These are the proofs of the article

Alaric Hall, ‘The Instability of Place-Names in Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Wales, and the Loss of Roman Toponymy’, in *Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Richard Jones and Sarah Semple (Donington: Tyas, 2012), pp. 101–29.

The final publication is almost identical to these proofs. A list of corrections follows.

p. 103, line 12: 'Hall forthcoming' > 'Hall 2011'
p. 103, line 22: 'Hall forthcoming' > 'Hall 2011: 222-3'

p. 104, line 13: '(These' > '(these'

p. 106, table 7.1: column 2, row 3 (i.e. number of names in charters from C7-2) should read '9', not '3'.

p. 107, line 9: '(cf. Hall forthcoming)' > '(cf. Hall 2011: 228-9)'
p. 107, table 7.2: column 1, row 6: 'Mean hides' > 'Mean hides (surviving)'

p. 108, table 7.3: column 9, row 1: would '# SD lost name' be clearer as 'SD lost names'? Up to you.

p. 110, line 7: '(Hall forthcoming)' > '(Hall 2011)'

p. 112: I wonder if we could tweak the wording of this passage, which I've written rather poorly. Fair enough if not. I think the revised version should take up a similar amount of space. The changes delete 'early medieval' in the first line quoted, and change 'continuity between England‘s place-names and Roman ones' to 'continuity between Roman place-names and Anglo-Saxon ones'

ORIGINAL

Crucially, however, early medieval Wales, despite linguistic and toponymic influence from Latin-, Irish-, English- and Norse-speakers, experienced linguistic continuity through the first millennium AD. If the lack of continuity between England‘s place-names and Roman ones was caused by the language-shift to English, then, a large proportion of the

PROPOSED

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lack of continuity between Roman place-names and Anglo-Saxon ones was caused by the language-shift to English, then, a large proportion of the

p. 125: Oh God, another belated bit of copy-editing: I promise to sacrifice my first-born child to you if you let me change this sentence!! Arrrgh.

ORIGINAL

However, despite the complexities, it seems to be that the bottom line is that the Book of Llandaf does seem to show that in some circumstances, early medieval place-name stocks were highly
fissile.

PROPOSED

However, despite the complexities, the bottom line seems to be that early medieval place-name stocks could be highly unstable, even without major ethnic or linguistic shifts.

p. 128

ORIGINAL

—, forthcoming._A gente Anglorum appellatur: the evidence of Bede‘s Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum for the replacement of Roman names by English ones during the early Anglo-Saxon period‘, in O. Timofeeva & T. Säily (eds), Words in Dictionaries and History: Essays in Honour of R. W. McConchie. Amsterdam: Benjamins. Working paper available at: http://www.alarichall.org.uk/bede_and_place-names.pdf (accessed 14 October 2010).

PROPOSED

—, 2011._A gente Anglorum appellatur: the evidence of Bede‘s Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum for the replacement of Roman names by English ones during the early Anglo-Saxon period‘, in O. Timofeeva & T. Säily (eds), Words in Dictionaries and History: Essays in Honour of R. W. McConchie: 219-31. Amsterdam: Benjamins. Available at: http://www.alarichall.org.uk/bede_and_place-names.pdf (accessed 14 October 2010).

7.

The instability of place-names in Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Wales, and the loss of Roman toponymy

ALARIC HALL

This paper makes its contributions in three main areas. The first is *pragmatic*. This is an 'open source' paper. Its findings arise from several datasets which are published online, primarily at http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/42650, as an integral part of this paper.[1] The digitisation of Anglo-Saxon charter evidence sponsored by the British Academy, represented primarily by the website *Kemble* and *ascharters.net*; the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (2000–); and the *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book* (Palmer *et al.* 2007) are milestones in medieval name-studies, but, unlike in many disciplines, articles in place-name studies still seldom involve online publication of data (cf. Fox 2007, §8). However, readers of this paper are invited not only to use my datasets to check my claims, but to develop them for their own purposes.

Secondly this paper has a *theoretical* dimension. We often work on the implicit assumption that place-name survival is random, and therefore unbiased evidence for the time at which the names were coined (and I am as guilty of this as anyone: Hall 2006; 2007: 64–6). Likewise it is also often assumed, if seldom stated, that place-names are 'unbiased' sources, representing 'the beliefs and actions of the general population, with no hidden agenda or deliberate program' (Brink 2007: 106). This may not be the case, however: fundamental sociolinguistic questions about how place-names were coined, accepted, and maintained are only just beginning to receive detailed investigation. In using a number of different, relatively large datasets to sketch how stable place-names were in early medieval England and Wales and in what circumstances, this paper begins to address some of these problems, and to identify approaches for further work.

[1] Where I refer to spreadsheets below, these can be found at this URL.

The third contribution it claims to make is *historical*. Because place-names tended to be lexically meaningful when coined in the Middle Ages, they are widely used as evidence for historical phenomena. As a case-study for the historical implications of its theoretical explorations, this paper focuses its analyses of the evidence for place-name stability on a historical issue to which place-names are central: explaining the early medieval language-shift in eastern Britain from Celtic and Latin to English. A key approach here is to compare English evidence with a region which to a large extent experienced linguistic continuity throughout the first millennium, Wales.

In all these cases, understanding what goes on in Britain is important more widely: patchy and problematic though our medieval data is, England has one of the most thoroughly surveyed corpora of historical place-names in the world. Comparison with place-name data from better-understood but otherwise comparable contexts would be valuable—the study of Anglo-Saxon genealogies was revolutionised by Laura Bohannan's celebrated comparison of oral genealogies recorded forty years apart among the Tiv in northern Nigeria (1952; often via Goody-Watt 1963: 308–11), which enabled Anglo-Saxonists to see how ostensibly immutable genealogies can in fact change over time. But I am not aware of any accessible, comparable datasets for place-names. The data is surely out there: Brian Roberts compared the 'quiescent' settlement-patterns of England over the last millennium, for example, with the much less stable patterns identified in Fiji from the later nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth by Roger Frazer. Frazer did not discuss place-names, but these could presumably be traced and the relationship between settlement instability and naming investigated (Frazer 1973; Roberts 1996: 124–5). At present, then, language-change in early medieval Britain is, unnervingly for early medievalists aware of the problems in the field, often taken as a paradigm for understanding change elsewhere today, and place-name studies have an important part in this (e.g. Mufwene 2001: 139–41; cf. Bühnen 1992 from a German perspective).

Most Anglo-Saxon place-names are most readily etymologised as Old English, and this has traditionally been seen as evidence for a cataclysmic cultural and demographic shift at the end of the Roman period, in which not only the Brittonic and Latin languages, but also Brittonic and Latin place-names, and even Brittonic- and Latin-speakers, were swept away (for recent examples see Hooke 1997: 68; Coates 2007a; 2007b; Padel 2007). There are various examples of languages spreading without large

demographic shifts in which existing place-names are assimilated, such as Latin in Gaul, establishing a paradigm in which language-shifts associated with small demographic shifts have a small impact on place-names. A possible exception, the expansion of Gaelic place-names at the expense of Pictish ones in Pictland, can easily be interpreted more as a process of translation than replacement, because of the close relationship between the two different varieties of Celtic (Woolf 2007: 330). However, a massive demographic shift has become an untenable explanation for the Englishness of England's place-names (see Higham 2007; Richards *et al.* 2008), and toponymists, following the lead of linguists more generally, are accordingly seeking alternative models to explain place-name shifts (the diverse array of approaches is surveyed in Hall forthcoming). One of the most promising lines of thought is that place-names in large parts of Britain shifted only gradually to English, with competing names co-existing in variation perhaps for long periods, but with the establishment of a linguistically English place-name stock largely before the time of our earliest documentation (cf. Higham 1992: 200, building on Cox 1975-6: 55–7; Baker 2006: 178 & 183; Probert 2007: 232–3)—a process just about visible in the case of Roman Verulamium, known both by the borrowed name *Uerlamacæstir* and the entirely Old English name *Uaeclingacæstir* in 731, and, in another phase of renaming, by the forerunner of its current name, *St Albans*, already by 1007 (Hall forthcoming).

The idea of gradual but still largely prehistoric change would work only if the early Anglo-Saxon onomasticon was much less stable than it later came to be. We all recognise that place-names came and went in Anglo-Saxon England, and there are important and ongoing debates over when particular name-elements were in vogue, and the introduction of Old Norse names (e.g. Fellows-Jensen this volume). Even so, it often seems to be assumed that we owe the predominance of Anglo-Saxon place-names in England to the migration period, and that their predominance in the historical period reflects a sudden and dramatic phase of renaming. Explicit statements along these lines are rare, but conventional wisdom is probably represented by Margaret Gelling who, discussing how far instability of settlements might have affected place-name stability, recently wrote of Old English topographical names that 'there will have been expansion of settlement and formation of new names throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, but it is my belief that many of the names discussed in this book date from the 5th century' (Gelling & Cole 2000: xix). We might debate whether she also thought this of etymologically habitative names, or what proportion 'many' names

represents—something more like 20 per cent or 80? But Gelling's tone seems to imply that the migration period was the crucial one for the formation of Anglo-Saxon England's place-names, and it follows that if 'many' English place-names date from the fifth century, the toponymicon must have been fairly stable since then.

There was certainly high place-name stability in the post-Conquest period. Of the 14,783 place-name records assembled by Palmer *et al.* from the Domesday survey (2007, 'places' table), only 677 (4.58%) have no known later reflex. A further 542 (3.67%) are 'evidenced after 1086 but disappeared later', have reflexes only in non-habitation names or have been lost to the sea or a reservoir (Palmer *et al.* 2007: 22). Thus around 8.25 per cent of Domesday place-names are now, by these criteria, lost: over 91 per cent survive to the present (These figures are distorted by the inclusion of a number of entries in the table which are merely cross-references, but their effect will be small). Likewise, although medieval Scandinavia did see continual change in its place-names through the medieval period (see Fridell 2002a; 2002b; 2002c), its famous tranche of prehistoric names is perhaps more influential on British scholars' thinking (see Strandberg 2002). The prominence of Domesday data and Scandinavian naming in English place-name studies may have encouraged us to assume that the stability of earlier medieval English place-names was of a similar order of magnitude, with a major shift in names explicable only by a catastrophic linguistic change, like mass migration by speakers of a new language.

English place-names 1: (near-) contemporary charters

Ideally, one would take snapshots of the complete English toponymicon at several points during the early medieval period, and measure their similarity. This is, of course, impossible. However, it is possible to assess how many Anglo-Saxon place-names from different periods have survived to the present day.[2] Our main contemporary sources for Anglo-Saxon place-names are charters. Accordingly, my first dataset is the most reliably datable sub-set of the charter corpus for Anglo-Saxon place-names: contemporary or near-contemporary single-sheet charters which appear to be genuine (my list of these was drawn from Keynes n.d.). These charters contain place-names referring to land granted and sometimes to meeting-places and recipients. They often also include

[2] It is also possible to go some way towards establishing *termini ad quem* for the survival of others now lost, which could be revealing, but I have not attempted this analysis here because comparable data is not readily available for my early Welsh place-names.

boundary-clauses describing a perambulation of the land granted, but it is often unclear how far the points named in these clauses are place-names and how far they are *ad hoc* descriptions of topographic features, so I again use only the most reliable sections of data: place-names denoting land granted, meeting-places and recipients (see "spreadsheet_1_single-sheet_charters"). I systematically accept the identifications of these places in the *Electronic Sawyer* (2008). There must of course be inaccuracies: place-names that are lost but, through mistaken identification with another name, thought to survive; and names which survive but whose modern reflex has not been identified. However, it seems unlikely that the *Electronic Sawyer*'s identifications are wildly out.

Defining place-name 'survival' is of course difficult; my definition is that a modern name, however much it may have changed over time, can be seen phonetically to be a descendant of the Anglo-Saxon one, and that where names are not simplexes such as æt Cumbe~Combe (S 1436) or Cræft~Croft (S 190), the specific element shows some continuity, as in the *suþ* in Suþham~Southam (S 892) or the *cyninges* in Cyninges tun~Kingston (S 1438). This is often an implicit criterion in identifying a medieval place-name with a modern one, and formalising it makes it easier to compare the Anglo-Saxon and Welsh data. In theory, names might be lost from oral use but then reintroduced through later antiquarian impulses, but cases of this must be rare.

Rates of place-name survival, by half-century, are presented in Table 7.1. As with most of the datasets used here, the amount of data here is small—too small for sophisticated statistical analysis—and this restricts the confidence which we can have in it. The survival of a few more seventh- or eighth-century charters could have a major effect on the pattern. That said, there is also a clear trend: early names look markedly less likely to survive to the present than later ones.

Many factors might, in theory, influence the survival of names besides date, and it is hard to control for this. However, one which our sources allow us to examine to a degree is the size of the place. This can be guessed through the proxy of the size of the land-grants to which the place-names refer, where charters state this. Measurements given in charters are of course problematic: units vary, and the meanings of the units vary, both over space and time (where we can reliably trace charter-bounds, it would be possible to test and consolidate this research by measuring the actual area). These figures do not necessarily indicate the area which the place-name itself denoted, but it seems likely that charters would generally refer to land granted by the best-known place within or

adjacent to it, and that the bigger the area granted, the greater the likelihood that it would be near a major place. Table 7.2 gives the hideage of individual estates where this is stated in hides or sulungs (following the *Electronic Sawyer*; for their equivalence see Charles-Edwards 1972: 14–15).

	C7-2	C8-1	C8-2	C9-1	C9-2	C10-1	C10-2	C11-1	Total
No. of charters	3	6	13	33	20	18	35	21	143
No. of names	3	10	34	83	37	28	57	29	287
Probably surviving #	3	5	21	49	30	22	52	25	207
%	**33.3**	**50**	**61.8**	**59**	**81.1**	**78.6**	**91.2**	**86.2**	**72.1**
Possibly surviving #	0	1	3	6	3	2	3	2	20
%	**0**	**10**	**8.8**	**7.2**	**8.1**	**7.1**	**5.3**	**6.9**	**7**
Lost #	6	4	10	28	4	4	2	2	60
%	**66.6**	**40**	**29.4**	**33.7**	**10.8**	**14.3**	**3.5**	**6.9**	**20.9**

Table 7.1: Names attested in (near-) contemporary single-sheet charters, and whether they survive into the modern name-stock.

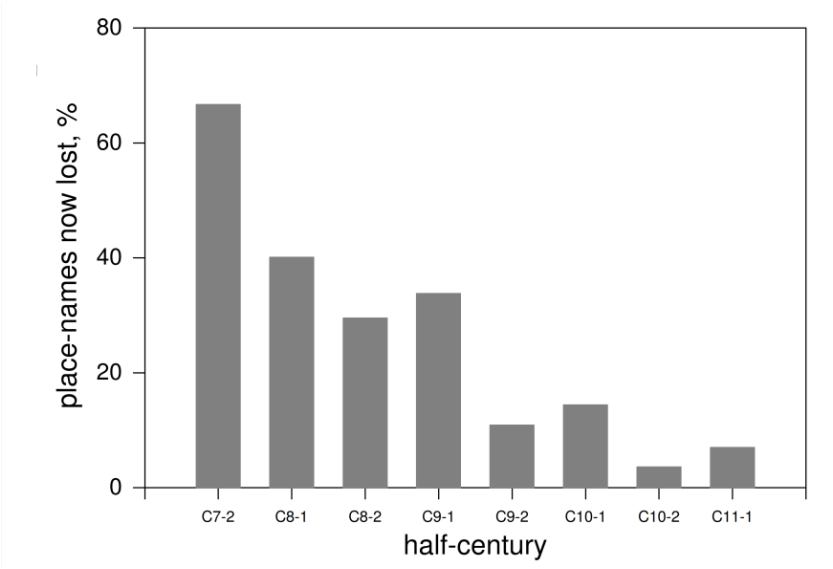

Fig 7.1: Percentage of names lost from the modern name-stock in (near-) contemporary single-sheet charters, by half-century.

Again, although the data is messy, there is a clear trend. Although the ratios vary dramatically, doubtless in part because the datasets are

often tiny and therefore unrepresentative, on average lost place-names denote smaller grants than surviving place-names—across the whole period, about half the size. That this is true in every period reduces concerns about the changing significance of *hid* and *sulung*. One obvious hypothesis for why is that small places would be spoken of by smaller numbers of people, meaning that a new name could spread relatively easily through the speech community, whereas a new name for a famous place would face the greater challenge of being adopted by a larger and more dispersed speech community (cf. Hall forthcoming). This idea is familiar to place-name scholars in relation to the widely observed tendency to instability in field-names and stability in major river-names.

	C7-2	C8-1	C8-2	C9-1	C9-2	C10-1	C10-2	C11-1	Total
No. of charters	0	3	11	24	10	14	23	14	99
No. of surviving names	0	2	12	24	16	14	23	16	107
No. of lost names	0	2	6	12	2	3	1	1	27
Mean hides (all names)	0	12	15.8	13	6.5	13.4	9.4	4.9	10.84
Mean hides	**0**	**20**	**18.21**	**17.32**	**6.97**	**14.21**	**9.7**	**5.13**	**12.05**
Mean hides (lost)	**0**	**4**	**10.83**	**4.35**	**3**	**9.33**	**3**	**1**	**6.04**

Table 7.2: The size of estates in (near-) contemporary single-sheet charters, and whether the names associated with them survive into the modern name-stock.

It seems unlikely, however, that the poorer survival of early names can simply be explained by early grants being of relatively small size. The data is inconsistent, but if there is a trend, it is probably in the opposite direction, early names (whether lost or surviving) tending to be associated with larger grants. If so, early place-names have lower survival rates *in spite of* denoting relatively major places.

English place-names (2): Domesday, and all names up to 731

The evidence of contemporary, genuine charters for place-name survival can be tested against other datasets. Two are used here, from each end of the historical Anglo-Saxon period. To start with the end of the period, from 950–1050, 5–11 per cent of names in charters are lost, which is respectably similar to the *c.* 8.25 per cent of Domesday names which are now lost. The Domesday survey also shows a correlation between size and place-name survival. Taking those vills whose holdings were assessed by their county's standard unit of assessment, referred to in Palmer *et al.*

as 'geld', the overall average geld is 3.22 (2007, ByPlace table, cf. Guide.pdf: 13). However, the average geld of holdings in vills whose names outlived the Domesday survey but are now lost as settlement-names is 1.89, while for vills whose names have no known later reflex the average is only 1.43. These analyses could be refined, but seem clearly to repeat the overall pattern of my charter data.

		# Prob. surv.	%	# Poss. surv.	%	# Lost	%	# Total	# SD lost name
Topographic	**All**	73	**61**	6	**5**	40	**34**	119	3.9
	NH	21	**62**	4	**12**	9	**27**	34	
	Ch.	43	**61**	2	**2.8**	26	**37**	71	
	Narr	30	**63**	4	**8.3**	14	**29**	48	
Habitative	**All**	44	**66**	2	**3**	21	**31**	67	3.11
	NH	8	**67**	1	**8.3**	3	**25**	12	
	Ch.	25	**64**	1	**2.6**	13	**33**	39	
	Narr	19	**68**	1	**3.6**	8	**29**	28	
District	**All**	24	**80**	0	**0**	6	**20**	30	1.95
	NH	8	**80**	0	**0**	2	**20**	10	
	Ch.	10	**77**	0	**0**	3	**23**	13	
	Narr	14	**82**	0	**0**	3	**18**	17	
Total	**All**	141	**65**	8	**3.7**	67	**31**	216	3.54
	NH	37	**66**	5	**8.9**	24	**25**	56	
	Ch.	78	**63**	3	**2.4**	42	**34**	123	
	Narr	63	**68**	5	**5.4**	25	**27**	93	

Table 7.3: Names attested in Anglo-Saxon texts from up to 731, and whether they survive into the modern name-stock.

Turning to the early period, Barrie Cox gathered Anglo-Saxon place-names attested up to 731, his corpus comprising names from early charters (excluding boundary clauses, but including texts thought to be reliable copies) and narrative texts (most importantly Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*; Cox 1975–6; see "spreadsheet_2_cox_1975_76"). By my count, his dataset includes 216 non-river names (*contra* Cox 1975–6: 55–6 which states that there are 224 names, including 75 habitation names, where I count 216 including 67 habitative names). I present the survival rates from this data according to Cox's semantic categorisations of the names as topographic (i.e. names whose generic elements do not denote settlements), habitative (names whose generics do denote settlements) or district (denoting a district rather than a

settlement). I split Cox's material into three other subsets: names in narratives ('narr.' in Table 7.3); names in charters ('ch.'); and a subset partly overlapping with these of names known to have denoted a place in Northumbria (understood here as the pre-1974 counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and anywhere to the north, including Scotland). The names in charters include many in the corpus analysed in the previous section; the names in narratives, however, are independent. Meanwhile, all of the Northumbrian names are attested in narratives; and only one charter mentions a Northumbrian place (York). The Northumbrian dataset is, then, effectively independent of my (near-) contemporary charter data both in terms of region and evidence-type.

About 31–35 per cent of all Anglo-Saxon place-names attested up to 731, then, are lost. As the fairly low standard deviation within each category shows, the survival rates for neither source-type nor region display a very large difference in survival. Places mentioned in narratives consistently emerge as more stable than those in charters, conceivably because they tended to be more major places, but the differences are not enormous. These very rough analyses probably mask complexities which closer readings might reveal, but they at least suggest that the evidence about place-name stability from charters is roughly indicative of England as a whole.

The similarity in Cox's data of place-name loss in Northumbria to Southumbria is worth pausing on. The dataset is small and not to be relied on too heavily, but it is salutary that Northumbria's place-names seem about as stable as the average for place-names in narratives, because in the modern Northumbrian name-stock there is a large number of etymologically Old Norse place-names, post-dating Cox's data. The south of England did not experience this influx of Norse names, but shows a similar rate of place-name loss. This suggests that linguistic instability may not lead to any particular increase in instability in the place-name stock—merely that new names might be coined in a different language from older ones and so be distinguishable from them by historians—and may affect how we should interpret etymologically Norse place-names as historical evidence.

Comparing Cox's charter data with my own corpus, the two datasets are broadly consistent in that larger places have more stable names than small ones—although there is no more correspondence in precise ratios between the corpora than there is between different periods of my own corpus. In Cox's data, thirty surviving names are associated with an average of 21.8 hides, and eight lost names with an average of 15. Cox's

semantic division of names militates in the same direction: about 33 per cent of etymologically topographic and habitative names have been entirely lost, but only 20 per cent of district names have been. This in turn chimes with the fact that on a few occasions in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Bede's phrasing implies a difference between more and less famous places, with the places which he implies are famous tending to have names derived from Roman ones (Hall forthcoming).

Precisely what sociolinguistic processes underlie the greater instability of names of minor places is unknown, though I have offered the hypothesis that names of small places are used by small numbers of people, making it relatively easy for new names to take hold in the speech community. This is worth contrasting with an alternative model posited by Oliver Padel (2007: 225), in the course of arguing in favour of major demographic change as the explanation for loss of pre-Anglo-Saxon place-names in England:

> where Brittonic names have survived at all in Devon and further east, they tend to belong to major places. If an Anglo-Saxon ruling minority were carrying out a policy of renaming places into English, one might have expected them to have concentrated on precisely those major names, and not to have bothered so much with individual farms and minor hamlets, since those places were (under this model) still occupied by the Brittonic-speaking natives.

My data suggests that we might need rethink this model of renaming: in the context of a language-shift, with a tendency for new variant names to be introduced in the prestige language, we should expect precisely the names of minor places to be the most susceptible to change: variant names produced by an elite group for major places would be relatively unlikely to take hold, whereas variant names coined for minor settlements on their estates could be influential. By taking larger synchronic samples, it would be possible in future to examine in much more detail how size and place-name survival correlate in different datasets, which would provide one stepping-stone to understanding how place-names changed more generally. A preliminary glance at those Domesday records assessed by geld (up to a geld of 10 because higher assessments are rare and so offer patchier data) hints that there, at least, we may even be able to identify a direct proportionality between size and survival (Fig. 7.2).

The loss of place-names in Cox's data is considerably lower than in my early charters: 53–58 per cent loss is suggested by the contemporary charters from 650–750, against 31–35 per cent by Cox's evidence (which

is more consistent with the following century, 750–850). This correlates with a difference in estate-size: although the average size of estates with surviving names are similar (around 20 hides), the average sizes of estates with lost names in Cox's data is 15 hides, against 4 for my early eighth-century charters. To some extent the disparity may also reflect some of Cox's charters being later forgeries (e.g. S 22); containing misidentified names (cf. Bracklesham for *Tætteshamstede*, S 42); or including place-names silently updated by their later copyists. But my tiny dataset for the earliest charters may simply be less representative. Whatever the case, a clear trend still emerges: seventh- and eighth-century Anglo-Saxon place-names are much less likely to have survived to the present than tenth- and eleventh-century ones, despite tending to be associated with larger estates; to put it another way, the Anglo-Saxon place-name stock was markedly less stable around 700 than around 1000 or 1100. This suggests that a significant number of Roman names could have been both borrowed and lost between the beginning of Anglo-Saxon culture in England and the time of our earliest sources.

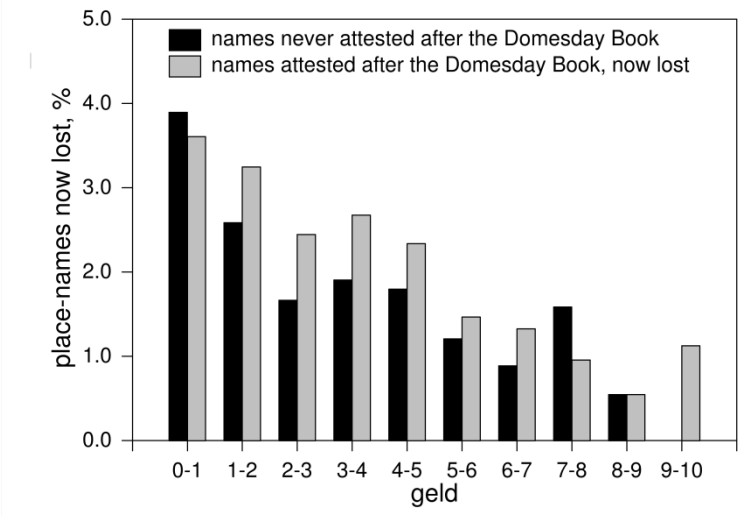

Fig. 7.2: Percentage of Domesday names lost from the modern name-stock, by geld.

The evidence for the greater instability of early Anglo-Saxon place-names can again be set against Padel's arguments in support of a large demographic shift as an explanation for the dominance of etymologically English place-names in England. Examining the distributions of

etymologically English and Brittonic place-names in Devon and Cornwall, Padel began by considering the Domesday data, and then compared this with earlier evidence, finding that 'the linguistic pattern... seems to go back to the earliest written records in the region, in the eighth and ninth centuries' (2007: 223). This is no doubt broadly true, but my wider survey suggests that if we had as full a survey of names from around 700 as we have from around 1100, we would find that at least 30 per cent were different, and that the linguistic patterns they suggested differed accordingly. Meanwhile, the far greater presence of Brittonic place-names in eleventh-century Cornwall than in Devon could have something to do with English becoming the prestige language in Cornwall only after a tipping-point had been reached in the stabilisation of place-names in English-speaking culture, which, to make a stab based on my charter data, might have come around the second half of the ninth century; whether significantly or not, this happens to be consistent with the chronology of West Saxon political expansion in the south-west (cf. Padel 2007: 223–4). A putative 30 per cent turnover of names between 700 and 1100, of course, cannot entirely account for the dearth of Brittonic names in England; but my findings at least challenge some entrenched assumptions, and may reduce the scale of the problem. The comparison with Welsh evidence below offers a further development of this approach which could reduce the scale again.

Welsh-place-names: the Book of Llandaf

Although superficially quite different from Anglo-Saxon England in culture, early medieval Wales can be seen fundamentally as a closely comparable society (Wickham 2005: 49, 28–30 & 351–4)—more so, say, than the common comparison of Gaul, or more far-flung comparisons like the Basque Country (Coates 2007a) or North America (Padel 2007). Crucially, however, early medieval Wales, despite linguistic and toponymic influence from Latin-, Irish-, English- and Norse-speakers, experienced linguistic continuity through the first millennium AD. If the lack of continuity between England's place-names and Roman ones was caused by the language-shift to English, then, a large proportion of the place-names of Wales should originate in the Roman period. This has not, to my knowledge, been tested. Admittedly, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* records about 182 settlement names for what is now England, of which between 31 and 38 (17–20%) show some phonetic continuity with modern names, and about sixteen for what is now Wales, of which seven or eight (43.8–50%) show continuity. But in six of these Welsh cases, the

continuity is because the Roman name derives from a river-name, and it is the river-name which survives rather than a settlement name, which is seldom the case for the English names, and makes the datasets less straightforwardly comparable. With the recent publication of the *Dictionary of Continental Celtic Place-Names* (Falileyev *et al.* 2010) and its associated datasets, it would be possible to compare these figures with the survival of Roman-period Celtic place-names elsewhere in Europe. A more troubling indicator arises from the fact that most Brittonic noun phrases changed their structure around the sixth century, from determiner + generic (like English ones, as in the Roman name *Moridunum*, 'sea-fort') to generic + determiner (as in the modern Welsh reflex of *Moridunum*, *Caerfyrddin*, etymologically 'fortress of Moridunum' but widely understood as 'the fortified town of Myrddin'; Koch 2005: *s.v. Caerfyrddin*). While Brittonic place-names surviving in England and Scotland often show the older word-order (e.g. Hough 2001; Fox 2007: §14), only one or two per cent in Wales do, even in our earliest major source for Welsh place-names, the Book of Llandaf;[3] this proportion is probably consistent with the existence of lingering determiner + generic constructions in Welsh more generally. As the example of *Moridunum~Caerfyrddin~Carmarthen* indicates, the reorganisation of Roman-period Welsh names need not preclude phonetic continuity with modern ones, either Welsh or Anglicised; but it does show that old Brittonic names seldom became fossilised in the way that they did in England and Scotland.

Presumably the main reason why Welsh names appear so seldom in the debate on the loss of Roman names in England is the lack of early medieval evidence and, until recently, of extensive surveys of the kind undertaken by the English Place-Name Society (see now Charles 1992 and Wmffre 2004). The study of Wales's earliest names has, however, been put on a new footing by Jon Coe's recent doctoral thesis, which provides a meticulous discussion of the place-names of the twelfth-century Book of Llandaf, most of which occur in its uniquely extensive and early cartulary (2001). Coe gives good indications of names'

[3] I owe these conclusions to a pilot survey undertaken by Bethany Fox of the Pembrokeshire hundreds of Dewsland, Cilgerran and Cemais (based on Charles 1992) and three hundred names from Cardiganshire (based on Wmffre 2004), funded by the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, under the auspices of Helsinki's Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English. Of the 641 names in this survey containing Welsh elements, 8–13 (1.3–2%) could be interpreted as old compound names.

etymologies, localizations, modern reflexes, and so forth. My methods have not, to my knowledge, been applied to this material before, so the analyses below identify a range of problems and possibilities which require much more detailed investigation alongside my focus on understanding the loss of England's Roman names. Excluding boundary-clauses, the Book of Llandaf records 206 place-names, of which twelve may or may not survive in the modern name-stock (5.83%) and 129 (62.62%) are lost from it. One hundred are associated with useable evidence for the size of the land-grants they denote. Because Davies has calculated the acreage of some estates, I reckon all other estate-sizes in acres through rule-of-thumb conversions of the medieval Welsh land-units of *modius* and *uncia*, at 42 and 500 acres respectively (Davies 1973; 1978: 33–7).[4] As with Anglo-Saxon charters, size seems to matter: the overall mean grant size is 510 acres, but grants associated with surviving names average 661 and grants associated with lost names 439. The ratio here is roughly similar to my Anglo-Saxon charter data.

Unlike my Anglo-Saxon charters, however, the Llandaf charters only survive in a cartulary which is a complex document in some cases offering copies of material originating over five centuries earlier (see Davies 1979; cf. 1978). Periodizing place-name loss by the original dates of the charters established by Davies and removing those which she considered 'at all dubious' (1979: 91), and reckoning acreages where evidence is available, we arrive at the figures shown in Table 7.4.

The removal of 'dubious' charters does not seem significantly to affect the overall loss rate (66.67% instead of 62.62%); it does affect grant sizes, but the overall pattern of lost names being associated with smaller estates continues—the huge variations within each half-century presumably primarily reflecting inconsistencies caused by very small amounts of data rather than variation over time. But as the following graph indicates, it is hard to identify any relationship between charter-date and place-name survival.

However, the charters probably show varying degrees of updating of the place-names at different stages of their textual transmission: the Welsh elements of some early charters, for example, are preserved in thoroughly updated spelling, and may also include updated place-names.

[4] Davies' calculations could, on the basis of Coe's work, be corrected and extended in future.

	C6-2	C7-1	C7-2	C8-1	C8-2	C9-1	C9-2	C10-1	C10-2	C11-1	C11-2	C12	Total
No. of names	4	8	23	26	16	1	26	10	6	26	4	3	153
Probably surviving #	2	5	4	7	2	0	11	1	0	7	1	1	41
%	**50**	**62.5**	**17.39**	**26.92**	**12.5**	**0**	**42.31**	**10**	**0**	**26.92**	**25**	**33.33**	**26.8**
Possibly surviving #	0	1	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	10
%	**0**	**12.5**	**4.35**	**3.85**	**25**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**7.69**	**0**	**0**	**6.54**
Lost #	2	2	18	18	10	1	15	8	6	17	3	2	102
%	**50**	**25**	**78.26**	**69.23**	**62.5**	**100**	**57.69**	**80**	**100**	**65.38**	**75**	**66.66**	**66.67**
Mean acres (all names)	1000	975	1496.33	627.2	267.6	126	197.47	378	233.5	211.85	100	501	454.46
Mean acres (surviving)	**1000**	**775**	**4000**	**545.33**	**188**	**0**	**330**	**2100**	**0**	**126**	**100**	**750**	**719.58**
Mean acres (lost)	**1000**	**1500**	**995.6**	**500**	**334.22**	**126**	**156.69**	**262**	**233.5**	**227.45**	**100**	**252**	**342.3**

Table 7.4: Names attested in the Book of Llandaf up to the twelfth century, whether they survive into the modern name-stock, and the acreage of associated estates where known.

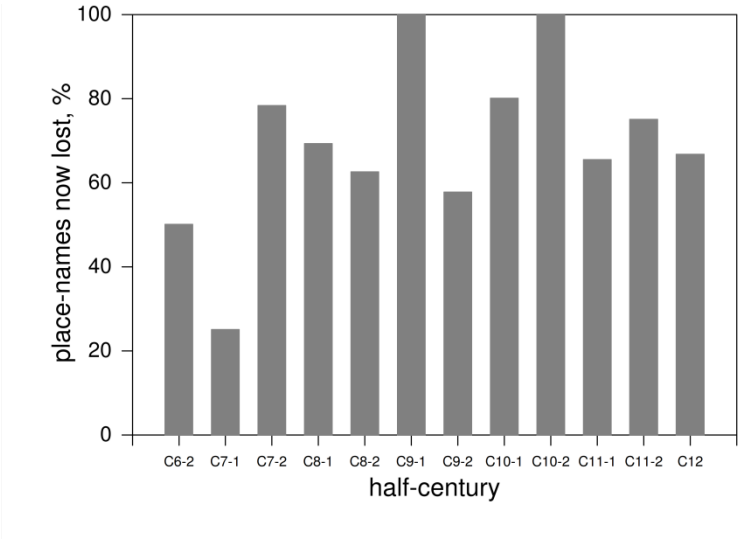

Fig. 7.3: Percentage of names lost from the modern name-stock in the Book of Llandaf, by half-century.

One approach to dealing with this would be to investigate place-names relative to the different strands of textual transmission identified by scholars in the collection. The approach I take here is a different one, however: Coe has grouped the Book of Llandaf's 119 boundary-clauses according to their linguistic conservatism into seven periods, whose sequence is clear and can tentatively be dated (2004). It is reasonable to guess that linguistically conservative bounds are also likely to preserve old place-names, and that updated ones are more likely to include updated place-names. Grouping the place-names denoting the land in the boundary-clauses by period (and including charters whether or not they are dubious, on the assumption that the external evidence of linguistic dating makes it irrelevant whether a charter is a forgery or not), we get the data presented in Table 7.5.

The rather lower proportion of lost names in this dataset correlates with the larger mean estate-size (presumably larger estates were more likely to be described with boundary-clauses because their boundaries were harder to keep track of, or perhaps simply because of their higher status); it is probably also worth adding that boundary-clauses make it easier to localise names, and perhaps therefore satisfactorily to establish

continuity with modern names; and there may be other aspects of charters with boundary-clauses waiting to be identified which make them a distinctive group. Despite the complexity and patchiness of the data, and the relatively short datable period of two centuries, linguistically early charters show greater place-name loss than later ones in what seems to be a clear trend (Fig. 7.4).

Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
	up to 930	930–90	990–1010	1010–30	1030–50	1050–80	1080–1120s	
No. of names	35	5	8	26	27	13	5	119
Probably surviving #	9	2	3	12	11	5	3	45
%	**25.71**	**40**	**37.5**	**46.15**	**40.74**	**38.46**	**60**	**37.82**
Possibly surviving #	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	7
%	**11.43**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3.7**	**15.38**	**0**	**5.88**
Lost #	22	3	5	14	15	6	2	67
%	**62.68**	**60**	**62.5**	**53.85**	**55.56**	**46.15**	**40**	**56.3**
Mean acres (all names)	724.12	230	220.5	484.7	642.08	846	458.67	596.62
Mean acres (surviving)	629.2	313	126	638.43	1306.5	613	375.5	705.67
Mean acres (lost)	846.67	147	252	126	346.78	1111	625	556.06

Table 7.5: Names attested in the Book of Llandaf up to the twelfth century, whether they survive into the modern name-stock, and the acreage of associated estates where known, by linguistic period (following Coe 2004).

This trend may be chimeric: the dataset is small, and as with the Anglo-Saxon material, the relationship between the size of a place and place-name stability is not sufficiently well understood straightforwardly to correct for the influence of size, while the dramatic variation in estate-sizes make rule-of-thumb inferences hard. However, analysis by Coe's

linguistic periodization at least establishes the possibility, for future testing against larger datasets, that in Wales, as in England, earlier place-names are less likely to survive into the modern name-stock than later ones.

Where the Welsh data clearly differs dramatically from the English, however, is in the proportions of names which survive: only about 9 per cent of tenth- to eleventh-century names in my Anglo-Saxon charter material are lost; the figure for Coe's periods 2–6, *c.* 930–1080, is 54 per cent—and this from a subset of the data which seems to show a slight bias towards stability. I have striven to apply equal criteria for judging whether or not a name survives between the Welsh and English data: where Coe marks a Welsh name as lost but notes possible phonetic continuity with modern names (Welsh or English), I have marked the name as surviving or possibly surviving. The Welsh estates do tend to be smaller than the English ones, but the difference is not dramatic. Taking the plunge on the problematic issue of assigning acreages to hides and reckoning a hide at 100 acres (cf. Wickham 2005: 319 & 328), the average estate sizes and survival rates for data where this is known and which can be assigned fairly securely to the tenth and eleventh centuries are shown in Table 7.6.

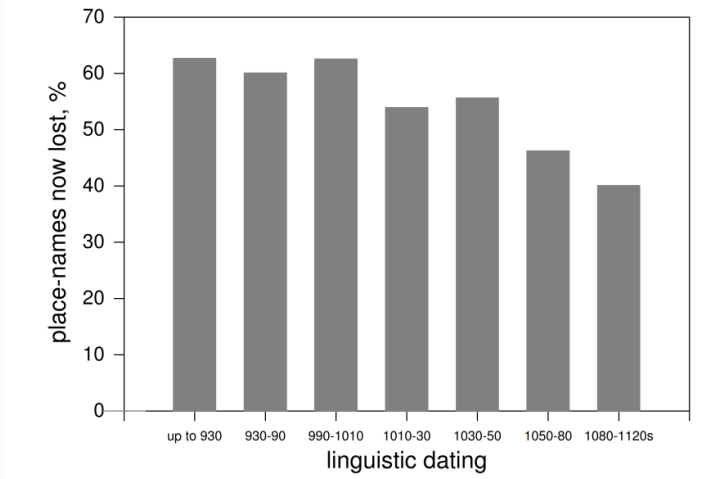

Fig. 7.4: Percentage of names lost from the modern name-stock in the Book of Llandaf, by linguistic period (following Coe 2004).

	England 900-1050	Wales *c.* 930-1080
No. of names	58	38
Probably surviving #	53	16
%	**91.38**	**42.1**
Possibly surviving #	0	1
%	**0**	**2.63**
Lost #	5	21
%	**8.62**	**55.26**
Mean acres (all names)	924	588.18
Mean acres (surviving)	**951**	**789.07**
Mean acres (lost)	**640**	**457.84**

Table 7.6: The size of estates in (near-) contemporary Anglo-Saxon single-sheet charters and the Book of Llandaf, and whether the names associated with them survive into the modern name-stock.

The average Welsh estate size associated with surviving names is 83 per cent that of the Anglo-Saxon ones; the average Welsh estate size associated with lost names is 70 per cent that of the Anglo-Saxon ones. Conceivably, further research on the relationship between estate size and name survival will show that this difference in size is enough to account for the different survival rates, and that the different survival rates are simply the product of incomparable datasets. But this seems unlikely to me to be the whole story. Given that the Book of Llandaf is from the earlier twelfth century, reliable-looking charters purporting to be from the eleventh century (regardless of Coe's periodization) can be taken more or less at face value as evidence for place-name survival from that period. The land-grants associated with these names are admittedly small—lost names, where data is available, average 217 acres—but it remains striking that of the 30 names, 21 (70%) are lost: this is a different world from eleventh-century England, where even of the 678 Domesday records assessed at a geld of 0.1 or less, only 68 (10%) have place-names lost from the modern name-stock. It seems hard to doubt that the place-name stock of early medieval Wales was much less stable than in contemporary England—even if one underlying cause of this was that medieval Welsh settlements tended to be smaller. Indeed, at least ten of the Llandaf charters actually record variant names, emphasising that during the early medieval period, place-names tended to change with the places' owners, perhaps the best example being Lann Enniaun (Coe 2001: *s.v.*, citing Evans & Rhys 1893; for comparisons in my Anglo-Saxon corpus see S

1184, S 155, S 153 and for further Welsh examples Richards 1971: 341–42):

> the story of the foundation of this church is recounted in the *Life of Euddogwy* (page 138). It took its name from King Einion who granted the land to Euddogwy, but the church (and the surrounding settlement) eventually came to be known instead, after the saint, as *Lann Oudocui* (Llandogo). This change of name can be seen in charters 156 and 222, in each of which Lann Enniaun is glossed *Lann Oudocui*.

The Welsh data, then, suggests a paradigm for place-naming in which there was endemic instability in the name-system—more than at almost any time attested by my Anglo-Saxon data.

However, given that the loss of large numbers of Celtic names in England is traditionally explained by language-shift, the relatively limited survival of early medieval Welsh place-names today might be attributed to the subsequent Anglicisation of the regions referred to in the Book of Llandaf, which are predominantly the south-east and the south coast and saw English becoming the prestige language, or even became entirely English-speaking, relatively early; indeed, Anergyng, an eastern region covered by the charters, is likely to have been largely English-speaking some centuries before the Book of Llandaf was written (Coe 2004: 40–43; cf. Padel 2007: 226–7). However, the more northerly and westerly regions attested in the Book of Llandaf remained Welsh-speaking, to some extent bilingually with English but to a large degree monolingually, into the eighteenth century, so we can check whether these show a lower rate of loss.[5] Coe localized 148 names, with varying degrees of precision; of these, 66 localizations are uncertain, but as these comprise a large proportion of the lost names, I work on the assumption that they are accurate. I divided the localized names in half by latitude and by longitude, producing four quadrants. The north-west quadrant almost exclusively covers areas which were monolingual Welsh-speaking or bilingual into the eighteenth century, and in many cases beyond (needless to say, a more refined approach could demarcate areas of linguistic continuity with more precision).Place-name loss in the localized data is lower than for the whole dataset, probably primarily because it is harder to localise lost names. What is important are the relative differences in

[5] The border of the Welsh-speaking area is represented on the map below after Davies 2000, 84, itself based on Davies 1993 and Pryce 1978; the data used on this map are available alongside the spreadsheets as "llandaf_place-names.kmz", which can be opened, *inter alia*, using the software Google Earth.

place-name survival between regions—and place-name loss is indeed lowest in the north-west quadrant, as the language-shift hypothesis would predict.

	Half				Quadrant				Total
	N	S	E	W	NE	SE	SW	NW	
No. of Names	74	74	74	74	52	22	52	22	148
Prob. surviving #	40	24	32	32	25	7	17	15	64
%	50.05	32.43	43.24	43.24	48.08	31.82	32.69	68.18	43.24
Poss. surviving #	7	5	10	2	7	3	2	0	12
%	9.46	6.76	13.51	2.7	13.46	13.64	3.85	0	8.11
Lost #	27	45	32	40	20	12	33	7	72
%	36.47	60.81	43.24	54.05	38.46	54.55	63.46	31.82	48.65

Table 7.7: Place-name survival rates in different regions covered by the Book of Llandaf.

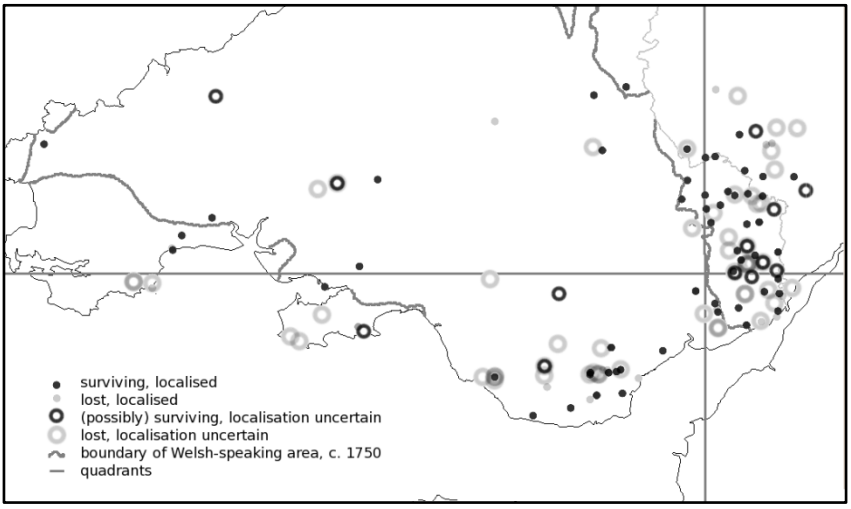

Fig. 7.5: Distribution of localizable names from the Book of Llandaf.

However, it is possible to identify various factors which also correlate with the high rate of survival in the north-west, which are unlikely to correlate with the linguistic situation. The following three graphs show distributions which could hint at correlations between place-name loss in each region and (a) average acreage of estates, (b) the proportion of names including elements denoting churches (*llan*, *eglwys*,

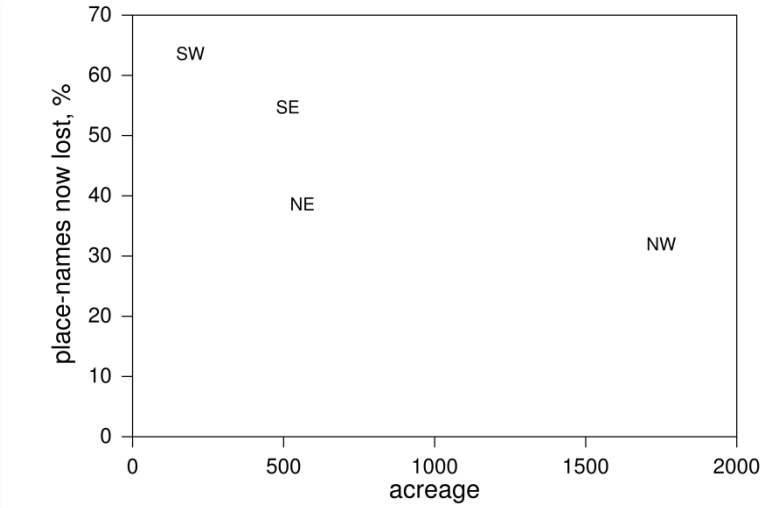

Fig. 7.6a: The mean acreage of estates (where known), against place-name loss.

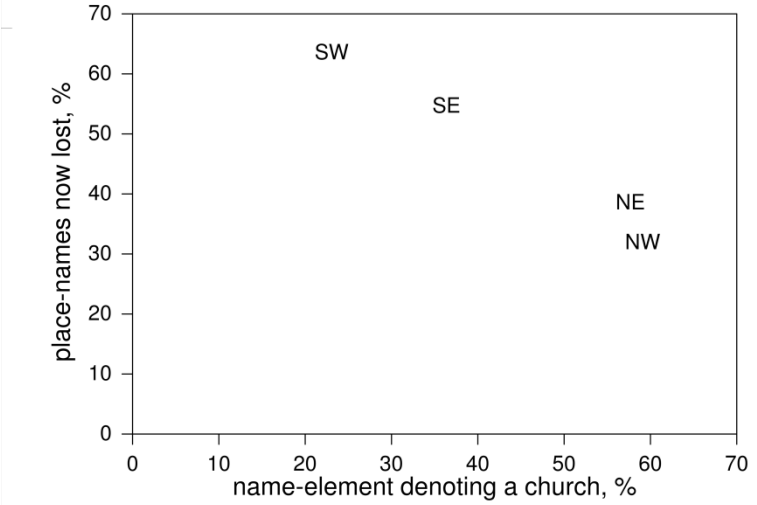

Fig. 7.6b: The proportion of names including an element denoting a church, against place-name loss.

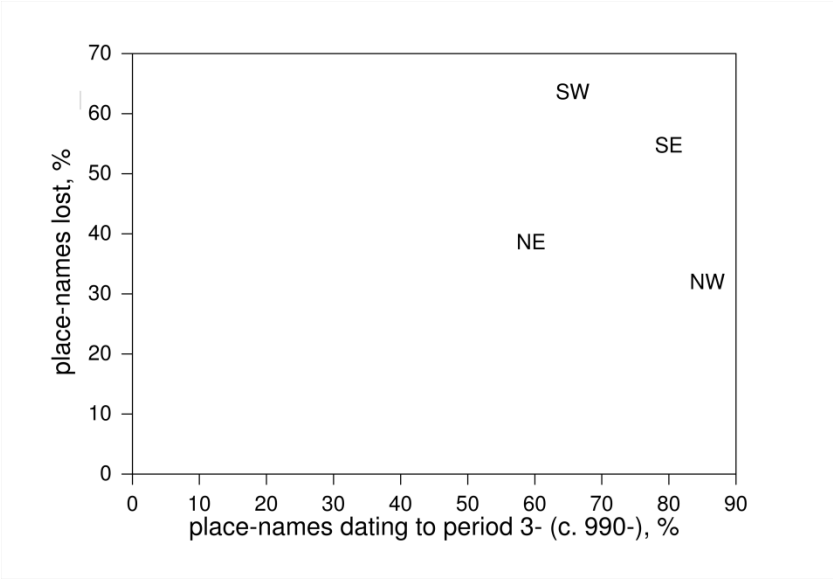

Fig. 7.6c: The proportion of names dating to Coe's period 3– (*c.* 990–) (where known), against place-name loss.

ecclesia, *podum*), and (c) the proportion of names associated with boundary clauses dating to Coe's periods 3–7 (*c.* 990–), as a rough measure of date (for the data see "spreadsheet_3_book_of_llandaf"). Presenting these graphs does not mean that I think their correlations are necessarily significant (and still less that the correlations indicate direct causation): larger datasets and more rigorous analysis would be required to conclude this. What they show, however, is that we would be unwise simply to leap to the assumption that linguistic stability is the main cause of greater toponymic stability in the north-west quadrant of my data.

Figures 7.6a and 7.6b suggest that two factors in the high rate of place-name survival in the north-western quadrant are that the place-names there tend to be associated with very large land-grants and that a large proportion denote churches, whose names show more continuity than the average. (Taking the whole dataset, 28 of the 73 church-names are lost (38.36%), with average associated estates of 719 acres; of the remaining 133 names, 101 are lost (75.94%), with average associated estates of 387 acres.) Although figure 7.6c does not reveal a clear correlation, it at least emphasises that the north-western material tends, linguistically, to be unusually late, and other evidence gives some reason

to think that this might be associated with higher rates of place-name survival in the present day. With such limited and unreliable data, it would be hard to quantify the relative importance of these factors, and they are very unlikely to be independent. What they show, however, is that we cannot simply assume that the north-west has higher place-name survival simply because it did not experience early Anglicisation: we should look for other reasons for the instability of early medieval Wales's place-names.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the degree to which early medieval place-names were stable, and in what circumstances. My evidence is problematic, and the figures I offer here should be generally understood primarily to indicate prospects for future enquiry rather than reliable conclusions. Still, there is one clear finding, which is apparent in all datasets through a variety of different proxies: the names of major places were more stable than those of minor places. Although this comes as no surprise, I am not aware that the point has been demonstrated for early medieval settlements before; and the methods used in this paper indicate some of the ways in which we might begin to investigate the subtleties and significance of this key sociolinguistic factor in how place-name systems functioned—and perhaps begin to account for this non-random factor in place-name survival when using place-names as historical evidence.

The English evidence affords good evidence that, within the early medieval period, earlier place-names are less likely to have a reflex in the modern place-name stock than later names. The Welsh data is much more problematic, but there is a case to be made for the same trend there. By the late eleventh century, English place-names had almost entirely stabilised: of the place-names that made it into the Domesday survey, over 91 per cent are still in use as settlement names. But more than 30 per cent of place-names from around 700 have been lost. This suggests that early Anglo-Saxon place-naming worked in rather different ways from later on, and that names were more fissile. I have not been able to think of a convincing method for extrapolating from the historical data what proportion of prehistoric Anglo-Saxon names we should expect to have survived to the present, but it seems likely that we should expect to see the survival of a lower proportion again. This goes some way towards explaining how linguistically English place-names came to replace Roman place-name stocks without positing massive demographic change.

The evidence for early medieval Wales affords another perspective on these suggestions—data in which names are much less stable again, and in which the English situation of place-names becoming largly fixed by 1086 is quite unfamiliar. Comparing the Welsh and English data is difficult. While a key source, the Book of Llandaf still offers only a fairly small dataset, preserved as a complex mix of material from the sixth century to the twelfth, with varying degrees of updating, and it is not possible to present century-by-century figures for place-name loss in the way that we can with contemporary Anglo-Saxon charters. Nor is the average size of the estates granted the same, to mention only the clearest of the possible disparities. Further research might make it possible to adjust for these factors—or to understand how far it makes sense to try, and whether we should rather be identifying essentially different models of settlement and naming. However, despite the complexities, it seems to be that the bottom line is that the Book of Llandaf does seem to show that in some circumstances, early medieval place-name stocks were highly fissile. Names attested in boundary clauses which date linguistically from up to c. 930 are, on average, associated with estates averaging a respectable 847 acres. Nearly 63 per cent are lost. Even if all these were assigned to the sixth century (the charter-dates are in fact evenly spread between *c.* 550 and c. 930, and some might have been updated within that period), that would still show that the majority of late Roman place-names could be lost even in conditions of relative linguistic stability. The eleventh-century comparison with England is even starker. I have discussed various ways of comparing the evidence, but we are looking a nine per cent loss of names of fairly small eleventh-century English places against something like a seventy per cent loss of Welsh ones.

It is not possible here to investigate why early historic Welsh place-names might have been so much less stable than contemporary English ones, but I have shown that we should be cautious of simply invoking later medieval Anglicisation. Davies implied that 'a substantial change in the land-holding pattern in the eleventh and twelfth centuries' might be the explanation for the loss of names from the Llandaf corpus (1973: 114), and we should probably be thinking along these lines rather than linguistic ones, considering differences in settlement size, mobility and nucleation; differing mechanisms of landholding; and the degrees of literacy and bureaucratization. As we start to access and refine our understanding of these factors, wider conclusions about the mechanisms of place-naming in early medieval societies will start to emerge, with implications for how we understand names as historical evidence.

Whatever the precise outcome of this, early medieval Wales suggests the degree to which place-names might be unstable despite substantial linguistic continuity. Padel wrote of the 'remarkable process...that brought about the thorough-going replacement of Brittonic language and place-names throughout England' (2007: 221); the Welsh evidence suggests a model in which a fairly rapid turnover of place-names would be more a mundane process than a remarkable one. We have little more hard evidence for continuity of names from the Roman period in Wales than in England. This has presumably been assumed hitherto simply to reflect a lack of data, but perhaps the Book of Llandaf indicates a society in which place-names were simply unstable. The possibility is open that England shows no greater loss of Roman place-names than we should expect in any region of post-Roman Britain.

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