

This ceiling, however, looks increasingly shaky. Work on Clovis has shown that his baptism almost certainly took place several years later, perhaps in 507.² And when we consider the time that the news of this baptism might have taken to reach Patrick; and remember, too, that Patrick could have written the *Confessio* several years after the *Epistola*, the utility of Clovis's baptism as a chronological barrier is greatly reduced. In fact, it becomes elastic to the point of uselessness.

But there is a still more fundamental problem with using Clovis to date Patrick: the idea that the Franks once converted to Christianity would not have captured and ransomed Roman Christians. This is, in fact, demonstrably wrong. Clovis, after his conversion, wrote a letter in which he discusses the organisation of just such ransoming.³ And, anyway, as Procopius shows so clearly, the Franks, 'though they are Christians', could act as barbaric pagans when the mood took them well into the sixth century.⁴

Yes, it is true that Patrick refers to the Franks as *gentes* here. And it is true also that the word *christiani* pushes *gentes* in the direction of 'heathens' or perhaps 'barbarians'—*christiani* is coupled with *romani*—as opposed to a blander 'peoples'. But that can be easily accounted for by the activities of the Franks in the passage.

The present writer knows of no reason why anyone would want to date Patrick to the late fifth or early sixth century, but if the arguments for such a dating were persuasive Clovis should not be allowed to stand in their way.

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Iberian *Addenda* to Fleuriot's *Toponymes*

In 1980, in *Les origines de la Bretagne*, Léon Fleuriot gave a list of over sixty continental place names that he believed indicated Late Antique British settlement. He ordered these names under nine headings in the following typology: I. Britin(i)acum; II. Britanniolum, Britanniola; III. Britannia; IV. Britonorum; V. Britta Villa; VI. Brittonorum Villare; VII. Brittonorum curtis; VIII. Britto, Brittones; VIII. Britoialum,

from this passage seems not unwarranted: Patrick is perhaps unlikely to have referred to the situation in Gaul in this way if he had been writing in the sixth century'. It should be noted that both writers also have and express reservations.

2. On the dating of Clovis see: Ian Wood, 'Gregory of Tours and Clovis', *Revue Belge Philol Hist* 63 (1985) 249–72; Mark Spencer, 'Dating the baptism of Clovis, 1886–1993', *Early Medieval Eur* 3 (1994) 97–116; and now Danuta Shanzer, 'Dating the baptism of Clovis: the bishop of Vienne vs the bishop of Tours', *Early Medieval Eur* 7 (1996) 29–57. Shanzer argues convincingly for a late baptism.

3. 'Chlodowici regis ad episcopos epistola', MGH, *Capitularia Regum Francorum* (Hanover, 1883) 1–2; see also Shanzer's comments, 'Dating the baptism', 47–48.

4. Procopius (*The history of the wars*, vi 25), tr. H. B. Dewing (6 vols, 1914–19), iv 86: Frankish massacres in the Italian city of Ticinum where Frankish warriors, though Christian, take and sacrifice civilians in the city as the first fruit of war. This should be dated to 539, the year of the siege of Fiesole.

Britolium.¹ The celebrated Breton scholar suspected that the names he had found were the result of British settlement under the impulse of the Roman army. Whether this was the case is now perhaps impossible to establish and Fleuriot himself accepted that some of his names were more convincing than others.² His study, which identified Brit- or Bret- place names in what is today France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands was less than complete south of the Pyrenees. He knew well that British settlement had taken place in Galicia, in the north-west but he mentioned only one name, Bretoña (in the province of Lugo), and wrote that ‘apparemment les toponymes sont absents, peu reconnaissables ou non étudiés’.³ Fleuriot’s ‘apparemment’ is perhaps an admission that he lacked the tools to undertake thorough research in Spain and Portugal. In fact, there are at least fifteen names in the peninsula that fit loosely into Fleuriot’s typology.⁴

(1) *Bretoña*: Galicia, in the province of Lugo, concello of A Pastoriza (1089, ‘Britonia’).⁵ (2) *Bertoña*: Galicia, in the province of A Coruña, concello A Capela (936, ‘Bretonia et alia Britonia’).⁶ (3) *Bretoña*: Galicia in the province of Pontevedra, the concello of Barro. (4) *Bretonia*: Galicia in the province of Lugo, the concello of Sober. (5) *Bertón*: Galicia, in the province of A Coruña, the concello of Ferrol. (6) *Bretún*: in the provincia of Soria, forty kilometres to the north of Soria, close to the border with Rioja. (7) *Bretón*: Asturias in the concello of Avilés. (8) *Bretios*, Galicia, in the province of Lugo, the concello of Guntín (1027, ‘Bretenos’).⁷ (9) *Bertos*: Galicia, in the province of Pontevedra, the concello of De Páramo. (10) *Brito*: the north of Portugal, between Vinhais and Verín. (11) *Brito*: the north of Portugal close to Guimaraes. (12) *Bretal*: Galicia, in the province of A Coruña, the concello of Ribeira. (13) *Bretelo*: Galicia, in the province of Ourense, the concello of Chadrexa de Quiexa; (14) *Britelo*: north of Portugal; close to the frontier with Pontevedra (Spain), five kilometres from Ponte da Barca. (15) *Britelo*: north of Portugal, close to Mondim de Basto.

Clearly the Iberian names given above must also be handled with caution⁸ and,

1. Léon Fleuriot, *Les origines de la Bretagne* (Paris 1980) 101–07.

2. *ibid.* 106–07; see also L. Fleuriot, ‘De Britannus Britto ...’, *Études Celtiques* 19 (1982) 259–61.

3. *Origines*, 105.

4. See also appendix I of S. Young, *Britonia: caminos novos* (Noia 2002) 123–28.

5. Angel Rodríguez González & José Angel Rey Caiña, ‘Tumbo de Lorenzana: transcripción’, *Estudios Mindonienses* 8 (1992) 11–324: 162–63.

6. Carlos de Castro Álvarez, José Ignacio Fernández de Viana y Vieites & María Teresa González Balasch, *El monasterio de San Juan de Caaveiro* (A Coruña 1999) 106.

7. Nicandro Ares Vázquez, ‘Toponimia do concello de Guntín de Pallares’, *Lucensia: miscelanea de cultura e investigación* 10 (1995) 83–98.

8. Other names from the peninsula are interesting but have been rejected here: (1) *Bretuy*: Catalonia, the province of Lerins; (2) *Bretocino*: the province of Zamora, fifteen kilometres from Benavente; (3) *Bretó*: the province of Zamora, one kilometre from Bretocino; (4) *Briteiros*: north

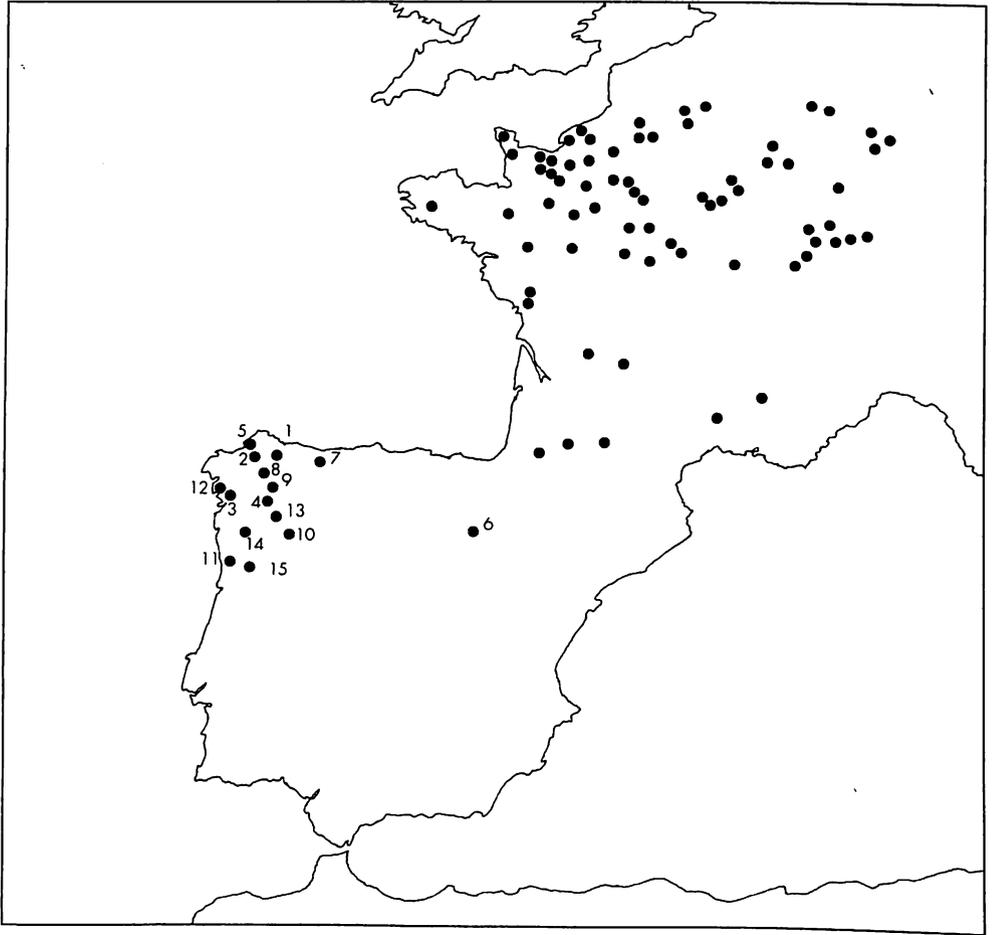
indeed, they have sometimes been explained without any reference to British settlement.⁹ However, it is also interesting that of the fifteen names listed here, nine are from Galicia and fourteen from the north-west, in other words, the quarter of the peninsula associated with early medieval British settlement. Especially important are the first four names because uniquely of Brit- or Bret- toponyms on the continent there is historical as opposed to linguistic evidence that they are the product of British settlement. In the sixth century there are two references to a 'bishop of the Britons' in the north-west. By the seventh century this bishopric had been superseded by a bishop 'Britoniensis', a derivative of 'Britonia'.¹⁰ The word 'Britonia' then evidently had some relation to the Britons who settled in the north-west. And it is only natural to also associate the first four place names given above with the same movement of peoples, especially since they are in the area (effectively the modern diocese)

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of Portugal, an Iron-Age fort; (5) *Brites Gomes*: the south of Portugal, near Mértola, a personal name perhaps; (6) *Bertola*: Galicia, the province of Pontevedra, the concello of Vilaboa; (7) *Bretes*: Guadalajara; (8) *Bertoles*: Galicia in the province of Pontevedra, the concello of Vigo; (9) *Bertelo*: Galicia, the province of Ourense, the concello of Nogueira de Ramuín; (10) *Dombret*: Galicia, the province of A Coruña, the concello of Sobrado; (11) *Bertimiráns*: Galicia, the province of A Coruña, the concello of Ames.

9. Many other solutions have been given including the Celtic deity Brig, personal names in Brit or Bret, the Galician word *bretem* 'cloud or mist', the Galician-Portuguese verb 'britar' and various Greek or Germanic words: see Young, *Britonia*, 60, for bibliography. However, one of the foremost experts on north-western toponymy, A. Moralejo Lasso (*Toponimia gallega y leonesa* (Santiago de Compostela 1977) 28 n 12) had no hesitation in linking several of these names with British settlement.

10. The history of the diocese is described Antonio García y García, 'Ecclesia britoniensis', *Estudios Mindonienses* 2 (1986) 121-34 (in Spanish); see now S. Young, 'The bishops of the early medieval diocese of Britonia', in *Camb Mediev Celt Stud* (forthcoming). Thanks are due to Lawrie Robertson for helping me place the references given here.



'Brit' place-names in continental Europe (after Fleuriot)