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Where's Walh-y?
Searching for 'Invisible Britons' in early medieval England

1. Introduction

Walh 'Briton, Welshperson, slave' has received more attention than most Old English words in the scholarship of early medieval England.[1] This is due to its relevance to debates around both slavery and ethnic identity. It is the term's relationship to this second topic that this paper will explore. The idea for the paper came in response to an invitation a conference celebrating the centenary of the English Place-Name Society: *A hundred years of names and places*, which gave me the opportunity to talk about three pieces of work produced by EPNS scholars in which have played a significant role in my current research.[2] The first of these was a chapter by Richard Coates (2007) called 'Invisible Britons', which explores the linguistic and onomastic evidence for Brittonic survival (or lack of it) after the *adventus saxonum*.[3] Coates demonstrates that Britons contributed more place-names to the English than previously recognised, but also that 'the number is still not enormous and the newly-recognized names do not radically distort the accepted picture, which is consistent with de-celticization' (Coates 2007: 46). He concludes that the traditional view of the *adventus saxonum* is probably accurate, and that there must have been 'few visible Britons' in early medieval England (Coates 2007: 51). Coates also suggests that personal names may provide further insight on this topic, but warns that various difficulties leave us 'unable to be sure what available anthroponymic material tells us about ethnicity' (Coates 2004: 5–6).

Despite Coates' warnings, uncovering the anthroponymic material relating to Britons in early medieval England is one of the principal aims of my current research project: Personal names, migration and ethnic identity in early medieval Britain.[4] It is in pursuit of this aim that I discovered two further articles: one by John Baker (2017), 'Old English *sǣte* and the historical significance of 'folk' names'; and another by Kenneth Cameron (1980), 'The meaning and significance of Old English *walh* in English place-names'.[5] I was led to them by Merewalh of the Magonsæte, having internalised two ideas about Merewalh often put forward by historians: that he was the ruler of a subkingdom called the *Magonsæte*, one of a number of polities with names containing Old English *sǣte* 'dwellers' situated in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, and that such names often indicated a British or Welsh character to the population; and second, that the *walh* element in Merewalh's name signified that he was a Briton, or had British ancestry.

Baker's article analyses a comprehensive corpus of *sǣte* names and convincingly demonstrates that they were a later form used widely across England and that they had no particular connection British or Welsh identity (Baker 2017: 439–442).[6] Kenneth Cameron's article unravelled the significance of the Old English term *walh* in English place-names. This unravelling was necessary due to the previously held assumption that *walh*, rather than meaning 'Briton' when present in place-names, had been used to signify 'slave' (Cameron 1980: 2; Zachrisson 1927: 42–46). Cameron's article concluded that the term *walh* in place-names almost certainly referred to Britons, rather than slaves, and that the coining of these names must have taken place in a relatively early period – most likely prior to the ninth century – before any pejorative overtones of slavery had become associated with the term (Cameron 1980: 29–31). He argued that *walh* place-names must have denoted small settlements inhabited by Britons who ultimately became absorbed into the local English population, 'but who also retained their national identity, including in all probability their language, long enough, in some cases into the eighth century, for place-names to be formed from the distinctive word used by the English settlers to describe them' (Cameron 1980: 20–34). Although Cameron touches upon personal names briefly, suggesting they probably did hold the same meaning, there is no detailed exploration (Cameron, 1980: 5–6). In fact, despite such assertions, there is no clear consensus as to whether instances of *walh* in personal names did actually signify 'Briton', or anything at all for that matter, and no detailed study of personal names containing *walh* has been carried out.

The aim of this article, therefore, is to take inspiration from the three excellent works of place-name scholarship cited above, and apply some of their methods to the question of *walh* in relation to personal names. First, I will establish a comprehensive corpus of Old English names containing *walh*. Then, by examining the names, the context in which they were recorded, and the wider historical context of their bearers, I will explore where and how *walh* was used in Old English personal names. In doing so, I aim to establish whether *walh* held any semantic significance when contained within Old English personal names and whether we can take the bearers of such names to have had British ethnic or linguistic identity. I hope that the corpus of names, as well as the conclusions drawn from it, will in turn be of use to place-name scholars in the identification of place-names from personal names containing *walh*, as well as contribute to the wider scholarship surrounding language, ethnicity and identity in early medieval Britain.

2. The dual meaning of *walh* in Old English

It is well established that *walh* had more than one meaning in Old English, although the chronological development of these meanings has been the matter of some debate. It was originally an ethnic and linguistic term, incorporated into Germanic languages during the Proto-Germanic period as an ethnonym for the continental Celtic tribe the *Volcae*, which later came to be applied to all Celtic speakers, and subsequently Latin speakers too (Faull 1975: 20; Miller 2014: 81; Findell and Shaw 2020: 70–72). Amongst insular speakers of Old English, *walh* referred to the native British inhabitants of southern Britain, specifically those who had formerly been (or who were the descendants of) inhabitants of the Roman Empire (Faull 1975: 20; Banham 1994: 150; Miller, 2014: 81–83; Findell and Shaw 2020: 70–72; Woolf 2003: 231–232). As Woolf (2003) points out, *walh* was not generally applied to other non-Germanic peoples – even when those people were Celtic-speaking.[7] Indeed, if, as Schrijver suggests, a significant portion of the late antique inhabitants of lowland Britain spoke Latin, rather than Brittonic, then *walh* may not have been associated specifically with Celtic speakers – at least not initially – but rather with Romanness more broadly, which is why it was appropriate for the Britons of Wales, Cornwall and Strathclyde, but not for Picts, Scots or Gaels (Schrijver 2007 and 2009; Woolf 2010: 232; Findell and Shaw 2020: 77–78).[8]

A secondary meaning of *walh* subsequently developed in Old English as a term used to refer to slaves (Faull 1975: 26; Pelteret 1995: 319–322; Miller 2014: 104). It was originally believed that this developed during the fifth and sixth centuries as Germanic invaders occupied the south and east of Britain, enslaving its inhabitants en masse, and leading to an association of British speech with slavery (Findell and Shaw 2020: 70–72; Miller 2014: 84). It is for this reason scholars such as Zachrisson and Smith considered that place-names containing *walh* to refer either predominantly or exclusively to 'slaves' or 'serfs' (EPNE **2**, s.v. *walh*; Zachrisson 1927: 39–46). However, as demonstrated by Cameron (1980), Hough (2000) and Draper (2002) in relation to place-names, and others such as Faull (1975), Pelteret (1995) and Miller (2014) in relation to the wider usage of the term, this is no longer understood to be the case. It is now widely accepted that *walh* as 'slave' was a later development that came into use in the context of later military activity between the eighth and tenth centuries, as West Saxon forces raided and eventually subdued British lands in Devon and Cornwall (Miller 2014: 132; Findell and Shaw 2020: 70–72).[9]

The use of the term *walh* has been an important aspect of the wider debate about ethnic identities, migration and intercultural relations in early medieval Britain. This article cannot cover this expansive debate in depth, but it would be remiss not to mention a key source for our understanding of the term which has recently undergone re-evaluation, the law code of King Ine of Wessex (d. 726). This late seventh-century law code records the earliest uses of *walh* in both its senses (Faull 1975: 20–26). The laws themselves were heavily influenced by contemporary Frankish Law Codes, such as the *Lex Salica*, in form and content, although a significant difference was, seemingly, the language in which it was written (Wormald 1999: 19–20).[10]. The earliest extant copy of Ine's Laws is as an appendix to the laws of King Alfred (d. 899) compiled some 150 years later (Ivarsen 2022: 1–2).[11] It has generally been accepted that Ine's laws were composed in Old English, with the language and terminology updated by Alfred's scribes to bring them in line with the West Saxon standard (Wormald 1999: 278–80). However, the extent to which the language originated in the context of seventh century England has been questioned. Just like the Frankish laws, it is possible that Ine's laws were a composite creation, with early material recorded in Ine's reign, but then added to by his successors (Wormald 1999: 105; Findell and Shaw 2020: 73; Jurasinski and Oliver 2021: 366). The use of terms such as *walh*/*wealh* 'Briton, Welshperson, slave' and *welisc*/*wylisc* 'Britsh Welsh', may therefore have changed over the decades during which they were produced. Ingrid Ivarsen has gone as far as to argue that the laws themselves were composed completely in Latin, following the Frankish model, and later translated into Old English when added to Alfred's *domboc* (Ivarsen 2022: 2). In both cases, this would call into question the usefulness of Ine's Laws for investigating the linguistic development of *walh* – at least prior to the late ninth century. All we can definitively conclude from it on this point is that, by the time of Alfred's reign, the term *walh* was used to mean both 'Briton, Welsh' and 'slave, servant'. Ivarsen's conclusions, if correct, demonstrate the importance of onomastic evidence in the early development of the term – so it is to this evidence we must look for early recorded instances of *walh* in Old English.

3. Investigating *walh* in Old English personal names

Cameron's seminal study of *walh* in place-names paid little attention to its use in personal names, other than to state that in such names the meaning of the term must be 'Briton, Welshman', and that 'it is inconceivable that it can be otherwise' (Cameron 1980: 5). Cameron was in agreement with Margaret Faull, who stated that 'the use of this element should indicate that the holder had some Celtic blood' (Faull 1975: 32). In contrast, Bertram

Colgrave argued against any meaning whatsoever; he believed that 'the frequency with which' *walh* appeared in personal names made it 'unlikely that the element was used only in the case of foreigners' (Colgrave 1956: 176). Moreover, Faull herself goes on to suggest that, even if *walh* did originally have the meaning of 'Briton' in personal names, it was eventually 'adopted into the personal name stock and used without thought for its real meaning' (Faull 1975: 32). So, while the presence of the term has sometimes been pointed to as a marker of the ethnic identity of the bearer, both within personal names themselves and place-names formed with personal names in *walh*, it is not clear that this is the case.

In fact, it is by no means universally acknowledged that the lexical items present in Old English personal names carried the same semantic meaning that they did when used in everyday vocabulary.[12] Frank Stenton, for example, said that 'at an early time the sense which a compound name bore was a matter of little importance… personal or family reasons determined the choice of a name, and speculation as to its meaning, if it came at all, came as an afterthought' (Stenton 1970: 168). Similarly, Cecily Clark said that: 'the combining of themes into compounds was ruled by onomastic not semantic choice' (Clark 1992: 458). If they are right, then it may have not mattered at all what *walh* meant in other contexts – it could have been meaningless when incorporated into a personal name. By examining the full corpus of *walh* names and the context in which they are found, this article aims to determine more clearly whether the term when used in personal names was intended to convey meaning, and whether this meaning had an ethnic sense.

4. Establishing a corpus of *walh* names

The first task is to establish a comprehensive corpus of Old English personal names which contain *walh*. There are challenges to this. Inconsistent orthography – especially in cases where an individual's name is only recorded a single time – makes identification problematic. This is further complicated by the nature of the sources themselves, particularly those individuals who appear in charter witness lists, where authenticity of a charter is not always clear. Finally, there is the perennial challenge of distinguishing between individuals bearing the same name. The method used in this study has been to carry out an initial identification of names using PASE, as well an examination of the names of the Durham *Liber Vitae* (which are not included within PASE), before carrying out a more in-depth analysis of each of the names to ensure it belongs in the corpus. Names appearing in spurious charters have been

excluded, as well as names where an alternative explanation for its etymology is more likely.[13] The resulting corpus of *walh* names is detailed below.[14]

Table 1: Corpus of walh names

	Name	Source(s)	Date	Location
Æthelwalh				
1	*Aedilualch*; *Aetheluualch*; *Aþeluuold*	BHE IV.13; VSW 41; ASC 661 (A)	670	Sussex
Bilwalh				
2	*Biluualch*	LVD 33r	750	Northumbria
Cenwalh				
3	*Coenuualh*; *Cenuualh*	Vesp. B 109v; Tib. B 23r	650	Mercia
4	*Cenwalh*; *Cenuualh*; *Cynwalh*; *Kenuuealh*	ASC 672 (A); CA II.7; ASC 648 (F-OE); ASC 644 (B)	650	Wessex
5	*Cenuualh*; *Cenuuald*	LVNM 15r; S 276	792	London
6	*Coenuualch*	LVD 27r	750	Northumbria
Cnobwalh				
7	*Cnobualch*	LVD 37r	750	Northumbria
Cundwalh				
8	*Cunduualh*; *Cuþuualh*	Vesp. B 109v; Tib. B 23r	675	Mercia
Ealdwalh				
9	*Aldualch*	LVD 37r	750	Northumbria
Merewalh				
10	*Meruuala*; *Meruuale*; *Mereuueale*	ASC 656 (E); RP I; MEE 93	656	Mercia
11	*Meruualh*	BHB 64	700	Wessex
Penwalh				

12	*Penuualh*; *Penuuald*; *Penulballus*; *Penulballus*	FVG I (A, H, D, E_2, G)	665	Mercia
Pleowalh				
13	*Pleoualch*	LVD 27r	750	Northumbria
Swiðwalh				
14	*Suiðualch*	LVD 30v	750	Northumbria
15	*Suiðualch*	LVD 37r	750	Northumbria
Wale (f)				
16	*Uuale*	BHB 14	715	Kent
Walh				
17	*Uualh*	S 22	710	Kent
18	*Uuealh*	S 41	806	Kent
19	*Uach*	LVD 27r	750	Northumbria
20	*Uach*	LVD 27r	750	Northumbria
21	*Ualch*	LVD 27v	750	Northumbria
Walhheard				
22	*Uualhard*	S 34; S 35; S 36; S 266	770	Kent
Walhhere				
23	*Uuealhere*; *Uuealhere*	S 266; S 1438	838	Kent
24	*Uuealhhere*	S 1482	835	Kent
25	*Uuealhhere*	S 1482	835	Kent
26	*Uuealhhere*; *Uualahhere*	S 293; S 1197	855	Kent
Walhhun				
27	*Uualhhun*; *Uuealhun*	S 30; S 31	755	Kent
Walhstod				
28	*Uualchstod; Uualhstod*	BVC XXXVIII; AVC XXII.	700	Northumbria
29	*Ualchstod; Uualhstod*	BHE V.23; S 101	730	Wessex

30	*Uualcstod*	S 1410	744	Wessex
31	*Ualchstod*	LVD 22v	750	Northumbria
32	*Ualchstod*	LVD 29r	750	Northumbria
33	*Ualchstod*	LVD 30r	750	Northumbria
34	*Ualchstod*	LVD 30r	750	Northumbria
Welisc				
35	*Uelisc*	S 8	679	Kent
36	*Uuelisc*	S 235	688	Kent

This corpus of *walh* names can be categorised further into four groups: (i) bynames bestowed on the bearer later in life, rather given to a bearer during infancy; (ii) monothematic names formed using the element *walh*, either on its own or with a suffix; (iii) dithematic names where *walh* appears as first element; (iv) dithematic names containing the element *walh* as second element. The categorisation of the names is not always clear-cut, as will become clear from the discussion below.

Table 2: Corpus of walh names by name type

Byname:	
Walhstod	7
Welisc	2
Total	**9**

Monothematic:	
Walh	5
Wale	1
Total	**6**

***Walh* as first element:**	
Walhhere	4
Walhhard	1
Walhhun	1

***Walh* as second element:**	
Cenwalh	4
Merewalh	2
Swiðwalh	2
Pleowalh	2
Bilwalh	1
Æðelwalh	1
Cnobwalh	1
Cundwalh	1
Ealdwalh	1
Penwalh	1
Total	**15**

Total	**6**

Table 3: Corpus of walh names: chronological and geographical distribution

Location	
Northumbria	15
Kent	11
Mercia	6
Wessex	1
London	1
Sussex	1
Essex	1
Total	**36**

Century	
Seventh	8
Eighth	23
Ninth	5
Total	**36**

The corpus is by no means negligible, but at thirty-six it is hardly a huge number, bearing in mind that we know the names of over 15,000 people who lived in this period.[15] In comparison, Old English *ælf* 'elf', which only appeared as a first element in Old English dithematic names, is recorded in the names of over 2,000 individuals in PASE alone.[16] So, to say that *walh* was a widely used name element would be an overstatement. It is certainly rare enough for us to rule out Colgrave's suggestion that it was so common that it there is no chance it could have signified 'Briton' (Colgrave 1956: 176).

There are also a couple of immediately obvious patterns that jump out from the summary above. Firstly, the chronological distribution of the names is largely concentrated to the eighth century (64 percent of the total), considerably more than the seventh century (22 percent). This concentration may well have something to do with the increased survival of documentary sources from the eighth century, onwards, rather than an increase in the use of the name theme itself. The light smattering of names in the ninth century (just 14 percent of the corpus), and lack of recorded names after this point is noteworthy, however. It suggests that, for some reason, *walh* ceased to be used as a productive element in Old English names from some time in the ninth century. Secondly, the geographical distribution of names shows prominent clusters of names in Northumbria (42 percent of the corpus) and Kent (31 percent).

Again, some of this may be down to the nature of the sources in these regions, particularly so in Northumbria, where names are recorded (or survive) in significant numbers through the works of Bede, as well as the Durham *Liber Vitae* (Book of Life), the 'Original Core' of which contains some 3,000 or so names (Briggs 2004: 83). However, there may be other reasons for the presence of names in these regions. Both of these phenomena will be examined more closely in the coming sections. However, we must first try to establish whether the element *walh* held any significance in terms of the bearer's ethnic or linguistic identity. To do so, we must examine more closely the specific contexts in which the *walh* names appear, taking into account prosopographical information, geographical location, chronology and manuscript context, to identify potential links to British identity, descent or speech.

5. Bynames: *Walhstod and Welisc*

To begin this task, this section will focus on some names which almost certainly referred to the British identity of their bearers. These are the two name forms in the corpus which are unequivocally bynames: *Welisc* and *Walhstod.* The first of these, *Welisc*, was an adjectival form meaning quite literally 'British' or 'Welsh' (BT s.v. *wilisc*). It was recorded as the name of two men: *Uelisc* (fl. 679), a signatory to an early charter of king Hlohthere of Kent at Reculver relating to land on the Isle of Thanet; and *Uuelisc* (fl. 688), a witness to a charter of King Cædwalla of Wessex (d. 689) relating to land around Farnham in Surrey.[17] The second byname was *Walhstod*, which resembles a standard dithematic construction with *walh* as the first element, and *stod* 'post' as the second (Insley and Rollason 2007: 156). The word *walhstod*, however, was a relatively widely used term meaning 'interpreter' or 'translator' (BT s.v. *wealh-stod*). The first man with this name, recorded as *Ualchstod* (fl. 700), was a brother at Lindisfarne who was cured of dysentery by Saint Cuthbert (d. 687) and was present at Cuthbert's death.[18] Another is recorded by Bede as *Ualchstod* (fl. 730), and described as a Bishop 'of the people who dwell west of the River Severn' – which presumably refers to the diocese of Hereford.[19] A third man of this name, recorded as *Walcstod* (fl. 744), was a monk at Glastonbury who witnessed a charter granting land from a certain Lulla to the Abbey there.[20] A further four men, all recorded as *Ualchstod*, were recorded in the Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae* (c.690–c.840), one amongst the *nomina presbytorum* ('names of priests) and three amongst the *nomina clericorum* ('names of clerics').[21]

Although there is no consensus as to whether the lexical items in Old English given names were semantically meaningful, it is generally accepted that bynames did carry meaning, at least at the point they were initially created. Bynames were bestowed on a person during their lifetime to indicate something about the bearer, such as their occupation or status, family relationships, geographical location, place of descent or ethnic origin (Hanks and Parkin 2016: 215–217). Such names were rare in the early Old English period and seem to have been used on an *ad hoc* basis until the around the late tenth century, from which point they became more systematically applied (Postles 2006: 93). In the case of *Welisc*, it is hard to conceive of it as anything other than a descriptive name which must have served a similar same function to the later medieval bynames such as *Welsh*, *French* and *Cornish* (FANBI s.v. Welsh, French, Cornish). It seems likely, therefore, that the two men bearing this name were Britons. Moreover, the relative rareness of bynames recorded prior to the tenth century makes these two seventh-century examples stand out as unusual. Their early use may reflect a desire by English people to distinguish Britons among them, a distinction that may, or may not, have been welcomed by the name-bearers themselves.

In the case of the name *Walhstod*, we must also assume that the name carried the same meaning as the everyday lexical item, and that it indicated that the bearers were able to speak and translate into another language (BT s.v. *wealh-stod*). This language need not, necessarily, have been Brittonic. When Ælfric of Eynsham described Jerome, he explained that: *He is se fyrmesta wealgstod betwux hebreiscum. ⁊ grecum. ⁊ and ledenwarum* ('He is the foremost translator between Hebrews, Greeks and Latins').[22] However, the presence of *walh* in the word may suggest that it would originally have been applied to people who could speak the language of the Britons – especially if *walh* was used specifically to refer to Romano-Britons as an ethno-linguistic group (Miller 2014: 84). Indeed, in the case of the seven individuals recorded as bearing this name, this seems the most likely explanation. All of them were recorded in regions bordering Brittonic-speaking areas, in Northumbria and the western reaches of Wessex. The most obvious explanation is that the names were given to people who could speak the language of the Britons, and may well have acted as translators in some official or unofficial capacity. This must have been particularly true of Walhstod, bishop of the people west of the Severn, whose position would have entailed ministration over a significant number of Britons (Waddington 2013: 315).

Of course, linguistic ability does not necessarily presuppose that an individual was of British origin. It is possible that these people were first-language Old English speakers who learned to speak Brittonic. However, given the probable power dynamic between the two languages, it is more likely that the reverse was true. It is also possible that these translators originated from bilingual households – although the fact that interpreters were needed suggests that, if such households did exist, they were in the minority. That said, the need for interpreters surely means that, not only were there significant numbers of Brittonic speakers, but there was a need for English speakers to communicate with them. In the case of *Walhstod*, therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that not only were the bearers British, at least in some way, but also that there were other Britons in the vicinity as well. This does not, however, necessarily prove that the element *walh* when present in other names held any semantic significance. It is possible that the original elements became obscured or forgotten, as is the case in many compound nouns, as well as compound names.

6. Monothematic names: *Walh* and *Wale*

That said, there is another group of names where a link between the term *walh* and the British identity of the bearer seems likely; these being six instances of monothematic names where the name was simply the nominal form *walh* 'Briton, Welshman' and *wale* 'Briton, Welshwoman. These include two Kentish examples: a *Uualh* (fl. 716), signatory to a charter of King Wihtred at *Clovesho* which granted privileges and immunity to the monasteries of Kent, as well as a *Uuealh* (fl. 807), witness to a charter in the reign of King Cuthred (d. 807), relating to grants of land at Eythorne.[23] A further three men of this name are listed in the Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae,* one of whom is recorded as *Ualch*, while the other two are recorded as *Uach* – all within the *nomina clericorum*.[24]

While these names are monothematic morphologically, their status is somewhat ambiguous, with essentially three possibilities. The first is that they were shortened forms of dithematic given names where the first element was *walh*, although this seems unlikely. There are no recorded instances of names where *walh* is combined with a diminutive suffix, such as *-a*, or *-uc*, which was the most common way of shortening a dithematic name, perhaps suggesting that this was not the case here. Indeed, the use of *walh* as a first element in compound names appears to have been particularly rare, even within this relatively small corpus, with only three such name forms being recorded for a total of six people, and not a single instance amongst the c. 3,000 people listed in the Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae*.

The second possibility is that they were monothematic names bestowed on the bearers in infancy, using *walh* as the only name element. This is certainly plausible, but if this were the case, it seems like an odd name to give a child without having an appreciation of the semantic meaning of the term. Even if we take Clark's position that the elements in compound names were not of primary importance, a name which was simply *Walh* cannot have been completely opaque to name users (Clark 1992: 458). It does not seem credible that one could name a child *Walh* – even in the late eighth century – without taking the meaning of the term into account. This would be true of the term if we take it to mean 'Briton', but even more so if it meant 'slave'. If these names were, indeed, birth names, then they must surely point to British heritage of some kind.

The third potential explanation is that names which were simply *Walh* were actually bynames, applied in a similar way to *Welisc*. This may well have been the case in one example of a female *walh* name in the corpus, the Abbess Wale, referred to in a letter by Eangyth and Heaburg (c. 719) to Saint Boniface.[25] Her name takes the form of the feminine common noun *wale* 'Welshwoman, slave' (Okasha 2016: 67 and 84; Tanke 1994: 22; Pelteret: 51–53).[26] This suggests that it was a meaningful name, rather than a hypocoristic formation from a dithematic name using the name element *walh*. There is, of course, no sure way of knowing the answer in the case of any or all of these names. Indeed, it is possible that there are examples of all three types. However, on balance, it seems more likely than not that the meaning of the term *walh* must have been a factor in the bestowal of these names, whether given at birth or acquired during the bearer's life, and that this meaning was a reference to the ethnic or linguistic identity of the bearer.

6. *Walh* names of early 'English' rulers

One group of *walh* names which has frequently been discussed by scholars as potentially indicating that the bearers had British heritage are those which belong to significant members of the early English royal dynasties and their extended families.[27] These include Æthelwalh king of the South Saxons (d. 685), Cenwalh king of the West Saxons (d. 672), another Cenwalh (fl. 650) who was brother of King Penda of Mercia (d. 655) and, of course, Merewalh (fl. 656), the ruler of the *Magonsæte*, who was son of Penda and brother of King Wulfhere of Mercia (d. 675. Less well-attested are Cundwalh (fl. 690) – who is also recorded as *Cuþwalh* – whose name appears solely in regnal lists and was the son of King Cenwalh,

and Penwalh (fl. 690), the father of Saint Guthlac of Crowland (d. 715) and a man 'of distinguished Mercian stock' with a *walh* name was Penwalh (fl. 690).[28]

In all these early dynastic names, *walh* appears as the second element. As a result, it is tempting to translate many of the names into meaningful compounds in which the first element describes the qualities of the powerful Briton alluded to in the second. This would render *Merewalh* an 'illustrious Briton', *Æthelwalh* a 'noble Briton' and *Cenwalh* a 'warlike Briton'. If we examine the wider onomastic context of the early English ruling elite, it is certainly plausible that these descriptions are accurate – or at least reflect conscious choices made by the name-givers. There are a number of other notable figures in the history of the early English kingdoms who bore names which indicated they may have had British descent. These include the kings Cerdic and Cædwalla of Wessex, the Northumbrian saints Cedd and Chad and the poet Cædmon.[29] We can perhaps add Mul (d. 687), the brother of King Cædwalla, to this list, whose name, which meant 'mule' seemingly referred to him being a 'half-breed' (Cameron 1980: 6). It is no great leap to imagine that these names refer to members of a newly formed 'English' elite which incorporated members of the native British aristocracy, perhaps as a result of intermarriage, or as a consequence of military conquest. If this was the case, the names of men such as Merewalh and Cenwalh could either represent newly coined formations given to powerful Britons by their English subjects, or simply names given at birth chosen specifically to represent their mixed heritage.

There is, however, another potential explanation for the repetition of *walh* within these names. A common feature of Old English personal naming was the use of 'variation': the repetition of individual name elements to demonstrate family ties across extended kinship groups (Woolf 1939: 1–3). Many of these men were connected through kinship or patronage. For example, Cenwalh was the father of Cundwalh and the uncle of Merewalh. The reuse of *walh* as a second element may, therefore, have simply been an onomastic choice made to demonstrate ties of family belonging between the bearers, rather than overt displays of ethnic identity. It is possible that the presence of this element in his name reflected a relatively recent familial union between Saxon newcomers and native Britons. Or it may have been the onomastic legacy of such a union in preceding generations which saw the element *walh* incorporated into the family name stock.

Indeed, such a chain of events seems plausible in the case in the case of the Mercians Cenwalh, Merewalh and Cundwalh, who all had demonstrable links to British ancestry. They were the brother, son and nephew of King Penda of Mercia respectively. The name *Penda* is difficult to explain if we are looking for an Old English origin. The most likely explanation, in my opinion, is that it comes from the Brittonic term *penn* 'head, chief, leader'. This is a proposition tentatively suggested by Patrick Sims-Williams, and more forcefully concluded by John Insley, who suggests that the source is probably Brittonic **Pennodagos* (Insley 2019: 270; Delamarre 2003: 134 & 249; Sims-Williams 1990: 26).[30] In addition to his name, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that Penda and the Mercian kingdom over which he ruled had longstanding British connections (Brady 2017: 23–52).[31] It has been established that Penda extended Mercian hegemony over a number of British sub-kingdoms during his reign – as well as Anglian and Saxon ones – before they became more permanently incorporated into the Mercian kingdom (Yorke 1997: 104). Indeed, while it may not have been called the *Magonsæte*, Merewalh certainly ruled over a such a sub-kingdom around Hereford and Worcester – much the same region as the diocese 'west of the Severn', over which the bishop Walhstod presided some 80 years later (Pretty 1989: 182). It is possible, therefore, that Penda – a king who allied with British rulers such as Cadwallon ap Cadfan of Gwynedd, his successor Cadafael Cadomedd, and Cynddylan ap Cyndrwyn of Powys to fight against his Northumbrian enemies – was a Briton, at least in part (Brady 2017: 24–26 and 36–40). So there are strong grounds to conclude that the presence of *walh* names amongst Penda's close kin is a legacy of this British familial identity, if not demonstration of ongoing British connections.

The final notable Mercian amongst this group of *walh* names belonged to Penwalh, the father of Saint Guthlac, who must have come from the same wider aristocratic group. Guthlac's hagiographer, Felix, writes that he could trace his pedigree back to Icel (d. 535), the (probably mythical) father of the Mercian ruling dynasty.[32] Not only does the name Penwalh feature *walh* as second element, the first element once again appears be the Brittonic *penn* 'head, chief'.[33] It is possible that this was a hybrid name – possibly a byname – formed through the conscious combination of Brittonic and Old English elements to create a name meaning 'chief Briton', acknowledging Penwalh's British identity. Another potential explanation is that *walh* was added to the first part of a Brittonic name beginning with *Penn-*, with similar effect. If so, it would demonstrate that these two terms were accessible to the Mercian name-users who created and used Penwalh's name.[34] As with Penda, there is more

than just Penwalh's name that leads us to suspect he had British connections. His son, Guthlac, is recorded as being able to understand the 'sibilant speech' of the Britons.[35] Felix explains that this is because he had been 'an exile among them', and it has often been assumed that this exile must have been during a period of Guthlac's youth when he was fighting against Britons on Mercia's western border (Colgrave 1956: 3; Cohen 2003: 143–144).[36] However Lindy Brady suggests that Guthlac was more than likely fighting alongside Britons as part of a 'multi-ethnic' warband, against other warbands of similar type, rather than taking part in a purely ethnic conflict (Brady 2017: 56–57). Indeed, a period of exile for a young man from an elite family who may have been candidate for the throne was not uncommon, but this was not the same as being in captivity and does not presuppose an antagonistic relationship between an exile and their hosts (Charles-Edwards 2013: 412; Brady 2017: 56-57). Rather, a period in exile would often have meant reaching out to family friends or relatives across the border to find safe haven. Guthlac's period in exile may very well, therefore, have been spent with connections kin across the Mercian border. If so, it would be a demonstration of the multi-ethnic nature of the Mercian aristocracy, and the expanding kingdom over which the Mercian kings ruled (Brady 2017: 59).

In isolation, Penwalh's name could be explained away as insignificant. As could all of the names borne by this this group of seventh-century notables. However, when looked at as a group and taking into account the broader cultural and political context in which they appear, as well as the familial connections of the bearers, there does seem to be enough evidence to suggest that there was a link between the element *walh* in these seventh-century names and British identity. In some cases, its presence may have been a legacy of a familial identity which was no longer important to its bearer, but it is likely that it stemmed from genuine British roots.

7. *Walh* names of the Durham *Liber Vitae*

In many of the cases of *walh* names we can know little about the lives or family connections of their bearers. However, by examining more closely the context in which those names were recorded we can find further evidence to support the theory that the names can be linked to the presence or legacy of British identity. In the case of *walh* names in the Durham *Liber Vitae*, this certainly seems to be the case.[37] It is well established that there were Britons – or at least people with Brittonic names – listed in the Durham *Liber Vitae* (Russell 2007: 5–8; Russell et al. 2007: 35–43).[38] In the context of the full corpus of names, they are small in

number. Under two percent of the individuals listed in the Original Core bore names of Celtic origin (Briggs 2004: 83; Chetwood 2018: 531). These names have previously been described as being scattered throughout the *Liber Vitae* with no discernible pattern (Russell 2007: 7–8; Brady 2017: 30). However, if we look at the *walh* names in conjunction with names of Brittonic origin, we begin to see a pattern. The names in the Original Core of the *Liber Vitae* are broken down into lists based on status or ecclesiastical role, with the bulk of the names found in the two lists of clerics and monks – well over a thousand names in each case. The names were collected over a period of roughly 150 years between c.690 and c.840, and the division into lists makes it difficult to date each name precisely (Briggs 2004: 65–69). However, we do know that the names at the beginning of each list were recorded first, and therefore the first few folios of each list should contain the earliest names (Briggs 2004: 66).

When looking at the distribution of the *walh* names, we find that the majority of them appear in the early sections of a list and usually in close proximity to names of Brittonic origin. In the first hundred names of the *Nomina clericorum* (fols 27r–27v), we find four of the *walh* names. These appear alongside five names of likely Brittonic origin: *Cunen*, *Riuualch*, *Baeglog* and two instances of *Tutta*.[39] Similarly, amongst the first hundred names of the *Nomina monachorum* (fols 37r–37v), we find three *walh* names in close proximity to four names of Brittonic origin: *Arthan, Cuna*, *Cundigeorn* and *Tudda*.[40] We also find a *Muul*, from Old English *Mul* 'mule' – a name seemingly bestowed on individuals of mixed heritage, as borne by the brother of Cædwalla (Insley and Rollason 2007: 180–181; Cameron 1980: 6).[41] That means that, of the first hundred individuals recorded in both of these lists, which probably date from the period between c.690 and c.720, around nine percent of the names were either Brittonic in origin, or referred to Britishness in some way.[42] This does not seem like an insignificant amount, and the co-occurrence these two types of name adds weight to the theory that *walh* names were used to refer to individuals with an element of British identity. Indeed, another ethnic term, *pecht*/*peoht* from Old English *peohtas* 'Picts', appears in the names of thirteen individuals from the Original Core. [43] Unlike *walh*, there is no Continental Germanic equivalent for *pecht*/*peoht* as a name element, and one can only assume that it became used as a way of denoting the Pictish identity or descent of its bearer (Rollason et al. 2007: 142; Müller 1901: 1–2).[44] If, as seems likely, *peoht* was meaningful in personal names, then surely there is a good chance *walh* was as well.

There is, therefore, some basis for concluding that the *walh* names in the Durham *Liber Vitae* did refer to Britons. If so, where might they have come from? It is generally considered that the *Liber Vitae* itself originated at Lindisfarne, and that the majority of the names listed in the Original Core refer to clerics based there and at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow (Briggs: 63–5; Wareham 2007: 147).[45] This being the case, it is possible that the names referred to individuals who originated from Brittonic-speaking areas of Cumbria or Strathclyde. However, it is also plausible that there were people who regarded themselves – or were regarded by others – as British in Northumbria up to the early eighth century. Cameron suggested that the latest English place-names formed with *walh* probably dated from exactly this period, and the fact that both *walh* names and names of Brittonic origin appear far less frequently in the later entries of the Original Core could indicate that their decline coincided with the point at which the remaining Northumbrian Britons came to be fully assimilated, and no longer saw themselves as Britons (Cameron 1980: 33–34).[46] What seems clear is that these individuals do not seem to have inhabited 'isolated pockets of British settlement' (Cameron 1980: 29). In fact, they seem to have been perfectly well integrated into the religious communities of Northumbria. This suggests that, while there may well have been isolated pockets of British settlement in some areas, it was not impossible for Britons to exist and become integrated into communities dominated by the newly dominant 'English' population, while still retaining some aspects of their ethnic identity.

8. *Walh* names in Kent

This brings us to the final group of names which deserves closer discussion: the the ten *walh* names recorded in Kent which form a significant proportion of the total corpus. The names date from between c. 679 and c. 863, with a particular concentration in the ninth century. They include a man named *Welisc*, two named *Walh* and the Abbess named *Wale*, whose names have been examined above, as well as a number of other men whose names featured *walh*, including a *Uuealhun* (fl. 762), who was signatory to two eighth-century Kentish charters relating to the joint-king Eardwulf (d. 762). and a *Uualhard* (fl. 779), who was witness to a series of charters relating to Eardwulf, Æthelberht II (d. 762) and Ecgberht (d. 779).47 In the ninth century we find up to four men all recorded as *Uuealhhere*. Two of these witnessed a will relating to a certain Abba at some point between 833 and 839, and are noted as being Deacon and Subdeacon at Christ Church, Canterbury.48 Two further charters from 838 also record a *Uuealhere* (fl. 838), in one of which he is referred to as Deacon, making it possible that this is the same as one of the previously mentioned men.[49] Another

man – a priest – recorded as *Uuealhhere* (fl. 863) witnessed charters relating to King Æthelwulf and another relating to Christ Church, Canterbury.[50]

The presence of people with these names in Kent, a region far from British lands, is striking. It is not impossible that these individuals had migrated to Kent from Wales or Cornwall, but such a move seems less likely than, for example, Strathclyde to Northumbria. It seems safe to assume they were locals to Kent. Yet, as in Northumbria, these Kentish *walhs* were not hidden isolated or marginalised. Their presence in witness lists suggests they were influential people, well integrated into the Kentish ruling elite. What is also striking is the late recording of some of these names, with five being recorded between 800 and 863. It would be a hard case to make that there were Britons – recognisable through their language or as part of their self-proclaimed identity – present in Kent well into the middle of the ninth century. So it is perhaps more reasonable to conclude here that *walh* had entered the name stock as a standard name element, without much thought given to its meaning. The fact that it is only amongst these later Kentish names that *walh* is used as a prototheme may suggest it is being used in this way, and any earlier descriptive quality had been lost. Given that up to four of these men bore the same name – *Walhhere* – it could even be that this name was being used and repeated as a name in its own right, a phenomenon which appears to have begun around this time (Clark 1992: 552; Postles 2006: 13; Chetwood 2018: 541–543).

However, once again, for the element to have entered into the name stock, one assumes that it must have been in use in the preceding centuries with sufficient regularity, either amongst the general population or within a specific family, for it to have survived until the ninth century. If this was the case, it may point towards a continued British presence in Kent up to a period not too long prior to this. Indeed, we have evidence of people with Brittonic names in Kent as late as the mid-eighth century. These include at least three occurrences of the name *Dunwalla* (from Brittonic *dubno* 'world' and *wellaunos* 'ruler'), including one who happened to witness one of the same charters as *Uuealhhun* in 755 (Insley 2019: 270).[51] So while arguing for the survival of British identities in ninth-century Kent is probably a step too far, the presence of Brittonic names alongside *walh* names indicates that there may well have been Britons in this region until sometime in the eighth century – a legacy we can still see in personal names a couple of generations later.

5. The end of the *walh* as we know it

As is so often the case when studying personal names, clear evidence of the reasons behind name choices is almost impossible to come by. People tend not to record why they choose the names they do for their children. As such, much of this discussion has been speculative, and in the case of any individual name there are usually multiple plausible explanations which differ from the ones proposed here. However, in exploring the full corpus of *walh* names within the broader historical context in which they existed, I believe there are good reasons to conclude that the term, when incorporated into personal names, did signify 'Briton', at least initially. This may not have been true in each and every case, and any correlation between the presence of the name element and British identity may have declined over time as the selection of names came to be ruled more by onomastic than semantic criteria. Yet, the regularity with which individuals bearing these names can be linked – through familial ties, historical context, geographical location or manuscript proximity – to other people with demonstrably British aspects to their identity, seems too frequent to be coincidental. This being the case, I believe we should tentatively add individuals bearing *walh* names to the body of evidence that demonstrates the continued presence of people who saw themselves, or were seen by others, as British in many areas of early medieval England for longer than has often been supposed.

Indeed, the disappearance of *walh* personal names may give us a hint as to when such Britons were completely assimilated into the greater mass of the English population, finally becoming 'invisible'. Kenneth Cameron found that the majority of place-names in *walh* must have been coined by the late eighth century (Cameron 1980: 34). The final instance of a *walh* personal name was recorded in 863, and we can assume it was bestowed sometime in the early ninth century. These two events may well have coincided closely with the point at which any remnants of British identity finally disappeared. Moreover, while previous studies have made it unnecessary to examine the corpus of *walh* personal names in the context of the semantic field of slavery, it is possible that the development of this secondary, overtly derogatory, meaning may have also contributed to its demise in the eighth and ninth centuries. Even in a period where name elements were no longer primarily chosen for their semantic meaning, a term which had now become associated with the negative characteristics of slavery may no longer have been deemed appropriate or desirable.

What has become clear over the course of this discussion is the difference between the nature of place-name and personal name evidence when searching for 'invisible Britons'. One must assume that, in cases of place-names containing *walh*, we are dealing with locations where the overwhelming characteristic of that settlement was the presence of a large number of Britons, at least at the time it was named. As Coates explains, such names and their distribution point to a 'more persistent survival of cohesive groups of Brittonic speakers' (Coates 2004: 9). In many cases these must have been the 'isolated communities' of Britons, set apart from the mass of the English population described by Cameron (Cameron 1980: 29–31). In contrast, the nature of the sources in which we find *walh* personal names means that they must have referred to people who were well integrated into 'English' communities, both local and religious. The *walh* names examined in this article belonged to monks, deacons, bishops, kings, abbesses and significant local notables. If, as is argued here, these people were indeed British, then it may suggest that the Britons of early medieval England were not all hidden away, out of sight, but that some of them remained visible members of multi-ethnic communities.

It should be stated that we are, of course, dealing with little more than a handful of names in the grand scheme of things. It would be unwise to conclude too much from a smattering of thirty-six names from amongst the thousands recorded from early medieval England. Moreover, much work would need to be done to align such an argument with the relative mountain of linguistic evidence which contradicts it. However, a fuller examination of the Brittonic personal-names of early medieval England, including those in place-names, may go some way to achieving this. Here's hoping that such studies take place, and bear fruit.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASC = *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A collaborative edition, Vols 1–8* (1986–2004), ed. Keynes et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press).

AVC = *Vitae Sancti Cuthberti Anonymae*, as edited in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A life by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's prose life*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (1969), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

BHB = *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius*, ed. Tangl, Michael (1916), (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung).

BHE = *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (1969), (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

BVC = *Bedae Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, as edited in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A life by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's prose life*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (1969), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

CH = *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The first series text*, ed. Peter Clemoes (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1997).

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FVG = *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (1956), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

LVD = Rollason, David and Linda Rollason (2007), *The Durham Liber Vitae: London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.VII: edition and digital facsimile with introduction, codicological, prosopographical and linguistic commentary, and indexes*, 3 vols (London: The British Library).

LVNM = *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester*, *British Library Stowe 944, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A.viii and British Library Cotton Titus D.xxvii*, ed. Simon Keynes (1996), (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger).

MEE = *Passio Beatorum Martyrum Ethelredi atque Ethelbricti*, as edited in David Rollason (1982), *The Mildrith Legend: A study in early medieval hagiography in England*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press).

PASE = *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England*, http://www.pase.ac.uk.

RP = On the Resting-Place of Saints (*Þá hálgan*), as edited in Felix Liebermann (1889), *Die Heiligen Englands: Angelsächsisch und Lateinisch* (Hannover: Hahn'sche Buchhandlung).

Tib. B = London, British Library, MS Tiberius B. v, as edited in David Dumville (1976), 'The Anglian collection of royal genealogies and regnal lists', *Anglo-Saxon England* 5, 23–50.

Vesp. B = London, British Library, MS Vespasian B. vi, as edited in David Dumville (1976), 'The Anglian collection of royal genealogies and regnal lists', *Anglo-Saxon England* 5, 23–50.

VSW = *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (1927), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

WCD = *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People, history and legend up to about AD. 1000*, ed. Peter C. Bartum (2009), (Cardiff: National Library of Wales).

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[1] This article uses the Anglian form of the word *walh* (genitive singular *wales*, nominative plural *walas*, genitive plural *wala*), as opposed to the West Saxon form *wealh*, largely because not doing so would prevent its use in the already tenuous pun present in the article title, but also because the majority of personal names recorded with this term take the *walh* form, rather than *wealh*.

[2] The conference took place at the University of Nottingham on the 9th September 2023. I would like to thank Jayne Carroll and the EPNS for the kind invitation to speak at the conference, which was a wonderful celebration of the society and the work that it does, as well the valuable comments received by those in attendance following my paper.

[3] The publications here are addressed 'in order of appearance' in my research, rather than by date of publication.

[4] My project has been funded by the Irish Research Council in the form of a Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship. I would also like to thank both the IRC and the School of English and Digital Humanities at University College Cork for their support.

[5] John Baker is the Head of the Institute for Name-Studies at the University of Nottingham, where I have kindly been provided with an Honorary Research Fellowship for the past three years. Without access to the resources of the Institute the University of Nottingham, this research would not have been possible.

[6] Baker demonstrates that the survival of the term in the Welsh borders was due to its peripheral location – meaning it simply remained in use there for a period after it had ceased to be used elsewhere. (Baker 2017: 439–442).

[7] This is a distinction which also held in continental Germanic languages (Miller 2014: 82–83).

[8] For a toponomastic counter-argument to Schrijver's theory, see David Parsons (2011) 'Sabrina in the Thorns'. Parsons concludes that, while there is onomastic evidence to suggest British Vulgar Latin may have been more widely used across society than previously thought, it seems unlikely that it superseded Celtic as the primary spoken language of lowland Britain.

[9] The use of *walh* for 'slave' appears predominantly in southern texts from late tenth century onwards, suggesting it was restricted to the West Saxon dialect and did not spread much further north than southern Mercia. (Pelteret 1995: 320; Miller 2014: 104). At no point does it seem to have superseded the original ethnic meaning of the term – rather the two terms existed side by side in those regions where it was in use (Miller 2014: 134). Indeed, it does not seem to have been preserved for slaves or servants of Welsh ethnicity, rather the secondary use of the term became applied generally to slaves or servants of any origin.

[10] See the whole chapter 2 (29–108) of Wormald (1999) for more detail.

[11] For a new edition of the laws, see Oliver and Jurasinski (2021: 370–437).

[12] For more on the construction of personal names in Old English see, for example, Chetwood (2018: 520–523), Clark (1992: 452–487); Colman (2014: 101–15); Insley (2001: 367–396).

[13] I have generally followed *PASE* as a guide to distinguishing between namesakes within the database, unless there is good reason not to.

[14] The entries are categorised under the head-form of each name. For many individuals, the list of sources and recorded forms is exhaustive (to my knowledge). For others, the extensive nature of records pertaining to his life, and orthographical inconsistency of the sources, has meant this has not been possible (for example, according to PASE, Cenwalh of Wessex is recorded fifty-eight times and his name takes twenty-eight forms). I have attempted to list the widest variety of forms, rather than record minor orthographical variations between sources.

[15] This estimate is based on the pre-Conquest entries in PASE, discounting anonymous entries, with the addition of the names of the Durham *Liber Vitae*.

[16] There are 1,882 individuals with *ælf* names recorded in PASE, in addition to 165 with the name *Alfred*.

[17] S 8 and S 235.

[18] BVC: XXXVII; AVC XII.

[19] BHE: V.23 explains that *…eis populis qui ultra amnem Sabrinam ad occidentem habitant Ualchstod episcopus…*

[20] S 1410.

[21] LVD fols 22v, 29r and 30r (two occurrences).

[22] CH XXX, *Assumptio Sanctę Marię Virginis*, p. 428, lines 12–13.

[23] S 41, S 22 and S 41. There are doubts about the authenticity of S22 (which may include ninth-century interpolations, or may have been forged completely in that century) however it is seen as incorporating an authentic witness-list. See: Whitelock (1979: 144), Liebermann (1913: 64); Cubitt (1995: 263–264).

[24] LVD fols 27r (two occurrences) and 27v. The form *Uach* could represent a different name entirely. Müller (1901: 43) suggests that this may be linked to Old English *wacian* 'to watch, to be awake', however Redin (1919: 37–38) concludes that a scribal error for *Ualch* is most likely. See also Insley and Rollason (2007: 185–186). One more monothematic name was tentatively included in the paper version of this article, belonging to a man named *Uuale* who was recorded in three charters, referring to him as a Hwiccian Præfectus (S 55, S 57 and S 113). There are significant doubts about the authenticity of all of these charters, so *Uuale* has been excluded from the corpus.

[25] BHB: 25. Wale is mentioned only once, as *Uuale*: *Et huius meę voluntatis atque propositi mihi conscia fuit Uuale abbatissa quondam mea et mater spiritalis* ('This desire of mine was known to Wale, who was formerly my abbess and spiritual mother').

[26] As Okasha and Colman both demonstrate, the grammatical gender of name elements did not necessarily correspond to the sex of the bearer (Okasha 2016: 73–75; Colman 2014: 110–111).

[27] Many of the names presented here have been explored by scholars such as Coates (1990), Sims-Williams (1990), Parsons (1996), Insley (2019) and Brady (2017).

[28] Cundwalh is recorded in Vesp. B 109v; Tib. B 23r. For Penwalh, see FVG: II, where he is described as being *vir de egregia stirpe Merciorum*.

[29] *Cerdic* represents Brittonic *Caraticos* (Coates 1990: 4; Parsons 1997: 1–8). Cædwalla's name is an anglicised version of Old Welsh *Cadwallon* from the Brittonic *katu*

'battle' and *wellaunos* 'leader' (Insley 2019: 270; Jackson 1953: 244; Delamarre 2003: 110 and 310). *Cedd* and *Chad* are short forms from a compound name containing the same initial element, *cad* < *katu* 'battle', as is present in *Cadwallon*. *Cædmon* is most likely an anglicisation of Old Welsh *Cadfan* (Insley 2019: 270).

30 Although Insley appears confident that ***Pennodagos*** is the most likely source for Penda's name, this is by no means agreed upon by all scholars given that the element *Penn-* was not commonly used in medieval names in Wales and Cornwall. That said, the element does appear to have been in use in early medieval Brittany, (cf. *Pennoe*, *Pennuas*), late antique Gaul (cf. *Cunopennus*), and a cognate form was in use in early medieval Ireland (cf. *CUNA-CENNI*), and it appears to me that the most plausible explanation for this element in both the names of Penda and Penwalh, is that it is from *Penn-* (see Delamarre 2003: 248; CR fols. 125v and 79r; Jackson 1953: 185). *Penda* is the only recorded individual with this particular name. There are a number of instances of dithematic names beginning with the element *pend* (cf. *Pendgyð* and *Pendwulf*, LVD fols. 16r and 22r), although John Insley takes these to be secondary formations from a reinterpretation of *Penda* as an element capable of being used in dithematic names (Insley et al. 2007). The name *Penda* and the element *Penn-* will be explored in more detail in future publications.

31 Brady (2017: 29–30) notes the appearance of personal names indicating British links within the Mercian royal family. Her deeper investigation into the history of the early Mercian kingdom proposes a 'a mixed Anglo-Welsh culture' in the borderlands (23–52).

32 FVG: II.

33 See also Brady (2017: 45).

34 As noted during peer review, *Penn-* may have been a recognisable 'British' term to Old English speakers, given its relatively frequent use in place-names and other common nouns meaning 'leader', and used in a name such as Penwalh's to demonstrate Britishness. (See Thornton 1997: 80-84, for parallels).

35 FVG: XXXIV.

36 FVG: XXXIV: *Tunc dicto citius levi somno expergefactus, extra cellulam, qua sedebat, egressus est, et arrectis auribus adstans, verba loquentis vulgi Brittannicaque agmina tectis succedere agnoscit; nam ille aliorum temporum praeteritis voluminibus inter illos exulabat, quoadusque eorum strimulentas loquelas intelligere valuit* ('Then, quicker than words, he was aroused from his light sleep and went out of the cell in which he was sitting; standing, with ears alert, he recognized the words that the crowd were saying, and realized that British hosts were approaching his dwelling: for in years gone by he had been an exile among them, so that he was able to understand their sibilant speech.')

37 In addition to the men named *Walhstod* and *Walh* examined above, a further seven men are recorded with *walh* names in the original core of the Durham *Liber Vitae.* Four of these appear in the *nomina clericorum*, where they are recorded as *Coenuualch*, *Pleoualch*, *Suiðualch* and *Biluualch*.[37] Three more are recorded amongst the *nomina monachorum*, recorded as *Alduualch*, *Cnobualch* and a second instance of *Suiðualch*.

38 In the Linguistic Commentary of the LVD (2007) edition, Russell at al. (2007a) categorise and explore the majority of these names in some detail as 'Celtic Names'. It must be noted, however, that a number of names listed in the subsequent sections of this commentary (i.e. 'English Dithematic Names' (81–164) and 'English Monothematic Names'

(165–187) could also be categorised as Celtic names, including, for example, *Ceadda* (171) and *Tudda* (184).

[39] *Cunen* is an anglicised form of Old Welsh *Cynin* from Brittonic *Cunignos* (Russell et al. 2007: 37). *Riuualch* is most likely from Brittonic *ri* 'king' with *gwalch* 'falcon' or possibly *balch* 'proud'. *Baeglog* is from Old Welsh *bagl* 'crook, staff', a name used to refer to priest (Russell et al. 2007: 36; Matasović 2008: 52). *Tutta* is from Old Welsh *tud* 'people, tribe', which could represent the Old Welsh name *Tuta*, a short form of names such as *Tudwal*, or a borrowing of the Old Welsh element *tud*, with an Old English *-a* suffix (Insley 2019: 272–273). Although the Celtic roots of this name are clear, Insley sees *Tudda* and its variants as having been fully incorporated into the Old English onomastic system, becoming 'semantically empty Old English names of ultimately British origin' (Insley 2019: 273). This is almost certainly true in the case of some names, but the point at which this transition is supposed to have taken place is not clear. The name's appearance here alongside other names of Brittonic origin names may lead us to consider these genuine Celtic names.

[40] *Arthan* is from Welsh *Arth-* 'bear', as in *Arthur* (Russell et al. 2007: 36). *Cuna* is most likely from Old Welsh *Cynan* or a short-form based on the same Celtic stem, *kuno* 'dog' (Russell et al. 2007: 37). *Cundigeorn* is an anglicised form of Brittonic *Conthigirni* from *kuno* 'dog' plus *tigerno* 'prince'. For more on *Tudda*, see f.n. 39.

[41] For more on *Cædwalla*, see f.n. 29.

[42] These dates are based on the assumption that the individuals listed in the first 100 names of each list would be part of the first generation of clerics recorded in the *liber vitae*. The names of the Original Core span c. 150 years. The list of *nomina clericorum* records the names of 1,173 individuals and the list of *nomina monachorum* records 1,030. Assuming an even distribution over the 150 years, that would make c. 220 individuals for each generation of 30 years.

[43] These names are *Pectuald* (22r), *Pecthelm* (28v), *Pecthelm* (30r), *Pecthun* (30v), *Pectgils* (33r), *Pechtuald* (33v), *Pechthelm* (34r), *Pecthaeth* (37r), *Pecthaeth* (37r), *Pecthelm* (38r), *Pecthun* (38r), *Pectgils* (39r) and *Pechtuulf* (43r).

[44] ASC 763, 777. This may have been the case of the two bishops of Whithorn – Pehthelm (d. 735) and Pehtwine (d. 776) – situated in the northern-western reaches of eighth-century Northumbria.

[45] Wareham suggests that the majority may gave come from Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, but they probably included names of monks and priests from dependent and associated monasteries within Northumbria, and perhaps further afield.

[46] No names of either type are found amongst the last 100 names in the *nomina monachorum* or *nomina clericorum*.

[47] S 30, S 31, S 34, S 35, S 36 and S 266. Another *Walhheard* is also recorded in charter (S 50) relating to land in Sussex, however the authenticity of this charter is disputed so the name has not been included in the corpus. See, e.g., Stevenson (1914: 703) and Stenton (1970: 61).

[48] S 1482.

[49] S 266 and S 1438. Without clear evidence either way I have erred on the side of following *PASE* in this instance.

[50] S 293 and S 1197.

[51] For more on the name *Dunwalla*, see Jackson (1953: 421), Delamarre (150–151) and Matasović 107. The Kentish instances appear in witness lists to charters S 24, S 1182 and S 30, which is also signed by the man named *Walhhun*. One of the individuals is recorded as *Dunuualh* in S 24, which a future publication will argue represents *Dunwalla*, rather than *Dunwalh*. If this is incorrect, then the name should be added to the corpus studied here.