparison with his painful experience of learning Greek as a foreign language at school.

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learn to read and write from the clergy, as in the case of St Patrick, who learned from his father and grandfather somewhere in western Britain at about the time the Romans left the country. The teachers would be at least bilingual, in Latin and the vernacular, or in a number of vernaculars, and a few would have some knowledge of Greek, too. In a monastery children would begin to learn Latin with the Psalms, learning all one hundred and fifty off by heart, as Wilfrid did *citissime* ('very quickly') when he entered the monastery at Lindisfarne at the age of fourteen (Bede, *HE* 5.19).[42] Guthlac provides evidence of the broader curriculum: he spent two years learning his letters, the Psalms, canticles, hymns and prayers and studied Scripture at the monastery at Repton before opting for the eremitic life (Felix, *V.Guthl.* 22–3, in Section I.20). It was with a view to these studies in the liturgy, in grammar and in spelling that Bede and Alcuin, for example, wrote textbooks for their pupils. These works taught the rules laid down by earlier grammarians, using examples selected mainly from Christian literature.[43] A grounding in Latin grammar and metre, together with an understanding of the principles of rhetoric, would allow them to read more widely among Christian writers of both prose and verse. The students would thereby also come into contact with some classical literature. Alcuin's *Dialogue on Grammar* (Section I.27) shows us boys in their early teens discussing Latin grammar with their master, while the educational writings of Byrhtferth and Ælfric give us an insight into what pupils find difficult, and what the teacher considers might make learning easier (in the case of Byrhtferth, writing parts of the textbook in easier Latin or in English) or more fun (in the case of Ælfric, making the lessons for the younger children more interactive and indulging in schoolboy humour). Music and mathematical subjects would be part of a more advanced syllabus. An alternative to a monastic education was a personal tutor: it seems that Oswald, later Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York, was tutored by the scholar and poet Frithegod before being sent to the monastery at Fleury in France by his uncle Oda, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Young men often travelled to Ireland to study, though in his *Ep.* 5 (Section I.6B) Aldhelm disputes the need for this: does not England have educational opportunities to rival what can be found in Ireland? A monastic education was also available for girls. Already from the seventh century there is evidence that girls were sometimes sent abroad to France for their education, while Bede tells (*HE* 3.8) how Eorcengota (the sister of King Hlothhere, the donor in one of the earliest English charters) went 'to be taught and to be joined to the heavenly Bridegroom' at the important Merovingian monastery of Faremoutiers (founded in the 620s)

42 On the suitability of the Psalms for men and women of all ages and walks of life, see Ambrose in the prologue to his explanations of twelve of the Psalms (*PL* 14.925A); cf. D. Howlett (2000) 'A Brittonic curriculum: a British child's ABC 123', *CMCS* 40: 21–6.

43 For further information and bibliography, see C. Ruff, 'Latin as an acquired language', in **The Oxford handbook of medieval Latin literature* (2012).

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in Gaul because 'at that time there were not yet many monasteries founded in England'. One of the monasteries founded in England in the seventh century was Barking Abbey, east of London, which quickly gained a reputation for learning, with its abbess Hildelith so learned that Aldhelm chose to dedicate to her his work *On Virginity*.[44] Whitby, too, was well known as a centre of learning: Bede (*HE* 4.23) records that five future bishops, including John of Beverley, studied there under Abbess Hild just after the middle of the seventh century. Wimborne, where some of Boniface's female correspondents were educated, was another early foundation. Slightly later came such foundations as Wilton Abbey outside Salisbury (802), which by the eleventh century served as a kind of boarding school for aristocratic young ladies, and Nunnaminster (c.900) at Winchester, which seems to have produced female scribes in the tenth century.[45] It would seem that these women studied either by correspondence with men, by reading their works or by means of tuition from other women within their convent, like Leoba, who knew Aldhelm's work, but also learned from Eadburg (at Wimborne or Thanet) how to write Latin hexameters (*Ep. Bonif.* 29, in Section I.21B).

Although many of those who learned Latin came from aristocratic and royal families, the sources also provide glimpses of students from humbler and non-Christian backgrounds. Asser, in his account of King Alfred, mentions that in the last quarter of the ninth century not only were children of the nobility tutored at court with Alfred's family but so were *ignobiles*; in particular there was a young pagan boy from a Scandinavian family who was a particularly good student (Asser, *De rebus gestis Alfredi* 75, 94, in Section I.32). But even though Alfred was familiar with books in OE while still at his mother's knee, he had problems learning Latin, as Asser relates in chapter 23.

The question of the extent of lay literacy, whether in the vernacular or Latin, is complex and controversial.[46] Indeed, education for the lay aristocracy was often lacking, to the point that members of this social sector were unable even to write, as appears to be the case in the seventh century when King Frithuwald in the 670s 'signs' the Chertsey charter (S 1165) with a cross *pro ignorancia literarum* ('on account of my ignorance of letters'), and in the same decade King Hlothhere signs his charter (S 8) with the sign of the cross *propria manu* ('with my own hand'). To be sure, even at this early period there were highly learned laymen, like Aldfrith, the half-brother of Abbess Ælfflæd: he studied in Ireland and was a friend of Adomnán of Iona. Often the kings would collaborate with the bishops to promote education: for example, King Sigeberht and Bishop Felix, inspired by the excellent

44 J. Brown and D. Bussell (ed.) (2012) *Barking Abbey and medieval literary culture: authorship and authority in a female community*, Woodbridge.

45 For an earlier indication of a woman acting as a scribe, cf. Boniface's letter (35) to Eadburg, asking her to copy St Peter's two epistles in gold letters for him: *deprecor … ut mihi cum auro conscribas epistolas … sancti Petri apostoli*.

46 *Wormald (1977: 95–114).

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schools in Gaul, opened a school in East Anglia.[47] It would appear, then, that education might at least in theory be available to Christian and non-Christian, to religious and lay, to nobility and those of lower birth, at home and abroad, but access to it would depend on various factors.

Further variety within the educational picture is derived from the fact that there were naturally different levels of familiarity with Latin, not only because there is a difference between being able to write the letters as the most basic scribe might copy a text, to recite by heart a text in a foreign language (as with the liturgy in church), to read a written text with or without comprehension, and to compose a text of one's own. The study of Latin was only possible for the few, and even among these there would be many who had but a basic grasp of the language.

It is often assumed that all those dedicated to the religious life were well educated, but it is evident that not all priests, for example, were competent in Latin, as Bede laments in his letter to Bishop Ecgberht (5, in Section I.18): this could lead to theological problems if priests were garbling the liturgy. The most famous example of the Church's anxiety about the inability of priests to recite the liturgy correctly comes from Pope Zacharias' letter to Boniface (*Ep. Bonif.* 68) in which he discusses whether there needs to be re-baptism if the priest has said the wrong Latin words, but he decides not.[48]

It was therefore considered important not only to persist with teaching Latin but also to translate key texts from Latin into English. This would permit those who knew only their native tongue to say the Lord's Prayer or the Creed in English, at the lowest level,[49] or to read St John's Gospel (which Bede himself translated into English *ad utilitatem ecclesiae Dei* ('for the use of God's Church'), as Cuthbert of Jarrow reports in his letter *On the Death of Bede* (Section I.19A), or to study Orosius' *History Against the Pagans* or Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Rule* in the translation that King Alfred arranged to be made from Latin into English. In the (OE) prose preface to the translation of the *Pastoral Rule*, Alfred makes it clear that standards have gone down: now there are few people south of the river Humber who can translate a letter from Latin into English, and Latin scholars need to be sought from abroad, unlike in previous times when foreigners came to study in England. The new translations would help those who could read OE to gain important Christian knowledge, while stimulating some to take their

47 Bede, *HE* 3.18; Sigeberht seems to have studied in Gaul while he was in exile, while Felix originated from Burgundy.

48 A southern Italian of Greek origin, Zacharias translated the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great into Greek; he was Pope from 741–52 and corresponded frequently with Boniface.

49 Bede, *Ep. Ecgb*. 5. A later example is found in the twelfth-century *Life and Miracles of Godric, Hermit of Finchale* (4.14) by Reginald of Durham: Godric is said to have learned the Lord's Prayer and the Creed 'from the cradle'.

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Latin studies further so as to make them eligible for higher positions within the Church. Similar intervention was required at the end of the tenth century, at the time of Byrhtferth and Ælfric, as is clear from Ælfric's Latin preface to the first series of his OE Catholic Homilies (Section I.38), in other words at relatively regular intervals in British culture between 600 and the Conquest. Throughout this period, as also in the period after the Conquest, translation, both oral and written, was of great importance for educational purposes and in spreading knowledge.

Communication and Record

As a language of communication, one probable difference with the period before about 450 is that Latin was less widely spoken in Britain, except in certain ecclesiastical and monastic contexts.[50] One of the criteria for the selection of passages in this anthology has been their inclusion of examples of direct speech in Latin, as between Cuthbert and the abbesses he visits, which in Bede's version (*CuthbP* 34, in Section I.11B) includes Cuthbert's humorous response to Ælfflæd. The numerous saints' lives are in fact a particularly rich source of spoken Latin. This is indeed an area that requires further examination, so as to compare it with what else is known about spoken Latin in other periods, particularly with reference to the colloquial Latin in Petronius, Martial or Aulus Gellius and to possible vernacular influence.

Medieval Latin texts can also occasionally reveal interesting information about the much-discussed gulf between Latin and the Romance languages which, as it grew wider, rendered mutual comprehension more difficult. Willibald of Mainz, for example, in his *Life of St Boniface* (Section I.23), says that when Boniface visited Rome in 722, he was unable to communicate orally with the pope (who perhaps mixed in vernacular words or spoke a regional dialect), so Boniface asked to write down his profession of faith, presumably in his version of spoken Latin; after a few days the pope summoned him back, apparently having understood and accepted the Latin document.[51] A different situation is evident when Wilfrid preaches to the Frisians in about 678. He presumably does not try to speak Latin to them: since he seems to be able to communicate without any language barrier, it is possible he spoke a form of Old English sufficiently close to their vernacular, which was also one of the North Sea Germanic group of languages (*V.Wilf.* 26). The alternative is that a translator is involved, but there is no mention of this. A

50 The supposition that monks could speak Latin is questioned by J. Barrau (2011) 'Did medieval monks actually speak Latin?' in *Understanding monastic practices of oral communication*, ed. S. Vanderputten, Turnhout.

51 Willibald, *Vita Bonif.* 6; cf. R. Wright (2002) 'Foreigners' Latin and Romance: Boniface and Pope Gregory II' in *A sociological study of Late Latin*, Turnhout. On Latin at the Vatican in the seventh century, cf. Eddi, *V.Wilf.* 50, 53 (Section I.15).

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distinction of registers should be drawn between the direct speech of everyday conversations which may reflect colloquial Latin, and spoken Latin recorded in formal speeches (as for example those given by Archbishop Berhtwald at the Synod on the river Nidd in Yorkshire (*V.Wilf.* 60)).

In the last fifty years it is spoken language, as being more immediate and 'natural', that has been the focus of sociolinguistic studies. Is it possible to study the direct speech recorded in Latin literary texts, or indeed the language of written texts more generally, from a sociolinguistic point of view? To be sure, historical sociolinguistics depends on written records for its material. Scholars such as Suzanne Romaine believe that textual material should be studied 'not as a poor reflection of spoken language but as valuable research fabric in its own right'.[52] However, there might be thought to be particular problems with using Latin in this way if one considers written medieval Latin to be fossilised and anachronistic, without sufficient variety.[53] The present anthology aims to provide evidence that BML is in fact 'relatively heterogeneous in terms of text types and genres', which Nevalainen regards as necessary if sociolinguistic analyses are to be made of the stylistic or register variation in medieval Latin. This should open up the study of BML to many types of questions regarding language contact, language change and the possible reflection of pronunciation in the spelling.[54] At least written Latin cannot be affected by the 'observer's paradox', as spoken languages are, whereby the speaker, if aware of being observed, will alter their language. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that however useful sociolinguistic analyses may be, it is important to grasp the content of the texts, to register what is being communicated rather than simply compiling statistics and graphs for different linguistic features.

However, most of the medieval Latin texts provide evidence not of spoken but of written communication, most directly in letters, but also in other genres intended to communicate information to other people, from educational works to biblical commentaries.

That Latin was valued as a language of record as well as of communication is clear from the proem section of a number of charters in which the written form is clearly regarded as 'an insurance against forgetfulness and treachery'.[55] A charter of King Alfred (S 355), for example, dated to around 895, opens elegantly with the statement, *quicquid concedendum est a regali dono fidelibus, libello litterar-*

52 **The handbook of historical sociolinguistics* (2012: 241). This book includes a chapter on editing medieval manuscripts in their social context.

53 *Clackson and Horrocks (2007: 269).

54 T. Nevalainen (2006) 'Historical sociolinguistics and language change' in **The handbook of the history of English* (2006).

55 *Chaplais (1973a: 31).

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um muniri debetur, quia fragilis hominum memoria recedit et traditio litterarum semper ad memoriam reducit ('whatever is to be granted to the faithful by a royal gift ought to be protected by a charter, because man's fragile memory fades, while anything handed down in writing always acts as a reminder'). These values gradually passed into Anglo-Saxon culture as writing took the place of oral communication.[56] More generally, the fact that the material was written down has of course meant that much of it has survived, providing later generations and centuries with invaluable information about the past, as well as demonstrating that these writers were not merely composing learned literary exercises for amusement and admiration among a small circle of friends. Moreover, the fact that they continued to use Latin for communication and record for hundreds of years indicates that they were successful in these aims.

Conclusion

It has been noted that different educational standards in different places and at different times and the effects of a multilingual culture made it inevitable that each individual would have a vocabulary and a linguistic ability personal to them. If a person decided to communicate or record something in Latin, he or she would make personal choices about how to write. While the Anonymous *Life of Gregory* in the seventh century and the chronicle of Æthelweard in the late tenth, for example, provide evidence of somewhat idiosyncratic styles, there is also room in the tapestry that is British medieval Latin both for the simple style of the *History of the Britons* and the rhetorical complexities of Aldhelm and his admirers, which involve a wider vocabulary, a variety of subordinate clauses and the use of hyperbaton. Modern readers of this material should not be too hasty to compare and condemn, particularly if comparison is made only with the literary Latin of the classical period. Indeed, modern students of Latin should be encouraged to encounter the language of a wide range of periods and of different types of writing, as do students of English literature, so as to develop an appreciation of the writers' competence and variety. A somewhat flexible and lenient attitude (as with modern English) might be adopted, if one recalls how Augustine, who had studied classical Latin and rhetoric at the highest levels, challenges what he regards as over-rigid adherence to grammatical rules: he writes in his important work on language, *De doctrina Christiana* (2.13.19): *quid est ergo integritas locutionis nisi alienae consuetudinis conservatio, loquentium veterum auctoritate firmatae*? ('What then is purity of speech but the preservation of someone else's habit, fixed by authoritative speakers in times past?').

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56 S. Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon lay society and the written word', in *McKitterick (1990).

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And yet, aside from individual characteristics and idiosyncrasies, BML of the Anglo-Saxon period does in general display a high degree of linguistic and stylistic coherence. Useful comparisons can be made between BML prose and, for example, such Continental writings with a national slant as the sixth-century *History of the Franks* of Gregory of Tours or the *History of the Normans* of Dudo of Saint-Quentin, dated to around 1000. In addition, BML can be studied within a corpus that illuminates our understanding of how Latin develops when it is learned as a second language in a multilingual context.

Whether from a literary, linguistic, sociolinguistic or comparative viewpoint, there remains scope for further research into the Latin of Great Britain.[57] While the last twenty years or so have produced a great deal of scholarship which at least touches on medieval Latin, the tendency has been to publish translations to assist the reader, general accounts of a subject in the form of 'companions' and handbooks, or detailed conference papers in edited volumes. There remains a need to encourage historians, classicists and other students of literature to engage with and enjoy the original language of the medieval period. This is not only so as to ensure that there will be people of sufficient competence in reading the medieval texts to allow them to produce more translations – which is currently regarded as part of the democratisation of access to the past – but also so as to enable people 'to privilege … the message of primary sources over those who have sought to interpret them', as Diarmaid MacCulloch writes, citing the advice of Geoffrey Elton.[58] To be sure, the study of a language is challenging as well as fascinating, but if someone in medieval Britain was motivated to write Latin, a language he or she had learned at school as modern students do, in order to communicate with his or her contemporaries or with future generations, might not modern readers attempt to listen, taking the work on its own terms so as to understand its import? If these writers have involved themselves with the Latin, we, as recipients, should take the trouble to do the same: close involvement with the language and the content – for which this anthology offers a *point de départ* – should lead to an understanding of a period not only concerned with theology, with Church administration and with strife between internal – and with external – kingdoms. Engagement with the texts can usefully and easily start with the letters and saints' lives. The period 450–1066, as seen through these texts as well as through archaeological finds and technological surveys, contains individual people, not only those writing these works but also the many encountered in their works: husbands and wives, parents and children, siblings, friends and enemies, Picts and Vikings, princesses and enslaved girls, bishops and birdcatchers, kings and cowherds. These texts show action as well as interaction between named

57 N. Watson, 'The idea of Latinity' in **The Oxford handbook of medieval Latin literature* (2012).

58 D. MacCulloch (2018) *Thomas Cromwell: a life*, London, 4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316890691.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

individuals in named places, and their travels both in Britain and abroad. And they tell of the inhabitants' relationship to the sea surrounding the islands of the British archipelago, to the landscape[59] of Britain, with the rivers, roads and fields that were crucial to their way of life, and to the beautiful books and buildings they created during this period of great achievements which in many ways laid the foundations for modern Britain.

59 In connection with the way in which the minsters were often named after local topographical features, *Blair (2005: 195) speaks of the Anglo-Saxons' 'intense and fine-grained interest in the landscape'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316890691.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press