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Notes on Châteaubleau (L-93)¹

David STIFTER

The aim of this article is to make several comments on the tile from Châteaubleau (L-93) and thereby to add to the analysis of this – as of yet – little-understood Gaulish text. Given the minimal scholarship devoted to the inscription so far, the comments here will focus almost exclusively on the seminal works by LAMBERT 1998–2000, SCHRIJVER 1998–2000 and RIG II.2 238–241. Some of the ideas presented in the following should be seen as strictly speculative contributions to the subject, but always as speculations based on facts. The numbers after the cited forms refer to lines of the inscription.

Before commencing with the commentary proper, an explanation of the terminology used in this article is in place: I make a threefold distinction between Early, Middle and Late Gaulish. Early Gaulish is the language before Roman administration had established itself fully in the whole country, a development which roughly coincides with the birth of Christ or shortly before. During the early period, the language is preponderantly written in Greek letters, in contrast to the later language which is almost exclusively transmitted in Latin script. In absolute dates, the period extends from the end of the third to the end of the first century B.C. Middle Gaulish signifies the period from the beginning of strong Roman influence until approximately the end of the second century A.D. The first century A.D. especially is the period of the greatest production of Gaulish inscriptions. Late Gaulish refers to the period after the second century A.D. until the eventual disappearance of the language in

1 Work on this paper was undertaken within the context of the FWF-funded project P20755-G03 'Die altkeltischen Sprachreste in Österreich' (The Old-Celtic Language Remains of Austria). I thank Aaron Griffith and Stefan Schumacher for help, suggestions and comments.

the mists of unrecorded history. The three periods are distinguished by subtle grammatical, that is, phonological and morphological, differences that warrant the establishment of a chronological distinction. There are of course no clear-cut dividing lines between the three phases; the transitions are gradual. This fuzziness in the chronological ascription of the texts is exacerbated by the notoriously difficult dating of Gaulish inscriptions. Dates of inscriptions can usually only be obtained by external, archaeological methods, and on occasion these allow the positioning of the texts only very roughly. I intend to publish a more elaborate justification for my periodisation of Gaulish in the future.

NEMNALÍUMI 1

In his edition of the Châteaubleau tile in *Études Celtiques* 34, Pierre-Yves LAMBERT (1998–2000: 81–85) offers a long list of possible analyses of the first word (or perhaps better: continuous sequence of letters) of the inscription, which he reads as *nemnaliiumi*. However, the reading is uncertain. For the first and fourth letters, *n* and *m* are possible alternative readings (cp. LAMBERT 1998–2000: 63, RIG II.2 238). This allows for four different combinations and renders the choice of the reading arbitrary. It would be beside the point to discuss all of Lambert's etymological suggestions. What is important is that Lambert ultimately decides to analyse the form as a denominal verb 'I celebrate', deriving it from a putative Celtic nominal stem **nemnal-* 'celebration'. A cognate is said to be found in the OIr. word *nemnall*, attested in a separate entry in *Sanas Cormaic* 960 (MEYER 1913: 82):

Nemnall .i. is ed ainm is mō do anmandaib in domuin .i. nem-nūall dēnmae ind aifrind innsin. Nemnūall, nūall fer nimhe uimbe.

'*Nemnall*: this name is the greatest of the names in the world, that is, this is the heaven-shout (*nem-nūall*) of celebrating the mass. *Nemnūall*, the shout (*nūall*) of the men of heaven (*nem*) is about him.'

Since the word is not attested elsewhere in Irish literature (cp. DIL N 33.39–47, attestations in later glossaries quite obviously derive from *Sanas Cormaic*), this passage remains the only one that permits a semantic interpretation on the basis of context. By taking the glossary entry at face value, the editors of DIL came up with a common noun of the meaning 'intonation, chanting or hymnody in religious worship?', albeit with a question mark at the end. This interpretation has been followed by Lambert. According to him, OIr. *nemnall* in *Sanas Cormaic* is a rare and precious example of a lexical archaism contained

in glossatorial works. This analysis is repeated in LG 210, RIG II.2 240, and it has been followed, for example, by DLG 234.

However, this explanation of *nemnaliūmi* and *nemnall* is incorrect. A close reading of the entry in *Sanas Cormaic*, coupled with the few onomastic attestations of OIr. *Nemnall* that can be found, for example, in O'BRIEN 1962, yields a very different picture. The main catch is the ambiguity of OIr. *ainm*, a loan translation from Lat. *nomen*. It can either mean 'name' or 'noun'. This ambiguity lies at the heart of the misunderstanding of the entry in *Sanas Cormaic*. Lambert and the editors of DIL have taken *ainm* to refer to the grammatical category 'noun', whereas it is in fact the purpose of the entry to explain the etymology of a personal 'name'. OIr. *Nemnall* is not, as the formulation in DIL N 33.47 suggests, a common noun which can also be used as a proper noun; rather, it is a proper noun only. As such it is attested several times in historical sources (collected in UHLICH 1993: 284–285), and this use is also borne out by its position in *Sanas Cormaic*. MEYER (1912: 178) points out that the author of *Sanas Cormaic* tends to place proper names at the beginning of a letter. The entry *Nemnall* comes second in *N* (of 39 entries under that letter altogether), being preceded only by *Nia* 'sister's son', which Cormac refers, as a quasi-proper noun, to Jesus. UHLICH (1993: 285) explains the name as a compound of *nemain* 'battle-fury' or *Nemain/Nemon* 'name of a war-goddess' + **uālo-* 'ruling, ruler; strong, mighty'. He translates the compound as 'strong through battle-fury or Nemain/Nemon'; as an alternative I would suggest 'ruling/leading in battle-fury'.² In contrast to what LAMBERT (1998–2000: 85) suggests, the variant *Nemnuall* has not been coined by Cormac for pseudo-etymological purposes, but it is the genuine archaic form of the name. OIr. *Nemnall* relates to Early OIr. *Nemnual(l)* like OIr. *Domnall* to Early OIr. *Domnual* < **dubnoūalos* 'ruler of the world'.

The etymology of Gaul. *nemnaliūmi* based on OIr. *Nemnall* thus has been refuted, and at the same time all motivation has been removed for reading *nemnaliūmi* and not any other combination of *n/memn/m°*. If, however, the reading *nemnaliūmi* should be retained, I want to propose one formally possible analysis not mentioned by Lambert: *ne mna liūmi* < **ne mnās liū-mī* 'I do not accuse women' (but see below what I write about final *-s* in this inscription).

2 See also MEYER 1912: 180–181; 1914: 4 fn. 2.

GNIÓU 2

LAMBERT (1998–2000: 90) state that this is “sans doute thème verbal ‘connaître’”, i.e. derived from the PIE root **ǵneh₃*-³ ‘to recognise’ (LIV 168–170), and he translates the form as “je (ne) connais”, but he does not discuss the problematic morphology of his proposal. It is difficult to see how *gnióu* should be compatible with the reconstructable present stem of this verb which is **ǵnina-* (KP 347–352, after McCone). It is curious that Lambert does not mention the alternative, which immediately suggests itself, that *gnióu* is the exact equivalent of OIr. *gníu* ‘I do, make’ < PC **ǵniū* (see KP 339–347) < PIE **ǵenh₁*- ‘to create’ (LIV 163–165). If a verbal noun could be identified in the vicinity of *gnióu*, it would be possible to think of a periphrastic DO-construction.

APENI 2

In addition to the analysis proposed by LAMBERT (1998–2000: 92), i.e. *apeni* < **ac + beni(n)* ‘and the woman’ < **ad-k^ue* + acc.sg. of **ǵ^uenh₂* ‘woman’, on purely formal grounds the form could alternatively be interpreted as **ape + nī* < **ad-k^ue ne-est(i)* ‘and it is not’.

UELLE 2

Among other suggestions, LAMBERT (1998–2000: 93) does not rule out that *uelle* is the locative of a loan from Lat. *uilla*. But this is most certainly excluded. Lat. *uīlla* < **ueīksleh₂* has a long *ī* which, by all that is known, should not be rendered as *e* word-internally in Late Gaulish. Only short *i*, particularly in unstressed position, apparently tends to be lowered to *e*.

UEÍONNA 1, UEÍOMMI 4, UE|ÍIOBÍIE 8–9

This group of words quite obviously forms a paradigmatically related system. Of these, *ueíobiie* is a verbal form, *ueíonna* and *ueíommi* could be nominal formations derived from the verb, but imperfects have also been suggested (LAMBERT 1998–2000: 79). To these probably must be added *ueíobiu* from the cast inscription L-70. It and *ueíobiie* look like unverbated periphrastic formations consisting of a stem **ueíō-* + a form of the verb ‘to be’. Whether *ueía* on the plate from Lezoux (L-66 10) belongs here as well is unclear.

3 Not “*gnH_o-*”, as erroneously written in RIG II.2 240.

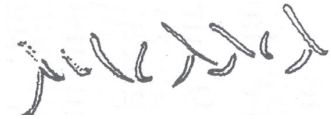
LAMBERT (1998–2000: 86–87) tends towards deriving this verb from PIE **ued^h-* ‘to lead’ (LIV 659), in the sense of ‘leading = marrying a woman’ (accepted in DLG 310). SCHRIJVER (1998–2000: 136–137), hesitatingly, seems to follow him in this, but nevertheless proposes **ueīdīo-* ‘wise’ as an alternative interpretation. However, the connection with the root ‘to lead’ runs counter to the combined evidence of Indo-European and Celtic. Both in the mother and in the daughter language family this root furnishes a simple-thematic primary verb in the present stem, i.e. “**uéd^h-e-*” in Proto-Indo-European (LIV 659) and “**ued-e/o-*” in Proto-Celtic (KP 656). The Gaulish verb under scrutiny here, however, looks as if it contained the suffix **-īe/o-*.

There is another problem connected with this etymology. It requires the development *dī > ī(i)*, a development that implicitly entails the loss of ‘lenited’ intervocalic **d*. For neither development can independent evidence be found in the corpus of Gaulish. There is very limited evidence that intervocalic *g* could be lost in Late Gaulish (L-70: *mouno* < **moguno-?*; Endlicher’s Glossary: *treide* ‘foot’ < **treget-*), but the letter representing the sound is usually spelled out in full, as indeed it is in Châteaubleau *regeniātu* 3, *īegumi* 4, *dagisamo* 8, etc. In any case, the behaviour of *g* makes no predication about that of *d*, since *g* is typologically more prone to be lost (via lenited [ɣ]). The basis on which the interpretation of *ueīonna* etc. as ‘to marry’ rests is therefore very thin.

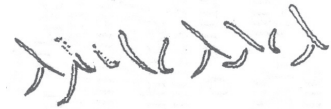
NUANA 7

LAMBERT (1998–2000: 70) mentions a few likely instances of copying mistakes in the Châteaubleau inscription (*īeguisini* 5 for *īegumisini* 7, *beliassu* 7, 11 for *beīassu* 6, 9, 10, *anmambe* 2 for *anmanbe* 5). If the idea of copying mistakes is accepted for the inscription, the question may be asked if *nuana* 7, which LAMBERT (1998–2000: 108) calls “obscure”, can be explained in a similar way. Various readings and suggestions have been proposed (SCHRIJVER 1998–2000: 139–140; RIG II.2 240). LAMBERT (1998–2000) alludes to a possible “apocope de *anuana*”, but rejects the idea immediately with reference to the fact that the word for ‘names’ should be **anmana* in Châteaubleau. Nevertheless, I want to pursue this idea further. *Nuana* could be from **[a]nuana* ‘names’ if we allow for the the same process of copying error to have taken place as in the instances mentioned above. The error could have been triggered by haplography, that is to say, in the process of copying the eye of the scribe could have jumped over the first two strokes, forming the *a*, because of their graphic similarity, if not identity in style, with the first two strokes of the following *n*. To make my point clearer, I have created a cut-and-paste montage of what **anuana* could

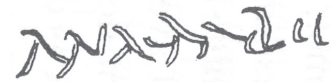
have looked like in the hand of the Châteaubleau scribe (ill. 2). This can be contrasted with a drawing of the actually attested form *nuana* (ill. 1), with the two occurrences of *anmanbe* in Châteaubleau (ll. 2, 5; ill. 3 and 4), and with *anuana* as attested on the lead plate from Larzac (L-99 1a2; ill. 5).



Ill. 1: The form *nuana* on the Châteaubleau tile (L-93 7).



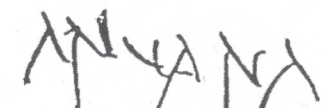
Ill. 2: Montage of **anuana* ‘names’ in the Châteaubleau hand.



Ill. 3: For comparison, *anmanbe* on the Châteaubleau tile (L-93 2).



Ill. 3: For comparison, *anmanbe* on the Châteaubleau tile (L-93 5).



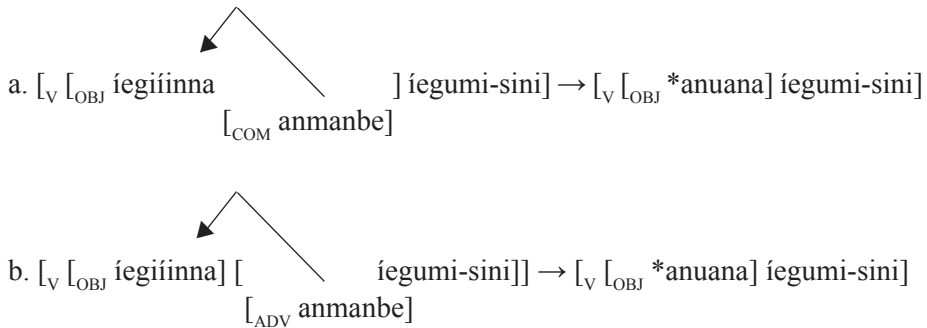
Ill. 5: For comparison, *anuana* on the Larzac inscription (L-99 1a2).

Of course, this hypothesis, if correct, would be highly consequential for the historical phonology and dialectology of Gaulish. The contrast between the word for ‘name’ *anuana* < **anmana* in the late-first-century inscription from Larzac (L-98, 1a2, -7), which shows dissimilation of **m* > *u* after another nasal, and Châteaubleau’s *anmanbe* or *anmambe* (ll. 2, 5) < **anmanbi* or, with syncope, < **anmanobi*, has been taken to reflect a wave-like spread of that particular dissimilation, which by the second or third century A.D. had not yet reached Châteaubleau in northern Gaul (SCHRIJVER 1998–2000: 135–136; a structurally

similar dissimilation affected Celtiberian, cp. STIFTER 2006). If, however, *anuana* should be found side by side with *anmanbe* in one and the same text, the details of the nasal dissimilation rules in Gaulish must be revised and one rare areally distinguishing feature of Gaulish vanishes. In *anuana* < **anmana*, the preceding and the following *n* could have exerted a combined dissimilatory influence on the **m*. Note in this context that the other certain instance of the same or a related dissimilation in British, Welsh *mynwent* ‘graveyard’ < Lat. *monumentum*, also has an *n* preceding and following the affected *m*. On the other hand, in the instrumental plural *anmanbe* which, in phonetic terms, conceivably may have been [anmambe] with assimilation of the stem-final nasal to the labial sound of the ending, the second **m* may have exerted a retarding counterinfluence by which the unstable first *m* was able to retain its occlusion. In addition to that, the syllable structure is different in the two case forms. In **anmana*, the target **m* was in the onset of an open syllable, whereas in **anmanbi*, if indeed it and not **anmanobi* is to be reconstructed for the instrumental plural, it was in a closed syllable. Although syllable structure may have been a factor in Gaulish, it manifestly was of no importance in Welsh *mynwent*. If this emendation is applied, a kind of parallelism emerges in the text between lines 5 and 7. Line 5 contains the sequence *iegiinna anmanbe ieguisini*. The triple *iii* in *iegiinna* may either stand for *-iji-* (LAMBERT 1998–2000: 74), or – as seems more likely to me – can be interpreted as a spelling for *ī*, i.e. **iegīnna* (RIG II.2 382). Its precise morphology is unclear, but the root is that of the verb form *iegumi* and the final portion *-nna* makes the impression of a nominal, perhaps participial formation. Under this hypothesis, *-nn-* might reflect the morpheme of the passive present participle < **-mn-*.⁴ Alternatively it could be speculated that *-nn-* is a development of or orthographic device for original **-n-*, perhaps in stressed position. Given the clear legibility of the two *n*’s, it is very unlikely that the suffix **-īmā*, productive in the British languages for verbal nouns, was intended. As for *ieguisini* instead of expected *iegumisini*, one could toy with the idea that it is an intentional, phonetic spelling, indicating the lenited pronunciation and subsequent loss of intervocalic **m* > **μ*. There is, however, in Gaulish itself no good argument for such a lenition of **m*. Therefore, I believe with LAMBERT (1998–2000: 78) that *ieguisini* is a simple error for *iegumisini*, as in line 7. Under the present segmentation of line 5, *iegiinna* ...

4 It is unclear, however, why **-mn-* should have been assimilated to *-nn-* in this case and was not dissimilated to *-un-*, as in **akauno-* ‘stone’ < **akamno-*.

íegumi has all appearances of a *figura etymologica*; *-sini* is perhaps a resumptive pronominal element, referring to the fronted object, i.e. ‘the *íeg*-ged/-able things, I *íeg*- them’. The intervening *anmanbe* ‘names’, which is likely to be an instrumental, not a dative, could be an explicative complement either to *íegíinna*, ‘the things which are *íeg*-ged/able by/with names, I *íeg*- them’, or could be an adverbial complement to *íegumi*, ‘the *íeg*-ged/-able things, I *íeg*-them by/with names’. The structure of the sequence in line 7 would be similar, **anuana íegumisini* ‘names, I *íeg*- them’, but the *figura etymologica* has been given up. Instead, the instrumental complement has been promoted to the object position. The possible readings of the phrase can be rendered formally thus (the arrow indicates the promotion to object position):



ÍEXSTUMI 9, 11

The twice attested verbal form *íexstumi*, always written in continuous script with following *sendi*, which is certainly some kind of demonstrative pronoun, has at the first glance the vague appearance of a form corresponding to the 1sg of an Insular Celtic t-preterite. It is quite obviously paradigmatically related to the verbal forms *íegumi* and *íexsetesi* on the same inscription. However, it has been rightly stressed that the origin of the Insular Celtic t-preterite as a morphological class lies precisely in the regular loss of **s* in clusters like **-χst-*, a loss which patently has not occurred in the present form (cp. SCHRIJVER 1998–2000: 138). Therefore, *íexstumi* cannot be anything like a t-preterite, and what is more, the cluster *-χst-* in this form cannot be original. Instead, it must have arisen secondarily by syncope of a vowel. This has led SCHRIJVER (1998–2000: 138–139) to posit a preform **íexsi-tu-mi*, i.e. a *si*-imperative with early loss of the final *-i*, followed by a suffixed subject pronoun (*-tu*) and an object or indirect object pronoun (*-mi*). While there is nothing implausible with such an explanation, I want to propose a more complex way of accounting for a

syncopated form *íexstumi*. In order to do so, I have to make a wide detour that will take me to other inscriptions as well as other verbs.

The three forms *gabás* ‘took, has taken (?)’ (L-55), *prinas* ‘bought, has bought (?)’ (L-32), and *readdas* ‘gave, has given (?)’ (L-78) have been proposed to be preterites within the verbal system of Gaulish (LG 66). The texts from which these forms are taken all belong roughly to the first century A.D. or slightly later. All dates have been arrived at by archaeological methods. L-78 has been found in the context of material dating to around 40 A.D. (RIG II-2 202), L-32 is part of the finds from La Graufesenque, the Gaulish inscriptions of which can be assigned to the period of the emperors Claudius or Nero, that is, around the middle of the first century (RIG II-2 84). L-55, finally, has been incised on a vessel that belongs to the period of the Flavian dynasty or Hadrian (RIG II-2 162), that is, the end of the first or the beginning of the second century.

Morphologically, the three verbs can be analysed as consisting of an invariant stem + preterital suffix *-as-* + Ø-ending for the 3sg. The invariant stem can either be a root (*gab-*), or it can be a generalised present stem (*prin-* < **k^uri-n-h₂-*), or it can be a complex of preverbs and the reduced shape of a root, the reflex of a root aorist in Indo-European terms (*readd-*, if from **pro-ad-deh₃-*). For the present purposes, I want to call this type of preterite formation the *as*-preterite. Historically, the emergence of this pattern can be traced relatively easily. It is similar to what has been proposed to explain the Insular Celtic s-preterite (I refer to the convenient summary of the developments in KP 66–68): in the paradigm of the athematic s-aorist of roots ending synchronically in vowels, the ending of the 3sg **-st#* (containing the *s*-marker of the aorist and the *-t* of the 3sg) regularly became **-t^s* (uel sim.), that is ‘*tau Gallicum*’. The result of this sound change was a morphologically unsegmentable form; the **-t^s* was reinterpreted as the new categorial marker for preterite, with zero-ending in the 3sg. In the next step, thematic endings were added to the 3sg which served as the base form for the new paradigm. The final *-s* in *gabás*, *prinas*, *readdas* must be the reflex of *tau Gallicum* < **-st*, which in word final position may have been further simplified to **-ss*. It may be speculated that in the other persons, where the suffix **-st-* stood word-internally, more easily recognisable spellings of *tau Gallicum* would be found, if ever they should be discovered in Middle Gaulish texts.

If the *as*-preterite corresponds etymologically to the s-preterite of W1-verbs in Old Irish, the vowel of the suffix was short. This short *a* must have originated after roots or stems that ended in a laryngeal. After consonants, the laryngeal was vocalised as **ǎ* before the **s* of the s-aorist, and it looks as if it was widely

generalised from such positions, and it may have spread especially to other verbs with stems ending in **ǎ*, verbs which originally would have had quite different stem formations. *Prinas* may be such a case. If the received etymology is correct, its stem vowel was short in the present tense. This is supported by the behaviour of both of its cognates, OIr. *crenaid* and W *prynaf* ‘to buy’ (KP 438–441). In *prinas*, the productive *as*-preterite, built on the present stem, probably replaced a reduplicated perfect. Etymological considerations favour a long **ā* for *readdas* (**dā-* ‘to give’, KP 265–267), but it is conceivable that the paradigm of the verb also contained forms with a short vowel which served as a pivot for assimilating it to the pattern of verbs with **ǎ*. At a first glance, *gabas* with its present stem **gabje-* ‘to take, grab’ (KP 318–324) does not seem to belong here. But in Old Irish the corresponding verb *gaibid*, contrary to all rules, also forms an *s*-preterite, precisely *gabais*, *gab* < **gabāsti*. The underlying non-palatalised root-final consonant of this preterite, as well as the weak preterite formation as such, run counter to the standard pattern of the S2-class to which *gaibid* belongs. The reason for this is to be sought in the fact that by the application of the normal Celtic sound changes on the inherited *s*-aorist a preterite stem **gǎxt-* would have resulted, a form that would have looked morphologically too dissimilar to the underlying root (KP 323). Replacing such a form by one containing a productive suffix like **-as-* was a welcome way out of the dilemma and provided for greater intraparadigmatic transparency. The OIr. preterite *gabais*, *gab* is therefore exceptional in two regards, and this makes the morphological comparison with MGaul. *gabas* all the more persuasive.⁵

It is obvious that if the preceding analysis is correct, the preterite-stem formation of first-century Gaulish with its spread of a ‘weak’ stem formation to verbs that had inherited ‘strong’ formations resembles rather that of Middle Welsh or Middle Irish than that of Old Irish.⁶

5 Thus contra DE BERNARDO STEMPEL 2005: 195. She objects to the interpretation of *gabas* as a form of the sigmatic aorist on the grounds that “[...] *gab(i)-* als nicht denominatives Verb [würde] kein *-a-* vor dem präteritalen Morphem *-s-* aufweisen”. The only alternative she sees is to interpret the form as *ā*-subjunctive. Even though the interpretation of the entire inscription L-55 is unclear, it is structurally less likely that a votive inscription or a possessor note contain a 2sg subjunctive than a 3sg preterite.

6 Another instance where a ‘weak’ formation appears in an expectedly ‘strong’ verb is in the sentence *nu gnate ne dama gussou* ‘now, son, do not yield (< suffer) to violence’ on the plate from Lezoux (L-66 7). The other Celtic languages point to a present stem **damje/o-* (KP 260–263).

There is one more form that has to be mentioned in this context. In *legasit* ‘laid, has laid (?)’ from the inscription on L-79, a vase which by epigraphic dating belongs to the third century (RIG II-2 205;), it looks as if an underlying *as*-preterite **legas* has been recharacterised by the addition of the Latin (!) 3sg ending *-it*. It may be surmised that the 3sg in *-as* with zero-ending had become morphologically too opaque for the speakers of Gaulish. If *legasit* is the preterite to a causative formation like **logī-* ‘to lay’, as suggested by the context, it must be concluded that the *as*-preterite had become productive enough in the intervening time to include other present stem types as well. I regard as erroneous all conceptions of Gaulish verbal morphology that explain the difference between *readdas*, *gabas* and *prinās* on the one hand and *legasit* on the other hand as having anything to do with a reflex of a verbal particle being present in the latter form. The simplest way to account of the difference is chronological. Whereas the first three forms basically belong to the Middle Gaulish of the first century A.D. or shortly afterwards, *legasit* is Late Gaulish from the third century and exhibits stronger structural influence from Latin.

This is now the point to return to the main object of investigation. I believe that *īexstumi* can be integrated into this picture as well. In Châteaubleau’s *īegumi* etc. we have a verb whose synchronic root in Late Gaulish was *īeg-*. The productive *as*-preterite of it would have been 3sg **īegas* or **īegasit*, and **īegasū* in the 1sg. In order to arrive from the latter at *īexstumi* as found in the inscription, two things must be assumed. First, syncope of the suffixal vowel *a* with ensuing spirantisation of the guttural before the *s* (this may have been an automatic rule even in Late Gaulish). Secondly, the *t* must be accounted for somehow. Various possibilities exist: *-st-* could be a spelling for or even the phonetic realisation of *tau Gallicum* after a guttural, or *tau Gallicum* had already become plain *s* by that time, and the *t* stems either from the conflation of the *as*-preterite with the suffix of what must have corresponded to the Insular Celtic *t*-preterite, or the *t* originated in an athematically recharacterised 3sg in **-ast* (independent from the recharacterisation evidenced by *legasit*), which in turn served as the basis for a new suffix generalised throughout the paradigm.

The whole discussion therefore boils down to the suggestion that *īexstumi* < **īegastu-mi* is a 1sg preterite form. This would have the advantage of parallelism with the 1sg present tense that is so undisputably attested on the tile in the form *īegumi*. The parallelism also extends to the fact that *īegu(m)isini* and *īexstumisendi* twice appear with what looks like a suffixed object demonstrative pronoun. At the same time reading *īexstumi* in the suggested way would help to keep low the number of different persons appearing in the text.

THE FATE OF FINAL *-s* AND MORPHOPHONOLOGICAL LENITION

It has nearly achieved the status of received wisdom that final *s* and, except for monosyllables, final nasals have been lost in the language of the Châteaubleau inscription. This idea is expressly stated by LAMBERT (1998–2000: 72): “[...] les fins des mots sont presque toutes vocaliques, comme si toute consonne finale avait disparu [...]” and SCHRIJVER: “There are no forms ending in *-s* or *-m/-n* [...]. This makes the loss of word-final *-s* and *-m/-n* highly plausible [...].”, who, a page later, writes with even greater conviction: “[...] since word-final *-s* and *-n/-m* were lost [...]” (1998–2000: 136–137).

While this is indeed likely for final nasals,⁷ I want to draw attention to the fact that in the case of final *-s* the alleged loss is by no means beyond doubt. Since the understanding of the textual structure of Châteaubleau must still be said to be in its infancy, in this text there is a lack of compelling syntactic arguments in favour of the presence of forms that would require an ending in *-s*, like, for example, *o*-stem nominative singulars or animate accusative plurals. Most forms in *-o* could be accusatives with lost nasals (see fn. 7), and the function of *quprinno* in line 3 is unclear. In short, the case for the loss of final *-s* is not compelling, and its absence from the Châteaubleau tile may be mere coincidence (but see my suggestion for *nemnaliūmi* above).

The situation in other Late Gaulish texts is also ambiguous, being to a large degree due to the uncertain interpretation of the handful of texts that have come down to us. In L-15 (Plumergat), a nom.sg. *Vabros* is found, but the dating of this inscription is entirely uncertain and it is not clear whether it belongs to Late Gaulish at all. L-103, the notorious lead plate from Rom, being written in continuous script, defies all attempts at interpretation. In any case it seems as if there are no words ending in nasals or *-s* in this text, but given the lack of understanding of the text the same *caveat* applies as with Châteaubleau. On the other hand, the fragments of a lead plate from Bath (L-108), despite being roughly as intractable as L-103, seem to have final *-m* and *-s*. Nevertheless, one cannot be sure whether those desinences are not owed to the regularising influence of the Latin school education. Finally, the glass vessel from Villa

7 In line 1, *beni* seems to be the object of the initial phrase and must therefore somehow reflect PC **benam*. In the same line, *incorobouido* can be analysed as a prepositional phrase *in coro bouido*. If *coro bouido* is a singular *o*-stem, it must be an accusative dependent on the preposition *in* ‘in’. Otherwise a locative in *-e* would be expected, which is perhaps attested in l. 7 *indore core*. In l. 8, the apparent *o*-stem singular *sedagisamo cele uiroiono* has been suggested to be the object of *cluio* (LAMBERT 1998–2000: 108).

d’Ancy à Limé (L-132) has a final *-s* in *ibetis*, which again could be owed to Latin. That is to say, the fate of final *-s* in Gaulish is not entirely clear. While it is evident from low-register texts like the graffiti from La Graufesenque that there was a tendency towards weakening and loss of *-s* at the end of words already in the Middle Gaulish period,⁸ it cannot be demonstrated conclusively that the sound was completely lost in a regular fashion in all registers towards the end of the Gaulish language. It may be worthwhile to glance beyond the confines of the Gaulish language. In the Vulgar Latin of Gaul, *-s* definitely was not lost, but it survived long into the French period and must have been present as late as Old French. Its eventual disappearance from French is a separate, high-medieval matter. Since it is *a priori* likely that Gaulish and Latin strongly influenced each other in Roman-age Gaul and must have gone through various developments in tandem, it may be speculated whether the loss of final *-s*, which was on its way in Middle Gaulish, was retarded through Vulgar Latin influence in the later period.

SCHRIJVER (1998–2000: 137) carries the significance of the alleged lack of final consonants on the Châteaubleau tile even further: “[...] since word-final *-s* and *-n/-m* were lost, the language of the inscription, being Celtic, will probably have had phonemic lenition [...]”. From the context it is evident that he thinks of morphophonological mutations in the Insular Celtic sense. This statement is not cogent. ‘Celtic’ is of course no linguistic parameter that predicates the path of developments a language will take. Furthermore, there are other languages, like Germanic, Slavic, with extensive losses of final nasals and sibilants, which nevertheless never developed anything of the sort of initial mutations. Perhaps the rise of mutations is linked to other factors, like the linear order of constituent elements. Perhaps the obligatory placement of heads on the left periphery in Insular Celtic is conducive to a stronger perception of syntactic unity within the constituent phrases, which in further consequence leads to a situation where everything within a syntactic ‘unit’ is treated as if it were a single word. Gaulish, however, would not be affected by such developments.

8 Cp. also the recently discovered inscription on a spindle-whorle from Amiens (Somme), dating to 90–125 A.D. (L-140, LAMBERT 2008: 112). The text reads *cara uimpi | tocaranto*. *Caranto* could reflect the genitive **karantos* of PC **karant-* ‘friend’ with loss of final *-s*.

SUFFIXED SUBJECT PRONOUNS

The Châteaubleau inscription has provided further evidence that in Gaulish subject pronouns could be optionally suffixed to verbal forms. This is sufficiently evident from the occurrence side by side of each other of thematic 1sg verbs ending in *-mi* (*liūmi* 1, *iegumi* 4, 5, 7, *upīummi* 6 (?), *íexstumi* 9, 11) and those without (*gniōu* 2, *siaxsiou* 6, *chuiou* 8) within a single text (for further examples of 1sg verbs see the collection in LG 64–65, DLG 430). This apparently random distribution⁹ is one argument against the hypothesis that Gaul. *-mi* is due to the agglutination of the inherited PIE athematic 1sg ending **-mi* onto the thematic ending **-ū < *-oh₂*, and the grammaticalisation of the resultant **-ūmi*, as it happened independently in Sanskrit and Old Irish. The other argument against this idea is that despite the relatively high frequency of the ending *-umi* in Gaulish, the final vowel is always written ⟨i⟩, never ⟨e⟩. Since there is a general tendency in the history of Gaulish to lower final short *-i# > -e#*, the absence of such a spelling in the case of *-umi* is significant and points to the long vowel *ī*, a sound that was not affected by lowering.¹⁰ The morpheme **-mī* cannot be an ending, so it is natural to suspect it to be a pronoun. Since there is no good syntactic evidence in favour of regarding **mī < *moī* as a suffixed oblique pronoun with a kind of reflexive meaning, it is easiest to read it as a subject pronoun, continuing pre-Celt. **mē*, a lengthened by-form of the PIE object pronoun **me* (cp. KATZ 1998: 275 ff., DLG 310 s.v. *uediūmi*).

With the optional suffixation of subject pronouns virtually established for the first person singular, the question naturally arises if suffixed subject pronouns can be identified for other persons as well. Châteaubleau furnishes a few possible such forms, although none of the analyses is as unambiguous as that for the 1sg. In lines 2–3, *íexsete si | sue*, probably an s-subjunctive, could either

9 It could be objected that the distribution of forms with and without *-mi* reflects grammatical categories and distinctions that have not been detected yet (e.g., pres. ind. *-umi* vs. subj. *-u*; or simple thematic stems in *-u* vs. *īe/o*-stems in *-iūmi*). It is likely, however, that both *pissīūmi* (L-100 10) and *siaxsiou* (L-93 6), despite having different desinences, belong to the same category, viz. the *sīe/o*-future. This is an argument in favour of the optionality of the element *-mi* within grammatical categories of Gaulish.

10 The corpus of Gaulish contains two forms which appear to have the athematic ending **-mi*: *μμμ* (G-13) and *imi* (L-120) ‘I am’ < **h₂esmi*, and *petame* in Châteaubleau (l. 3). The latter has been suggested to be a loan from Lat. *peto* ‘to ask, request’, transferred into the ‘weak’ class of athematic *ā*-verbs (LAMBERT 1998–2000: 100–101). The meaning of *petame* under this analysis would be ‘I ask’, and it would show the expected lowering of *-i > -e*.

be a 3sg fem. < **ieg-se-ti* + *sī*, or it could conceivably be a 2pl < **ieg-se-tesi* + *sue*. Against the latter analysis speaks the fact that the element *sue* or *sui* occurs in two other instances (ll. 5, 8) after forms that do not look like 2pl verbal forms. Likewise, the sequence *suirexetesi* in line 5 could contain a 3sg fem. < *-eti* + *sī*. LAMBERT (1998–2000: 77–81) offers many more suggestions for complexes of verbs + suffixed pronouns on the Châteaubleau tile, but most of these are fairly speculative and involve non-subject pronouns, which are not the focus of the present comment.

From outside Châteaubleau, I want to draw attention to one form in particular. Line 3 of the lead plate from Chamalières (L-100) opens with the form *lopites* or *lotites*, a form that has been almost universally regarded as a 2sg verb. However, it could well be a 3sg *lop/tit* + a masculine subject pronoun *-es*. This could either continue **es* or, more likely in view of OIr. *é* and *é-som* ‘he’, it could be from **ejs*. This has been recognised by RUBIO ORECILLA 1997, but his insight has gone unnoticed in the discipline. Formally, *lop/tit-es* looks like an o-grade causative/iterative with suffix **-eje/o-*, i.e. **lop/t-ejet* + *ejs*. I will not enter into further etymological speculation about the verb.

The position of subject pronouns after the verb, perhaps in enclitic position, finds a parallel in the British Celtic languages, and it may have significance for the emergence of the system of *notae augentes* in Old Irish (cp. LAMBERT 1998–2000: 79).

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