Interrogating the anecdote:
thinking about multilingualism in western Britain, 500–1200

Conway Lecture 2 (1 September 2022)   Paul Russell

1   How are we to think about language-contact (resulting in bi-/multilingualism) when the evidence is very thin and fragmentary?

(a) What kind of evidence are we looking for (Mullen 2012)?
        • code-switching: unassimilated borrowing (usual intra-sentential)
        • loanwords: assimilation to phonology and morphology of the borrowing language (NB importance of embeddedness) (for Latin loanwords in Welsh: Loth 1892; Lewis 1940; Haarmann 1970; Zimmer 2011, 2012; French: Surridge 1966; for English, Parry-Williams 1923).
        • morphological remodelling (e.g. pluperfect in Brittonic languages) (Russell 2011, 2012)
(b) What models make sense to use?
        • what won't work: a data-heavy, statistical approach (frequently adopted in studies of modern phenomena.
        • superstrate/substrate models work up to a point in broad-brush ways; but the binarity of such approaches can be a problem (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Thomason 2001, 2004).
        • stable (long-term) bilingualism
        • diglossia/heteroglossia and the importance of 'domain'
        • ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles, *et al*. 1977)
(c) Some observations
        • we have to work with what we have; do what we can with the crumbs of evidence left to us; and use these models in a nuanced way to fill in the gaps.
        • it is too easy to fall into thinking in binary terms, and thus lose the nuance.
        • often the evidence restricts us to a specific domain; in the early medieval world that is often ecclesiastical and Latinate (Latin is often implicated, whether spoken as L1 or L2, or as a written language); care is needed as to how far we can generalise beyond that domain.
        • it is easy to lose sight of that the fact that in the medieval world (as now) much language acquisition was L2, L3, etc. and the same issues may arise as in the modern world as to levels of competence and domains.
        • what we do about the linguistic anecdote from a linguistically alert writer?

2.   Focus here is on one particularly rich area of the medieval world for our purposes, one that will probably be less familiar to most: the multilingual world of south Wales:

post-Roman: British/Latin/Irish (Evans 1983; Smith 1983; Schrijver 2002, 2009; Russell 2011)
early medieval: Welsh/Irish/English/Scandinavian/Latin (Russell 2013)
high medieval: Welsh/French/ English/Flemish/Latin (Russell 2017a)

3. Example 1: 6th c. post-Roman Britain epigraphy

Redknap & Lewis 2007: 235–40 (B42 Llywel):
        [M]ACCVTRENI SALICIDVNI
(Ogham) **MAQITRENI SALICIDUNI**

Redknap & Lewis 2007: 242–5 (B45 Trallwng):
         CVNOCENNI FILIV[S] CVNOGENI HIC IACIT
(Ogham) **CUNACENNI [A]VI ILLVVETO**

         • Latin is consistent with developments elsewhere in Late Latin/early Romance; confusion of endings; use of epigraphic *-I* at a point when case-endings were disappearing (for the debate: Charles-Edwards 1995; 2013: 89–115; Adams 2007: 616–20; Schrijver 2014). Cf. also hypercorrection 'errors' in the Latin: *CVM MVLTITVDNEM*, *IN CONGERIES LAPIDVM*, etc.
         • Ogham and Irish name forms are diagnostic of an Irish presence (cf. Sims-Williams 2002); cf. spelling of 'composition-vowel' (Irish /a/; Brittonic /o/)
         • Irish settlement in a British and Latin-speaking Wales, and speakers of Irish probably learning British and Latin.

4. Example 2: a monastic context in south-east Wales
A glossed copy of Juvencus (CUL Ff. 4. 42) glossed in Latin, Welsh and Irish (late 9th-early 10th c.). The main scribe identifies himself on a colophon as Núadu: *araut di nuadu* 'a prayer for N.' (cf. the Irish idiom *oróit do* …); on this, see McKee 2000ab; Harvey 1991; Russell 2012: 206–14.
         Translation of glosses (cf. Lambert 1990; Russell 2017b: 113–18, 183–4, and 2022: 110–14); NB we only see that they are doing when they make errors.
          • fol. 26r25 (G) monimenta, gl. .i. hencassou
         Partial calque on OIr *senchas* (pl. *senchaissi*): OIr *sen-* > OW *hen-*, but second element retained (there being no Welsh equivalent) with added OW plural suffix (cf. McKee 2000a: 505).
         • fol. 14v26 (G) scropea, gl. carrecou
         A plural *cerric* would be expected (McKee 2000a: 479), and this may be a case of a scribe who can control regular plural formation but is less secure with vowel-affected plurals (NB a classic L2 error of over-generalising a rule).
         • fol. 5r22 (E) nomenque genusque, gl. .i. tribus .i. bemhed 'fifth'
Cf. OIr *cóiced* 'fifth, province'.
         • Irish monks in a Latin- and Welsh-speaking (probably monastic) context, learning Welsh
           but at an L2 level?

5. The anecdote of a linguistically aware author: Gerald of Wales
His works presents a wealth of evidence on language (Putter 2009; Zimmer 2003; Russell 2013), but we need to be careful how we read them; for example, it is unclear how much Welsh Gerald had, but the comments about him not preaching the crusade in Welsh do not mean he could not speak Welsh (Putter 2009: 87). Gerald almost certainly spoke some Welsh but of varying levels of competence and confidence depending on the domain.
         • We are back to the problem of the binary; we have to allow for varying levels of competence in different contexts and registers; cf. the issue of interpreters in Wales (Bullock-Davies 1966; Suppe 1995, etc.; Chapman 2015; cf. Russell 2013, 2019: 10–12); collecting evidence for canonisations (Richter 1979, 2000, 2013; Hayes, 2005).

• Gerald was very linguistically aware but we therefore have to be very careful how we read his assertions (cf. Putter 2009). My last set of examples are from Gerald's works but from contexts where language is not the focus of the comments.

6. Example 3a: Gerald on the *illiteratura* of the clergy
      • *Gemma ecclesiastica*, ii. 36 (RS ii. 346): 'Factus est repente de coelo sonus' etc.' [Acts 2: 2]. Cum caetera Gallice interpretatus esset, ueniens ad *repente*, stetit et haesitauit, tandem uero dixit: 'Repente, "il se repenti".'
      'A noise was suddenly made from heaven', etc.'. When he had translated the rest into French, coming to *repente*, he stopped and hesitated, and finally said '*Repente* "he repented"' (cf. Hagen 1979: 264).
      • ibid., 'Uere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare', qui cum exposuisset: 'Uere dignum et iustum est', 'Ueraiment dignum et iuste', ueniens ad aequum, dixit: 'Equum, ceo est cheual', et salutare "saillauit [? *recte* saultauit]".'
      'It is truly meet and just, proper and helpful towards salvation', and when he parsed it: *Uere dignum et iustum est* 'Vraiment digne et juste'; coming to *aequum*, he said, '*Equum,* c'est un cheval, and *salutare* "it leapt"' (Cf. Hagen 1979: 264).

7. Example 3b: Gerald mimicking Irish Latinity (*De gestis Giraldi*, ii. 15)

Eodem die, cenante cum archiepiscopo Ossiriensi episcopo Felice (qui monachus erat mutilatus, ut uidebatur, et eunucatus), cum quesisset ab eo archiepiscopus quid ei uisum fuisset de archidiaconi sermone, respondit ille quia multum bene dixit mala: 'Vocauit', inquit, 'nos potores. Certe uix me continui **quod** statim in ipsum non inuolaui uel saltem **quod** uerbis talionem reddendo **quod** acriter ei non responderim.'

That same day, the bishop of Ossory, Felix (who was a monk and, apparently, mutilated and a eunuch) was dining with the archbishop. When the archbishop asked him what he had thought of the archdeacon's sermon, he replied that he had said wicked things with great eloquence. 'He called us drinkers', he said. 'In truth, I barely stopped myself from rushing at him on the spot or, at least, repaying like with like in words and giving him a sharp answer.'

Is Gerald mimicking Felix's Latin in which he is using *quod* to represent Irish *co*/*go*?

8. Example 3c: Gerald and the Latinity of the hermit of Llywes (Gwyddelau?) (*De gestis*, iii. 2)

Talis enim erat ei loquendi modus, semper per infinitiuum nec casus seruabat, et tamen satis intelligi poterat. Quare magis admirandum unde uiro simplici et idiote scientia talis: … Requirenti uero archidiacono unde ei uerba Latina, cum non didicerit, respondit in hunc modum … (sua enim ipsius uerba ponam, sicut ea libenter archidiaconus et frequenter retractare et recitare consuerat):
      'Ego', inquit, 'ire Ierosolimam et uisitare sepulcrum Domini mei et, quando redire, ego ponere me in hoc carcere pro amore Domini mei, qui mori pro me et multum ego dolere quod non posse intelligere Latinum neque missam nec euuangelium et multociens flere et rogare Dominum dare michi Latinum intelligere. … Et post missam ego uocare presbiterum ad

fenestram cum missali et rogare ipsum legere euuangelium illius diei et ipse legere et ego exponere, et dicere sacerdos quod recte et postea loqui cum presbitero Latinum et ipse mecum et ab illo die ego sic loqui. Et Dominus meus, qui dedit michi Latinam linguam, non dedit eam michi per gramaticam aut per casus sed tantum ut intelligi possem et alios intelligere.'

For such was his manner of speaking, always with infinitives, and he did not use cases, but he could nevertheless be understood easily enough. For this reason it was more to be wondered where a simple and unlettered man got such knowledge from … And when the archdeacon asked him where he had got his Latin words, for he had not learnt the language, he replied in this way … (for I shall quote his very own words, in the form in which the archdeacon used frequently and most willingly to recollect and recite them):
        'I go to Jerusalem', he said, 'and visit the sepulchre of my Lord, and when I return, I put myself in this imprisonment for the love of my Lord, who die for me. And I grieve much that I cannot understand Latin, or the mass, or the gospels, and many times I weep and ask the Lord to give me to understand Latin. … And after the mass I call the priest to the window with his missal and I ask him to read the gospel reading for that day. And he read and I expound, and the priest say that I do it correctly, and afterwards I speak Latin with the priest, and he with me. And from that day I speak thus, and my Lord, who gave me the Latin tongue, did not give it me by means of grammar or cases, but only that I might be able to be understood and to understand others.

Is Gerald mimicking the hermit's Latin in which he is using infinitives to reflect the Middle Welsh use of verbal nouns in continuous narrative?

REFERENCES
Adams, J. N. 2007. *The Regional Diversification of Latin, 200 BC–AD 600*, Cambridge.
Bullock-Davies, Constance. 1966. *Professional Interpreters and the Matter of Britain*. Cardiff.
Chapman, Adam. 2015. *Welsh Soldiers in the Later Middle Ages 1287–1422*. Woodbridge.
Charles-Edwards, T. M. 1995. 'Language and society among the insular Celts, AD 400–1000', in *The Celtic World*, ed. M. Green. London, 703–36.
Charles-Edwards, T. M. 2013. *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064*, Oxford.
Currie, Jacob, Thomas Charles-Edwards, & Paul Russell (eds.), forthc., *Gerald of Wales, On the Deeds of Gerald (*De gestis Giraldi*)*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford).
Evans, D. Ellis. 1983. 'Language contact in pre-Roman and Roman Britain', in Haase 1983: 949–97.
Filppula, Markku & Klemola, Juhani (eds.). 2009. 'Special issue on re-evaluating the Celtic hypothesis', *English Language and Linguistics*, 13.2, 155–334.
Filppula, Markku, Klemola, Juhani & Pitkänen, Heli (eds). 2002. *Celtic Roots of English*, Joensuu.
Giles, H., R. Bourhis, & D. Taylor. 1977. 'Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations', in *Language, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Relations*, ed. H. Giles. London, pp. 307–48.
Haarmann, Harald. 1970. *Der lateinischen Lehnwortschatz im Kymrischen*. Bonn.
Haase, Wolfgang. 1983. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Part II: *Principät*, vol. 29.2. Berlin.

Hagen, John J. 1979. *Gerald of Wales, The Jewel of the Church. A Translation of* Gemma Ecclesiastica *by Giraldus Cambrensis*, Davis Medieval Texts and Studies 2, Leiden.

Harvey, Anthony. 1991. 'The Cambridge Juvencus glosses – evidence of Hiberno-Welsh interaction', in *Proceedings of the eighth international symposium on language contact in Europe, Douglas, Isle of Man, 1988*, ed. P. Sture Ureland and G. Broderick. Tübingen, pp. 181–98.

Harvey, Anthony. 2015. 'Cambro-Romance? Celtic Britain's counterpart to Hiberno-Latin', in Moran & Warntjes 2015: 170–202.

Hayes, Gianetta M. 2005. 'Ordination rituals and practice in the Welsh-English frontier, circa 1540–1640', *Journal of British Studies* 44: 713–27.

Lambert, Pierre-Yves. 1990. 'Old Irish *gláosnáthe* "linea, norma"', *Celtica* 21: 235– 9.

Lewis, Henry. 1943. *Yr Elfen Ladin yn yr Iaith Gymraeg*. Cardiff.

Loth, Joseph. 1892. *Les mots latins dans les langues brittoniques*, Paris.

McKee, Helen. 2000a. *The Cambridge Juvencus Manuscript glossed in Latin, Old Welsh and Old Irish. Text and Commentary*. Aberystwyth.

McKee, Helen. 2000b. 'Scribes and glosses from Dark Age Wales: the Cambridge Juvencus manuscript', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 39: 1–22

Moran, Pádraic & Immo Warntjes (eds). 2015. *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contacts, Scholarship. Festschrift for Dáibhí Ó Cróinín*, Studia Traditionis Theologiae 14. Turnhout.

Mullen, A. and James, P. (eds.). 2012. *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*. Cambridge.

Mullen, A. 2012. 'Introduction: multiple languages, multiple identities', in Mullen and James 2012: 1–35.

Parry-Williams, T. H. 1923. *The English Element in Welsh*. London.

Putter, Ad. 2009. 'Multilingualism in England and Wales, *c*. 1200: the testimony of Gerald of Wales', in *Medieval Multilingualism. The Francophone World and its Neighbours*, ed. C. Kleinhenz & K. Busby, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Britain 20. Turnhout, pp. 83–105.

Redknap, Mark, & J. M. Lewis. 2007. *A Corpus of Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales. Volume I: South Wales and the English Border*. Cardiff.

Richter, Michael. 1979. *Sprach und Gesellschaft von der Mitte des elften bis zum Beginn des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart.

Richter, Michael. 2000. 'Collecting miracles along the Anglo-Welsh border in the early fourteenth century', in Trotter 2000: 53–61.

Richter Michael. 2013. 'Trace elements of obliterated vernacular languages in Latin texts', in *Spoken and Written Language. Relations Between Latin and the Vernacular Languages in the Earlier Middle Ages*, ed. M. Garrison, A. P. Orbán, and M. Mostert. Turnhout, pp. 1–9.

Russell, Paul. 2011. 'Latin and British in Roman and post-Roman Britain: methodology and morphology', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 109: 138–57.

Russell, Paul. 2012. '*An habes linguam Latinam? Non tam bene sapio*: views of multilingualism from the early-medieval West', in Mullen and James 2012: 193–224.

Russell, Paul. 2013. '*Externarum linguarum excellens*: the rhetoric and reality of the languages of Gruffudd ap Cynan, ruler of Gwynedd († 1137)', in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain (c. 1066–1520): Sources and Analysis*, ed. J. A. Jefferson and A. Putter. Turnhout, pp. 73–87.

Russell, Paul. 2017a. '"Go and look in the Latin books": Latin and the vernacular in medieval Wales', in *Latin in Medieval Britain*, ed. R. Ashdowne and C. White, Proceedings of the British Academy 206. London, pp. 213–46.

Russell, Paul. ed. 2017b. *Reading Ovid in Medieval Wales*, Columbus OH.

Russell, Paul. 2019. 'Bilingualisms and multilingualisms in medieval Wales: evidence and inference', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmorodorion*, 25: 7–22.

Russell, Paul. 2022. 'Rethinking the Latin and Old Welsh glossing in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 153 (Martianus Capella)', *North American Journal of Celtic Studies* 6: 102–42.

Schrijver, Peter. 2002. 'The rise and fall of British Latin: evidence from English and Brittonic', in Filppula, et al. 2002: 87–110.

Schrijver, Peter. 2009. 'Celtic influence on Old English: phonological and phonetic evidence', in Filppula and Klemola 2009: 193–211.

Schrijver, Peter. 2014. *Language Contact and the Origins of the Germanic Languages*. London.

Sims-Williams, Patrick. 2002. 'The five languages of Wales in the pre-Norman inscriptions', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 44: 1–36.

Smith, Colin. 1983. 'Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain: epigraphic and other evidence', in Haase 1983: 893–948.

Suppe, Frederick C. 1995. 'Who was Rhys Sais? Some comments on Anglo-Welsh relations before 1066', *Haskins Society Journal* 7: 63–73.

Suppe, Frederick C. 2002. 'Roger of Powys, Henry II's Anglo-Welsh Middleman, and his Lineage', *Welsh History Review* 21: 1–23.

Suppe, Frederick C. 2007. 'Interpreter Families and Anglo-Welsh Relations in the Shropshire-Powys Marches in the Twelfth Century', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 30: 196–212.

Suppe, Frederick C. 2018. 'The career and subsequent reputation of Iorwerth Goch, bi-cultural denizen of the medieval Welsh marches', *North American Journal of Celtic Studies* 2: 133–54.

Surridge, Mary. 1966. 'Romance linguistic influence on Middle Welsh', *Studia Celtica* 1: 63–92.

Thomason, Sarah G. 2001. *Language contact: An introduction*, Edinburgh.

Thomason, Sarah G. 2004. 'Contact as a source of language change', in *Handbook of language variation and language change*, ed. J. K. Chambers *et al.* Oxford, pp. 687–712.

Thomason, Sarah Grey & Kaufman, Terrence. 1988. *Language Contact, Creolization and Genetic Linguistics*, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Trotter, David. 2000. *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*. Cambridge.

Zimmer, Stefan. 1990. 'Dating the Loanwords: the Latin Suffixes in Welsh', in Alfred Bammesberger & Alfred Wollmann (eds.), *Britain 400–600: Language and History*. Anglistische Forschungen, 205. Heidelberg, pp. 263–82.

Zimmer, Stefan. 2002. 'Latin and Welsh', in Leah Sawicki and Donna Shalev (eds.), *Donum Grammaticum. Studies in Latin and Celtic Linguistics in Honour of Hannah Rosén*, Orbis Supplementa 18, Leeuven, pp. 395–406.

Zimmer, Stefan. 2003. 'A medieval linguist: Gerald de Barri', *Études celtiques* 35: 313–50.