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AN INSCRIBED LEAD PENDANT FROM NORFOLK

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This note describes the scene on Side A and offers a reading of the inscription on Side B of a recently discovered lead pendant from Norfolk. The inscription is read as two symmetrical lines of Anglo-Latin verse that contain transcriptions of one word of Greek and two words of Hebrew, both divine names. All the phenomena on Side B are illustrated by close parallels in Insular Latin literature from the seventh century to the tenth and related to the scene on Side A.

Elisabeth Okasha, FSA, and Susan Youngs, FSA, have published an account of a pendant discovered by a metal-detector user, now in the Castle Museum, Norfolk (accession number NWHCM : 2000.3).[1] The lead pendant, 23 by 15 by 1mm, exhibits a Crucifixion scene that divides Side A into quadrants, the upper left depicting perhaps the crosses of the two thieves, the upper right depicting perhaps an angel, the lower left and lower right depicting perhaps the Virgin Mary and Saint John (fig 1). The upward slope of the arms of the central Cross is, as Okasha and Youngs observe, 'found uniquely in sculpture on the free-standing Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise'. The upright beam exhibits near the top a small rectangle and a small cross, balanced symmetrically near the bottom by a small cross and a small rectangle. The rectangle near the top probably represents, as Okasha and Youngs suggest, the *titulus*; that near the bottom probably represents, I suggest, the *suppedaneum*.

Though the piece is not only small but difficult to read, because the decoration is lightly and sketchily rendered on the A side, the entire design can be related to Insular analogues.

A Cross with sloping arms is described by the West Saxon Aldhelm, the first man of any Germanic nation to become a Latin author whose works have descended to us under his own name. Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury and first bishop of Sherborne (d 709), the founder of Anglo-Latin literature in prose and in verse, whose influence few English writers escaped for the next four hundred years, quotes in chapter 7 of his widely disseminated prose treatise *De Virginitate* a quatrain of rhyming octosyllabic verses that provide a verbal picture of a rood scene:

Xpistus passus patibula	'Christ, having suffered the fork-shaped yokes
atque leti latibula	and the hiding-places of death,
uirginem uirgo uirgini	the Virgin [Mary] the Virgin [Christ] to the Virgin [John]
commendabat tutamini.	commended for protection.'

The eleven words and seventy-seven letters (or eighty-eight characters and spaces between words)[2] of these verses offer a source for both the sloping arms, the 'fork-shaped yokes', of the Cross and the position of the principal figures, Christ at the centre commending the Virgin Mary on the left to Saint John on the right.

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Fig 1. Lead pendant in the Castle Museum, Norfolk (NWHCM : 2000.3): Side A. *Photograph*: Susan Youngs

A possible literary model for the *titulus* is the beginning of a letter published in 633 by the first Hiberno-Latin author to pursue his literary career entirely in Ireland, Cummianus Longus (592–662): *Aebreos, Gregos, Latinos, quas linguas ut Ieronimus ait in crucis suae titulo Xpistus consecrauit*. 'Hebrews, Greeks, Latins, which tongues, as Jerome says, on the inscription of His own Cross Christ consecrated.'[3] Cummian returned to the theme in his commentary on Mark's Gospel: *Et hoc tribus linguis: 'malchus Iudaeorum', 'basilius exomologesson', 'rex confessorum'. Hae tres linguae ad principatum in Xpisti crucis titulo consecratae sunt ut omnis lingua commemoret perfidiam Iudaeorum*. 'And this in three tongues: ''king of the Jews'', ''king of those confessing'', ''king of confessors''. These three tongues were consecrated at the beginning in the inscribed notice of the Cross of Christ, so that every tongue should call to mind the perfidy of the Jews.'[4]

The subject is also discussed in the *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*, a text that originated in Ireland during the seventh century and acquired additions in England in the eighth century.[5]

237 *Tria uasa sunt linguarum Ebraeum Graecum Latinum*
tres enim hae linguae in titulo crucis Xpisti consecratae sunt

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prima Ebraea propter legem
secunda Graeca propter sapientiam Graecorum
tertia Latina propter regnum Romanorum
et ideo hae tres linguae primatum in omnibus linguis obtinent
nam erat scriptum Ebraice Graece Latine Iesus Nazarenus rex Iudaeorum.

Three vessels of languages are Hebrew, Greek, Latin,
for these three languages were consecrated on the inscribed notice on the Cross of Christ,
first Hebrew on account of the Law,
second Greek on account of the wisdom of the Greeks,
third Latin on account of the realm of the Romans,
and on that account these three languages obtain the primacy among all languages,
for it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, in Latin 'Jesus the Nazarene king of the Jews'.

From the space before | *tria* to the *I* of *Iesus* there are 326 letters and spaces between words, coincident with the alphanumeric value of *IESUS NAZARENUS REX IUDAEORUM*, 9 + 5 + 18 + 20 + 18 + 13 + 1 + 23 + 1 + 17 + 5 + 13 + 20 + 18 + 17 + 5 + 21 + 9 + 20 + 4 + 1 + 5 + 14 + 17 + 20 + 12 or 326. The alphanumeric values of words are relevant to the connection between the illustration and the inscription.

Also in the *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*:

372 *Crux Domini de quattuor lignis facta est*
quae uocantur cypressus cedrus pinus et buxus.
Sed buxus non fuit in cruce
nisi tabula de illo ligno supra frontem Xpisti fuit
in qua conscripserunt Iudaei titulum Hic est rex Iudaeorum.
Cypressus fuit in terra usque ad tabulam cedrus in transuersum pinus sursum.

The Cross of the Lord was made from four trees
which are called cypress, cedar, pine, and box.
But box was not in the Cross,
except a plaque from that tree was above the face of Christ
on which the Jews wrote the inscribed notice 'This is the king of the Jews'.
Cypress was in the earth as far as the plaque, cedar on the transverse, pine above.

The fourth word is *quattuor*. From *in cruce* | to the end of the passage there are sixty-one syllables, coincident with the alphanumeric value of *CRUX*, 3 + 17 + 20 + 21 or 61.

Muirchú moccu Macthéni wrote in Book II, chapter i of his *Vita Sancti Patricii*, published not later than 700:

Omnes psalmos et ymnos et Apocalipsin Iohannis et omnia cantica spiritalia scripturarum quottidie decantans
siue manens aut in itinere pergens
tropeo etiam crucis in omni hora diei noctisque centies se signans
et ad omnes cruces quascumque uidisset
orationis gratia de curru descendens declinabat.

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Chanting out daily all psalms and hymns and the Apocalypse of John and all spiritual canticles of the scriptures
either remaining [in one place] or proceeding on a journey
signing himself also with the victorious sign of the cross in every hour of the day and of the night one hundred times
and at all crosses whichever he saw
he used to turn aside descending from the chariot for the sake of prayer.

The word *CRVX* bears an alphanumeric value of 3 + 17 + 20 + 21 or 61, coincident with the sixty-one letters and spaces between words from the space after *crucis* | 3 to the *c* of *cruces* 4, coincident also with the sixty-one letters and spaces between words from the *s* of *cruces* 4 to the end of the chapter.

The alphanumeric elements of these texts are important for understanding Side B of the lead pendant (fig 2), which exhibits an inscription in Anglo-Saxon script from the tenth century or later transcribed thus by Okasha and Youngs:

+NOMEN
DEIISTI[N]
E/BRAICEE
[-]NE/[.][T.]
E/T[.T..NO.]

The word *ist*, either for *istud*, as suggested by Okasha and Youngs, or as a misspelling of *est*, would be an error unparalleled in the Insular tradition. *Ebraice* for *Hebraice* would be acceptable, but *in Ebraice* for *in Hebraico* would be orthographically and grammatically unacceptable, unparalleled in the Insular tradition.

I have published elsewhere evidence of independent and fairly widespread knowledge of Hebrew and Greek among Insular scholars from the seventh century onward.[6] Against that background one can read this inscription as two lines of decasyllabic verse:

	words	syllables	letters
+ NOMEN DEI ISTIN EBRAICE	1 + 4	4 + 6 = 10	21
E[L] D[OMI]NE ET ET[IAM] ATONOI	5	4 + 6 = 10	21

representing in Latin letters

+ NOMEN DEI ICTIN EBRAICE
אל DOMINE ET ETIAM אדני

and meaning

+ The Name of God is in Hebrew
El, Lord, and also Adonoi.

This refers to the two names of God in the Creation story of Genesis 1.1–2.4, in Hebrew אלהים *Elohim* or אל *El* and יהוה, pronounced אדני *Adonai* or *Adonoi*, in Greek Θεος and Κυριος, in Latin *Deus* and *Dominus*, in Old English *God* and *Hlaford*. The word order of the English translation follows the word order of the inscription. From that one need not infer that the designer mistranslated אל *El* as 'Lord'. Understand 'The name of God is in Hebrew *El* and also *Adonoi*, Lord'. Both names are given in the vocative case because that is the form one uses in prayer addressed directly to God.

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Fig 2. Lead pendant in the Castle Museum, Norfolk (NWHCM : 2000.3): Side B.
Photograph: Susan Youngs

The oldest extant Insular analogue is the first two words on a gold amulet from Romano-British Segontium, modern Caernarvon, the Hebrew names of God written in Greek script with Greek vocative –E, ΑΔΩΝΑΙΕ ΕΛΩΑΙΕ.[7]

The next analogue is the Cambro-Latin *Orationes Moucani*, composed not later than the seventh century and preserved in the eighth-century Mercian manuscript, British Library, Royal 2.A.xx. The first and the ninth prayers end

Eloe Sabaoth Ia Adonai
Eli Eli laba sabacthani.[8]

The name *Adonai* recurs in texts from seventh-century Canterbury:

decem … nominibus nominauit eum … primum eorum est Adonai, i. Deum;
et nomen Adonay non indicaui eis;
Hebraei dicunt × nomina Dei … ex quibus primum est Adonay.[9]

The first name in the *Interpretatio Nominum* of the eighth-century Corpus Glossary is *Adonai, Adoneus, Dominus*.[10] The name recurs in two tenth-century texts, in Israel the Grammarian's poem *Adelphus Adelpha Mater*, line 40, *Olla Adonai Abba*,[11] and in

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Frithegod of Canterbury's poem *Breuiloquium Vitae Beati Wilfredi*, line 513, *Adonaique pio clamore citauit*. The spelling *Atonoi* is unremarkable Anglo-Latin orthography, in which from the time of Aldhelm, the Épinal Glossary and the Corpus Glossary onward *t* was often written for *d* and *d* for *t*.[12]

The Greek verb ICTIN can be paralleled in an Insular Latin poem, Brían mac Con Catha's *Rubisca*, line 8, *bonus … rubisca rara estin aduentus*.[13] '*E*/*T*' as an abbreviation for *etiam* is widespread.[14] For examples of the combination *et etiam* see the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, *s.v. etiam* 2d.

Recognition of this text adds two verses to the canon of Anglo-Latin poetry, the symmetry of which, in words and syllables and letters, is a verbal equivalent of the symmetrical disposition of decorative elements on Side A. The inscription adds to the many examples long known yet another example of threefold play in all *tres linguae sacrae*: in Greek one word, ICTIN, in Hebrew two words, אל and ארני, and in Latin blocks of one, two and three words, *Ebraice*, *nomen Dei* and *Domine et etiam*, together nine words.[15] The number nine, square of the number of the *tres linguae sacrae* and square of the number of the Trinity, is consistent with the nine rhyming rhythmical prayers composed by the Cambro-Latin author Moucan. As British Library, Royal 2.A.xx is an eighth-century Mercian manuscript, and both the Breton Israel and the Irish Brían were probably at the court of Æthelstan, there are easily discernible routes of transmission of learning from Cambro-, Armorico- and Hiberno-Latin to Anglo-Latin centres well before the suggested date of the pendant.[16]

The unpretentious and personal nature of this artefact on lead, as distinct from a more precious metal, suggests that interest in the *tres linguae sacrae* and in gematria was not the preserve of a few isolated clerics, but generally diffused among literate religious.

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NOTES

1. Okasha and Youngs 2003.
2. Howlett 2000: (77) 29–39, 44–51, 61–2, 85, 192; (88) 124–30, 131–42; 2005: (77) 69, 111; (88) 15, 81, 196, 225.
3. Walsh and Ó Croínín 1988, 57–8.
4. Cahill 1997, 75.
5. Bayliss and Lapidge 1998, 150, 178.
6. Howlett 1997a; 1998a; 1999a; 2002. To this evidence one should add the correct calculation of gematria on eleven Hebrew forms of personal names in Muirchú moccu Macthéni's *Vita Sancti Patricii* and play on Hebrew etymologies of Irish names in the 7th-century Irish text *Auraicept na nÉces*.
7. Collingwood and Wright 1995, I, 144, no. 436; Howlett 2005, 154–6.
8. Howlett 1992; 1998b, 57–68.
9. Bischoff and Lapidge 1994, 314, 344, 388.
10. Hessels 1890, 3.
11. Howlett 1995, 40.
12. Sweet 1883, xiii; Hessels 1890, xxiv, xxxvi; Ehwald 1919, 758.2–759.1, 764.1.
13. Howlett 1996, 72, 83.
14. Cappelli 1967, 124.2.
15. Howlett 2002.
16. If one represented the initial sign + by *CRVX* there would be from the *C* of *CRVX* to the *L* of *EL*, thirty-one characters and spaces between words, coincident with the alphanumeric value in Hebrew notation of אל, 1 + 30 or 31. For scores of examples of this technique, derived from the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud and Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, Book II, see Howlett 1997b; 1998b; 1999b; 2000; 2005.

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A TECHNIQUE FOR DISTINGUISHING THE TEXTURES OF BRICKS AND TILES

John F Potter*

A simple, relatively non-destructive technique is described which can be used to distinguish between the fabrics and textures of different bricks and tiles. Its use should help to prevent the continued confusion that exists in the identification of different kiln-based clay products in the field.

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological investigation of the sites of buildings tends at some stage to involve a requirement to accurately distinguish, date or identify typical kiln-baked clay products

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