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Los Angeles

Studies in Merovingian Latin Epigraphy and Documents

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Indo-European Studies

by

Éloïse Lemay

2017

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Studies in Merovingian Latin Epigraphy and Documents

by

Éloïse Lemay

Doctor of Philosophy in Indo-European Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Brent Harmon Vine, Chair

This dissertation is a study of the subliterary Latin of Gaul from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. The materials studied consist in epigraphic and documentary sources.

The inscriptions of late antique and early medieval Trier and Clermont-Ferrand receive a statistical, philological and comparative analysis, which results in 1) fine-grained decade-by-decade mapping of phonological and morphosyntactic developments, 2) comparative discussion of forms of importance to the chronological and regional development of Vulgar Latin, and, 3) isolation of sociolectal characteristics. Particular attention is paid to the issue of inscription dating based upon linguistic grounds.

This dissertation also approaches papyrus and parchment documents as material culture artifacts. It studies the production, the use, and the characteristics of these documents during the Merovingian period.

This dissertation examines the reception that the Merovingian documents received in the later Middle Ages. This is tied to document destruction and survival, which I argue are the offshoot of two processes: deaccession and reuse. Reuse is tied to the later medieval practice of systematized forgery. Systematized forgeries, in turn, shed light upon the Merovingian originals, thanks to the very high level of systematic interplay between base (the Merovingian documents) and output documents (the forgeries).

The dissertation of Éloïse Lemay is approved.

Richard Rouse

H. Craig Melchert

Stephanie Jamison

Brent Harmon Vine, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

To Jeffrey and Cato

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Philologists, who chase  
A panting syllable through time and space,  
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,  
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark.  
William Cowper, *Retirement* (1782)

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Summary

Merovingian Latin occupies a crucial position in the history of Latin itself and of the Romance vernaculars. It plays an important role as witness to the final stage of the history of Vulgar Latin, or Latin as a vernacular, living language. It bridges the gap between late antiquity and the Carolingian reforms on Latin and on education.

This dissertation is a study of the subliterate Latin of Gaul from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, using epigraphic and documentary sources. In this dissertation, I analyze the language of the late antique and early medieval inscriptions of Gaul that have been recently re-edited, covering Trêves and Clermont-Ferrand and its neighboring cities. I also study the small number of subliterate documents that are available for the latter portion of this period. I treat both the inscriptions and the documents not only as linguistic sources of relevance to the study of Late Vulgar Latin, but also as material culture evidence, which informs us about various aspects of the societies that produced them, used them, and reused them. This in turn sheds light upon the artifacts, helping refine their dating and attribution, and also allowing us to isolate the circumstances that led to their survival and destruction. Attempting to account for the scarcity of sources of very late antiquity and of the very early Middle Ages is a difficult problem in itself. My approach involves examining the reception of Merovingian artifacts by the later Middle Ages, along with examining the various processes by which institutions deal with their documentary archives.

The tail end of Late Antiquity and the very early Middle Ages has left a relatively small number of sources behind, compared to the later Middle Ages. However, there is still

enough documentary and epigraphic material to allow for in-depth linguistic studies using statistical means in addition to the more traditional qualitative methods. These combined methods make it possible to track decade-by-decade developments across multiple aspects of language in geographically-distinct corpora, in order to determine how language evolved over time and over a geographical span. This in turn makes it possible to say whether there were any watershed moments in the evolution of the language, coinciding with major political events or with other factors. The quantity of data coupled with quantitative and qualitative methods also make it possible to evaluate how different groups of speakers used language within a community. This dissertation tracks language variation that is 1) chronological, 2) geographical, and, 3) social.

This dissertation is concerned with issues that are internal to Vulgar Latin linguistics. However, in addition, I attempt to make use of my results to tackle the problem of inscription dating. It is hoped that I may offer ways of refining our approaches towards dating based on linguistic grounds. My discussion on that topic deals with methodology, as no amount of data will be enough to remedy a shoddy methodology.

## **1.2 Defining Merovingian Latin**

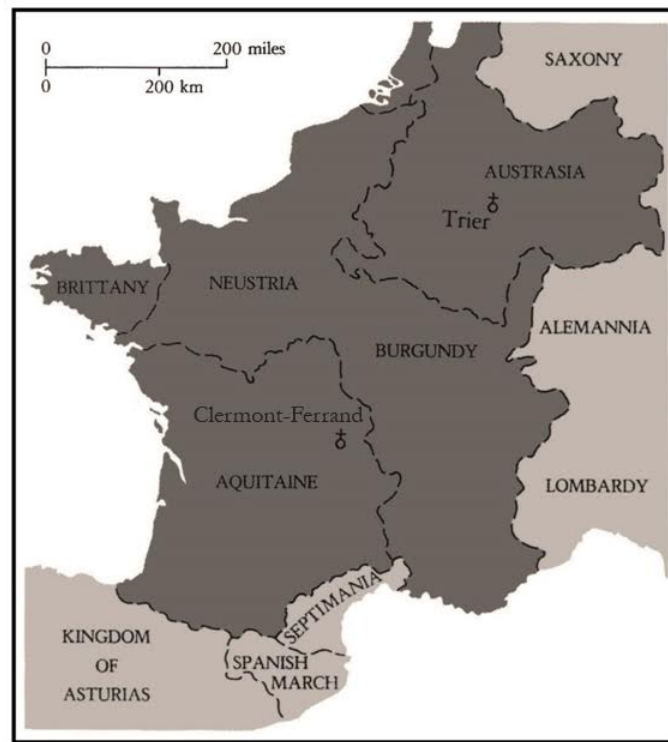
In this section, I argue the characteristics of Merovingian Latin, in an attempt to justify why its originality warrants study. In parallel to this, I cover the main works on the subject. I also discuss what this dissertation will and will not consist of, and why.

### **1.2.1 What is Merovingian Latin?**

Thanks to the expansion of the Roman sphere of influence, the Latin language had come to be spoken over an area considerably larger than the *Latium vetus* from which it had originated as one out of many Italic dialects. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the west, it remained the language of use in much of this territory, where it had come to displace the indigenous languages. In some of these regions, the descendant languages of Latin endure even now, as the modern Romance languages.

Shortly after the deposition of the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, in 456, the Merovingian dynasty took over in northern Gaul. The successive Merovingian kings stabilized under their rule an ever increasing territory, over the course of some 300 years; see Figure 1.1 for the Merovingian kingdom at the point when it reached its maximal extension. The Merovingian kingdom, or *Francia* in Latin, came to consist in the Roman provinces of Gaul, *Raetia*, *Germania Superior*, and a portion of *Germania Inferior*. It is this territory that the Carolingian rulers came to inherit and to expand, first under Pepin the short in 754 and then under Charlemagne.

*Stricto sensu*, "Merovingian Latin" covers, then, the Latin that was in use from 457 (accession to power of Childeric I) to 754 (accession to power of Pepin the Short, first Carolingian ruler) over the territory that was controlled by the Merovingian rulers. Meanwhile, we may speak of Visigothic Latin for Spain and, for Italy, of Lombard Latin.



Merovingian Gaul in 714

Figure 1.1: Map of the late Merovingian kingdom

## 1.2.2 Why Merovingian Latin?

### 1.2.2.1 The ‘hinge’ Merovingian period

A vexing question for Latinists and Romance language specialists rests in dating the transition from Latin to Romance.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> c., the passage had no doubt effectively been made. The 9<sup>th</sup> c. indeed saw the first two texts that could be called French, the *Strassburg Oaths* (842) and the *Eulalia* (881). Earlier, in the Council of Tours of 813, it was mandated that preaching to the people had to be made in the *lingua rustica romana* instead of Latin. By then, it appears that the gap between the vernacular and the written language was large enough as to impede intelligibility. There was an awareness that the vernacular was no longer Latin; the vernacular is referred to differently from Latin, as *lingua rustica romana*. This date, then, can be considered, at least for the Frankish kingdom, as a general *terminus ante quem*. However, it is important to note that, in all likelihood, considering the size and the diversity of the Merovingian kingdom, the process did not progress uniformly chronologically, geographically, or within the different social groups, and may therefore be a moving target.

As absolute *terminus post quem* for the transition, we could place the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. While this may strike one as an extreme view, there are scholars who believe that the political upset that accompanied the deposition of Romulus Augustulus had considerable and measurable repercussions on language and education, which caused an irremediable and major shift between the Latin of antiquity, and that of the early Middle Ages<sup>2</sup>.

By the end of the Merovingian period or the earliest Carolingian period at the latest, then, the vernacular must have been a highly evolved form of Vulgar Latin (or very early

---

<sup>1</sup>The ‘Latin-Romance’ debate is a complicated and ongoing one. For a summary and her stance, see McKitterick (1991), 130 ssq.

<sup>2</sup>Notably, this commonly held position underpins the linguistic analysis conducted by the editor of the Trier inscriptions; Gauthier (1975, p. 77).

Romance), so evolved that intelligibility with Latin had been compromised, which would lead to the Council of Tours' mandate, and the linguistic reforms of the Carolingian kings Pippin the Short and Charlemagne. It follows then that the Merovingian period was a hinge period in the history of Vulgar Latin.

My dissertation offers a longitudinal study of the Latin of Late Antiquity and of the early Middle Ages, tracing evidence of language change throughout this hinge period. While my dissertation cannot settle the question of the start of the Romance languages, it contributes an important piece of information: whether the fall of the Roman Empire provoked a measurable dislocation in the language, or not.

### **1.2.2.2 Merovingian Latin predates the Carolingian reforms**

Merovingian Latin occupies the space between the Roman Empire, which had established Latin in Gaul along with Roman life and Roman administrative structures, and the rule of the Carolingian dynasty, spear-headed by Charlemagne.

Charlemagne's rule was characterized by a high degree of centralization and control, exemplified by a string of reforms on education, administration, scribal practices, and on the Latin language as it was written<sup>3</sup>. These reforms installed a new linguistic norm, modeled after that of Classical and Patristic Latin. Written Latin had to follow these prescriptive models. Effectively, this dislocated the written Latin of the Carolingian period further still from the spoken language than at earlier periods<sup>4</sup>. Merovingian Latin, in contrast, did not operate under normative constraints that were quite so heavy, and thus reflects more attestations of Vulgar Latin developments<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup>How the reforms were implemented and how they affected language is detailed in Verdo (2010, pp. 85-89).

<sup>4</sup>This is treated throughout the eighth chapter of Clackson and Horrocks (2011).

<sup>5</sup>Although the written language cannot be held to represent the spoken language. There were always certain rules to the written language that set a distance between the written and the spoken language. This is a distinction that was made clear already by Meillet, Perrot, and Perrot (1928, p. 279). I present in this dissertation that there was a Merovingian norm that accepted certain vulgarisms (from the point of view of CL) as acceptable, while it marked others as needing to be avoided. This norm had replaced the CL norm among all but the most educated circles.



Thus, the Merovingian period is a transitional period in the history of the Latin language, marking what may be the last stage of Vulgar Latin, or Latin as the vernacular language of the people, immediately preceding the first form of ‘medieval’ Latin - the learned, archaizing, artificial Carolingian Latin<sup>6</sup>. Yet, despite this importance, the very last stage of Latin is a neglected part of the history of the Latin language. The histories of Latin often do not cover the Merovingian period, partially or at all<sup>7</sup>. This may be due in part to the traditional divide between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This divide is artificial, and likely does not apply to the Latin language. Instead, according to the view that I have presented, in Gaul, it is the Carolingian reforms that would have brought about a strong divide between Latin as a spoken, living language, and the medieval reality of Latin as a learned, set language and the vernaculars as the living languages. My dissertation studies, then, the very last stage of Latin in Gaul, and seeks to better integrate it to the history of the Latin language.

### 1.2.2.3 Merovingian evidence for regionalization?

The traditional narrative is that the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> c. are characterized by a move away from the urban centers of cultural and political life of antiquity, which lay south, on the Mediterranean sea. The early Middle Ages looked north, towards a rural, land-based, more regionalized economy<sup>8</sup>. The progressive erosion of Roman models and structures, which took place over the course of the centuries that followed the dislocation of the Roman Empire into the Germanic kingdoms, allowed for written Latin to reflect more closely Vulgar Latin developments and for Vulgar Latin to evolve regional specificities and at a faster pace.

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<sup>6</sup>This is valid only for Gaul. Other regions were not affected by the Carolingian reforms as much, and thus the dating of their transitional period differs. This is treated throughout the eighth chapter of Clackson and Horrocks (2011).

<sup>7</sup>Here are a few examples of major longitudinal studies of Latin that neglect all or part of the Merovingian period: Adams (2007), Adams (2011), Weiss (2011), Baldi (2002). They do recognize the arbitrary nature of their scope.

<sup>8</sup>Notably, this is followed by Pierre Riché, Riché (1962), Riché (1989), Riché (1999), and is central to his thesis, presented below.

Following this view, Merovingian Latin can be counted on to exhibit more innovations than the Latin of the highly romanized, urban centers of the Mediterranean sea, which were better able to maintain their Roman heritage. Romanization, it is said, had been more tenuous in northern Gaul than in the former Roman provinces further south, as the regions it covered were even during the Roman Empire still remote marches, although they did contain cities of great cultural and administrative importance. Northern Gaul also comprised a significant non-Roman, Frankish population.

An attractive hypothesis is that the linguistic and cultural situation of the Merovingian kingdom could be subdivided even further<sup>9</sup>. The southern realms of the Merovingian kingdom would have stayed culturally more Roman, in terms of culture, education, and society, and that this would find itself reflected in the language. This would be because the southern realms were more urban and densely populated, had been better assimilated into Roman culture than the north, and were joined to the Frankish kingdom only at later dates. The north, however, would be resolutely more Germanic, with the Loire perhaps marking the difference. Riché goes so far as to speak of the 'Barbarian Gaul' of the north and the 'Roman Gaul' of the south<sup>10</sup>. However, against this, Hen has argued that the sources simply do not corroborate this, as they would be too sparse to be reliable<sup>11</sup>.

My study of the inscriptions of Gaul attempts to settle the question, by providing the piece of the puzzle that had been missing until now: detailed linguistic analyses of inscription clusters that are geographically far removed from one another. The first inscription cluster studied is that of Trier, which is far in the north east of Gaul, while the second consists in the inscriptions of Clermont-Ferrand, Bourges, Limoges, Cahors and Le Puy, in the center and south of Gaul. The location of Trier and Clermont-Ferrand is indicated on Figure 1.1. There are hundreds of inscriptions available for study; these should be enough in number to allow for secure conclusions not only about Merovingian

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<sup>9</sup>In particular, the following scholars support this thesis: Riché (1962), Riché (1989, pp. 19-22), Riché (1999, pp. 85-92), Verdo (2010, p. 80) and Banniard (2001, p. 26).

<sup>10</sup>See Riché (1962), Riché (1989, pp. 19-22), Riché (1999, pp. 85-92).

<sup>11</sup>Hen (1995, pp. 5-6).

Latin, but also about regionalization (or lack thereof).

The inscriptions are the only source that can adjudicate this matter. The vast majority of the documents indeed come from Paris and were produced by a single issuing authority, the royal chancellery. The only documents that are from another city are the Tours accounting documents, which would be very difficult to use to make statements about the differences between Tours and Paris French<sup>12</sup>.

### **1.3 The late antique and early medieval primary sources**

This dissertation only covers subliterate sources. There are two types of sources that are studied: inscriptions and documents ('charters').

#### **1.3.1 Rationale for source selection**

The end of Late Antiquity and the very early Middle Ages did not yield much in the way of sources, as compared to the Classical period and to the later medieval period. However, the sources are plentiful compared to the other branches of Indo-European linguistics. There are, then, primary sources certainly in a quantity that allows for study.

As limited temporally and regionally in scope as Merovingian Latin may seem, it will not be possible in this study to cover all of the sources available. I have chosen to restrict myself to original non-literary sources, as the others presented considerable methodological difficulties. The ones that are studied in this dissertation are listed below under 1.3.

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<sup>12</sup>The Tours accounting documents, understandably, do not contain any continuous prose. They contain lists of names of tenant farmers, many of which are of Germanic origin. They are thus of no use to the study of syntax, morphosyntax or morphology, although they could serve phonology, onomastics, and Old Frankish linguistics. They have not yet been studied by linguists.

**Bias toward original and non-literary sources** I selected only period sources, and not later copies of sources. I selected sources that skew toward the non-literary<sup>13</sup>. The reasoning was to avoid the interference of the later periods.

Literary texts<sup>14</sup> are transmitted to us through copies, and copies of copies. Each copy carries the risk of scribal error, and of deliberate tampering or rewriting. Such is the nature of manuscript transmission.

Later scribes were prone to ‘rectify’ the original text, making it adhere to their linguistic norms, erasing variations of spellings, changing a little known or a non-classical word for one they deemed more appropriate, etc. This was the purpose of treatises such as the *De Re Orthographia*, by Alcuin, Charlemagne’s leading scholar.<sup>15</sup> Such changes obfuscate linguistic developments.

There are a few examples of texts for which we have manuscripts that predate the Carolingian reforms and manuscripts that were written after the reforms, showing the clear and measurable effects of rewriting<sup>16</sup>. Thus, it is eminently preferable to avoid later copies.

While we have some amount of Merovingian literary texts, there are very few actual manuscripts of these texts that are from the Merovingian period. For instance, only one manuscript of the Chronicle of Fredegar dates from the 7<sup>th</sup> c., and only two manuscripts of Merovingian hagiographic material are actually from the Merovingian period, an area for which Merovingian writers were especially prolific.<sup>17</sup> The situation is not better for legal compilations: for the *Lex Salica*, unfortunately, none of its manuscripts predates the

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<sup>13</sup>A small subset of the inscriptions can be considered literary. However, it makes sense to treat them in parallel with the rest of the inscriptions, as they share much in common, such as set phrases belonging to funerary epigraphy.

<sup>14</sup>And some documents, such as copies of charters and also cartularies, by definition.

<sup>15</sup>Fouracre and Gerberding (1996, pp. 64-5). Alcuin’s *De Re Orthographia* would have been made to act as guideline for Carolingian scribes recopying older manuscripts, to standardize the Latin of these manuscripts to Carolingian norms.

<sup>16</sup>Carolingian rewriting of Merovingian texts has been studied most extensively for hagiography; Fouracre and Gerberding (1996, p. 65) and Verdo (2010).

<sup>17</sup>Fouracre and Gerberding (1996, p. 64).

Carolingian reforms, dating from the mid-8<sup>th</sup> c. onward<sup>18</sup>.

Beyond the issue of the very small number of original Merovingian manuscripts, there's the additional issue of access: they are not available as diplomatic editions. Consulting them, then, would require lengthy trips to the various archives at which they are stored.

In comparison, the inscriptions and the original charters are assuredly originals, and they have been reedited recently, in part for the inscriptions, and in entirety for the charters.

### 1.3.2 Inscriptions

Inscriptional evidence spans the duration and the entire territory of the Merovingian kingdom. They are the only source to do so.

The inscriptions cover uninterruptedly the 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> c. They provide invaluable coverage of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c., for which extremely little is available.

The major and minor city centers produced inscriptions in varying numbers, yielding linguistic and cultural evidence covering the entire territory. This isn't the case for the documents, which are nearly all from Paris.

#### 1.3.2.1 Editions, site selection

The Trier and the Clermont-Ferrand inscriptions have been reedited in the *Recueil des Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*<sup>19</sup>. This collection seeks to update and correct the older, dated edition of Le Blant (1856–1892). Unfortunately, the *Recueil* covers only two sites of the Merovingian kingdom, Trier and *Aquitania Prima*; for the rest of the

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<sup>18</sup>Drew (2011, p. 53). There are additional problems with the *Lex Salica*: its transmission is so complex, as the Laws survive in so many manuscripts, well over 80, of such varying length and content, that the current state of affairs is that it has not been possible for modern editors to establish a single critical text that would encompass all of the manuscripts; Drew (2011, pp. 52-3). While the *Lex Salica* originated in the 6<sup>th</sup> c., it was supplemented throughout the Merovingian and Carolingian period, leading to a highly complex, hybrid text, with layers pointing to different periods.

<sup>19</sup>Receiving one volume each; Gauthier (1975) and Descombes (1985).

Merovingian kingdom, including Paris, there is only Le Blant.

Le Blant (1856–1892) contains some 700 inscriptions<sup>20</sup>. Since Le Blant, the number of inscriptions available is estimated to have doubled. Indeed, of the 237 inscriptions covered by the new Gauthier (1975) for Trier, only half figure in Le Blant. The consequence of this is that the new re-editions of the inscriptions, when they will come out, have the potential to disrupt any linguistic conclusions based upon the older editions alone.

I cover the inscriptions of Trier and *Aquitania Prima* partially because these are the only groups of inscriptions for which there are up to date editions. The absence of recent editions for the rest of the Merovingian inscriptions is constraining. Thankfully, we are fortunate in that Trier was a very important late antique metropolis and, in fact, it was the leading city of Late Roman Gaul, as an Imperial regional capital. *Aquitania Prima* may appear to be an odd choice brought about by the fact that the rest of the Merovingian inscriptions haven't been reedited yet, but its geographical location (so far south that it was first part of the Visigothic kingdom) makes it especially interesting. The inscriptions of Vienna have been reedited recently; I consider their input in my contrastive study, in the fourth chapter, although I could not dedicate to them a specific chapter, as I did for Trier and *Aquitania Prima*. Vienna would benefit from receiving an in-depth treatment, as would the other regions once their inscriptions will be reedited.

Throughout my dissertation, I make use of the inscriptions from other regions and periods to bolster my study. I pay particular attention to the Republican and Imperial inscriptions of Gaul and Italy. I do so as I hold it to be important to situate Merovingian Latin within the history of the Latin language, geographically and chronologically-speaking.

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<sup>20</sup>However, Le Blant covers a geographic area larger than the Merovingian territory. Only a portion of these inscriptions are actually in Gaul (corresponding roughly to the provinces listed as *Première Belgique*, *Seconde Belgique*; *Première Germanie*; *Première, Deuxième, Troisième, Quatrième Lyonnaise*; *Première Aquitaine*, *Seconde Aquitaine*; *Séquanaise*).

### 1.3.2.2 Numbers, geographical and chronological distribution

This is detailed under the second and third chapters. For convenience, I repeat here a summary of the information.

**Numbers** The new editions contains, for Trier, 237 inscriptions, and for *Aquitania Prima*, 62 inscriptions. Vienna has about 300 inscriptions.

**Geographical distribution** The Trier corpus contains almost exclusively inscriptions from Trier. There are a handful of inscriptions from nearby Metz. The *Aquitania Prima* contains inscriptions from a few cities, and for that reason it is referred to by the name of a region. Most of the inscriptions are from Clermont-Ferrand, but a few are from Bourges, Limoges, Le Puy and Cahors. It makes sense to treat these cities together, as they are not only somewhat close to each other, but as they share some particularly prominent inscription authors.

**Chronological distribution** The Trier inscriptions span 330-730 AD uninterruptedly. The *Aquitania Prima* cover well 500-640 AD, but only very sparsely or not at all the periods that precede and follow.

### 1.3.3 The documents

The Merovingian documentary evidence consists in legal documents (or ‘charters’).

The following topics are discussed in detail under the fifth chapter. For convenience, I repeat here a summary of the information.

#### 1.3.3.1 Editions

There are two main editions, which cover all of the charters: the *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* (ChLA) and the *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae*.

### 1.3.3.2 Numbers, geographical and chronological distribution

**Numbers** It is evaluated that there are all in all some 90 Merovingian charters, some 50 of which are copies and some 40 are originals. The reason for the vacillation lies in the disputed authenticity of some of these documents, which some scholars accept and others reject.<sup>21</sup>

**Geographical distribution** Nearly all the charters were found in the archives of the Saint-Denis abbey near Paris. The only exception to this is the Tours accounting documents.

**Chronological distribution** The charter evidence clusters in the last 150 years of the Merovingian period. There is nothing available that is earlier than ~600 AD. Accounting for the documentary silence of the early Merovingian period has proven a thorny problem.

## 1.4 Methodology

Each chapter contains its own methodology section. In these, the various chapter-dependent methodological concerns are addressed. These also cover literature review.

The methodological sections (2.1.2.6, 2.5 ) of Chapter 2 are especially concerned with the methodological shortcomings of the one linguistic study that's been carried out for the Trier inscriptions specifically, Gasnault and Vézin (1975), and of Gaeng (1968), who attempted to offer a statistical analysis of the vocalism of the inscriptions of Gaul. It also offers a long treatment of the issue of inscription dating based upon linguistic grounds; I propose a model that addresses some of the difficulties faced by that of Gasnault and Vézin (1975).

The methodological section of Chapter 3 is very short, as much of the previous chapter's discussions still apply, and as there is very little that has been written on the language

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<sup>21</sup>For the main modern editions: the *Codices Latini Antiquiores* recognizes 44 Merovingian charters as original, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* recognizes 38.



of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions specifically.

Chapter four offers a contrastive study of the different inscription clusters. It also offers an attempt to date inscriptions based upon linguistic grounds, in answer to Gasnault and Vézin (1975). There are overarching methodological concerns addressed throughout the chapter, to lay out my reasons for proceeding as I do, and to motivate my analysis and conclusions.

Chapter five offers a different take on material that has been approached by many experienced scholars. While I disagree with their analyses and conclusions, this doesn't have to do with methodology. The one methodological innovation I offer is to import artifact-based methods from archival science.

## 1.5 Structure of the dissertation

The structure of this dissertation is as follows on Table 1.1. In the following, I provide brief descriptions of the remaining chapters.

### 1.5.1 Ch. 2-3: Epigraphic evidence for the Late Antique and Merovingian period: Trier and *Aquitania Prima*

These two chapters consist in specialized studies of particular groups of inscriptions (or 'corpora'), those of Trier and of Clermont-Ferrand (and its surroundings, corresponding to the Roman province of *Aquitania Prima*). While my discussion is focused on Vulgar Latin linguistics, it also bears upon the related topics of epigraphy, sociolinguistics and material culture. Both chapters share the same structure and the same methodology; however, the number of pages devoted to each elements vary, as the two corpora are fairly dissimilar.

Chapters two and three are broken into two main portions. The first section offers a combined statistical and philological approach to the language of the 'regular' inscriptions. The regular inscriptions follow a specific structure (or 'formulary') that is more or less

Table 1.1: Research plan of dissertation

Chapter 1	Introduction
	<i>Introduction of topic</i> <i>Research plan</i> <i>General methodological concerns</i> <i>Literature review</i>
Chapter 2	Epigraphic evidence for the Late Antique and Merovingian period: Trier
	<i>Statistical study of the language of the ‘regular’ inscriptions</i> <i>Philological study of the language of the ‘irregular’ inscriptions</i> <i>Material culture, sociolinguistics</i> <i>Dating using linguistic grounds</i>
Chapter 3	Epigraphic evidence for the Late Antique and the Merovingian period: <i>Aquitania Prima</i>
	<i>Statistical study of the language of the ‘regular’ inscriptions</i> <i>Philological study of the language of the ‘irregular’ inscriptions</i> <i>Sociolinguistics</i>
Chapter 4	Epigraphic Evidence for the Merovingian Period: Contrastive Study of the ‘late’ vulgarisms
	<i>Contrastive study of the two inscription clusters</i> <i>Integration of evidence of additional regions</i> <i>Comparative approach to dating using linguistic grounds</i>
Chapter 5	The material culture of Merovingian papyri and manuscripts
	<i>Inventory, typology</i> <i>Codicology, dating using codicological grounds</i> <i>Use of charters</i> <i>Destruction, reuse and survival of charters</i>
Chapter 6	Conclusion

rigid, and constitute the majority of the evidence available for each corpora. The second section deals with the non-formulaic ('irregular') inscriptions one by one and as a group, relying upon a philological, linguistic approach. It is in this later section that issues of sociolinguistics and material culture are treated.

### **1.5.2 Ch. 4: Epigraphic evidence for the Merovingian period: Contrastive study of the 'late' vulgarisms**

This chapter consists in a contrastive study of epigraphic material covered so far in this dissertation, while integrating that of other regions (Vienna, in particular).

The focus of this chapter is on a particular subgroup of vulgarisms, those that are found entirely or for the most part in the later material. The objectives are twofold. First, it is hoped that by isolating and evaluating the evidence of the 'late' vulgarisms in the inscriptions, I can shed light upon Vulgar Latin developments. Second, I hope to see if these 'late' vulgarisms can be used as dating indicators for undated inscriptions.

### **1.5.3 Ch. 5: Inventory, typology, use and reuse of early medieval documents**

This chapter is concerned with the subliterate documents of the Merovingian periods, consisting in papyri and in parchment documents.

First, I inventory the evidence and sort it according to various internal and external characteristics. The charters were produced according to certain rules and traditions, which evolved over time. I track this evolution and attempt to motivate it. This, in turn, provides me with grounds by which to refine the dating and the attribution of some of these charters.

I then move on to the topic of the use of these charters. These charters were produced with certain purposes in mind, and we can see them come into play. This helps isolate the reasons for which documents were not only produced, but stored and preserved.

My last topic of discussion consists in the reuse of Merovingian charters in the later

Middle Ages. Reuse is very closely related to document survival and destruction. Forgery-making was a major form of document reuse. I examine this process. The very high level of systematic interplay between base (the Merovingian documents) and output documents (the forgeries) sheds lights upon 1) the forgery-making process, 2) more precisely, the selection process of Merovingian originals, 3) the characteristics of these originals, and, 4) the missing characteristics of some of the originals (dates notably), which can be inferred.

#### **1.5.4 Ch. 6: Conclusions**

I group together my observations on the chapters concerned with epigraphy (2, 3, 4). I then move on to my conclusions about the documents.

Part I

# Epigraphy

## CHAPTER 2

# Epigraphic evidence for the Late Antique and Merovingian period: Trier

### Introduction: Trier

As Trier rose in importance, from regional center to regional capital to imperial seat, its culture and its language emerged as equally authoritative, rivaling Rome.<sup>1</sup> As can be expected from a significant population center, a large number of the inscriptions available for the tail end of the Roman Empire and the earliest years of the Merovingian kingdom are from Trier.

The Trier inscriptions, spanning uninterruptedly from 330 to 730, provide us with a remarkable and irreplaceable linguistic testimony. They constitute the largest cluster of epigraphic material available for the early Merovingian period, for which we do not yet have documentary evidence (the earliest charters are from the 620s or 630s) and for which we have relatively few literary manuscripts.

The language of the inscriptions is generally formulaic and repetitive. This repetition, coupled with the fact that we have a sizable number of inscriptions, opens the door to a quantitative analysis of the rate of occurrence and of the distribution of various vulgarisms<sup>2</sup>. It is hoped that my research will impact our understanding of the development of Late Latin phonological and morphosyntactic changes, and, with the additional in-

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<sup>1</sup>Adams (2007, pp. 200, 275), quoting Ausonius.

<sup>2</sup>The code used to generate the graphs is available here, using material under MIT license: <https://github.com/tirpidz/DataCrunch> My thanks to Martin Turcotte, engineer and programmer, and to Felix Labrecque-Sinnot, research statistician, for their technical help.

scriptional evidence of other regions, that I may be able to isolate regional developments.

A small number of inscriptions do not follow the formulary or expand significantly upon the formulary, generating original text. These are studied separately as they yield additional insight into the social variation within Trier Latin. This leads me, finally, to sociolinguistics and to burial practices.

The overarching purpose of this chapter is to show how certain beliefs and assertions that endure in modern scholarship on the Merovingian period are not anchored in reality. They are leftover historiographical constructs that are demonstratively false if we examine the primary sources, such as Trier. As a result, I target for my work to reach beyond purely linguistic research, contributing to historical research, and to the broader historiographical narrative.

## **2.1 Statistical and philological analysis of the inscriptions of Trier**

### **2.1.1 Objectives**

I will provide a study of the distribution of the occurrences of different Vulgar Latin features in the inscriptions of Trier, separately and taken as an aggregate. This, straightforwardly enough, forms the quantitative portion of my analysis. Along with this, I list the occurrences of each Vulgar Latin feature and I discuss specific cases that warrant special attention; this is the philological portion of this section.

My work could not be done without considering Vulgar Latin development. Therefore, I surveyed other Vulgar Latin sources (commonly, Republican and Imperial inscriptions, the Vindolanda Tablets, the personal letters of private individuals, the *Appendix Probi*, the Merovingian charters) that inform us about the development of each Vulgar Latin feature. Whenever discussing the early history of particular Vulgar Latin features, I reference the standard grammar of Vulgar Latin (Väänänen (1981)).

## 2.1.2 Methodology

### 2.1.2.1 Inscription nomenclature

I use the inscription numbering given by the editors of the *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule* (RICG). Unless otherwise specified, the volume is the one that corresponds to Trier, the region treated in this chapter. Whenever I discuss inscriptions from the other regions that have been edited in the various volumes of the RICG, I note the region along with the inscription's number (Trier is noted as 'T', *Aquitania Prima* is noted as 'AP', and Vienna is noted as 'V'). To give an example, inscription number 10 of the Vienna RICG is noted as V 10. Other inscription call numbers (such as from Le Blant or from the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL)) are given in full form.

### 2.1.2.2 Inscription Selection

My first task consists in compiling a list of inscriptions suitable for linguistic study. I limited myself to the inscriptions that are 1) in Latin<sup>3</sup>, 2) securely from Trier or from its immediate surroundings<sup>4</sup>, 3) of a minimal length amenable to a linguistic study<sup>5</sup>, 4) for which dating can be securely evaluated using other grounds than language.

Whether an inscription can be dated is an important factor in my selection. Dated inscriptions mean dated linguistic evidence, which I can use to register chronological

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<sup>3</sup>Nine inscriptions are written in Greek (10, 92, 93, 112, 168, 172, 211, and the graffiti of 235a, 236b) and are attached to the Syriac community that was active in Trier in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. See Gauthier (1975, pp. 49-50).

<sup>4</sup>I excluded the material from Metz and surroundings (17 inscriptions, nearly all of which highly fragmentary) from the quantitative portion of my study. Metz is a different city center from Trier, some 115km removed; the populations and education levels may have differed. Thus, they cannot be used to derive conclusions about Trier Latin. Whenever particular forms are discussed, in this chapter or the next, these are noted as being from Metz.

I also excluded the 17 inscriptions listed in the Appendix of Gauthier's edition, as they are of dubious, foreign or uncertain provenance, as they are not late antique or early medieval, or are forgeries. These are not reliable indicators of late Vulgar Latin linguistic developments in Trier.

<sup>5</sup>Minimal length is determined by the presence of one Vulgar Latin feature or the reasonable possibility of at least one Vulgar Latin feature. An inscription featuring only a few letters would not be selected then.



developments. Very few of the Trier inscriptions bear dates. Thankfully, a chronology for these inscriptions has been proposed by Gauthier, based on epigraphic, archaeological, diplomatic/stylistic, and art historical grounds, which I will employ in this research<sup>6</sup>. Gauthier has assigned a ‘probable’ date range for each inscription, which she evaluates to be more or less broad. For each inscription, she also offers an extended range, stretched to the extreme boundary of what she deems ‘possible’. Her evaluation of what she deems ‘possible’ versus ‘probable’ is highly qualitative; she does not attempt to explain more exactly how likely the ‘possible’ range is. This makes difficult the use of this broader ‘possible’ range. My study therefore relies on the more trustworthy narrower ‘probable’ date range.

A portion of the inscriptions remains intractably impossible to date. While I did not include these remaining undated inscriptions in the quantitative portion of my study, their linguistic evidence is otherwise integrated in the forms of examples that I list and discuss under each Vulgar Latin feature. Whenever I discuss evidence that has been excluded from the corpus used for quantitative study, the inscription number appears preceded by an asterisk.

For my statistical analysis, I selected 125 inscriptions out of the 237 listed for Trier in the most recent edition, Gauthier (1975). The catalog entries are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 29A, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 80, 84, 84A, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 117, 119, 124, 126, 127, 132, 134, 135, 137, 138, 139, 142, 142A, 143, 144, 145, 147, 152, 153, 154, 156, 160, 165, 169, 170, 178, 180, 184, 191, 192, 193, 194A, 214, 217, 219, 220, 222.

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<sup>6</sup>Gauthier (1975, pp. 95-104). According to Gauthier, her chronology has been independently confirmed in the dissertation research of Krämer (1974). He does not provide a systematic chronology, unlike Gauthier, but he provides remarks on the chronology of certain sites and subgroups of inscriptions (e.g. the ones she deems latest are discussed in Krämer (1974, pp. 56-57)). His focus is on the formulary and on paleography, but he dutifully takes into consideration archeological findings. His chronological remarks do appear to be in accordance well enough with Gauthier’s chronology, in such a way that I feel comfortable using it.

### 2.1.2.3 Inscription Distribution

Let me first examine the chronological distribution of these inscriptions. On Figure 2.1, each inscription is represented by a trait, spanning from the earlier boundary of its date range to the later. The inscriptions are ordered chronologically, based on the middle value of their date ranges (thus, an inscription with the date range of 350-400 would receive an earlier rank than one dated 350-450). Each inscription's catalog number, following Gauthier's edition, is written at the end of its date range.

The following observations can be made. 1) The majority of the Trier inscriptions are early (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> c.). 2) Some inscriptions have broader date ranges than others<sup>7</sup>. 3) The date ranges of the later inscriptions tend to be broader. 4) We can observe that there are watershed dates that Gauthier used to establish her chronology (coinciding with 450 and the turn of each century).

### 2.1.2.4 Inscription Subdivision

As can be seen from Figure 2.1, the inscriptions form 'clusters', or groups of inscriptions which approximately share starting, ending and median value. The median values of these clusters tend to coincide with the median or the end of the centuries. Based on these clusters, I established the following subdivisions for the corpus, forming five groups (see Table 1, 'Inscription subdivision by group'): Earliest (1), Early (2), Middle (3), Late (4) and Latest (5). The 'median' values in the table refer to the median value of the earliest inscription and of the latest inscription covered by a group<sup>8</sup>. These groups are useful to approximate the behavior of the dataset and will be referred to throughout the

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<sup>7</sup>The inscriptions 87, 169, 142, 70, 75, 89, 217 are especially broad. The inscriptions with broader date ranges may still contain valuable input. I accepted whatever inscriptions fitted the inclusion criteria, trying to be as inclusive as possible. The reason for this is that some Vulgar Latin features are poorly attested. Removing inscriptions limits our chances of finding these attestations. Furthermore, most of the inscriptions with broad date ranges are late, and we have relatively few late inscriptions. Removing the late inscriptions with a broad date range would therefore be crippling our already limited evidence.

<sup>8</sup>Using median values is superior to listing the earliest and latest values, as this would lead to overlap between the groups.

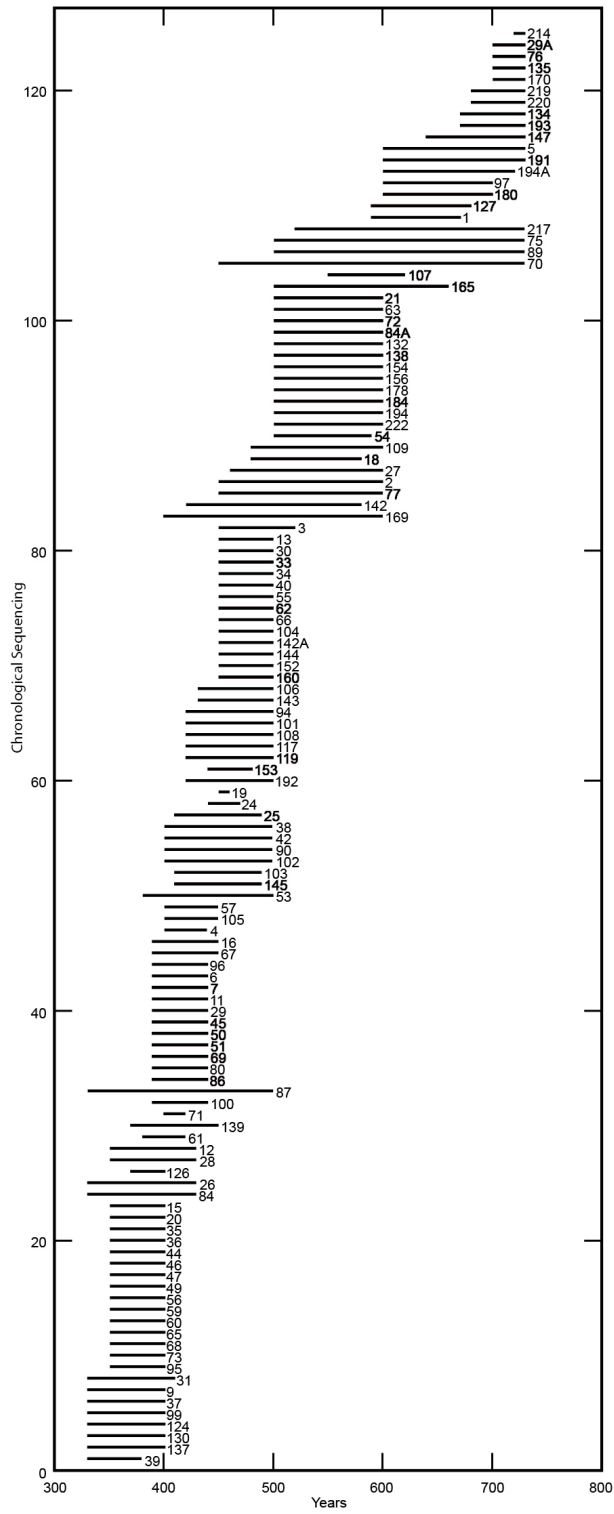


Figure 2.1: Trier: Inscriptions that can be dated approximately

discussion of the data. They are also used as control, to show that my assessment of the trends decade by decade does indeed reflect the data.

Table 2.1: Trier: Inscriptions subdivisions by group

Subdivision	Name	Medians	Inscriptions covered	Total
Group 1	earliest	355-390	9 15 20 26 31 35 36 37 39 44 46 47 49 56 59 60 65 68 73 84 85 99 124 126 130 137	28
Group 2	early	400-425	4 6 7 11 29 45 50 51 57 61 67 69 71 80 86 87 96 100 105 139	20
Group 3	middle	440-485	3 13 19 24 25 30 33 34 38 40 42 53 55 62 66 90 94 101 102 103 104 106 108 117 119 142A 143 144 145 152 153 160 192	33
Group 4	late	500-590	2 18 21 27 54 63 70 72 77 84A 107 109 132 138 142 154 156 165 169 178 184 194 222	23
Group 5	latest	615-725	1 5 29A 75 76 89 97 127 134 135 147 170 180 191 193 194A 214 217 219 220	20

### 2.1.2.5 Linguistic features studied

I selected the following changes in the received spelling for study, as they are an indicator for underlying Vulgar Latin linguistic developments. These will be henceforth referred to as ‘Vulgar Latin features’ (alternatively, ‘VL features’) or as ‘vulgarisms’ in this research, although it is understood, of course, that we are dealing with the graphic representation (by way of spelling variants) of phonological and morphosyntactic phenomena. In addition, it is understood that the absence or presence of these vulgarisms is not enough to make statements about the state of the Vulgar Latin of Trier; we must keep in mind general Latin developments and the fact that there are differences between written and spoken language.

I have made my selection based on 1) Corpus Attestation (i.e., whether a Vulgar Latin feature has a significant number of occurrences in the corpus), 2) Saliency (i.e. whether a Vulgar Latin feature is deemed an especially noteworthy development in the history of the Latin language), 3) Ease of Evaluation (i.e. whether the attestations of a Vulgar Latin feature can be identified unequivocally and easily). These three factors have led me to select several phonological features for detailed study, while morphosyntactic features are treated in a more general manner. While the Vulgar Latin grammars such as Väänänen (1981) list many more Vulgar Latin features, I had to restrict my list to those features that are attested in the Trier corpus. This means that my study is especially limited with respect to morphosyntactic and syntactic features, due to the constraints of the formulaic language of epigraphy.

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<sup>9</sup>Greek aspirates can occur in any position: word-initial, medial, or final.

Table 2.2: Trier: Phonological features

Vowels		
	Vocalic merger	$/\check{i}/$ and $/\bar{e}/$ $/\check{u}/$ and $/\bar{o}/$
	Monophthongization	$/ae/ > /e/$ $/au/ > /o/$
	Other voc. dev.	Syncope V in hiatus Prothetic V
Consonants		
	Word-initial C	$/h/- > \emptyset$ Gk aspiration & Gk aspirates <sup>9</sup>
	Word-medial C	Cluster simplification ([ks], cl. with nasals etc) gemination, degem. palatalization
	Word-final C	$-/m/ > \emptyset$

Table 2.3: Trier: Morphosyntactic features studied

Nouns, Pronouns	
	Agreement
	Agreement of relative pronoun
	Declension class
Verbs	
	Agreement with subject
	Conjugation class

### 2.1.2.6 Methodological shortcomings of previous studies

The only linguistic study conducted on the Trier inscriptions is that of Nancy Gauthier, one of their editors<sup>10</sup>, which received however several corrections and stern criticism by Veikko Väänänen<sup>11</sup>. Other editors<sup>12</sup> offer philological remarks pertaining to language and epigraphy for individual inscriptions, but they do not offer a synthetic view of the language of the corpus. Krämer (1974) provides a detailed study of the Trier formulary, but his focus isn't the study of Vulgar Latin. Väänänen (1981) and Pirson (1901) are grammars that integrate the Merovingian inscriptions; I will make use of the works throughout mine.

Gaeng (1968) and Pirson (1901) offer general studies of the Latin of the inscriptions of Gaul. Their goals are very different from mine, which are to offer a in-depth study of particular sites. Gaeng's study, it should be noted, is limited to changes affecting vowels (mergers, monophthongizations, syncope etc).

Gaeng and Pirson cover a very large geographic area; all of Gaul for Pirson, and Gaul, Spain and Italy for Gaeng. The sites that I study are much more narrowly defined: the city of Trier and its surroundings, and the city of Clermont-Ferrand and the other smaller centers of *Aquitania Prima*. Gaeng subdivides Gaul into two, *Narbonensis* and *Lugdunensis*. The latter covers the regions of *Belgica*, *Lugdunensis* and the two *Aquitaniae* and *Germaniae* - that is to say all but easternmost Gaul, and in fact the two corpora studied in this dissertation. For *Lugdunensis*, he considers only 266 inscriptions for study, which is a relatively small number, and in fact only a fraction of what is available. This means that he lumps together the inscriptions of a very large geographic area, and that he considers only a very small number of data points, the distribution of which he does not provide. It is indeed impossible to determine from his study the precise geographic

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<sup>10</sup>Gauthier (1975, pp. 61-77).

<sup>11</sup>Väänänen (1976, pp. 146-147), which concludes with "Je crains que la synthèse linguistique fondée sur les données de la première Belgique soit prématurée."

<sup>12</sup>The list of the editors, along with their contributions, can be found in Krämer (1974, pp. 3-5). The main works are: Diehl, Moreau, and Marrou (1927-1931), Fuchs (2006), Gose (1958), Hettner (1903), Le Blant (1892).

breakdown of his 266 inscriptions. Are they for the most part from one particular region, or did he take samples from each region? Are some regions more heavily represented? These questions remain unanswered, and in fact lead me to believe that his methodology may have resulted in obscuring finer-grained regional developments. This is unfortunate, as Gaeng's objective was, precisely, to detect regional variation.

My study is devised to yield much more granular results, diving deep into relatively small corpora, integrating as many data points as available (237 inscriptions for Trier, 62 inscriptions for *Aquitania Prima*), and tracking as many linguistic features as salient. This means that Gaeng and I offer vastly different degrees of magnification; he zooms out while I zoom in. This granularity allows me to track 1) fine-grained chronological developments<sup>13</sup>, 2) a broader array of linguistic features<sup>14</sup>, and 3) it allows me to take into account epigraphical information, along with regional style and sociolinguistics, and 4) it opens up the door towards regional variation studies, which will be made possible by the re-editions of the inscriptions of additional corpora.

I can give an example of the desirability of a highly granular study such as mine. Gaeng's reviewer, Politzer (1972, p. 703), judges that Gaeng did not bring new conclusions to the table; "In General, G's findings are those that one would expect on the basis of other studies of Vulgar Latin inscriptions and documents and on the basis of Romance development. Since Lat.  $\text{ĩ}/\bar{\text{e}}$  and  $\text{ũ}/\bar{\text{o}}$  merge in most of the Romance-speaking world, their graphic presentations are confused in the inscriptions. [...]". However, my analysis reveals that the finer-grained details of the development of both mergers in fact very much differ, and this impacts not only the relative chronology of Vulgar Latin features, but, at a more fundamental level, our understanding of language change.

The Trier edition editor, Gauthier (1975), provides a short linguistic study, in which she tallied the occurrences of some Vulgar Latin features, most of which are phonological

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<sup>13</sup>I am able to track development decade by decade, while Gaeng can only discern between 4-6<sup>th</sup> c. developments and 7<sup>th</sup> c. developments.

<sup>14</sup>I track a variety of vowel- and consonant-affecting phonological features, and a few morphosyntactic features, while Gaeng had to restrict his study only to the vowel-affecting features.



in nature. Her findings are presented on a table on p.76. She separates the inscriptions into two groups. The first group covers: spelling confusions between *ī* and *ē*, *ae* and *e*, omission of *h*, simplification of consonant clusters, *qui* instead of *quae*. For this first group, she gives a breakdown of the number of occurrences for each feature. However, for the second group, she gives only the total number of occurrences of many features, without a breakdown. The features covered are: simplification of diphthongs, loss of vowels in hiatus, prothetic vowels, reduction of [kw] to [w], palatalization of [k], loss of *-m* and *-t*, case confusions, other morphosyntactic developments, etc.

It would be preferable to track each feature individually, as 1) this may allow us to distinguish which features become substantially more attested from those that become only marginally so, 2) which may indicate generalized Merovingian Latin developments, or 3) tendencies particular to Trier. Finally, 4) a finer breakdown would be needed to see if phonological changes such as vocalic mergers or the loss of final consonants impact in the long term morphosyntax, in terms of case usage, use of prepositions, verb endings, etc.

Gauthier subdivides her inscriptions into two groups: earlier than 450 and later than 450. She does not attempt to make further distinctions within the later inscriptions. However, it is desirable to do so, as it may give indications as to the speed of changes for each feature. We are lucky in that the Trier inscriptions are fairly numerous and that date ranges can be evaluated for most of the inscriptions, which make a more refined analysis possible. Furthermore, Gauthier's categories are based on the presupposition that 450 was a watershed moment in the development of Trier Latin - something that needs proving and which we should definitely not take for granted.

Gauthier argues that the conclusions from her linguistic analysis can be used as a reliable dating indicator, an assertion that Veikko Väänänen rejects on the basis of serious factual errors made by Gauthier and on his assessment of Gauthier's analysis as premature<sup>15</sup>. Gauthier considers only Trier evidence, neglecting other Vulgar Latin sources and

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<sup>15</sup>Väänänen (1976, p. 147).

general Latin developments; this leads her to assert that some vulgarisms are very late (and so dating indicators) when, actually, they are found in Latin sources that are much earlier, and are thus a well implanted feature of the Latin language by the time of the Trier inscriptions. That there are only late attestations in Trier may be a fluke (especially for vulgarisms that are only rarely found) or it may have to do with the complex issue of register and style, and stonemason education.

I am hoping to remedy the weaknesses of Gauthier's linguistic analysis so as to offer more nuanced and accurate conclusions about Trier Latin and about the dating of Trier inscriptions based on linguistic grounds. My quantitative and philological analysis of Trier Latin will in turn be enriched by a comparative study of the inscriptional material of another region of Gaul, *Aquitania Prima*, in Chapter 3. Finally, beyond offering finer grained chronological development, I present how social variation plays a great role in the language of the Trier inscriptions, offering a sociolinguistic commentary.

### 2.1.3 Sample Inscriptions

**Regular or 'formulaic' inscriptions** I include here two sample inscriptions representative of most of the corpus, for illustrative purposes. They adhere to a formulaic structure that presents few limited variations<sup>16</sup>.

In its most basic form, the structure consists in the following elements:

Hic quiescit (or: iacet, pausat, requiescit) in pace *A*  
qui uixit annos *X* et menses *Y* et dies *Z*  
*B* titulum posuit

The relationship of agent *B* to the deceased *A* is made explicit (*filius* or *filia*, *parentes*, *uxor* or *uir*, *pater* or *mater* etc.). If the agent is plural (e.g. *parentes*, *pater et mater*, *fili*), the verb agreement is commonly respected, and so there is *posuerunt*. This basic

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<sup>16</sup>The formulary is covered in depth in Krämer (1974) and also in Gauthier (1975, pp. 37-50).

structure is occasionally expanded slightly. Perhaps the agent or the deceased is qualified as *carissimus* or *pientissimus* or it is mentioned that the act was done *pro caritate*, the length of the life of the deceased is stated, or a note is made about the social identity of the agent or the deceased, e.g. *clericus*, *ciuis Surus* ('Syrian citizen'), *puella* etc. More extensive additions to the formulary are discussed further in this section and under 2.3.

(1) 73. 350-400

Hic quiescit in pace  
Ursicina qui uixit  
annos V et mensis  
XI et dies III; Elpidius  
et Ursula filiae primae na-  
te posuerunt.

Features: Confusion of *i* and *e* (*mensis*; *menses* expected), *qui* generalized (*quae* expected), monophthongization of *ae* (*nate*; *natae* expected).

(2) 21. 500-600

Hic quiescit in pace  
Fedola qui vixxit an-  
nus LXXV, sub die IIII kal(endas)  
macias, cuius filius et  
flia tetulum posue <r>u-  
n- -t.

Features: Confusion of *o* and *u* (*Fedola*; *Fedula* expected. *annus*; *annos* expected), confusion of *i* and *e* (*tetulum*; *titulum* expected), *qui* generalized (*quae* expected), changes affecting [ks] (*vixxit* as orthographic variant of *vixit*).

Other changes: *macias* for *maias*. The glide in Classical Latin *maias* is geminate. The Trier spelling may be indicative of hardening followed by palatalization, following the scheme [ii] > [ʒi]; this is commented on by Väänänen (1981, pp. 52-53 n° 95) who quotes the form *magias* for *maias*.

As Gauthier (1975, p. 66) notes, *flius* and *fliā* for *filius* and *filia* may be a purely graphic phenomenon not indicative of any sound change. The inscription does not bear abbreviation signs or superscript letters. However, it is written very densely, and the lines bearing these two forms are especially dense. It may thus be that the letters were omitted in the interest of space. In addition, these are common words in epigraphic language, and so can be abbreviated without impeding readability, as the reader knows to expect them. Many of the other instances of syncopated spellings in the Trier inscriptions affect such common words in very dense inscriptions; these forms are discussed in Section 2.1.4.4.

**Regular ‘fragmentary’ inscriptions** A significant number of the regular or formulaic inscriptions are damaged with loss of text. The extent of the damage varies, from causing an uncertain reading for one or a few letters, to complete destruction of the text. Naturally, the more extensive the loss, the harder it becomes to make use of the inscription for linguistic purposes. Nonetheless, some inscriptions with extensive damage bear enough linguistic information still to be valuable.

Here are three examples of fragmentary inscriptions. The first one features mild to moderate damage, as is common throughout the corpus. The second and third (items 4 and 5) show the highest amount of damage that I could integrate to the corpus. For these, reliance upon the formulae is often required in order to recover as much of the text as possible.

1) Mild to moderate damage.

(3) 67. 500-600

[Hic quie]scit Ui-  
[... in] pace fi-  
[delis q]ui uixit  
[annos] III minus  
[dies] XXXVIII nutri-  
[c]ionis pro ca-  
ritate titu-  
lum posuerunt.

Features: Confusion of *i* and *e* (*nutri/c]ionis*; *nutriciones* expected).

2) Extensive damage.

(4) 85. 350-400

[Hic quies]cet in pace  
[... ne]ofita quae  
[vixit ... ] parentes  
[titulum posuerunt]

Features: Relative pronoun agrees with nominative feminine antecedent. Confusion of *i* and *e* (*[quies]cet*; *quiescit* expected).

(5) 152. 450-500

Hic re[quiescit]  
Rustic[... in p-]  
ace fed[elis qui]  
vixsit a[nnos ...]  
X mesis[ ... dies]  
VII posui[t/runt ...]  
[.]tiola [ ...]  
[.]a nep[t ...]

Features: Confusion of *i* and *e* (*fed[elis]* and *mesis*; *fidelis* and *menses* expected. changes affecting [ks] (*vixsit* as orthographic variant of *vixit*). *-ns-* > *-s-* (*mesis*; *menses* expected).

**Irregular inscriptions** By far, the majority of inscriptions follow the same structure, with few variations, and thus can be deemed ‘formulaic’. Some inscriptions are longer and more elaborate, but still adhere to an enlarged version of the formulary. A small number of inscriptions are more literary in register (with some even showing poetic aspirations). These tend not to adhere to the otherwise prevalent formulaic structure. An even smaller number of inscriptions do not employ the formulary but do not appear to have literary or poetic aspirations.

Since irregular inscriptions tend to be *sui generis*, I cannot provide usefully representative examples. Although they have been integrated to the corpus for quantitative purposes, they require a separate discussion, provided below under 2.3.

## 2.1.4 Data

### 2.1.4.1 Merger between /ĩ/ and /ē/

**Cases** Classical Latin /ĩ/ and /ē/ merged as /e/ in Late Latin<sup>17</sup>.

Commonly, /ĩ/ is written as <e>. I observe the forms *Vector* for *Victor* (man's name; 66), *nobelis* (135) for *nobilis*; *dulcesime* for *dulcissima* (138), *fedelis* (20, 101, 152) or *fideles* (117) or *fedele* (137) for *fidelis*, *uenerabelis* (147) for *uenerabiles* (29A)<sup>18</sup>. Also common is *tetolum* for *titulum* (2, 7, 21, 50, 51, 54, 63, 69, 72, 76, 77, 105, 107, 135, 165), *principales* for *principalis* (104), *trebunus* (107) for *tribunus*, *duodecem*<sup>19</sup> (127) for *duodecim*, *Selentia* for *Silentia* (woman's name; 160), *aeternetate* (217) for *aeternitate*.

Alternatively, /ē/ is written as <i><sup>20</sup>: *matir* (75) for *mater*, *posuirunt* (27, 147) for *posuerunt*, *ficit* (147) for *fecit*, *ticum* (55) for *tecum*, *adoliscens* (147) for *adolescens*, *mensis* for *menses* (3, 30, 73, 152, 222), *patris* for *patres*<sup>21</sup> (35, 36, 40, 45, 53, 117, 220). I find also *parentis* for *parentes* (25), 61), *nutricionis* for *nutriciones* (67), *nouembris* for *nouembres* (104), *distitutus* (217) for *destitutus*.

There is only one instance of /ĩ/ written as <e>: a very surprising *ec* instead of *hic* (adverb), from the highly fragmentary inscription 173. This inscription contains other particularities affecting /i/ (*priimitiua* for *primitiua* and *annios* for *annos*); these forms too are found nowhere else in the Trier inscriptions. So, it may well be that all of these unique forms can be chalked up to stonecutter idiosyncrasy rather than to linguistic

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<sup>17</sup>Väänänen (1981, p.30 nos 42, 43).

<sup>18</sup>Naturally, forms like *fideles* or *uenerabiles* would be perfectly acceptable used as a masculine or feminine plural in the nominative, vocative or accusative case. However, the inscriptions do not attempt to use them as thus; they are used as epithet to a subject that is nominative singular, either masculine or feminine; we are thus dealing assuredly with variant spellings of the nominative singulars *fidelis* and *uenerabilis*. Through this section and the next ones, I have verified what form is called for by the context, to make sure that I do not present an already existing form as a vulgarism.

<sup>19</sup>This form may have been created in analogy to *decem*.

<sup>20</sup>Väänänen (1981, p.36 nos 54, 43).

<sup>21</sup>Same comment as in footnote 18. The context makes clear that we are not dealing with a genitive singular (the correct form being indeed *patris*), but with nominative plurals.

development. On the other hand, the loss of /h-/ in *ec* is not that interesting, as this is attested elsewhere in Trier and as it follows Latin phonology; see Section 2.1.4.5.

This merger commonly affects verb endings: 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sing. act. indicative perfects find endings in *-et* (*uixet* for *uixit*: 84A, 132; *obiet*<sup>22</sup> for *obiit*: 147). 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation presents find endings in *-it* (*iacit* for *iacet*: 3, 45 and possibly 11<sup>23</sup>). This also affects presents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugations, such as the ubiquitous *quiescit*, written *quiescet*<sup>24</sup> (2, 15, 26, 28, 36, 44, 46, 47, 49, 61, 70, 85, 105, 132, 139), or built on *quies-* (29, 50) or *requiescit* written *requiescet* (30, 193) or *requiiscit* (33). Also, *tradedit* for *tradidit* (29A), *tegetur* for *tegitur*<sup>25</sup> (127), *posuet* for *posuit* (132), *lecuit* (134) for *licuit*, *didicavit* (217) for *dedicavit*.

Another possible case of i/e confusion involves *quiescint* (222; also discussed under 2.1.4.10), for *quiescent* (reanalyzed as 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation from the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation ending *-unt*). There is another instance of such conjugation reanalysis, 68: *quiescent*.

**Distribution** The feature is very well attested throughout the Late Antique and Merovingian periods. That the feature is so well attested at the earliest periods would point to it being a Vulgar Latin development that predates the Trier material well enough as to have permeated the writing habits.<sup>26</sup> Its frequency of occurrence increases, as Gauthier notes, but I am not finding as drastic an increase as she proposes. The increase I observe is modest, with some fluctuation.

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<sup>22</sup>This form may well be dissimilatory, to avoid the undesirable sequence /ii/. There are other cases where this sequence is avoided in Latin: affecting the suffix *-itas*, *societas* instead of *\*sociitas*; see Weiss (2011, p. 119).

<sup>23</sup>The stone does not allow for a clear reading; there appears to be a blank space between *iac* and *t* left for one letter. Gauthier reconstructs *i* in her edition, but the broadness of the space left for the letter would support an *e* over an *i* in my evaluation.

<sup>24</sup>The context makes clear that we are not dealing with a future indicative, or a subjunctive present, but that this form is meant to be an indicative present.

<sup>25</sup>Same comment as in the previous footnote. The context makes clear that we are not dealing with a 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sing. fut. pass. (the correct form being indeed *tegetur*), but with a 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sing. ind. pr. I will not repeat this comment again.

<sup>26</sup>The feature is indeed well attested already in the early imperial Latin of the letters of Claudius Terentianus, Adams (1977, pp. 7-8), and earlier still.



Gauthier remarks that spelling confusions between /ǃ/ and /ē/ are especially numerous in the Trier inscriptions. This will need to be evaluated against inscriptions from other city centers.

To produce Figure 2.2, I divided the inscriptions into 5 groups (as listed in 1.3), based on their median estimated date. For each group, I computed the weighted average number of occurrence of confusions between /ǃ/ and /ē/, using the inverse of the range of possible dates for a given inscription as its weight. In this way, the date range of each data point is factored in<sup>27</sup>. To compute a weighted average, the sum of weighted numbers of features is divided by the sum of weights for each group. The orange line is the linear regression, which is used as trend line, showing how data changes over time.

For Figure 2.3, a similar methodology was used. For each decade, I computed the weighted average number of occurrences found among all inscriptions that could originate from that decade. I have only very limited data for certain decades, hence some imprecision.

We can clearly observe a general trend for the number of occurrences to increase (as approximated by linear regression), albeit slowly. The feature was already well represented among the earliest material. The details and implications of this are discussed below in 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, and especially 2.2.2.3.

Figure 2.4 shows each occurrence of spelling confusions between <*i*> and <*e*> ordered chronologically. The inscriptions that feature the merger are in red.

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<sup>27</sup>The rationale for the use of weights is this: an inscription with a narrow date range is a much more reliable indicator of what happens at any point encompassed by its date range, than an inscription with a broad date range. Without the use of weights, the inscriptions with the broadest date ranges would get disproportionately factored in, as they would not only be considered for every year of their range (while inscriptions with narrower date ranges are considered at all only during a much shorter time span), but also as the broader inscriptions would be held to be equally good predictors as the narrower inscriptions. Thanks to the use of weights, broader inscriptions are held to be less reliable predictors, but over a broader set of years, which narrower inscriptions are held to be more reliable predictors, but over a narrower set of years.

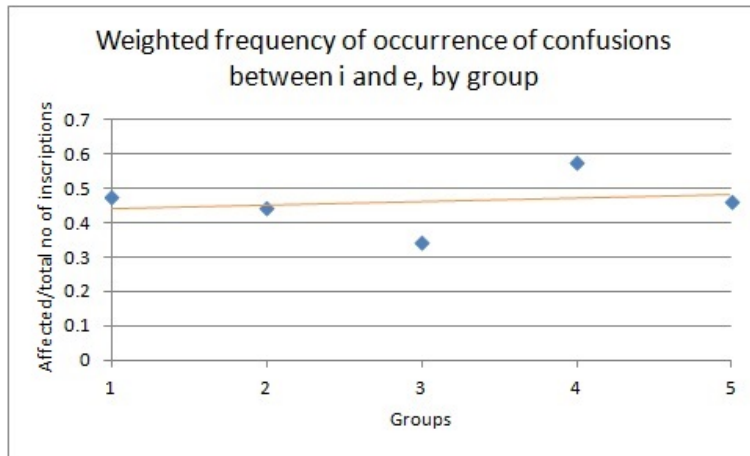


Figure 2.2: Trier: Weighted frequency of i/e confusions by group

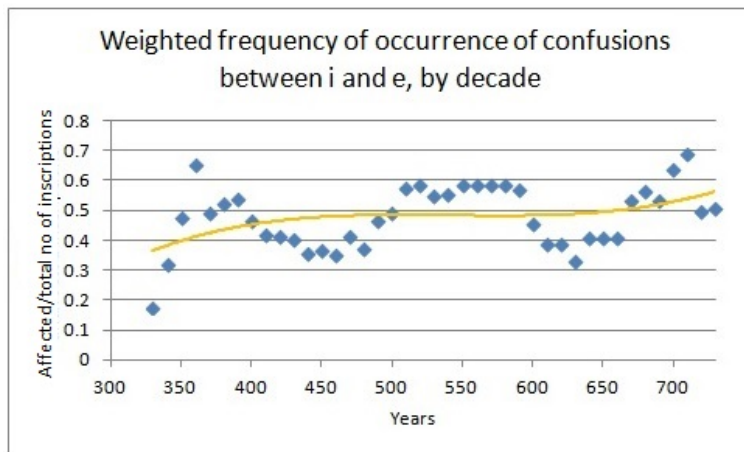


Figure 2.3: Trier: Weighted frequency of i/e confusions by decade

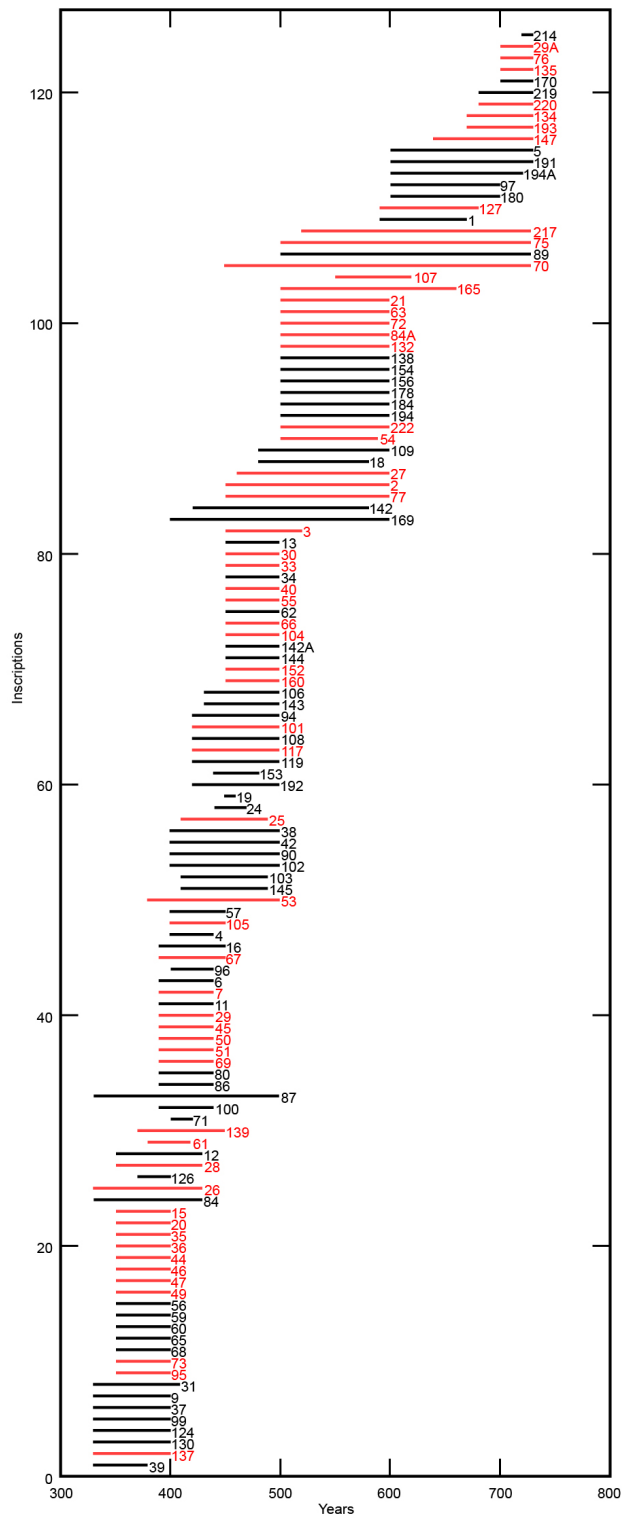


Figure 2.4: Trier: Confusions between <i> and <e>

#### 2.1.4.2 Merger between /ǔ/ and /ō/

**Cases** One of the major Late Latin perturbations to the Classical Latin Vowel system was the merger of CL /ǔ/ and /ō/ to /o/. This merger is usually taken to be significantly later than the merger of /ĩ/ and /ē/<sup>28</sup>. The Trier evidence covers the onset and the early development of this merger, providing numerous attestations to the merger, most of which are unambiguous. This makes it possible to trace the early history of the merger; beyond this section, comparative evaluation of the Gaul evidence is presented in section 4.2.3.

The merger between /ǔ/ and /ō/ is reflected in the language of the Trier inscriptions by a general confusion between spellings in <o> and in <u>. The confusion affects forms for which the Classical Latin spelling would have required /ō/ or /ǔ/ as one would expect, but there are also a few cases affecting forms with /ō/, probably by extension (hypercorrection or general confusion).

/ō/ written as <u>: *annus* for *annos* (25, 29A, 33, 62, 107, 119, 134, 135, 153, 180), *matrone* (138) for *matrone*, *numine* for *nomine* (147), *amure* for *amore* (147), *ustarius* for *ostarius* (165).

Carnoy (1906, p. 50) accounts for the accusative plural *annus* as modeled after 1<sup>st</sup> declension accusative plurals; e.g. *rosas*. However, I cannot find any other examples in Trier of such leveling, where 1<sup>st</sup> declension vocalism would be imported to the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The 2<sup>nd</sup> declension accusative plurals are otherwise preserved. The particular form *annusis* also discussed in Adams (2007, p. 77) and Löfstedt (1961, pp. 86-88) and has proven difficult to account for, beyond noting that it is quite common and not regionally-marked.

/ǔ/ written as <o>: *titolo* (7), *titolum* (127, 160) or *tetolum* (25, 45, 50, 51, 69, 72, 76, 77, 84A, 86, 107, 135) for *titulum*, *Fedola* for *Fedula* (a woman's name; 21), *numero* (135) for *numero*, *sous* for *suus* (145), *Francola* for *Francula* (a woman's name; 54), *Ursolus* for *Ursulus* (a man's name, 72), *adoliscens* (147) for *adulescens*<sup>29</sup>, *coniox* (160, 184) for

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<sup>28</sup>The references are presented under Footnote 20 of Chapter 4.

<sup>29</sup>*Adulescens* originates from the present participle of *adolesco*; the variant spelling *adulescens* may therefore well be archaizing. However, 147 is an especially late inscription (dated 650-730) bearing multiple other spelling confusions affecting <o> and <u>; it indeed yields *numine* (for *nomine*) and

*coniux*, *tomolo* (191) for *tumulo*<sup>30</sup>. We can add to this the possible case of *ad domino*, for *ad dominu[m]* (134, 193), if this isn't case usage confusion. For many of these examples, we are dealing with an unaccented /*ũ*/ preceding /*l*/.

The form *sous* for *suus* (145) is more difficult to explain. *sous* likely represents /so<sup>̄</sup>us/, as *suus* represents /su<sup>̄</sup>us/. This may be a dissimilatory spelling. The form *sous* is also found in the inscriptions of Spain; Carnoy (1906, pp. 53).

There are a few cases of /*ö*/ written as <u>: *pupulo* for *populo*(135), *pusuerunt* (18) for *posuerunt*. For the last example, perhaps the length of the root in the present stem was imported to the perfect, yielding *pōsuerunt*, with /*ō*/ written as <u>. However, I have not found other such examples of secondary spread of stem vocalism in the Trier or *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions. It is also possible that *pupulo* and *pusuerunt* feature regressive assimilation, as a form of 'vowel harmony'.

**Distribution** The feature is remarkably absent from the late antique material. It starts appearing at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. It then meets with a steady and rapid increase, to become as well attested as the i/e merger by the 7<sup>th</sup> c.

Figure 2.5 shows the weighted average number of occurrences by group. Figure 2.6 shows the weighted average number of occurrences by decade. Figure 2.7 shows each occurrence of spelling confusions between <o> and <u> ordered chronologically. The inscriptions that show the merger are in red.

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*amure* (for *amore*). I therefore hold that this *adoliscens* is much more likely to exemplify a Vulgar Latin vocalic merger than to be archaizing.

<sup>30</sup>Adams (2013, p. 67) and Carnoy (1906, p. 57) cite the form *tomolo* in particular as Gaulish examples of the merger.

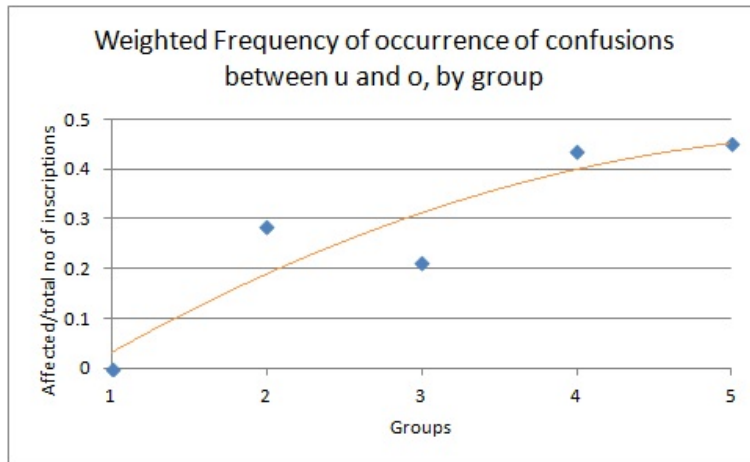


Figure 2.5: Trier: Weighted frequency of o/u confusions by group

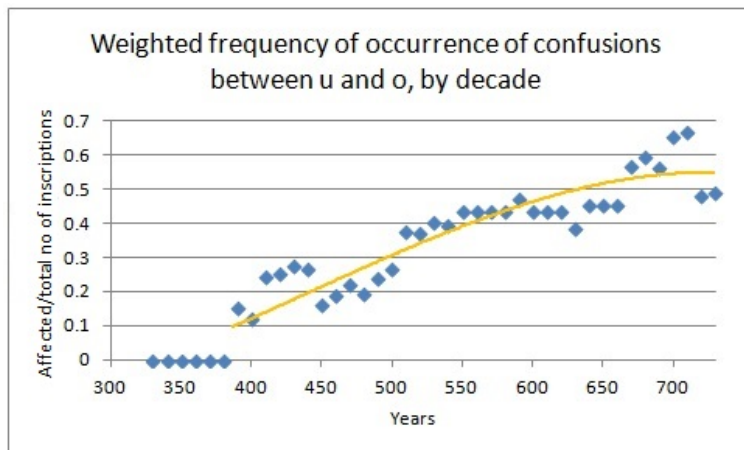


Figure 2.6: Trier: Weighted frequency of o/u confusions by decade

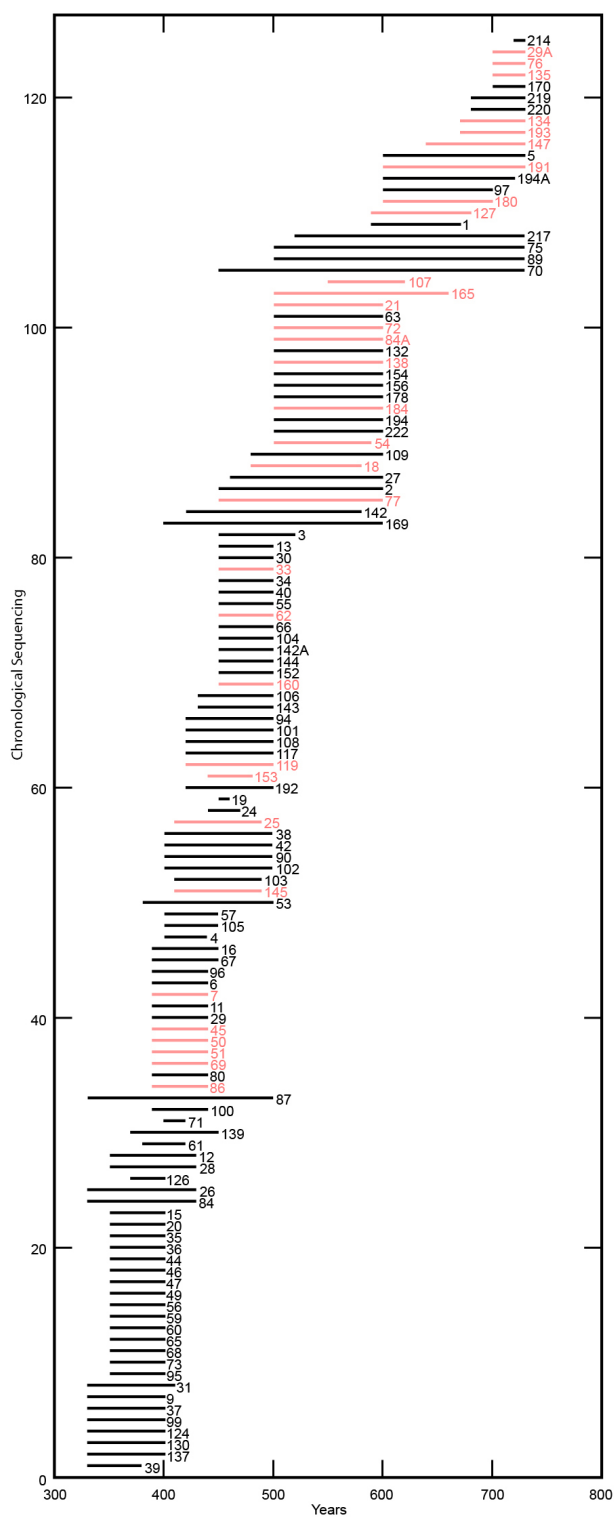


Figure 2.7: Trier: Confusions between <o> and <u>

### 2.1.4.3 Monophthongization

**Cases** I traced the developments of two diphthongs: /ae/ and /au/.

/ae/ finds itself monophthongized to /e/<sup>31</sup>, affecting in particular 1<sup>st</sup> declension feminines (9: *pietissime Aurore* (dat.), 24: *carissime Sanctule* (dat.), 32, 139: *carissime* (dat.), 73: *nate* (nom. pl.), 138: *dulcesime sue matrune* (dat.)), the relative pronoun in the feminine (35, 77, 103, 105, 192, 193 : *que*)<sup>32</sup>, along with *seculo* (126) and *precessi*[t] (\*173). There are a few hypercorrections (38, 124: *in pacae*, 68: *aeius* and *aeorum*, 97: *sa[e]nior*).

/au/ does not monophthongize to /o/<sup>33</sup> This is a development that generally happens late, in Romance, and in French it appeared to have happened after the palatalization of /k, g/ before /a/; see Väänänen (1981, pp. 38-39 no 60). Neither the monophthongization of /au/ to /o/ nor the palatalization before /a/ figure in the Trier material, likely on account of it being too early; but that they do not do so is still a finding, albeit of limited value.

When the following syllable contains an <u>, /au/ can monophthongize to /a/<sup>34</sup>. The forms are: 36: *Marus*, 76: *agu[st]as*, 191: *a[g]u[s]ta[s]*.

**Distribution** Both monophthongizations find early occurrences in the history of the Latin language. Looking at the earlier epigraphic evidence that's relevant to Vulgar Latin, /ae/ gets monophthongized to <e> already in the Pompeii inscriptions (Väänänen (1981, p. 38, n° 59)) and in the letters of Claudius Terentianus (Adams (1977, p. 11)), Adams (1995, p. 87) concludes that it is also a feature of the language of Vindolanda Latin, although the relatively few attestations indicate that the scribes sought to avoid writing

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<sup>31</sup>See Väänänen (1981, p. 38 no 59). /ae/ usually merges with the reflex of /ě/; however, there are some cases where it merges with Classical Latin /ē/; see Weiss (2011, pp. 510-511 footnote 43).

<sup>32</sup>The *qua* of 154 (and of 111 and 117, which fall outside of our selection) may instead have crept in from the nominal paradigm of the first declension.

<sup>33</sup>See Väänänen (1981, pp. 38-39 no 60).

<sup>34</sup>This is found already in Pompeii; Väänänen (1981, pp. 39-40 no 61).



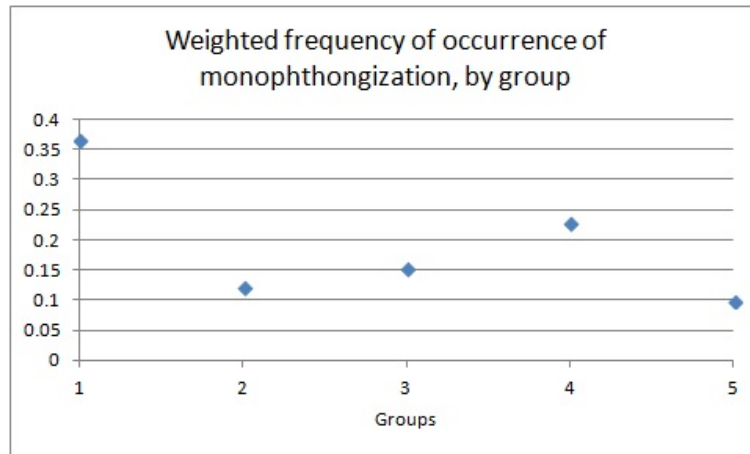


Figure 2.8: Trier: Weighted frequency of monophthongizations by group

it. Unsurprisingly, Gaeng (1968, p. 240-1) notes that it is found in the earliest Spanish, Italian and French inscriptions he covers.

Likewise,  $/au/ > /a/$  is found in the Pompeii inscriptions (Väänänen (1981, 39-40, n° 61)), although  $/au/$  does not ever get monophthongized in Claudius Terentianus (to  $/a/$  or to  $/o/$ ) and, similarly monophthongizations of  $/au/$  are not a salient feature in the *Appendix Probi*<sup>35</sup>.

Therefore, on both accounts, Trier Latin shows standard Vulgar Latin monophthongizations. The monophthongization of  $/ae/$  is much better attested than that of  $/au/$ . This has to do with the fact that  $/ae/$  occurs much more commonly than the environment for  $/au/$  to monophthongize to  $/a/$ . The occurrences of  $au > a$  are too few to be able to establish frequency. The frequency of occurrence of  $ae > e$  remains surprisingly stable; the feature is present in the earliest inscriptions and remains present steadily throughout the Merovingian period. It cannot therefore be used as a dating marker.

Figure 2.8 shows the weighted average number of occurrences by group, for the two monophthongizations. Figure 2.9 shows the occurrences for the monophthongization of  $ae$ . Figure 2.10 shows the occurrences for the monophthongization of  $au$ .

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<sup>35</sup>The only possible case, involving  $/au/ > /o/$  (83: *auris non oricla*) need not signal a phonological change, but a choice in register; see Powell (2011, pp. 110 and 112).

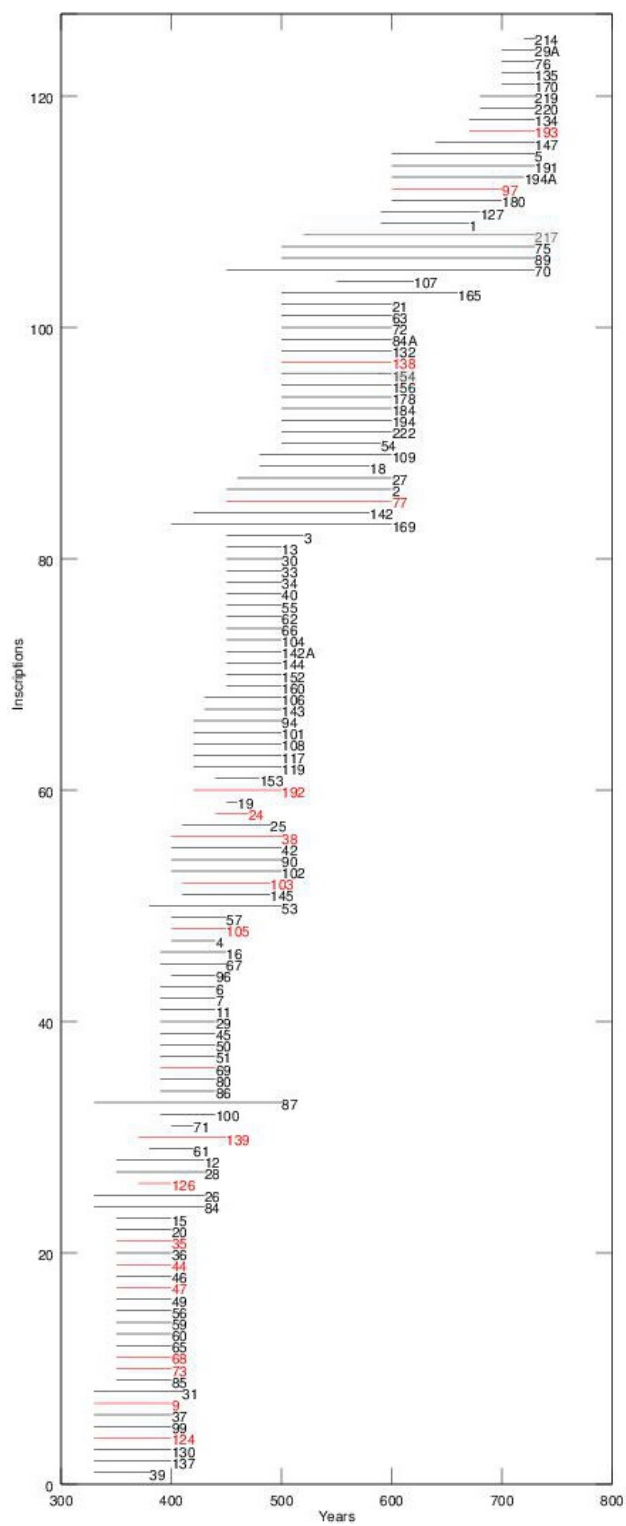


Figure 2.9: Trier: Monophthongization - /ae/ ><e>

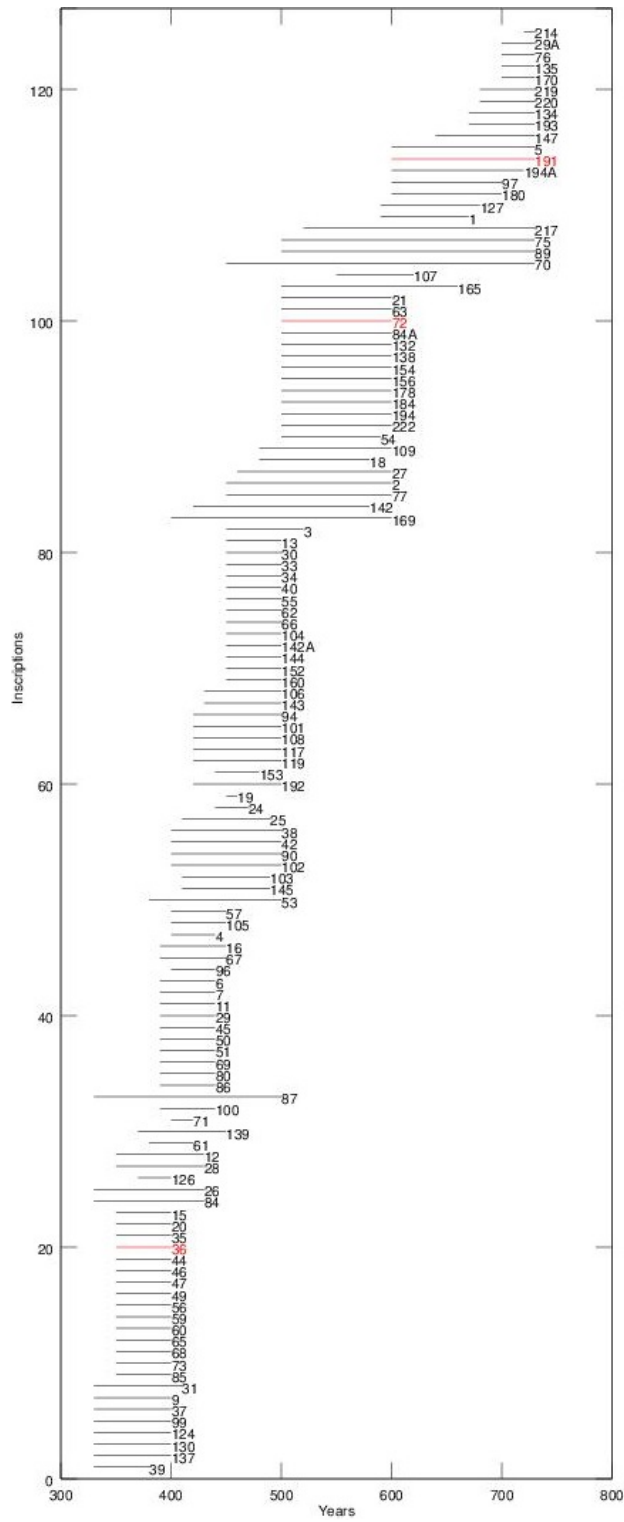


Figure 2.10: Trier: Monophthongization - /au/ ><o>

#### 2.1.4.4 Other vocalic developments

**Syncope, vowels in hiatus** Syncope happened throughout the history of Latin. In the *Appendix Probi*, no less than 25 entries pertain to syncope, out of 227 (Väänänen (1981, 41-42, n° 65 and 66), Powell (2011, pp.116-117)). It is also widespread in the Latin of the letters of Claudius Terentianus (Adams (1977, p. 21)). Considering this, I was expecting to find in the Trier inscriptions numerous instances of syncope. I anticipated finding syncopated spellings alongside fuller spellings, in a similar manner to the monophthongized spellings coexisting alongside the spellings with diphthongs. However, there are actually few examples of syncopated spellings.

18: *patr* and *titulm* for *pater* and *titulum*, 21: *flius* and *flia* for *filius* and *filia*, 153: *depostionem* for *depositionem* are all explained away by Gauthier as purely graphic phenomena<sup>36</sup>. I agree with her assessment of the forms found in 18 and 21, for the following reasons. These are words that are extremely common in epigraphic language and thus were expected by readers, making them in my view more likely candidate for abbreviated spellings. 21, in addition, is engraved particularly densely, and the last two lines are the densest, which bear the syncopated spellings; I first brought this up under Sample Inscription 2 (2.1.3).

153 is harder to assess. This inscription is engraved especially densely and irregularly: the letter spacing is irregular tending towards the narrow, and in places the letters are even juxtaposed; the letters are at times compressed and at others distended; the letters alternate between a larger and a smaller type that is at times elevated or lowered below the line in an effort to save space. The line that bears the form *depostionem* is the most compressed. This irregularity, coupled with compression, supports the argument that the stonecutter may have left a letter out or omitted it on purpose to save space. However, the uncommonness of the word *depositio* can be brought up as an argument in favor of true syncope, as a linguistic phenomenon. The affected word is not one that could have easily been anticipated and, consequently, whose reading would not have been impeded

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<sup>36</sup>Gauthier (1975, 66 n° 62).

by abbreviation.

Looking at other regions of Gaul, Gaeng (1968, p. 269) reports the form *depostio*, and accounts for it with a linguistic explanation, “Might we not, in order to account for this form [*depostio*], proceed from a hypothetical \**depostionem* (= *depositionem*) with a subsequent shift of accent in the nominative form, i.e. a sort of back formation?”. This assumes that syncope is regular in an unaccented syllable preceding the main accent, as in *depos(i)tióne(m)*. However, since the /i/ in nom. sg. *deposítio* is accented, it cannot syncopate, and a form like *depostio* would be a “back-formation” based on the acc. sg. This explanation would tie both forms, *depostio* and *depostionem*, together as resulting from accent-motivated syncope. If accepting this back-formation, this form presents several of the environments in which syncope is likely to occur, a front vowel in unaccented syllable situated between /s/ and /t/; Väänänen (1981, p. 40 no 64).

Pirson (1901, p. 50) proposes instead that these forms may have been modeled from the past participle *postus* of *pono*. Pirson’s proposal assumes that syncope can occur in a syllable following the accented syllable, hence *(de)pósitus* > *(de)postus* (whence *depostio*). The form *depostus* is in fact attested; Väänänen (1981, p. 43 no 70), citing also the similar forms *repostas* and *compostae*. From the point of view of standard Latin word-formation patterns, the forms *depostio* and *depostionem* must be derived from the participle *depostus*. On this topic, see Leumann (1977, p. 154) (154) on the assibilated form *depossio* < *depostio*. This proposal has the advantage of not depending upon a tricky back-formation, and of resting upon forms that are all attested.

There are several ways, then, to account for *depostionem*. There is an epigraphic explanation (as a purely graphic phenomenon resulting from word compression), a phonological explanation that rests upon accent-motivated syncope, and an explanation that allies phonology and morphology. All three are plausible, and the form remains resolutely ambiguous.

*Februarius* gets spelled *febrarius* (3) and either *febarrias* or *februarrias* (138)<sup>37</sup>. The

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<sup>37</sup>Only a small portion of the stone is now available, which does not cover the word that we are

spellings in *-bra-* of 3 can be accounted for under the omission of /u/ in hiatus<sup>38</sup>: the exact case of *febrarius* even figures in the *Appendix Probi*.

Even if some of these items were to be analyzed as reflecting syncope, there are still few instances in all. Perhaps this is an indicator of conservatism on the part of the Trier stonecutters.

**Prothetic vowel** Prothesis figures already in the Pompeii inscriptions, although it is not widespread (Väänänen (1981, p. 47 no 82)). It does not figure in the *Appendix Probi*. Commenting on inscriptional and literary evidence, Väänänen (1981, p. 47 no 82) observes that the most common environment for prothesis is /sC-/, while /Cs-/ is only rarely found.

There are only two instances of prothetic vowels in the Trier inscriptions, both in personal names: *Escupilio* (male name) for *Scupilio* (18) and *Ipsychius* (male name) for *Psychius* (139). While the first fits the common /sC-/ structure, the second fits the rarer /Cs-/. These two cases are not especially late: 139 is dated 370-450 and 18 is dated 480-580.

Possible environments for prothesis are rare in the Trier inscriptional material. There are instances where prothesis was anticipated as likely to occur, but did not: 106: *sperare* ‘to hope’, 156: *Spu[ri...a]* (female name).

It is of note that the only two cases of prothesis in the Trier inscriptions affect personal names. I interpret this to mean that the Trier stonecutters respected inherited spelling, attesting to their education, while they wrote personal names in a way that reflected their bearers’ pronunciation. Another example of this habit may be certain types of palatalizations; this is treated in Section 4.2.2.1. The conclusion that emerges from this is that prothesis (and these types of palatalization) was a part of spoken Trier Latin that did

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interested in. We therefore need to rely upon the transcription transmitted through manuscripts for the rest of the text. Here, it transmits *febarpias*, which is evidently unacceptable. Gauthier rectifies it as either *febarrias* or as *februarrias*, the latter due to the textual transcription misinterpreting a ligature for <*brua*> as <*ba*>

<sup>38</sup>Väänänen (1981, p. 46 n° 79).

not usually get written down. This is in turn supported by the relative rarity of prothesis in the Spanish inscriptions of late antiquity and of the early Middle Ages; Gaeng (1968, pp. 263-4). Due to the daughter language featuring prothesis, it is expected that Spanish Vulgar Latin would contain it too. That there the written attestations are so few and far between supports the view that this was a feature of the spoken language that wasn't yet committed to writing. As in Trier, the Spanish instances of prothesis often affect personal names; Gaeng (1968, p. 264) reports *Istefani*, *Estephani*, *Estefani* etc.

#### 2.1.4.5 Initial aspiration and aspirated consonants

<h> Loss of aspiration happened at a very early date in Latin history. Omissions of <h> and misplaced <h> are well attested already in Pompeii inscriptions (Väänänen (1981, 55 no 101)). Loss of <h> is very common in Claudius Terentianus (Adams (1977, p. 34)). One entry of the *Appendix Probi* is about misplaced <h>. In the Vindolanda Tablets, <h> is mostly preserved, but this may be an indication of good scribal training; Adams (1995, p. 90).

In the Trier material, loss of <h> is attested only word-initially and is somewhat common. The instances are as follows. Instead of *hic*, *ic*: 36, 42, 59, 61, 70 (145 has *ihc*, unattested anywhere else, which may well be a stonecutter error). Instead of *honore*, *onore*: 193, 194. The feature is attested at all periods, including the earlier material. The frequency of occurrence remains stable.

**Greek initial aspiration, Greek aspirates** Greek aspirates can occur in any position: word-initial, medial, or final. At various periods in the history of Latin, aspirated consonants from Greek loanwords were regularly written as simple stops ( $\chi > c$ ,  $\vartheta > t$ ,  $\phi > p$ ; the latter also commonly noted by *f* in Late Latin); the *Appendix Probi* and the Pompeii inscriptions contain multiple examples of such spellings (Väänänen (1981, pp. 55-56 no 102-3)). It is expected that Trier Latin contains many cases where a Greek aspirate is rendered with a simple stop. Still, there may have been attempts to render aspiration, or to preserve inherited spellings.

Table 2.4: Trier: Spellings for  $\Theta$ 

20	Euticianus	$\vartheta > t$
32*	Eustasius <sup>39</sup>	$\vartheta > t$
59	Talasia	$\vartheta > t$
64*	Tala[...]	$\vartheta > t$
70	Codora Cofilus <sup>40</sup>	$\vartheta > k$
123*	Tirintina	$\vartheta > t$
121*	Euthymius	$\vartheta > th$
236a*	Aeth[...]	$\vartheta > th$
236l*	Theodosius	$\vartheta > th$

In the Trier material, the treatment of Greek aspirates affects for the most part personal names. The Trier inhabitants commonly enough bore names that are of Greek origin, or that are built upon Greek roots. This isn't surprising: Trier indeed contained a sizable population of Greek descent and it was a cosmopolitan center in Late Antiquity. Let us compare, for each Greek aspirate, the occurrences of deaspirated and of aspirated spellings. The first instances listed feature simple stops, followed by any instances featuring attempts to render the Greek aspirates.

As can be seen from Tables 2.4, 2.5 2.6 and 2.7, the Trier inscriptions commonly render  $\vartheta$  as  $\langle t \rangle$ , although there are a few  $\langle th \rangle$ ; likewise,  $\chi$  is either rendered with the simple consonant  $\langle c \rangle$  or with  $\langle ch \rangle$  (for the particular case of *Christus*, spellings in  $\langle ch \rangle$  are more commonly found, but there are relatively few occurrences as the stonecutters prefer to use the Chi Rho christogram, which saves space); finally,  $\varphi$  is always rendered as  $\langle f \rangle$  (no instances show traces of a preserved plosive element, as  $\langle p \rangle$  or  $\langle ph \rangle$ ). Regarding the case of Greek initial aspiration, there is only one instance where it could have been rendered but isn't. However, in all likelihood this aspiration loss happened earlier than the Latin borrowing, occurring already in Greek.



Table 2.5: Trier: Spellings for X

32* 96	Eustasius <sup>41</sup>	$\chi > s$
47	Pancaria	$\chi > c$
48*	Pascasius	$\chi > c$
134	Cristus	$\chi > c$
19	Eucharius	$\chi > ch$
46	Nunechius	$\chi > ch$
139	Ipsychius archontus	$\chi > ch$
138 150* 194*	Christus	$\chi > ch$

In addition, 28 may well feature a hypercorrection, *charissimo* for *carissimo*. Such hypercorrect spellings did occur in Latin, and are in fact parodied in Catullus 84 (*chommoda* for *commoda*); Väänänen (1981, p. 56 no 103). As Gauthier (1975, p.70) notes, this particular spelling may not be a late antique original hypercorrection. The original stone is no longer available, its text was transmitted down through transcriptions, it is possible that the scribes inserted an  $\langle h \rangle$  (and thus would be a later medieval or early modern hypercorrection).

While I am providing a philological discussion of the treatment of Greek aspirates in Trier Latin, I chose not to input the data in the quantitative study. Greek personal

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<sup>39</sup>Possibly from Εὔσταχος or Εὔστάθιος. In my view Εὔστάθιος is likelier; see 2.1.4.6 below.

<sup>40</sup>Gauthier suggests that these would be stonecutter's errors for *Todora* and *Tofilus*, from *Theodora* and *Theophilus*; see Gauthier (1975, p. 237).

<sup>41</sup>See footnote 39.

<sup>42</sup>From Ἡλιόδωρος. Koinè Greek did away with rough breathing, and medieval Greek fronted /e:/, so the spelling *Iliodorus* likely reflects Greek phonological developments.

Table 2.6: Trier: Spellings for  $\Phi$ 

14*	Dafinis	$\varphi > f$
85	neofita	$\varphi > f$
87	Adelfia	$\varphi > f$
158*	Stefanus	$\varphi > f$
236*	Adelf[...] Trofemus	$\varphi > f$

Table 2.7: Trier: Initial Aspiration

32*	Iliodorus <sup>42</sup>
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names, which provide nearly all of the evidence, were borne only during the Late Antique period. There is very little evidence for the medieval period. Therefore, a quantitative approach would yield skewed results.

I do not deal with the treatment of aspirations inherited from Germanic; Gauthier (1975, p. 68) has some notes on the topic. Commonly, personal names of Germanic descent are affected. However, I feel that this study should be part of a longer discussion on Germanic influence in the Trier inscriptions, which I do not feel able to conduct at the moment. This would be an area for further research.

#### 2.1.4.6 Sound changes affecting word-medial consonants

I traced the following changes that affect word-medial consonants: simplification of clusters involving nasals, [ks] cluster developments, degemination and gemination of consonants, palatalizations. Different consonant clusters get simplified, leading to the loss of a nasal consonant. Commonly,  $/-ns-/ > /-s-/$ ,  $/-n\dot{i}V/ > /-\dot{i}V/$ .

**Simplification of consonant clusters**  $/-ns-/ > /-s-/$  is attested from the archaic period onward (Väänänen (1981, 64 n° 121)). It is also found, rarely, in the Vindolanda

Tablets; Adams (1995, pp. 93-94). The *Appendix Probi* features one hypercorrect form (*formosus non formunsus*).

In the Trier inscriptions, some very common words are affected, facilitating our study: *infans/infas* (3, 42, 103), *mensis/mesis* (60, 61, 62, 132, 143, 152, 215\*). The feature is attested at all periods, including the earlier material. The frequency of occurrence increases slightly, and later inscriptions sometimes feature multiple instances (notably, 217).

$-n\grave{i}V > -\grave{i}V$  affects the commonly used word *coniux*, resulting in *coiux* and other declined forms (24, 54, 55, 63, 140, 184, 189, 238). There is one instance of *matrimoi* for *matrimonii* (217).

For some consonant clusters involving nasals, the nasal ends up preserved:  $-/nkt/ > -/nt/$  (68) (Väänänen (1981, 62 n° 116)).  $-/mpt/ > -/mt/$  (106),  $-/mps/ > -/ms/$  (135). The few examples are spread equally chronologically.

Inscription 217 is puzzling. It simplifies some of the consonant clusters with nasals (*matrimoi* for *matrimonii*, *coniuctione* instead of *coniunctione*), leaves others untouched (*coniuctione*, *coniux*), and, finally, inserts nasals in clusters where they do not belong (*uincturum*). Inscription 217 features the one instance of *matrimonii* spelled *matrimoi*. If the ending  $-/ii/$  was pronounced  $-/\grave{i}i/$ , this would open up the way for the cluster to simplify (presenting the same environment as *coniux*, which can get simplified to *coiux*;  $-n\grave{i}V-$  to  $-\grave{i}V-$ ). It is quite possible that the ending indeed features a glide, as endings in  $-Cii$  (where C is not a nasal) regularly get contracted to a plain  $-Ci$  instead in Trier (*Bonifati* for *Bonifatii*, (37) *fili* for *fili* (38, 63, 91), *filis* for *filiis* (237), *gaudi* for *gaudii* (89); this is commonly found in Pompeian inscriptions and is regular for the Republican period, see Väänänen (1981, pp.44-45 no 74)). 217 has *uincturum* instead of *uicturum* for the future participle of  $v\bar{v}\bar{o}$  ('I live'). It may be that the stonecutter mistook the text, writing instead the future participle of  $vinci\bar{o}$  ('I bind'), as proposed by Gauthier<sup>43</sup>. Alternatively, as both  $v\bar{v}\bar{o}$  and  $vinc\bar{o}$  ('I conquer') form their future participle *uicturus*,

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<sup>43</sup>Gauthier (1975, p. 516).

an /n/ may have first crept into the future participle of *uincō* from its present stem, and that /n/ was then spread to the future participle of *vivō*<sup>44</sup>. However, it is possible that the stonemason restored what he thought was a consonant cluster that had gotten simplified (of the nasal + occlusive type illustrated in Väänänen (1981, p. 63 n<sup>os</sup> 116, 119), e.g. *sanctus* > *santus*), resulting in an hypercorrection. By writing *uincturum* instead of *victurum*, the stonemason sought to restore the fuller spelling.

**Degemination and gemination** Geminates, such as in the very common word *annus*, are mostly left untouched in Trier. This fits with the observations of Adams (1995, pp. 88-89) on the Vindolanda Tablets. There too geminates are left mostly intact. Adams takes this to be an indicator of good scribal training.

The few examples of degemination are nearly all late: 33 *anus* for *annos*, 70 *inocentis* for *innocentes*, 132 *ano* for *anno*, 138 *dulcesime* for *dulcessimae*. One case is more complicated: 59 *Talasia* (female name) from *Θάλασσα* ('sea') or *Θαλασσιά* (a rarer female name). It is unclear whether the double sigma sequence in Greek was a phonetic geminate at the time the name got borrowed into Latin.

The examples of non-etymological gemination are few: 178 has *[me]nssis* for *mensis*. Gauthier (1975, 68 n<sup>o</sup> 75) includes the *vixxit* for *vixit* of 21 and 29A as geminated spellings, but this is not, correctly speaking, gemination; see subsection 2.1.4.6 below.

**Palatalization** The different types of palatalizations do not become widespread until fairly late in Latin<sup>45</sup>. Väänänen reports inscriptional evidence from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> c. for the palatalization of /*t̪i*/ and /*d̪i*/, while for /*k̪i*/ and /*g̪i*/ the earliest evidence is from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> or from the 5<sup>th</sup> c.

In the Trier inscriptions, the instances of palatalization are few and far between, and they are all late or very late. There is one instance affecting /*g̪i*/ and two affecting /*t̪i*/.

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<sup>44</sup>As proposed by Brent Vine, private correspondence.

<sup>45</sup>Väänänen (1981, pp. 54-55 n<sup>o</sup> 99, 100), and indeed they do not figure in the Latin of Claudius Terentianus

There is also one possible case affecting  $/t̃i/$  or  $/k̃i/$ .

21 has *macias*, for *maias*. This case has been discussed under 2.1.3 as part of the sample inscriptions. To reiterate, an intermediate form *magias*, found in a late inscription of the CIL, provides us with the missing link supporting the development  $[ĩi] > [ʒĩ]$ .

29A has *deposicio* and 135 has *deposicio*, indicating that  $/ti/ > /t^s/$ ,  $/s/$ ; Väänänen (1981, 54 n° 99)).

32 has *Eustasius*, possibly from the Greek names Εὐσταχῦς or Εὐστάθιος. Positing a deaspirated intermediate step, regular within the development of Latin, this would lead to either of these developments:  $/k^h/ > /k/ > /s/$  or  $/t^hi/ > /tĩ/ > /sĩ/$ . I deem it likelier that the form *Eustasius* derives from Εὐστάθιος, due to the palatalizing effect of front vowels. It is harder to motivate the palatalization of  $/ku/$ .

21 is dated 500-600, 32 is dated 400-500, and 29A and 135 are dated 700-730.

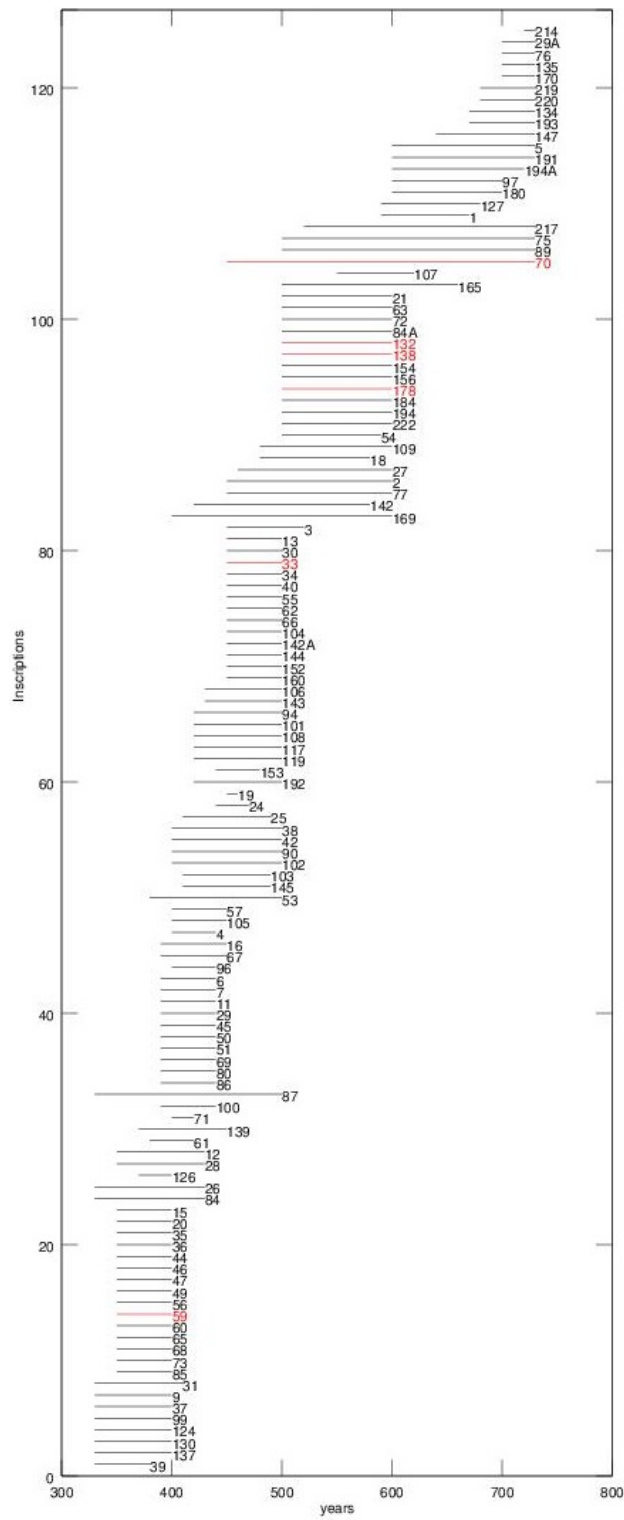


Figure 2.11: Trier: Degemination of consonants

**[ks] cluster** Väänänen (1981, 65, n° 123) presents as a general Vulgar Latin development that in [ks] clusters, the plosive element tends to assimilate to the sibilant, giving us /x/ [ks] >/ss/. Ultimately, the modern Romance languages present sibilants; e.g. It. *dissi*, Fr. *dis* <CL *d̄ix̄i*. This is corroborated by the Merovingian charter evidence. Vieillard (1927, pp. 48-49) finds *x* frequently spelled with <*sx*> or <*xs*> in the charters (for instance *exempla* spelled *exsempla*), while she does not find any indication in the spelling variants that the velar element strengthened. She interprets this as an indication that the sibilant was taking over the cluster. However, spellings in <*xs*> for the [ks] cluster are actually archaizing. It is therefore not certain that they reflect a phonological change<sup>46</sup>. Vieillard presents evidence of assimilation: when immediately followed by a consonant, [ks] is frequently spelled with only a <*s*>. For instance, *juxta* may be spelled *justa*, which Vieillard interprets as a reduction of [ks] to [s]. However, the Trier inscriptions do not present any signs of assimilation in [ks] clusters, of the type *justa* or otherwise. The [ks] is preserved.

The received spelling, *vixit*, remains by far the most common at all periods. Spellings in <*xs*, *sx*, *cs*, *cx*> and <*xx*> are less common in the early material, but they are not exclusively late. These alternate spellings are indicative that the [ks] cluster did not get simplified to /s/, as they undoubtedly attempt to represent the /k/ segment as distinct from the sibilant.

The majority of the instances of the [ks] cluster comes from the ubiquitous *vixit*, spelled as received ( 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 25, 28, 30, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 59, 63, 69, 71, 72, 73, 76, 80, 84A, 86, 94, 96, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 108, 109, 119, 124, 132, 134, 135, 139, 142, 143, 147, 154, 156, 165, 169, 170, 217, 219, 220), or spelled with an archaizing <*xs*> (1, 62, 65, 101, 152) or the innovative <*sx*, *cs*, *cx*, *xx*> (1, 21, 29A, 33, 62, 65, 101, 152, 180). Other instances of the [ks] cluster come from *complexsu* (89) and, for a less securely dated inscription, *Maxsimin[us/a]* (221).

Remarkably, I do not find spellings indicating a reduction to /s/ (for instance, spellings

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<sup>46</sup>Still, Adams (2013, p. 171) advances that Late Antique schools may even have promulgated the spellings in *xs*, in an attempt to thwart the advance of assimilated pronunciations in [s] or [ss].

like *visit* or *vissit*, which are commented on as common findings in early medieval epigraphic material; Väänänen (1981, 65, n° 123)).

There is only one instance of word-final [ks]: *innos* (3, dated 450-520), which may stand for *innox*, itself from *innoxius* or from *innocens*. The word *innox* is commonly used in epigraphy to refer to infants and children, it was used throughout the Roman Empire among Christian communities<sup>47</sup>. The spelling *innos* is unique.

Evidently, then, the [ks] cluster is surprisingly stable at Trier, and does not assimilate to /s/ or /ss/.<sup>48</sup>

Figure 2.12 shows the occurrences of the received spelling of *vixit*. Figure 2.13 shows the spellings in  $\langle xx xs cs sx \rangle$ .

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<sup>47</sup>E.g., from 5<sup>th</sup> c. Tunisia (AE 1997, 1606.) *Donata innox vivis in pace* and from Italy (AE 1909, 0066) *Glyceria innox hic posita est mente fidelis*.

<sup>48</sup>In other environments, /k/ disappears, as expected, such as /nkt/ >nt; *iunti* (68) for *iuncti*.



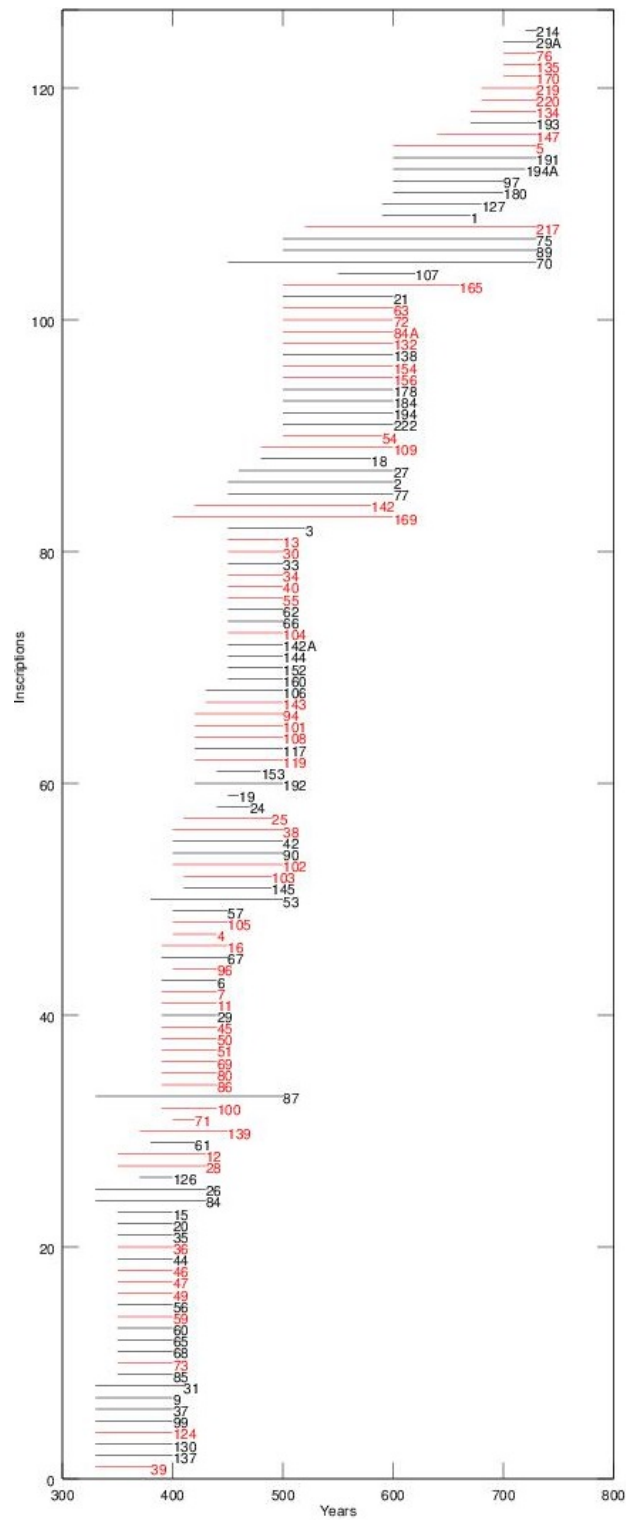


Figure 2.12: Trier: [ks]: <x>

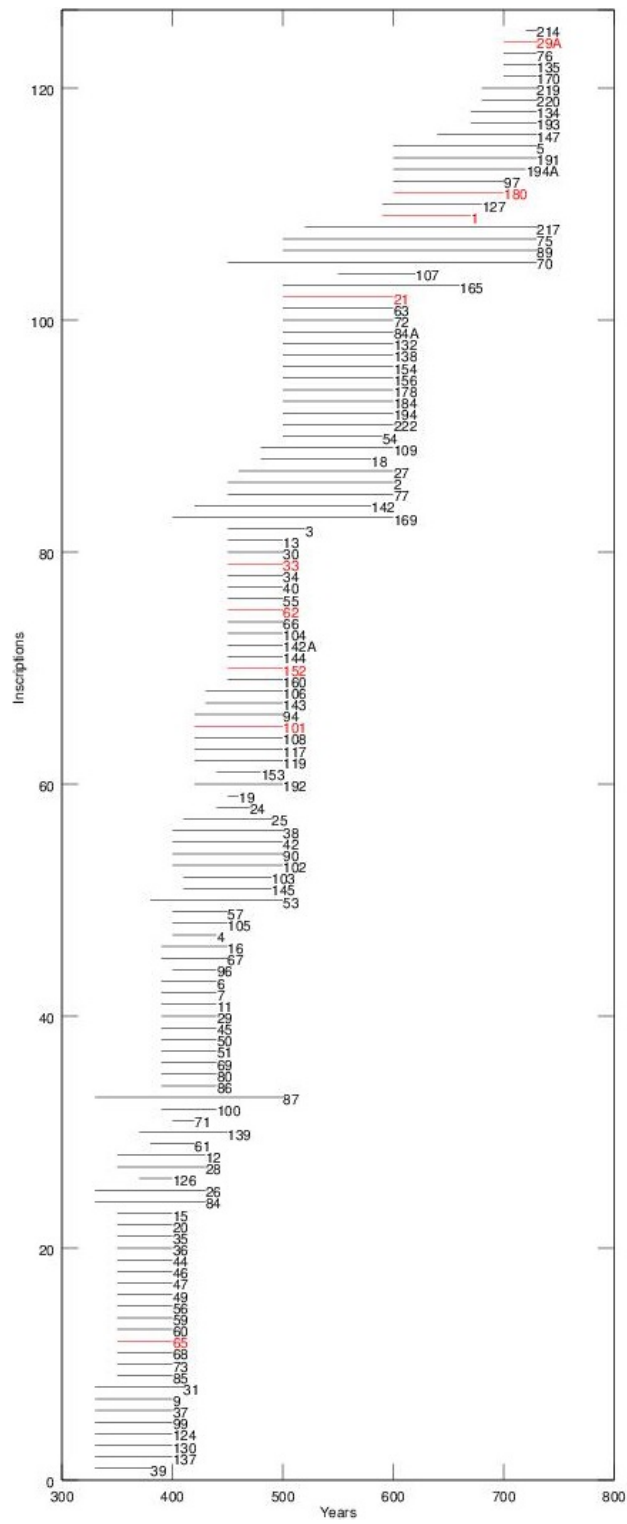


Figure 2.13: Trier: [ks]: <xx>, <xs>, <cs>, <sx>

#### 2.1.4.7 Sound changes affecting word-final consonants

*/-m/* There is evidence that */-m/* stopped being pronounced at an early date in Latin, and it can indeed be found missing already in Old Latin inscriptions<sup>49</sup>. Loss of final */-m/* is extremely common in the Latin of Claudius Terentianus. It is omitted about one time out of five (Adams (1977, p. 22)). The Vindolanda Tablets generally write */-m/*, but Adams (1995, p. 88) takes this to be an indicator of better scribal training; it is most assuredly not a sign of Vulgar Latin regionalization.

There are relatively few instances of omission of */-m/* in the Trier inscriptions. All of them involve accusative singulars (1: *propter caritate*, 1: *tetulu* (acc.), 18, 29, 40: *anno* (acc.), 30: *titulu* (acc.), 53, 96, 156: *annu* (acc.), 134, 193: *ad Domino*).

The *propter caritate* of 1 and the *ad Domino* of 134 and 193 may be accounted for phonologically or morphosyntactically.

The phonological explanation rests upon the loss of */-m/*, in the second case accompanied by */ǔ/* written as <o>; in both cases we are dealing with accusatives.

An alternate story, proposed by Gauthier (1975, p. 71), rests upon changes affecting case usage and preposition use. *Propter* may have come to govern the ablative instead of the accusative, perhaps modeled after the more common construction *pro caritate*. Gauthier (1975, 70 n° 82) suggests that there was uncertainty as to the cases governed by various prepositions, which she uses to explain the forms *pro caritatem* 30, 55, 62, and *in pacem* 242. Likewise, the *ad Domino* of 134 and 193 may feature an ablative, resulting from a mistake in case usage with the preposition *ad*.

However, there are a few problems with this. There are no unequivocal cases of accusative-governing prepositions used with ablative; *ad Domino* (134), 193, (194) can be explained phonologically, just like *propter caritate* 1. In addition, the only unequivocal cases of case usage change with preposition affect the accusative. Namely, the expected ablative is replaced by an accusative; *pro caritatem* 30, 55, 62 and *in pacem* 242.

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<sup>49</sup>Väänänen (1981, 66, no 127), citing the epitaph of L. Cornelius Scipio, CIL I<sup>2</sup>, 8,9.

The non-classical use of the accusative with some prepositions may be better accounted for by the spread of the accusative case, rather than a general case confusion. Finally, the phonological explanation is in my view the likeliest, as it relies upon vulgarisms that are solidly implanted in Trier Latin.

The earliest material is devoid of omissions of */-m/*; the first instances are from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. The frequency of occurrence then remains stable.

Figure 2.14 shows the chronological distribution of occurrences of the omissions of */-m/*.

#### 2.1.4.8 Morphosyntactic developments affecting nouns and pronouns

**Case usage confusion** In this corpus, I encountered few instances of what may be case usage confusion, either with case alone (170: *Ursiniano ossa*, where the noun complement is in the dat. instead of gen.), or with a preposition (134, 193, (194): *ad Domino*, 30, 55, 62: *pro caritatem*, 1: *propter caritate*), 242: *in pacem*.

It is often the case that a phonological explanation can be put forth as an alternative to a morphosyntactic one (e.g. omission of */-m/*, for 1: *propter caritate*). However, one explanation may appear likelier than another. For instance, in the case of 1, other losses of */-m/*, such as *-tetulu fecit*, makes omission of */-m/* the most likely account to explain *propter caritate*. I discuss these examples, along with the ones involving prepositions, under the phonological section 2.1.4.7.

For the purposes of the statistical analyses presented later in this section, the cases that have several alternative explanations are generally filed under the phonological account. It is usually the explanation that strikes me as most believable. I also do so in order to avoid counting twice a particular instance, under the phonological and the morphological rubric.

**Declension changes** 135 presents *capus* for *caput*, which may be a reanalysis of *caput* as a 2<sup>nd</sup> declension masculine, if it is indeed in the nominative; see Väänänen (1981, p.

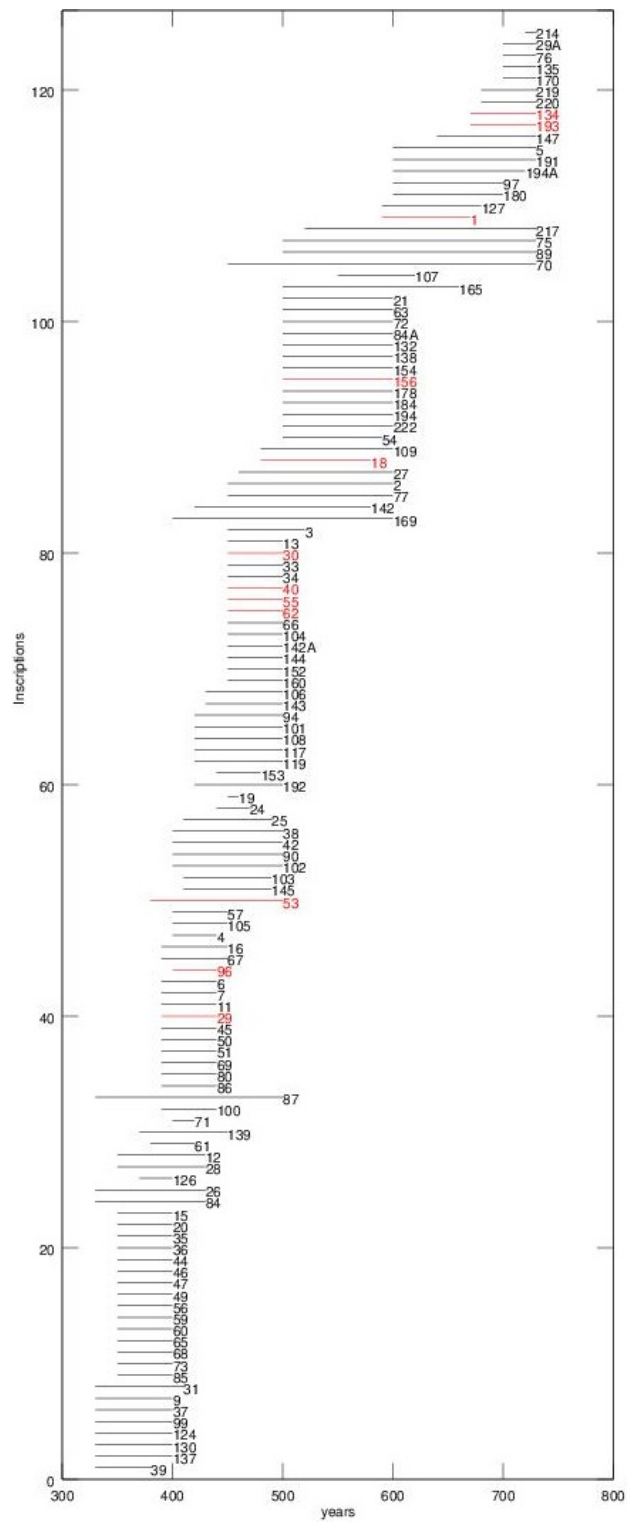


Figure 2.14: Trier: Loss of /-m/

102 no 214) and inscription 5 under 2.3.2.2.

#### 2.1.4.9 Agreement of the relative pronoun

I tallied the occurrences of relative clauses where the relative pronoun *qui* should be declined to another form than the nominative masculine singular. I compiled two tallies, one for instances of *qui* that are properly declined, and one for instances where the nominative masculine singular *qui* or more rarely the nominative neuter singular *quod* is used instead of a correctly declined form. The latter is an indication of the weakening of the case system, as case, gender and person agreement is no longer maintained.

All of the instances of generalized *qui* involve a relative pronoun in the nominative whose antecedent is feminine singular (e.g. (3) *Amanda [...] qui uixit*). Such cases are 3, 21, 24, 25, 30, 49, 57, 73, 100, 101, 119, 124, 138, 144.

When the declined feminine singular form is used, it is quite often spelled *que* (monophthongization of *ae* to *e*). It can also be spelled *qua*, possibly due to interference with the nominal declension<sup>50</sup>. The instances of *quae* (with any spelling) are: 13, 26, 31, 35, 47, 59, 61, 62, 69, 72, 80, 85, 102, 103, 105, 117, 139, 143, 154, 156, 219, 220.

There are few instances for the use of other cases of the relative pronoun. In 19, the relative is properly declined in the neuter plural accusative, *quae*. *Cuius* (21, 29A, 147, 194A) and *cui* (2, 7, 76, 135, 165, 214) receive a few attestations, but as the forms are identical in the masculine and in the feminine, they cannot inform us of whether the gender agreement was maintained. Still, that they are even used is an indicator that the case system was still well known.

While not a case of the nominative singular masculine form of the pronoun being generalized to other cases, the tautological construction of 29A (*cuius depositio eius*) and the highly redundant construction of 147 (*cuius pater et mater in amore ipsius*) could be interpreted as a sign that case alone no longer suffice to mark grammatical relationship<sup>51</sup>;

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<sup>50</sup>This is discussed more fully in footnote 32.

<sup>51</sup>A similar tautological construction has been commented on in Väänänen (1981, no 373 p. 61).

this particular inscription is discussed below under 2.3.2.2.

Figure 2.15 shows the weighted average number of features by group, for *qui* or *quod* generalized (in blue) and *qui* declined (in red).

Figure 2.16 shows the chronological distribution of occurrences of *qui* generalized, while Figure 2.17 shows the chronological distribution of occurrences of *qui* declined.

Examining Figure 2.16, we can observe that the generalized use of the relative pronoun in the masculine nominative case is well attested already in the earliest material. Most of the evidence is dated earlier than 550. There are no instances dated later than 600.

The distribution of ‘declined *qui*’, shown on Figure 2.17, indicates that, for all periods, relative pronoun agreement was maintained in at least some inscriptions. The later inscriptions which feature relative pronoun decline them correctly.

The distribution of ‘non-declined *qui*’ to ‘declined *qui*’, illustrated by Figures 2.15 , reveals that 1) *qui* remains declined properly more commonly than not at all periods, 2) the weighted frequency of ‘generalized *qui*’ is stable over time, 3) the weighted frequency of ‘declined *qui*’ is stable, except for group 5, 4) the proportion of ‘non-declined *qui*’ to ‘declined *qui*’ remains surprisingly stable, except for the latest Trier inscriptions which always decline *qui* correctly. For the 6<sup>th</sup> c., I find three instances of declined *qui* for three instances of generalized *qui*. For evidence later than 600, I find seven instances of declined *qui* and no generalized *qui*.

That the latest inscriptions always feature properly agreed relatives may strike as surprising. I offer an explanation under 2.2.2.3 (Observations pertaining to particular vulgarisms), which is tied to my study of irregular inscriptions (many of which are late) at 2.3.

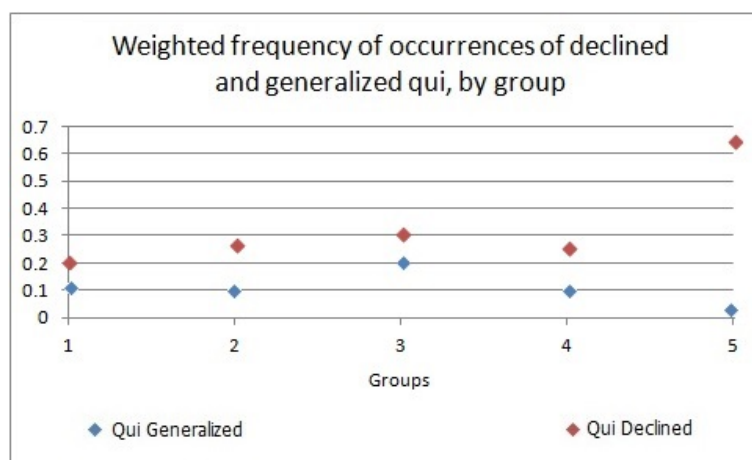


Figure 2.15: Trier: Weighted frequency of declined and non-declined relative pronouns by group



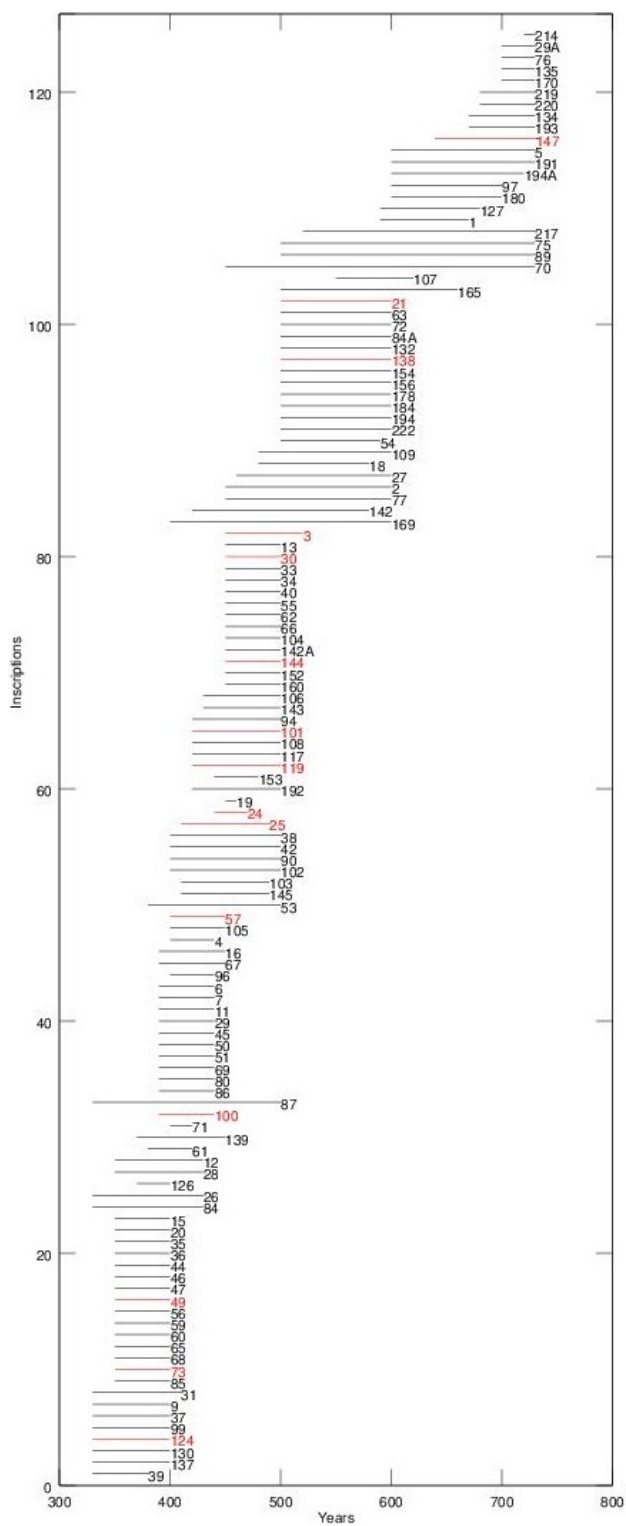


Figure 2.16: Trier: *Qui* or *quod* generalized

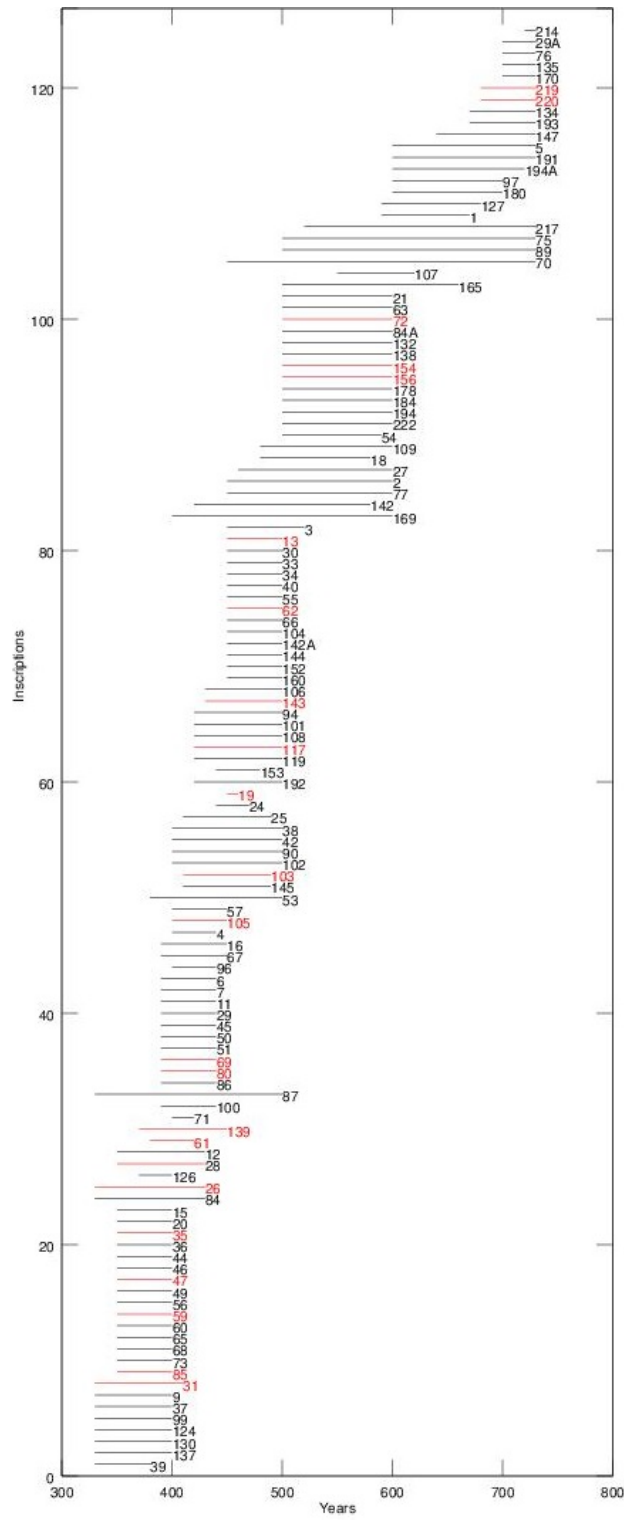


Figure 2.17: Trier: *Qui* declined

#### 2.1.4.10 Verb

My study of the changes affecting verbs is limited due to the nature of epigraphic language. The sentence constructions are simple and formulaic, with little variation. There are few verbs (commonly *requiēscō*, *vivō*, *pōnō*, *ferō*), almost invariably used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. singular or plural, usually of the present or perfect indicative.

**Conjugation classes** The only two cases in this corpus that I would accept as confusion of conjugation classes are 68: *quiescent* and 222: *quiescint*. The underlying form is the same: *quiescent*. The ending */-cint/* results from the confusion between *i* and *e*. Classical Latin would have *quiescunt* as 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. ind. pres. of *quiēscere*, as per the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation. The verb got reanalyzed as 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation, resulting in *quiescent*.

Other Vulgar Latin examples of 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugations remade as 2<sup>nd</sup> include *cadēre* and *sapēre* (Väänänen (1981, p. 136 no 314)), but I could not find examples affection other */-scō/* verbs. Still, it may be worth noting that many *-sco* verbs (3<sup>rd</sup> conj.) have parallel 2<sup>nd</sup> conj. basic forms (e.g. *timere* [2] *timēscere* [3]). There is no basic verb †*quiēre*, but there are forms that look as if they could have been based on such a thing, e.g. *quiētus*, *quiētūdō*.

Gauthier lists additionally three possible instances of *iacit* for *iacet* (3, 11 and 45; however 11 is uncertain due to material support damage) as mistakes in conjugation classes<sup>52</sup>. However, these are much more likely cases of confusion between */i/* and */ē/*. Indeed, not only is this feature significantly more common in the Trier material than conjugation class confusion, but it routinely affects (or even plagues!) verbal declensions (to wit *quiescint* above, but also numerous 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation 3<sup>rd</sup> p. singular present endings; see 2.1.4.1).

**Agreement** There are a few cases which exhibit a verb in the singular when the subject is clearly plural (2: *Febrarius pater et Caluola mater posuit*, 70: *quiescet Uitalis, Elearius*,

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<sup>52</sup>Gauthier (1975, 73 n° 87).

*Codora, Cofilus*, 100: *posuit Uetrano et Lea*, 132: *posuet Couoldus pater et mater Calopes*. Outside of our corpus, the Trier inscriptions also comprise 52 (*posuit pater et mater*) and 123 (*posuit Albins et Tirintina patres*).

Gauthier suggests that these cases may be due to the influence of a formula usually penned in the singular (the formulae ‘*x titulum posuit*’ and ‘*hic x quiescit*’; where *x* is supposed to refer to a singular subject, but becomes generalized in such a way that *x* can refer to plural subjects)<sup>53</sup>.

However, the use of a verb in the singular for plural subjects is well attested in Classical Latin<sup>54</sup>. The verb can indeed agree with the subject nearest it (1)<sup>55</sup>, or the subjects are taken as a single unit<sup>56</sup> (2), or the subjects are enumerated following the verb and, conceivably, the writer did not yet have them all in mind<sup>57</sup> (3).

The evidence of the Trier inscriptions fits within those paradigms. What emerges from this is that such agreement patterns are well established in the history of Classical Latin and in epigraphic language in particular, and significantly predate the Trier formulary.

Several of these occurrences involve the parents of the deceased. They are referred to as ‘*x pater et mater y*’ and as ‘*parentes*’. If the parents were perceived as forming a unit, then this unit could be referred to in the singular, as per agreement pattern (2).

Cases featuring a string of subjects (of the form ‘subjectA, subjectB... subjectZ’) could in theory be accounted for with agreement pattern (1) or with (3). The particular case of 70 is difficult to judge. It reads: *It quiescet Uitalis Elearius Codora Cofilus et Uitalianus et Codora inocentis quie in pace*. The first *et* is superscript. Several readings

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<sup>53</sup>Gauthier (1975, 73 n° 88).

<sup>54</sup>Ernout and Thomas (1953, pp. 129-130). Ernout and Thomas cite Classical Latin epigraphic material that exhibits constructions parallel to those of the Trier material, namely CIL VI 25169 5 ssq. *fecit Publia... et Publilius* and 28882 11 ssq. *fecit M. Uarenus et Uibia*.

<sup>55</sup>Ernout and Thomas (1953, 129 n° 149B), citing examples from Cicero and Catullus.

<sup>56</sup>Ernout and Thomas (1953, 130 b).

<sup>57</sup>Ernout and Thomas (1953, p. 130 c).

have been suggested <sup>58</sup> lists them and presents her own.

I suggest two possible readings. The first one would be: *Ic quiescet Uitalis olearius Codora. Cofilus et Uitalianus et Codora inocentis quie[scunt] in pace.* In this reading, *Uitalis* and *Codora* are the parents, and *olearius*<sup>59</sup> refers to the trade of *Uitalis*. We would expect the two elements to be joined by an *et*, but perhaps the conjunction was left out so as not to obscure the relation between the next group of names, which are all joined by *et*. *Cofilus et Uitalianus et Codora* are the children, named after their parents<sup>60</sup>. *Quie* can be completed as *quiescunt*.

The other reading is simpler, and, perhaps, due to Occam's razor, preferable: *Ic quiescet Uitalis, Elearius, Codora, Cofilus et Uitalianus et Codora. Inocentis quie[scunt] in pace.* The stonecutter first used the opening sentence of the Trier formulary (*Hic quiescit*), neglecting to consider that the string of subjects would require conjugating the verb in the plural. He then wrote the names of the deceased one after the other, using an *et* before the last element of the enumeration. The second *et* is indeed the only one that is actually engraved in the main text of the stone; the first *et* is subscript and may have been added, confusedly, after the text was first engraved. *Innocentes* may be taken as an apposition to the subjects *Uitalis, Elearius, Codora, Cofilus et Uitalianus et Codora*, or as the subject of the final clause, *quiescunt in pace*. However, the last line of the inscription may well be separate and self standing so that *inocentis quie in pace* reads as an independent clause. The stonecutter ran out of space on the last line and had to compress the text, writing smaller, cramped letters and cutting the verb short. The spacing between this last line and the rest of the text is also narrower. Perhaps, then, this last line was an unplanned addition.

The subjects are members of a family, spanning more than one generation (*Uitalianus*

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<sup>58</sup>Gauthier (1975, pp.236-237).

<sup>59</sup>This reading is suggested by Gauthier; as she notes, however, the substitution of an <e> for the initial <o> of *olearius* is difficult.

<sup>60</sup>To have a *Uitalianus* son of *Uitalis* fits the fashion of Trier, but to reuse unchanged the name of a parent (as for the two *Codora*) is not usual.

and the second *Codora* are named after their parents). We do not need to posit that they all must have died at about the time. Some of the Trier tombstones were indeed engraved long after the death of the deceased (or of some of the deceased); see section 2.4.3. The mistake of the stonecutter was to engrave one word after the other without considering the overall structure of his text, or the space that his text would require.

**Reflexive constructions** Classical Latin expresses the mediopassive voice through its passive constructions but also through reflexive verbs<sup>61</sup>. Reflexive constructions are a feature of Romance languages (e.g. Fr. *s'appeler*, It. *si chiama*). It is therefore not surprising to find, at 29A, the reflexive usage *Petro se clericum fecit*.

## 2.2 Discussion: Statistical analysis of the Trier inscriptions

This section is concerned with presenting Trier Latin findings obtained thanks to the statistical methodology applied in the previous section. First, I present the conclusions that can be derived from the behavior of all of the different Vulgar Latin features taken together as aggregate. Then, I move on to feature-specific developments.

### 2.2.1 Distribution of Vulgar Latin features

The main purpose of this section is to present a first set of observations from the data, which sheds light upon general Vulgar Latin development in Trier, and which will feed discussions about scribal training, adherence to a linguistic norm, and linguistic register. In order to do so, I will provide detailed visualizations for the data, as an aggregate instead of feature by feature (feature-dependent observations are presented below in 2.2.2), going through several tables and figures.

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<sup>61</sup>Väänänen (1981, 127-128 n° 293), in fact citing 29A.

### 2.2.1.1 Distribution, by individual inscription and by dating group

Figure 2.18 shows, for each inscription, the occurrences of the main (in the sense of most attested) Vulgar Latin features. This figure is meant to recapitulate the information presented in the previous section. The inscription groups are those listed at 2.1.2.4. From this figure, I derive the following conclusions:

**Some features are much better attested than others** From Figure 2.18, it can be observed easily that some features are generally better attested than others. Some have only a handful of occurrences, while others figure in a large number of inscriptions. I will discuss this phenomenon below, under 2.2.1.3 and 2.2.2.

**Not all vulgarisms figure in the earlier material** It can be seen that most features are present already in the earliest group of inscriptions, while a few are absent from the Earliest, Early, and even Middle groups. Another way to put this would be to say that by the time of the Late and Latest groups, all the features are attested. The specifics are discussed in 2.2.2.1.

It is necessary to be cautious. The absence or the presence of a vulgarism alone in the Trier inscriptions is not enough to make statements about whether it is part of the Vulgar Latin of Trier; the inscriptions inform us about spoken Latin, but they are not samples of spoken Latin. If a vulgarism is well implanted at earlier periods in Latin, but is rare or unseen in the Trier inscriptions, it may well be that it was consciously avoided, not that it somehow skipped Trier. It is needed then to consider that there is a difference between written and spoken language; this is tied closely to issues of sociolinguistics, of register and style, and of education. A discussion is presented under section 2.4.

### 2.2.1.2 Number of Vulgar Latin features by inscription

Figure 2.19 shows the number of Vulgar Latin features for each of the 125 inscriptions. The inscriptions are ordered by median value and color-coded by group. This figure is

		i/e	u/o	Monoph.	Qui gen.	ø h	ø m	Simpl.	Degem.	Gem.	var. vixit	proth. V	Syncope	Palat.
Group 1 (Earliest Inscriptions)	39													
	37													
	9			x										
	99													
	124			x	x									
	130													
	137	x												
	31													
	15	x												
	20	x												
	35	x			x									
	36	x			x		x							
	44	x			x									
	46	x												
	47	x			x									
	49	x				x								
	56													
	59						x			x				
	60								x					
	65											x		
	68				x									
	73	x			x	x								
	85	x												
	26	x												
	84													
	126				x									
	12													
	28	x												
61	x					x		x						
Group 2 (Early Inscriptions)	71												x	
	139	x		x										
	6													
	7	x	x											
	11													
	29	x						x						
	45	x	x											
	50	x	x											
	51	x	x											
	69		x	x										
	80													
	86		x											
	87													
	100				x									
	4													
	16													
	67	x												
	96							x						
	57					x								
	105	x			x									
Group 3 (Middle Inscriptions)	53	x						x						
	25	x	x		x									
	102													
	38			x										
	40	x						x						
	42					x		x						
	90								x					
	109			x										
	145		x			x								x
	19													
	24			x	x				x					
	101	x			x							x		
	108													
	117	x												
	119		x		x									
	153		x										x	
	192			x										
	94													
	106								x					
	143													
	13													
	30	x			x			x						
	33	x	x							x		x		
	34													
	55	x						x	x					
	52		x					x	x			x		
	66	x												
	104													
144				x										
152	x							x			x			
160	x	x												
142A														
3	x				x			x						



		i/e	u/o	Monoph.	Qui gen.	ø h	ø m	Simpl.	Degem.	Gem.	var. vixit	proth. V	Syncope	Palat.
Group 4 (Late Inscriptions)	142													
	159													
	2	x						x					x	
	77	x	x	x										
	27	x												
	18		x					x				x		
	109													
	54	x	x						x					
	21	x	x		x					x	x			x
	63	x							x					
	72	x	x	x										
	132	x		x					x					x
	138		x	x	x					x				
	154													
	156							x						
	178									x	x			
	184		x						x					
	194						x							
	222	x												
	84A	x	x											
	165	x	x											
	107	x	x											
	70	x					x			x				
	75	x												
89														
Group 5 (Latest Inscriptions)	217	x						x						
	1						x				x			
	127	x	x											
	180		x								x			
	97			x										
	194A													
	191		x	x					x					
	5													
	147	x	x		x									
	134	x	x			x	x							
	193	x	x	x		x	x							
	219													
	220	x												
	76	x	x											
	135	x	x											x
	170													
	29A	x	x								x	x		x
	214													

Figure 2.18: Trier: Distribution of Vulgar Latin Traits

meant to help visualize the distribution of vulgarisms. This information is put in table format under Table 2.8, which shows for each group how many inscriptions have how many Vulgar Latin features. From this figure and this table, I derive the following conclusions:

**Most inscriptions have few Vulgar Latin features** As Figure 2.19 shows, the overwhelming majority of the Trier inscriptions has zero (34 inscriptions), one (31 inscriptions), two (31 inscriptions) or three (21 inscriptions) Vulgar Latin features. Only a small

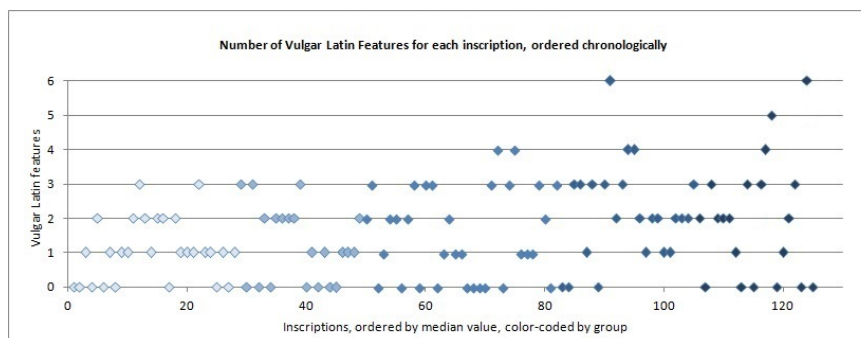


Figure 2.19: Trier: Number of VL features per inscription, by group

Table 2.8: Trier: Distribution of vulgarisms, by group.

N° of features	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
0	8	7	9	3	6
1	12	5	8	5	2
2	6	6	6	6	6
3	2	3	8	6	3
4	0	0	2	2	1
5	0	0	0	0	1
6	0	0	0	1	1
Total:	28	21	33	23	20

number of inscriptions contain four (5 inscriptions) or more (3 inscriptions contain 5 or 6) Vulgar Latin features.

**At all periods, a substantial number of inscriptions do not show any Vulgar Latin features** It can be observed from Figure 2.19 that even in the Late and Latest groups, a substantial number of inscriptions present no or few Vulgar Latin features. The absence of Vulgar Latin features cannot be used to determine whether it is early. I will quantify and discuss this below in 2.5, as this impacts the use of vulgarisms as a dating tool directly.

A significant number of inscriptions that do not feature Vulgar Latin features at the later periods are ‘irregular’ inscriptions that do not adhere to the formulaic structure. These are treated separately in 2.3, and are best accounted for using sociolinguistics.

**The maximal number of Vulgar Latin features increases over time** As can be seen at a glance from 2.20 and 2.21 and as is detailed in Table 2.8, the highest number of Vulgar Latin features per inscription increases over time. For the Earliest and Early inscriptions, the maximum number of features is three, and only two (for the Earliest)

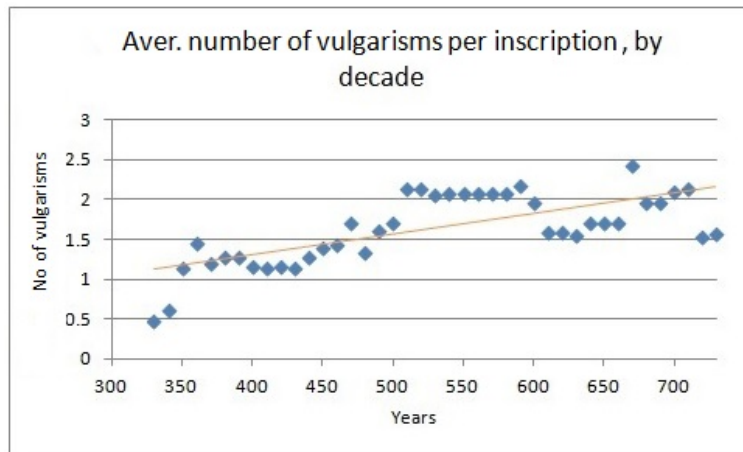


Figure 2.20: Trier: Weighted average number of Vulgar Latin features by decade

and three (for the Early) inscriptions feature that many. We have to wait until the Middle group to find inscriptions with four features or more. Two inscriptions of the Middle and Late group, dated 450-500 and 500-590, contain four Vulgar Latin features. The Late group also includes one of the two inscriptions that bear six features. The Latest group has the other such inscription. Even at later periods, relatively few inscriptions bear many Vulgar Latin features: only five inscriptions have four features, two have five, and one has six.

### 2.2.1.3 Variation in the average number of Vulgar Latin features

While it is expected for the average number of Vulgar Latin features to increase over time and to reflect a general move further away from Classical Latin, this increase needs to be isolated and quantified. I've modeled the data on Figure 2.20; 2.21 is meant to be used as control.

**The number of Vulgar Latin features increases modestly over time** As can be observed, the general development is for the number of Vulgar Latin features to increase gradually and modestly, as shown on Figure 2.21.

Figure 2.20 offers a more precise picture: the increase appears steady from 330 to 500, but then darts up at 500, plateauing until 600, before resuming its ascent after 600.

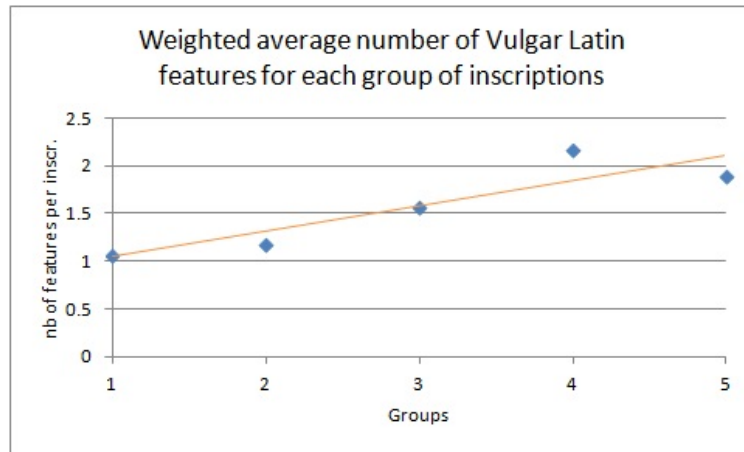


Figure 2.21: Trier: Weighted average number of Vulgar Latin features by group

This plateau is an artifact and the linear regression should be regarded as a better trend indicator.

*\* More on the artifacts.* The plateau (which can be observed also in the distribution of VL features; namely Figures 2.3, 2.6) is due to the fact that several inscriptions bear the date range 500-600, causing the distribution curve to flatten for those years. It is therefore most likely that the increase between the years 500 and 600 was in fact gradual, and that the plateau is simply an artifact.

**Some vulgarisms correlate with others.** Some vulgarisms are much less common than others. Some vulgarisms affecting vowels are very common (namely mergers, and to a lesser extent monophthongizations). Vulgarisms affecting the relative pronoun and consonants are less common. A few vulgarisms affecting vowels (hiatus, syncope, prothesis) can be added to this less common group.

It may be expected that the most uncommon vulgarisms would be distributed equally through the inscriptions, with a rate of occurrence that increases stably over time. However, this is not the case. While they are indeed commoner in later inscriptions and rarer in inscriptions from groups 1 and 2<sup>62</sup>, they present a surprising behavior: they tend not

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<sup>62</sup>In addition, the only cases from these groups may well be by the same stonecutter or by a group of

Table 2.9: Trier: Inscriptions featuring two or more uncommon vulgarisms

Group 1	59
Group 2	61
Group 3	3, 152, 62, 55, 33, 30, 101, 24, 145, 42
Group 4	70, 178, 138, 132, 21, 18, 2
Group 5	29A, 193, 134, 1

to come unaccompanied. If one inscription features one uncommon vulgarism, it often features others. Out of the 51 inscriptions that feature at least one uncommon vulgarism, 23 show two or more. The inscriptions that have two or more uncommon vulgarisms are listed under Table 2.9.

A few of these inscriptions depart from or do not use the formulaic (29A 193 134). Non-formulaic inscriptions feature original text, crafted for these particular inscriptions. Perhaps it can be expected that original text would be likelier to contain vulgarisms, including rarer vulgarisms. Some non-formulaic inscriptions indeed do contain many vulgarisms. However, a great many are actually written in better Latin than the average formulaic inscriptions. The picture is more complex then (and is treated below in sections 2.3 and 2.4.1), and indeed, most of inscriptions that feature multiple uncommon vulgarisms are regular formulaic inscriptions.

*\* The special case of the late inscriptions, dated 600-730 (end of group 4, group 5)* After the year 600 (corresponding to the last 15 years of group 4, and all of group 5), the data points of figure 2.20 are more scattered, although they still point to a slow but steady increase.

In order to understand the scattering, it is necessary to bear in mind that 1) there are many fewer inscriptions dated 600-730, and, that 2) fewer inscriptions makes it easier for the curve to be impacted considerably by a few anomalous inscriptions. A significant

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stonecutters from the same workshop, whose command over written language was especially poor; see subsection 2.2.3.1.

number of the latest inscriptions are ‘irregular’, in that they depart from the formulaic format that is otherwise prevalent in the corpus, and a significant number of these ‘irregular’ inscriptions are in fact literary and often metrical. Their text is not only original, but it is also longer, more complex and varied, and it tends to be written in excellent Latin. Since much can be said about these inscriptions, they are treated separately below under sections 2.3 and 2.4.1.

## 2.2.2 Feature-dependent trends and behaviors

### 2.2.2.1 Onset period

As can be expected, the period of onset of each vulgarism differs in the history of the Latin language. Many are attested very early, predating the Trier material by centuries. They figure in Archaic Latin material or even predate literary Latin (loss of aspiration and of  $/-m/$ ; syncope started appearing early and continued throughout the history of Latin), others are attested in the Pompeii inscriptions and other Republican sources (confusions between  $/\check{i}/$  and  $/\bar{e}/$ , monophthongization of  $/ae/$ , generalization of the masculine singular relative pronoun, simplification of the [ks] cluster, simplifications of other consonant clusters), others make timid first appearances in Republican inscriptions but become widespread at later times (palatalization, prothesis), finally some are said to be later still (confusions between  $/\check{u}/$  and  $/\bar{o}/$ , monophthongization of  $/au/$ ).

It is not surprising to see that most of the vulgarisms that are attested early in the history of the Latin language are well attested in the Trier inscriptions. However, it can also be observed that some of these ‘early’ vulgarisms do not figure in the earlier Trier inscriptions. Namely, the following are absent from the Earliest group: loss of  $/-m/$ , gemination (but there is an instance of degemination), prothetic vowel, syncope, palatalization, confusion between  $\langle u \rangle$  and  $\langle o \rangle$ . Of these, the following remain unattested in the Early group: gemination, prothetic vowel, syncope, palatalization. Of these, only gemination remains unattested in the Middle group.

That some of the earlier Latin linguistic developments do not figure in the earliest Trier

material may be due to their overall rarity (see section 2.2.2.3): some vulgarisms require especially rare environments to occur, present in a very limited number of inscriptions; generally, also, the earlier inscriptions feature fewer vulgarisms altogether. However, this cannot explain away entirely why some vulgarisms that should be common (early onset in the history of Latin, well-attested in Vulgar Latin material of earlier periods, require an environment that is common in the Trier inscriptions; for instance, the loss of */-m/*) find very few instances.

Perhaps the stonecutters were successful in avoiding these vulgarisms consciously, in which case they understood that the written language obeyed rules that the spoken language does not follow anymore. Alternatively, it may be that the stonecutters were good at recopying models that did avoid these vulgarisms, in which case the Trier stonecutters are careful and conservative. However, either of these explanations is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the stonecutters certainly do not shy away from other vulgarisms (such as vocalic mergers and monophthongization). I would say instead that some vulgarisms became part of the acceptable written language, effectively becoming normative, while others had not. I would speak of selective conservatism - some features were deemed acceptable (or even stopped being noticed altogether as *Vulgar*), while others needed to be avoided. As it happens, some of the Trier inscriptions record the status of the deceased or of the dedicator, making it possible to discern that the use of certain vulgarisms is socially marked, while others are not; this is discussed below under section 2.4.2.

#### **2.2.2.2 Development**

While the average number of vulgarisms per inscription increases over time, each Vulgar Latin feature follows its own development. This individual development does not need to match the general increase in vulgarism.

The frequency of occurrence of some vulgarisms markedly increases over time. Confusions between *<u>* and *<o>* appear in the 5<sup>th</sup> c., and from there just blossom; see 4.2.3 for a detailed discussion of this feature's development.

Some features' frequency of occurrence increases modestly but steadily over time. This is the case for confusions of <*i*> and <*e*> and for the omission of /-*n*-/ in consonant clusters. Alternate spellings of the [ks] cluster likewise increase slowly but progressively.

Other features remain equally attested over time. Such is the case for the agreement of relative pronoun. The frequency of occurrence of non-declined relative pronouns does not increase over time. Likewise, loss of /*h*/ and /-*m*/ remain equally attested over time.

For some features, I cannot detect a trend. It may be that the number of occurrences varies widely decade to decade, without any noticeable pattern. Such is the case for the monophthongization of /*ae*/. For others, there are too few occurrences to establish trends with much certainty. This is the case for gemination/degemination (few data points but mostly late), monophthongization of /*au*/ (one instance early, the other two are late and latest), syncope (only two occurrences, middle or late), prothetic vowels (only two instances, one early and one late), palatalization (five occurrences, middle or late), case usage confusion, any changes pertaining to verbs.

### 2.2.2.3 Prevalence

The total number of occurrences varies widely from feature to feature. The number of occurrences of a feature is an indicator of how widespread this feature is. Set against the total number of inscriptions, this is the frequency of occurrence. For some of the features, this is sufficient. However, for other features, it is more accurate to evaluate prevalence. By prevalence, I mean the proportion of actual occurrences to all possible occurrences. To evaluate prevalence, I compare the frequency of occurrence of a feature against the frequency of occurrence of the feature not happening in environments where it could happen.

Some features require much simpler environments to surface than others. Nearly every inscription contains words in which these features could appear. For these features, their prevalence is well approximated by their frequency of occurrence. Confusions between <*i*> and <*e*> and between <*o*> and <*u*> fall under that category. Words like *titulum*,



*requiescit, fidelis, dulcis* or *numero* are ubiquitous, and provide plenty of possibilities for these vocalic mergers to happen.

Other features require very specific environments to occur, such as the following syllable containing an /u/, for monophthongization of /au/. The changes affecting consonant clusters of course require the presence of these consonant clusters. Some of these consonant clusters occur infrequently in the Trier inscriptions. As for the agreement of the relative pronoun, we not only require relative clauses, but forms of the relative that would show agreement failures (*cui* and *cuius* are not gender-differentiated, for instance) and relative clauses with an antecedent that isn't masculine singular. It follows that we have fewer occurrences of these features.

It is not possible to determine the prevalence of these rarer features by associating it to the frequency of occurrence. In order to determine prevalence, it is necessary to establish a narrower list of instances of the precise environment required for the feature to surface. The varying proportion of 'inscriptions that feature X' to 'inscriptions that could feature X but do not' constitutes prevalence.

**Confusions of *i/e*, *o/u*** I find a large number of instances of confusions between <*i*> and <*e*> at all periods. I can thus speak of a large number of instances, but also of a stable high prevalence. For the *o/u* merger, I have no occurrences in the early inscriptions. Once the feature becomes attested, the frequency of occurrence shoots up steadily and rapidly, meeting that of the *i/e* merger for the latest inscriptions, and I may thus speak of high prevalence.

**Agreement of the relative pronoun** Nearly all Trier inscriptions have a relative clause, but only a portion of them have a relative clause with an antecedent that is not nominative masculine singular. This smaller group alone can inform us on the state of the agreement of the relative pronoun.

The ratio of 'non-declined relative pronouns' to 'well declined relative pronouns' remains surprisingly stable at all but the latest periods, always in favor of the latter. The

latest inscriptions feature several instances of properly declined relatives, and no improperly declined relatives. This may strike one as surprising. I can offer an explanation. The latest inscriptions are few in number (signaling a change in burial practice, perhaps). They often do away with or depart significantly from the late antique formulary. In order to do so, it is necessary to craft original text; this requires a more solid command over written language than filling in the blanks of the formulary. Therefore, the latest inscriptions must have been written by especially well-trained people, who could avoid basic agreement mistakes involving the relative pronoun.

### 2.2.3 Observations pertaining to particular vulgarisms

#### 2.2.3.1 Monophthongization of /*au*/

The instances of this monophthongization are few and far between (low prevalence; see 2.2.2.3). I find only three instances, one of which appears in an Earliest inscription (n° 36), the two others are Late and Latest. That we have so few data points makes any conclusions precarious.

However, it is worth pointing out that 36 contains a large number of vulgarisms for its group including three that are uncommonly found (i/e; monophthongization, loss of *h*-). Gauthier notes<sup>63</sup> that the paleography, the language, and the format of the age of the deceased match that of inscriptions n° 59 and 61. I indeed observe that none of them feature /*h*-/ and that they all contain uncommon vulgarisms (consonantal simplification, degemination) and an above average number of vulgarisms. Thus it may well be that the inscriptions n° 36, 59 and 61 form a group, having been produced by the same stonecutter or by a group of stonecutters from the same workshop, and whose spelling was especially lax<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup>Gauthier (1975, 219-220 n° 61).

<sup>64</sup>This is also discussed under footnote 62.

### 2.2.3.2 Merger of / $\bar{o}$ / and / $\bar{u}$ /

See Section 4.2.3 for a discussion of the Trier evidence for the onset and early development of the / $\bar{o}$ / and / $\bar{u}$ / merger. It is also considered alongside the Vienna and the *Aquitania Prima* evidence.

### 2.2.3.3 The simplification of the [ks] cluster

It is remarkable that the Trier inscriptions do not feature any instances of simplification of [ks], a Vulgar Latin feature that finds attestations in earlier Roman epigraphic material, that is widespread in Merovingian charters, and that is reflected in modern Romance. Nearly every inscription displays the environment required for the feature to occur (i.e. *uixit* is contained by very nearly every inscription). Yet the numerous variant spellings of *uixit* make clear that the stonecutters were trying to render a consonant cluster that included two consonants (<*sx*, *cs*, *cx*, *xx*>, and the potentially archaizing <*xs*>).

It could be argued that the preservation of the [ks] cluster is due to conservativeness and to the highly fixed nature of the formulary. Some vulgarisms appear to have been regarded as more acceptable written Latin in Trier, while others were deemed vernacular and were thus avoided in writing (explaining why there are few instances of missing final /-m/, palatalization and prothetic vowels). It may be that preserving <x> was deemed of special importance. However, this argument would hold only if the stonecutters seldom deviated from the inherited <x> spelling. The fact that the spellings <*sx*, *cs*, *cx*, *xx*, *xs*> can be found undermines an appeal to conservativeness, and instead supports a linguistic reality. That is to say, these variant spellings support that the stonecutters were trying to render a cluster with two components: a plosive element and a sibilant.

In addition, the Trier stonecutters would have needed to be extraordinarily conservative in order to avoid any spellings in <*s*> or <*ss*>, if indeed the cluster had simplified as elsewhere in Romance. The sheer mass of the evidence (correctly spelled *uixit* and of non-simplex alternative spellings (*uixsit*, *uixxit* etc)) is difficult to explain away, while there are simply no simplex spellings at all.

It may be that this is a regionalism. Perhaps it is that Trier Latin never simplified [ks] to [s], while the rest of Gaul generally did. However, the evidence from *Aquitania Prima*, presented under sections 3.1.4.6 and 3.1.5.2, does not support the hypothesis of an areal feature: *Aquitania Prima*, a region far removed from Trier, also preserves the [ks] cluster.

## 2.3 The Trier irregular inscriptions

Most Trier inscriptions follow the same structure (discussed under subsection 2.1.3) and can be deemed ‘regular’ or ‘formulaic’. I find it useful to separate those that fall outside of this category into two loosely-defined subdivisions, ‘expanded’ formulaic and ‘innovative’.

When made to craft original text, without the crutch of the formulary, the Trier stonecutters<sup>65</sup> departed from the Classical Latin norm. Some of these inscriptions contain a large number of the Vulgar Latin features studied previously. Others are surprisingly devoid of these vulgarisms, but present others, which I have not yet discussed, or are quite astonishingly ‘impeccable’. These vulgarisms (or lack thereof) warrant particular attention, especially as this discussion touches upon the realm of sociolinguistics, intersecting with material culture (through Trier burial practices) and linguistic and stylistic registers.

### 2.3.1 Inventory

Table 2.10 lists the irregular inscriptions, ordered by type (expanded formulaic or innovative). The dating group for each inscription is listed in parentheses.

‘Expanded’ formulaic inscriptions are usually longer than the otherwise laconic regular

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<sup>65</sup>Smaller workshops expected the stonecutter to cover the entire process. However, a larger workshop may employ specialized workers: a *scriptor* to compose the text, an *ordinator* to determine the text’s layout on the stone, and a stonecutter to engrave the text; Cravens (2002, p.50). Since it is not possible to determine whether an inscription’s text was composed by the stonecutter himself or some other trained worker, but we know assuredly that a stonecutter was involved, I use ‘stonecutter’ for short when discussing the composer of the text.

A small number of inscriptions were likely written by the family or entourage of the deceased, or prepared by the deceased himself. Some of these inscriptions were a show of erudition and can indeed be attached to educated, or to very educated and even prestigious clergy members. See sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.

Table 2.10: Trier: List of irregular inscriptions

Expanded inscriptions	29A(5), 68(1), 71(1), 97(5), 135(5), 138(4), 147(5), *173, 214(5)
Innovative inscriptions	19(3), 89(5), 90(3), 106(3), *122, *133, 134(5), 153(3), 170(5), 192(3), 191(5), 193(5), *194, 194A(5), *195, *196, 197, 217(5), 219(5), (234)

format and they still rely heavily upon formulaic structures, hence the name. Instead of using formulaic structures verbatim like regular inscriptions, they amplify and adapt these structures, sometimes also modifying their order. These inscriptions can be in verse, although they most often are not. Minimal additions to the formulaic structure are fairly common<sup>66</sup>, more extensive additions are less so, and usually affect late inscriptions.

‘Innovative’ or literary inscriptions depart from the formulary completely (or at least significantly) and are commonly in verse. ‘Innovative’ inscriptions are characterized by a higher level of literary craftsmanship in their elaboration. If they still show the basic formulaic elements, the amount of original text distinguishes them from the simply ‘expanded’ formulaic inscriptions.

Some irregular inscriptions suffer from extensive damage (\*173, 191, \*194, \*195, \*196, \*197, \*234). That we cannot rely upon the formulary makes textual reconstruction more difficult. The inscription numbers preceded by an asterisk had to be excluded from my quantitative study due to the extent of the loss of text, but whatever individual forms they contain were included in the philological discussions.

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<sup>66</sup>For instance, a few adjectives or qualifying nouns for the deceased or the dedicator, a different verb, a modified date format etc.

### 2.3.2 ‘Expanded’ formulaic inscriptions

Throughout this subsection and the next (2.3.3), I reproduce material edited by Gauthier. I reproduce only the ‘expanded’ formulaic inscriptions that are not so fragmentary

I follow her system of brackets: square brackets ([]) mean editorial reconstruction or missing text, round brackets (( )) mean that some letters are abbreviated (commonly using a superscript abbreviation mark or a ligature) in the inscriptions but are unpacked by the editor, angular brackets (<>) mean that the editor had to substitute letters. Whenever I disagree with an editorial decision made by Gauthier, I note her reading and mine. Letters written in caps without word breaks mean that the editor could not parse them in any acceptable way, and so simply reproduces them as they are on the stone. I have in some cases been able to provide readings.

These subsections (2.3.2 and 2.3.3) give me the opportunity to comment on the language, the metrics, and the epigraphy of each irregular inscription. The subsections that follow will build upon this work, offering broader discussions about sociolinguistics and funerary practices.

#### 2.3.2.1 Group 1: ‘Earliest’ inscription

The only expanded inscriptions that is not especially late comes from the first dating group.

##### (1) 68. 350-400

Hic Victorinus ex trib[unis et ...? coniux]  
aeius iunti in pace quiescent qu[i ...]  
annos XVI nam tulit ille ann[os ... et illa]  
annos XXVIII filia aeorum patri[bus ... issimis]  
pro caritate titulu[m posuit in pace]

This inscription does not feature the vocalic mergers typical of Trier (notably, <i> and <e> are unaffected; it is too early to see changes affecting <o> and <u>). However, I find the uncommon *quiescent* for *quiescunt* and the consonant cluster simplification, *iunti* for *iuncti*. In addition, this inscription contains two hypercorrections (*aeius* for *eius*, *aeorum* for *eorum*); see subsection 2.1.4.3 and Väänänen (1981, p. 31 no 45). Hypercorrections are otherwise rare in the Trier material. This inscription is then remarkable due to the number of uncommon vulgarisms that it contains.

The innovations to the formulary are modest and consist in the construction *iuncti in pace*, which is not attested anywhere else in the corpus, and the use of *tulit annos XX* to indicate the age reached by the deceased, found only on one other inscription, 176, also early (dated 410-490).

(2) 71. 400-420

Hic quiescit Uitalis qui  
 uixit annos LX[X]XV milit-  
 auit inter Io[ui]a[n]o[s] senio-  
 ris an(nos) XL coniu[n]x karissima  
 titulum posuit.

This inscription follows the formulary, but inserts *militauit inter Iouianos senioris annos XL*, to indicate that this is the burial of a military veteran. It features the common confusion of <i> and <e>, but is otherwise devoid of vulgarisms. The spelling with a <k> of *karissima* is an archaism; alternations between <k> and <c> can be found occasionally in 4<sup>th</sup> c. and 5<sup>th</sup> c. inscriptions (49, 71, 104). *Coniu[n]x* can also be interpreted as an archaism; see Leumann (1977, pp. 394, 533)

### 2.3.2.2 Group 4-5: ‘Later’ and ‘Latest’ inscriptions

All of the other inscriptions of this category are from the Latest and Late inscription groups. These later inscriptions feature formulary additions that are significantly more

extensive than the early 68.

(3) 29A. 700-730

Hic requiescit in  
pace uir uenera-  
biles Ludubertus  
de nobile genere qui  
uixit annus plus  
minus LXV cuius de-  
positio eius est XVI  
k(a)lendas) ian(uarias) et o(m)nes res suas  
s(an)c(t)o Petro trade-  
dit et se clericu(m) feci(t)

This inscription features vulgarisms well attested in the Trier inscriptions (vocalic mergers, palatalization of *t*, alternate spellings of [ks]). In addition, I find the tautological construction *cuius depositio eius*, the reflexive use *se clericum fecit* and the non-classical construction with preposition *de nobile genere*.

It is possible to recognize the Trier formulaic structure, expanded significantly. The subject is further defined by the appositional noun phrase *uir uenerabiles* and the prepositional phrase *de nobile genere* (where Classical Latin may have used case endings alone). More interestingly, we encounter the relative clause *cuius depositio eius est XVI kalendas ianuaris*. The relative pronoun is declined correctly, but the stonemason must have felt that its case alone could not be trusted to convey clearly the relationship, and so he added the possessive *eius*, correct on its own but tautological in addition to the relative pronoun; see also item (7), 147, of this subsection along with subsection 2.1.4.9. This relative clause is linked grammatically by the conjunction *et* to two clauses that, semantically, are independent, on the same level as the main clause.



(4) 97. 590-700

Recessit die octauo id-  
dus maias die solis puella A-  
<g>recia annoru<m> quindecim  
et frater ipsius sa[e]-  
nior post tertio i<d>-  
us maias nomine  
Parrontius uixit  
annos XX et <d>ies XX.

Gauthier holds in very low esteem the stonecutter who carved this inscription, judging harshly that he must be illiterate or barely literate<sup>67</sup>.

There are, however, several reasons for rejecting this position. This inscription presents *ipsius* instead of *eius* and the hypercorrection *saenior* for *senior*. This usage of the pronoun follows Vulgar Latin development; Väänänen (1981, pp. 120-121 no 270 and 272) about the pronoun *is* falling out of use, and *ipse* taking on anaphoric and demonstrative roles. The hypercorrect form *saenior* is actually a sign of education, as it requires some knowledge of the changes affecting vowels. It is worth noting that the other instances of hypercorrection (38, 68; 124 however is too damaged to tell) are all found in inscriptions that feature few to no vulgarisms, an indicator that their author was especially competent. Likewise, that the author of 97 managed to avoid successfully common Trier vulgarisms affecting vowels is an indicator of his education.

Gauthier appears especially baffled that the writer of 97 chose to compose his own text instead of relying upon the formulary, as the end product is quite unfortunate in her

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<sup>67</sup>Gauthier (1975, p. 280): “Mais il ne savait pas lire, c’est-à-dire que, tout en reconnaissant chaque lettre prise isolément, il ne savait pas les assembler pour saisir le sens des mots”. Unable to read the text, she argues, he had to isolate and decipher each letter, which he did only with much difficulty, leading to uncertain letter forms and to erroneous letters, which she rectifies in angular brackets. See also next footnote for her judgment of the poor training of the stonecutter.

evaluation<sup>68</sup>; I discuss the departure from the Trier formulary in late inscriptions under subsection 2.4.3.

(5) 135. 700-730

Hic requies data Hloderici membra sep[ul]crum  
qui capus in numero uicarii nomine sum[p]sit.  
Fuit in pupulo gratus et in suo genere pr[i]mus.  
Cui uxor nobelis pro amore tetolum fie[ri] iussit  
qui uixit in saeculo annus plus minus [...]L  
cui depositio fuit in saecul[o] VII ka[l(endas) aug]ustas.

This is the only inscription of this category that is at least partially in verse. The first two lines are more or less correct dactylic hexameters, see Gauthier (1975, p. 354). Lines 3 and 5 feature dactylic rhythms; the author may not have been able to sustain fully formed hexameters, but he strove to craft a metrical, more poetic prose. The last two lines are much more formulaic. Therefore, this inscription follows and expands the formulary, yet features a fair amount of original text.

The text exhibits the expected vocalic mergers and the more uncommon palatalization of *depositio* into *deposicio*. It also features a more puzzling *capus* instead of *caput*; Väänänen (1981, p. 102 no 214) presents this form as a likely reanalysis as a 2<sup>nd</sup> declension masculine, likewise Bernitt (1905, pp. 188-189) and Gauthier (1975, p. 354), both citing CIL VI, 29 849a *Roma capus mundi*. The syntax of this line is difficult. Perhaps *capus* can be taken as a nominative, if *fuit* is understood, and *uicarii nomine sumpsit* is

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<sup>68</sup>She judges that the text's author was very poorly educated and she appears baffled that this person chose to depart from the formulary, Gauthier (1975, p. 280): "Le texte de cette double épitaphe ne donne pas une très haute idée de la culture de celui qui l'a composé" and Gauthier (1975, p. 281): "Ce ne sont pas tant les formules employées qui sont significatives que le contraste saisissant entre l'habileté technique du lapidice et son incapacité à déchiffrer un texte élémentaire: ceci est la signature d'une époque où le fait de savoir lire est devenu une brillante exception. Celui qui a rédigé ce texte informe était, lui aussi, fort peu lettré: pourquoi s'est-il résolument écarté des formules éprouvées de l'épigraphe trévire? Certaines traditions avaient-elles fini par se perdre? A-t-il cru faire mieux? En tout cas, cette épitaphe prouve que l'art de graver la pierre s'est maintenu à Trèves alors que même l'instruction la plus élémentaire avait disparu".

taken to be an independent clause. An alternative would be to take it as an otherwise unattested 3<sup>rd</sup> decl. neutral s-stem, but this strikes me as considerably less likely. The form *capus* is also discussed under Section 2.1.4.8.

Gauthier is of the opinion that no syntax can be discerned for the first line, the nominatives put side by side. However, this is made in my view unlikely by the fact that the stonecutter appeared capable of crafting more complex sentences (for instance, the *iubere* + accusative and passive infinitive), which appear original. Thus I side with Hettner<sup>69</sup>, who interprets *sepulcrum* as an apposition to *requies* ('Here is the tomb, the repose granted...' or 'Here is the tomb granted as repose...'). While we may have expected the dative *membris* ('granted to the limbs of Hlodericus'), it would not have fit the meter. Instead, we should interpret *membra* as an accusative of respect. This would yield: 'Here is the repose given with respect to the limbs of Hlodericus, [this] tomb.' While the accusative of respect is a learned poetic construction, which we may not expect to encounter here, it should be noted that the inscriptions of low ranked clergy, such as 135, aspired to the style and erudition of the inscriptions of bishops, which included very elaborate poetic flourishes; this is treated under Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 and 3.2.3.

The antecedent of the relative pronoun of 1.5 could be either the *uxor* of 1.4. (following grammar, strictly speaking) or Hlodericus (following meaning; this inscription is about the late Hlodericus, it follows that all the clauses would refer to his life, relationships, and death, and especially so for the formulary). Meaning has to prevail over grammar.

**(6)** 138. 500-600 or 700-7300

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<sup>69</sup>Hettner (1903, 163 no 393).

Hic pausat in pace Ingenua  
christiana fidelis Ursacius  
cursor dominicus PIENTISSE  
T octaum decem kalendas fe-  
bar<r>ias qui uixit anos XXVIII  
titulum posuit dulcesi-  
me sue matrone  
in Christo

This inscription suffered damage in the modern period. Only a small fragment of the stone is now available, for most of the text we have to rely upon an early modern transcription. In addition, a portion of the received text is difficult to interpret (end of l.3 and first letter of l.4; Gauthier leaves the letters in caps in her edition to signify that she cannot propose a satisfactory reading).

I find the expected vocalic mergers, the degeminated form *anos* for *annos*, and the curious syncopated form *febarrias* for *februarias* (for which another acceptable reconstruction may well be *februarrias*; this was dicussed under 2.1.4.8).

The early modern transcription reads ‘*pientisse*’ at the end of l.3 and ‘*t*’ at the beginning of l.4. The small fragment of the tombstone that still exists covers the end of l.3. Gauthier discerns text under this *pientisse* of l.3, which she makes out to read *recessit* or *recesset* (the final ‘*t*’ being provided at the beginning of l.4.). Gauthier does not say whether she means for *Ursacius* to be the subject of this *recessit* or *recesset* (in which case this inscription would be the tombstone of Ursacius, in addition to Ingenua) or whether she takes *Ingenua* to be the only subject still. The first option is difficult semantically, as it leaves unclear who, indeed, if not *Ursacius*, is referred to as dedicator at l.6. However, if Ingenua is the only subject of *recessit* (as sense would have it), we have to take the nominative masculine *Ursacius cursor dominicus* (l.2-3) to be the subject of *titulum posuit* (l.6). This makes for a difficult text to read.

I propose instead to accept ‘*pietisse*’ transmitted by the 17<sup>th</sup> c. humanists, as standing for *pietiss[em]e* or *pietiss[im]e*, taken to be the adverb *pietissime*. CL had *piissime* as superlative adverb of *pius*, but Medieval Latin has also *piens* and thus *pietissime*, and these forms in fact find numerous early occurrences in 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. epigraphy<sup>70</sup>. These may have resulted from a secondary stative *piere* ‘be pure, be pious’, from CL *piare* ‘to purify’, or else may have been modeled after *sapiens*, which forms already in CL the superlative adverb *sapientissime*.

Little has survived of the stone, but it possible to make out that what remains forms the top right edge; the stonecutter did not carve out *pietisseme* or *pietissime* in full because he ran out of space. The ‘t’ of l.4 may be unpacked as *ante*, as Steiner suggests<sup>71</sup>, giving us *ante octauum decemum kalendas febarrias*.

What of Gauthier’s observation that <*recessi*> or <*recesse*> can be made out underneath <*pietesse*>? The stonecutter corrected a mistake. Basing myself upon the photography provided in her edition, <*pietesse*> is clearly made to stand out, and it has been engraved over some other letters (I cannot, however, pronounce myself upon what they read). It may be that the stonecutter first understood *Ursacius cursor dominicus* as another deceased person celebrated by this epitaph and wrote one of the verbs used to express that he lays in peace, before realizing his mistake and correcting his text.

(7) 147. 640-730

Hic requiescit uir uenera-  
 belis adoliscens nu(mine) Modoal(dus)  
 qui uixit plus mi(nu)s an(nos) XVI obiet  
 in pace quod ficit m(e)ns(is)  
 F(e)br(uariu)s dies VIII cuius pater et mat(er)  
 in amure ipsius titul(um) posui-  
 runt in pace.

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<sup>70</sup>Harrod (1909, pp. 12-13), Dickey (2007, pp. 130-133 footnote 1).

<sup>71</sup>Steiner (1851–1864, 33 no 1758).

/ō/ written as <u> is much less common than /ǔ/ written as <o>; see 2.1.4.2. Likewise, /ē/ written as <i> is much less common than /ĭ/ written as <e>; see 2.1.4.1. 147 is remarkable as it features examples of both the common and the uncommon types.

The *quod ficit* of 1.4 is actually correct; it is part of a set dating formula otherwise unattested in Trier, but found in Merovingian and Carolingian charters; see Levillain (1912)<sup>72</sup>.

The stonecutter used the correctly declined *cuius* as part of a highly redundant construction similar to that of 29A, *cuius pater et mater ipsius*, where *ipsius* stands for *eius*, and both serve to indicate possession; see subsection 2.1.4.9 and also item (3), 29A, of this subsection.

(8) 214. 720-730

Aufidius presbit[er]  
ann(orum) plus minus LX[...]  
hic in pace quies[cit]  
cui Augurina s[oror]  
et Augurius diac[...]  
filius et pro carita[te]  
titulum fieri iusse[runt].

The Latin of this inscription is remarkably correct. The formulae are not in the usual order, no doubt to put the emphasis on the name of the deceased and his status as priest.

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<sup>72</sup>In particular: “Très fréquentes dans la moitié du VIIe siècle et dans la première moitié du VIIIe, elles [i.e. la formule *quod ficit* et ses variantes] ne sont plus qu’exceptionnellement en usage au IXe.”; pp. 410-411.

### 2.3.3 ‘Innovative’ inscriptions

These inscriptions are all either from the Middle group or the Latest group. I have ordered them chronologically. Within this, I made some further logical regrouping, which I will discuss.

#### 2.3.3.1 Group 3: ‘Middle’ inscriptions

(9) 19. 450-460

Quam bene concordēs diuina potentia iungit!  
Membra sacerdotum quae ornat locus iste duorum.  
Eucharium loquitur Ualeriumque simul.  
Sedem uicturis gaudens componere membris  
Fratribus hoc sanctis ponens altare Cyrillus  
Corporis hospitium sanctus metator adornat.

This is one of the very few inscriptions for which the characters can be identified: Valerius and Eucharis were two 3rd c. bishops of Trier, and Cyrillus was bishop from 455 to 457.

The inscription is metrical and its Latin is impeccable. As Gauthier notes, the only mistakes in quantity involve the first names (*Cyrillus* usually has a long / $\bar{y}$ / in Late Latin and *Ualerius* has a short / $\check{a}$ /), but this is a fairly common poetic license. v.3 scans as a pentameter (perhaps to form an elegiac couplet with v.2), while the other verses are hexameters. To have one isolated pentameter does not follow classical verse norms.

(10) 106. 430-500

Egregii caelum meritis non posse neg[ar]i  
 Quis dubitet famulumque diu sp[era]re bea[tum?]  
 Per mortis [c]asum Dominus reparauit alumnum  
 exemtum Auspicium terris immiscuit astris.  
 [A]gnos[c...]m n[e]mpe fidem fructumque priorem  
 [...]ides uiuis in morte nec ullum  
 [...]u[...]e poteris cognoscere casum.  
 [Uixit anno]s XXVIII.

This metrical inscription features not only correct hexameters but excellent Latin, with the exception of the simplified *exemtum* for *exemptum*.

(11) 192. 420-500

[˘ ˘ h]ic posita est clarissima femina [˘ ˘ ]  
 [q]uae meruit miserante Deo ut funus [˘ ˘ / ˘ ˘ ]  
 nesciret natae quae mox in pace se-  
 [cuta est]/ concessum est solamen ei [˘ ˘ ˘ / ˘ ˘ ˘ / ˘ ˘ ]  
 [... q]ue potuit cr[...].

This metrical inscription presents fragments of hexameters. Its Latin is excellent (with [q]ue) for *quae* on v.5 as the only possible vulgarism.

(12) 90. 400-500

[...]ra parua notat  
 [...] ] paritura nepotes  
 [...] ]tuna domum.

Gauthier estimates that about half of this inscription is missing, on the left. It presents dactylic rhythms, marking it as metrical. The language is clearly not formulaic and the



deceased was likely female.

(13) 133. 330-460

[... ] Glyceria [...]

[... ]ti coniun[x ...]

[... ]er dono[...]

[... si]ne fine dol[or ...]

[... ]r uicturu[...]

[... ]PITUENTU[...]

[... ]UI[...]

Gauthier suggests that this inscription employs vocabulary found only in metrical inscriptions, but it is unclear whether this inscription is metrical due to the extent of the damage. If the reconstruction I propose is correct, then the text is literary but non-metrical.

On the first line, Gauthier notes but does not include in her transcription the vertical line that follows *Glyceria*, which can be interpreted as an *i*, forming perhaps the first letter of *iacet*. It may be that the line started with *hic*. This would follow the usual structure. If we accept this first line, we recover the width of the inscription, basing ourselves on letter size. This in turn yields the length of other lines if they are similarly indented (as is common in Trier), aiding textual reconstruction.

Gauthier suggests *semper* at l.3 for [...]*er*. This is possible, but it is not clear how the text would make sense. I suggest instead *mater* (giving us *coniun[x et]/ mater[...]*) or *coniun[x] / [mis]er* (in which case, *coniunx* would refer to the surviving spouse and dedicator, instead of the deceased). The *dono-* of l.3 may be the beginning of a personal name in the genitive (the tombstone's dedicator and the unfortunate soul left behind on l.5; the spouse or child of the deceased) continued perhaps on l.4.

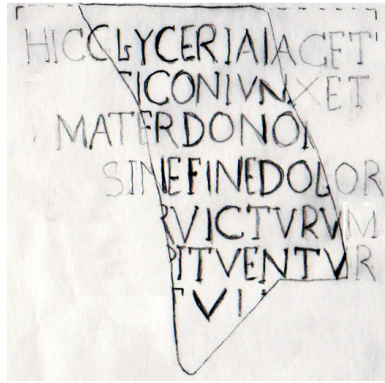


Figure 2.22: Partial reconstruction of the text of Trier n° 133

I would read l.5 as *uicturu[m]* (or, potentially, *uicturu[s]*) ‘the one that survives, prevails’ (used to refer to the one destined to eternal salvation at inscription 19). I would read l.6 as *tuentur* ‘they guard, care for, watch over’; the verb *tueor* is fairly common in hexameter poetry, and in particular the form *tuetur* is especially common at line-end<sup>73</sup>. The beginning of l.5 and the entirety of l.7 are difficult to reconstruct.

(14) 153. 440-500[?]

Titulum Rusticula ante qu-  
artum idus ianuaras decessit  
depostionem habuit pridem idus ia-  
nuarias annus habu-  
it XXII in tertium.

*Rusticula* may well serve two roles here. It is in a genitival relationship to *titulum* (with *titulus* reanalyzed as a neuter; see Gauthier (1975, p.396) for evidence of this in epigraphic language) at least meaning-wise. Instances of */-ae/* monophthongized as *<a>* in first declension endings are few (see 2.1.4.3 and in particular footnote 32), so it is unlikely that we are dealing with an underlying *Rusticulae*. It appears then that *Rusticula*

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<sup>73</sup>For various forms of *tueor*: 7 instances in Lucretius, 5 in Ovid, 16 in Vergil (Aeneid: 13, Georgics: 3).

was simply left in the nominative. Gauthier takes this to be a case of regression to the nominative; however, I would suggest instead that *Rusticula* was left in the nominative so that it would also act as grammatical subject to *decessit*.

The form *depostionem* may be due to syncope, or else the <i> was omitted due to the level of compression and irregularity of the line; this is discussed under Section 2.1.4.8.

The dating of this inscription is disputed (see Gauthier (1975, p.397) for references and for her arguments); some scholars interpret it to be especially late, while Gauthier deems it to be especially early. If we accept the disputed early dating of Gauthier, this inscription may well be part of the earliest ones featuring confusion between <u> and <o>. However, I am not convinced by her argument that the lack of reliance upon the Trier formulary indicates that this inscription is early. On the contrary, the non-formulaic inscriptions are spread about equally between the latest dating group and the middle group (see Table 2.3) and a comparatively larger proportion of the inscriptions of the latest group depart from or do not use the formulary (13 out of 20 inscriptions). Thus, not using the formulary is an indicator of lateness, not of earliness.

### 2.3.3.2 Group 5: ‘Latest’ inscriptions

(15) 170. 700-730

Ursiniano subdiacono sub hoc tumulo ossa

Quiescunt qui meruit sanctorum sociari sepulcra

Quem nec Tartarus furens nec poena saeua nocebi[t].

Hunc titulum posuit Ludula dulcissima coniux.

R(ecessit) V k(alendas) D(ecembres). Vixit annis XXXIII.

This inscription is poetic, but its meter is uncertain and may integrate prose sections. Gauthier discusses the scansion attempts in detail. I do not find the usual vulgarisms, but the syntax of the first clause is difficult; *Ursiniano subdiacono* is used as genitive and dative, as Gauthier notes.

(16) 219. 680-730

Hic requiescit in Domino puella D(e)i  
Hilaritas nomine quae omnib(us) dieb(us)  
uitae suae D(eu)m coluit et omni actu  
Saluatoris D(omi)ni praecepta seruauit  
uixit aut(em) annos p(lus) m(inus) L  
Lea deuota s(acra) D(e)o puella uinculo caritatis  
et studio religionis titulum posuit.

While the text of this inscription features the usual formulaic expressions, it also provides us with so much significantly original text, of literary caliber, that it belongs more rightly to the ‘innovative’ group. The language is devoid of vulgarisms.

(17) 89. 500-730

[...]MEN[...]  
[...]uatis genit [...]  
[...]t gaudi incli[t...]  
[...]complexu(.) ret[...]  
[...]terris qua(.) co[...].  
[...]quidem mund[...]  
[...]meruit reg[na caelesta?]  
[...]i migravit a[d astra?]

Gauthier suggests that this inscription employs vocabulary found only in metrical inscriptions, but it is unclear whether this inscription is metrical due to the extent of the damage.

The fragment is devoid of vulgarisms, including those affecting vowels. However, it features two archaizing spellings: [ks] written as <xs> and the non-assimilated spelling

<np> instead of <mp> in *complexsu*. These archaizing spellings indicate that the author wanted to announce his education through a learned flourish; this would be consistent with the elevated style adopted by a portion of the clergy members inscriptions.

*Gaudi* may be the genitive of *gaudium* as Gauthier suggests (such contracted endings can indeed be found in Trier; see Gauthier (1975, p.66 no 63) for a list), but this leaves us without a name for the deceased. It has also been proposed that it may be a personal name. Various Gallo- and Hispano-Roman names are indeed derived from *gaudium*, notably *Gaudius*, which could yield the form *Gaudi*. These names are very well attested and appear to have been very common<sup>74</sup>.

(18) 122. 560-730?

[...] potest dolere genus [...]

[...]s hic sita est Eutropia [...]

[...]is artus mors repent[...]

The stone is lost and so little of the text was transmitted, making dating difficult. The inscription shows no trace of the formulary, and is devoid of the vulgarisms common to the corpus.

Gauthier suggests that this inscription employs vocabulary found only in metrical inscriptions, but it is unclear whether this inscription is metrical due to the extent of the damage. The sequence *mors repent*, with a metrical cretic, cannot possibly have belonged to a poem in dactylic meter as per the Classical norm; however, this sequence would have been acceptable as part of a late antique accentual hexameter (e.g. *mórs repent*[ína] would make an acceptable dactylic rhythm)<sup>75</sup>.

(19) 191. 600-730

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<sup>74</sup>See Becker (2009, pp. 541-543) for a throughout review of the epigraphic attestations of the derivatives of *gaudium*. Gauthier (1975, p.86 no 114) finds in Trier some derivatives, including a <Gau->.

<sup>75</sup>Brent Vine, P.C.

[...]audes Treuer hoc re-  
[...]dicibus placuit pari  
[sociari?] tomolo co[i]ux Nonu-  
[sa? ... ka]lendas a[g]u[s]ta[s].

This highly fragmentary inscription has received some reconstruction attempts, presented in Gauthier. What little remains is replete with vulgarisms and uncertain readings due to material damage.

**(20)** 134. 670-730

[ innocens? a]d Domino transiit Hari-  
[... in nomine] Cristi qui uixit annus  
[... ?qu]e uita excedens melio-  
[r... ..ta ui]ta perennem meruit  
[...te] corona haec lecuit  
[santis? requies s]ociatur honore.  
[... ka]l(endas) Mai(as).

(21) 193. 650-730

[... inn]ocens ad Domino [transiit?]  
[... p]uella requiescet i[n pace]  
[...] que uita excedens m[elior ...]  
[ta ui]ta perennem merui[t ...]  
[...]te corona haec [lecuit sanc-]  
[tis? req]uies sociatur ono[re ...]  
[...]r causa dolore se[...]  
[...]ua rapuit io[...]  
[uixit an...] III et me(nses) III et [dies ...]  
[... augu]st(a)[s ...]

The highly fragmentary (194) is as follows:

[...]imia in nomine Chr(ist)i  
[...]ta uita  
[...c]orona  
[... so]ciatur onore

134, 193 and (194) share a common model, helping textual reconstruction. 134 and 193 are partially in prose, (194) is too fragmentary to tell.

They share a central portion, which Gauthier attempts to resolve thus as hexameters (pp. 350 and 477):

quē uī|ta ēxcē|dēns m[ēlī|ōr<sup>~</sup> | <sup>~</sup>tā | uī]ta  
pērēn|nēm mērū|ī[t<sup>~</sup> | <sup>~</sup>]tē cō|rōna  
haēc [lēcū|īt sān|ctīs? rēq]uī|ēs sōcī|ātūr ō|nō[re]

Gauthier concedes that the second line of her reconstruction begins with a short syllable, which is unacceptable for a dactylic hexameter. However, her scansion has other

problems. The third and fourth feet do not scan (one heavy quantity too many in each foot), and her hexameter has only five feet. In order to resolve some of the problems with this verse, we would need to scan: pĕrĕn̄| nĕm mĕrŭ| ī|t̄<sup>˘˘</sup> | -<sup>˘˘</sup> | - |tĕ cō|rōna or else to consider this line a pentameter (yielding *perennem meruit*<sup>||-˘˘|</sup>-te corona). Still, this does not resolve the problem of the light first foot.

134 and 193 share the construction *ad Domino transiit*, otherwise unattested in Trier, and 134 and 194 share *in nomine Christi*. These indicate that the stonecutters not only recycled verses, but also portions of prose.

Both 134 and 193 feature many vulgarisms. Single vowels and diphthongs are affected. Both inscriptions feature loss of aspiration: 134 has *Cristi* but *honore*, 193 and (194) have *onore*.

It is surprising to see that the inscriptions do not agree as to the vulgarisms that they show in the metrical portion that they have in common. Perhaps the original featured *onore*, but 134 rectified it (while not avoiding *Cristi*), or else 193 and (194) came up independently with the same instance of loss of aspiration.



(22) 194A. 600-720

[...]SFLA.O.A[...]  
[...]ui fuisti in nomin[e ...]  
[...]te recipit et infra[...]  
[...] et socius adgregar[...]  
[...]te turba fratrum te a[...] (5)  
[...]t optaVERANTEVIVS ha[...]  
[...]uem raptim mors flenda u[...]  
[...]te pro cui[us ...]s[.]am cess[...]  
[...]a planctis non plangat m[...]  
[...]us habet cuius bis quina signa [...] (10)  
[... lu]stris addidisque annis VIII con[...]  
octauo idus martias hic in[...]  
Leodomundus nepos suos p[oni?] iussit.

Gauthier suggests that this inscription employs vocabulary found only in metrical inscriptions. However, it is not metrical, due to presence of unscannable sequences such as  $\sim\sim$  sequences (l. 3 *recipit* and l. 4 *socius*) and cretic ( $\sim\sim\sim$ ) sequences (l. 11 *addiddisque, martias*). It is devoid of vulgarisms.

Perhaps a less desperate reading of l.6 would be *optauerant eius*, where the stonecutter wrote the first *u* of *euius* too early by anticipation.

The etymological, non assimilated form *adgregar[...]* is a learned, archaizing spelling. This is made all the more likely by the fact that this inscription appears to be tied to a monastic community (*turba fratrum*). Such etymological forms are a feature of high ranked clerical and monastic inscriptions; see Section 3.2.2.

(23) 217. 520-730

Hic conditus Genesius qui uixit annis XLV  
in matrimoii coniuctione fuit annis XVII  
qui licet immaturo obitu distitutus  
tamen superstitibus omnibus filis suis  
adque uxore defecit; titulum cum aeternitate  
uincturum coniux semper amantissima sui  
adque obsequentissima didicauit.

The single vowels and the diphthongs of this inscription are widely affected. For the treatment of the nasals in this inscription (e.g. *matrimoii*, *coniuctione*, *uincturum*), see 2.1.4.6. The form *inmaturo* is a learned archaizing spelling.

### 2.3.3.3 Uncertain dating

(24) 234. 400-500?

[... ]ne pulchro  
[... ]am modo dulcis eras  
[... ]ia dictat honorem  
[... ]a nostra ferunt  
[... ]dolori

So little remains of this inscription that it is hard to reconstruct the text or to date it, but it shows no sign of adhering to the formulary, it shows dactylic rhythms (and therefore may be metrical), and it is written in correct Latin.

## 2.4 Discussion: social variation, material culture, and sociolinguistics

### 2.4.1 Funerary inscriptions and the individual

A few inscriptions contain information about the social status of the individuals (deceased or dedicator) that they mention; these inscriptions are listed in Table 2.11. These status-bearing inscriptions can be attached to high ranked administrators, city officials, bearers of honorary titles, and members of the military, or the clergy, or the nobility. I have sorted most of the inscriptions of Table 2.11 under either of the subcategories of irregular inscriptions, but some feature such minor alterations to the formulary that I regard them as regular.

Normally, the brevity of the formulary generally prevents any such information from being recorded, and so for these there is no straightforward way to identify the social status of the deceased or the dedicators<sup>76</sup>.

**Clergy** The largest category of inscriptions that list social status is for members of the clergy; these inscriptions are listed in Table 2.12. It is by far the group that is the most detailed. We encounter members of monastic orders (101<sup>77</sup>, 219, 220), people who joined monastic orders in older age (29A), members of the presbyterate (135, 142A, 214)

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<sup>76</sup>It may have been possible to identify their status from grave goods or other signs. Unfortunately, the Trier necropoleis were dug up early in the history of modern archeology, and so the records are generally poor, yielding little information as to the burials associated with the inscription-bearing funerary stone tablets or sarcophagi. Many of these stones were also not found *in situ* or have been lost and their text was transmitted only through early modern records; this is noted by Gauthier, in her discussion of the archeological sites of Trier (Gauthier (1975, pp. 19-25); these sites are further discussed in Gauthier (1986)). Still, details intrinsic to the stone tablets and sarcophagi may yield clues, such as the size of the inscription, the quality of the carving, the presence of ornamental details, and the quality and degree of elaboration of the text. However, these are more difficult to judge and interpret, as they are period-dependent, than the direct mention of a title. This work remains then to be done by a material culture specialist

<sup>77</sup>Gauthier (289) deems it likely that this *uirgo fidelis* may simply refer to a young girl, not to a nun. *fidelis* is, as she notes, used thorough the inscriptions as personal praise, not as marker of a religious order. However, the word for unmarried woman used in the Trier inscriptions is exclusively *puella*. *Virgo* is therefore highly marked. It may be that this *uirgo fidelis* served the same role as the *puella sanctimonialis* of 220: young women destined to serve as nuns.

Table 2.11: Trier: Inscriptions stating social status

Status markers	Inscriptions
Clergy (all)	19, 29A, 101, 126, 135, 142A, 170, 194A, 214, 219, 220
Nobility	29A, 135, 147, 192
High ranked office holder	37, 107, 126, 130, 138
Military	71, 130

and diaconate (109, 170, 214; often praised for their community involvement and public recognition), and finally bishops<sup>78</sup> (19). The entire hierarchy of the Church is represented.

About half of these inscriptions feature original poetic compositions that do away with the formulary; see Table 2.13. This is particular to the ecclesiastic inscriptions. Unlike the majority of the Trier inscriptions, which must have been the product of trade professionals, and composed according to their standards using the formulary, these poetic ecclesiastic inscriptions were composed by clergy members. They are original compositions that are a testament to the writers' literary skills and high command of language. It is possible to see in these the work of the most highly educated members of the society.

It is possible to account for these poetic inscriptions by positing that they are part of a broader literary tradition of funerary epigraphy, modeled after the impressive examples of leading ecclesiastics and literary figures. Another region of Gaul, *Aquitania Prima*, yields inscriptions written by or on behalf of key ecclesiastic and literary leading figures, Venantius Fortunatus and Sidonius Apollinaris. The erudite metrical poetic inscriptions composed by bishops and other such leading ecclesiastics and literary authors may well have fueled a tradition of elaborate literary inscriptions among clergy members of all ranks; see Sections 3.2 and 3.2.3. The quality of these inscriptions' language and poetry

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<sup>78</sup>The particular historical figures can be identified for this inscription, and consist in three bishops of early Trier.

<sup>79</sup>*Turba fratrum* likely refers to a monastic setting.

Table 2.12: Trier: Inscriptions from members of the clergy

Clergy	
19	membra sacerdotum
29A	se clericum fecit
101	uirgo fidelis
109	subdiaconus
135	uicarus
142A	presbiter
170	subdiaconus
194A	turba fratrum <sup>79</sup>
214	presbiter, diaconus
219	puella Dei deuota sacra Deo puella
220	puella sanctimonialis

Table 2.13: Trier: Meter and language of clergy-produced inscriptions

N°	Meter	Vulgarisms	Status
19	Correct	None	High (bishop)
135	Partial/faulty	Several	Low (vicar)
170	Partial/faulty	Some	Low (subdeacon)
194A	Possibly partial	Few or none	Monastic
219	None	None	Monastic

correlates with the education of the clergy member, and with his or her rank in the Church. Thus, the inscriptions of bishops and monks are ranked most highly in terms of grammatical and metrical correctness.

In Trier, 19 and 219 would be the best and most felicitous examples available of this tradition. 194A may be added to this, with the *caveat* that it is highly fragmentary. The highest ranked clergy members produce inscriptions that are the most meticulous and conservative in their language. 19, namely, was produced for two bishops. Similar observations can be made about inscription 219, tied to nuns who devoted their lives to monastic study, and perhaps 194A also, which is likely tied to a monastic setting.

In the monastic inscriptions, fittingly enough, 219 is more restrained and sober in its expression. However, 194A appears to have been written in the longer, more ornate and fanciful style found in the clergy members that exerted prestigious public roles (bishops, priests, vicars, deacons etc). This variation may be tied to personal tastes or to backgrounds, or perhaps to differences between monastic orders.

The inscriptions 135 and 170 are examples of what happens further down the Church hierarchy.

To summarize my observations, I categorize these inscriptions as having either: correct hexameters, partial or faulty hexameters, or prose; no vulgarisms, some vulgarisms (especially those most common in Trier), several vulgarisms; see Table 2.13.

Correct meter can be found only in the inscriptions from bishops or monks. Likewise,

the language of these inscriptions tends to be devoid of vulgarisms. Lower ranked clergy members produce inscriptions that are less felicitous stylistically and metrically and they struggle to avoid vulgarisms.

It emerges from this that the lower ranked clerks were educated influential members of their community, but they did not possess the learning of bishops and monks. They no doubt wrote as the educated members of their community wrote (and regarded as good writing), but they could not follow the norms of the Classical language and its elevated metrical patterns.

Likewise, the expanded formulaic inscriptions 29A and 214 belonged to well educated highly literate clergy members who could command high means and resources, but did not have access to the highest level of learning.

A few inscriptions ascribed to clergy members are regular ‘formulaic’ ones. 109 and 142A have no vulgarisms. 101 and 220 on the other hand have several.

**Nobility** In 29A, 147 and 192, listed in Table 2.14, the deceased is of noble stock. In 135, the dedicator (the wife of the deceased) informs us of her noble status.

135 and 192 are irregular (and literary and at least partially metrical), 29A and 147 are expanded formulaic. 192 is the only one that does not feature any vulgarisms; the vowels are affected pervasively in all of the other inscriptions, as is common in the Trier corpus, but in addition 29A and 135 feature palatalization (*deposicio* for *depositio*) and 29A has the variant spelling *xx* for [ks] (*vixxit*). Further, the use of prepositions and cases is decidedly non-classical (as discussed above under each inscription).

Similarly to the clergy, it appears that nobles enjoyed inscriptions that were personalized and perhaps even literary, which they wrote in the language of the educated elite, but without the refinement of higher learning.

Regarding 147, it may strike one as surprising that an *adulescens* would be qualified as *uir uenerabilis*. Gauthier believes that this adjective is used in Trier as a vague honorific term for both clergy and lay men. It is, however, nowhere nearly as common as other

Table 2.14: Trier: Inscriptions from members of the nobility

Nobility	
29A	uir uenerabilis, de nobile genere
135	primus in suo genere uxor nobilis
147	uir uenerabilis de nobile genere
192	clarissima femina

praises (*dulcis* (27+ occurrences), *carus* (13+), *fidelis* (10+), *pius* (4)). This limited use supports a more specific, restricted meaning, and, as both occurrences in the Trier material see it joined to *nobilis*, it is most likely a high social status marker. Perhaps it can be likened to *clarissimus*; Gauthier accepts the *clarissima* of 192 as indicative of senatorial rank. That she finds uses elsewhere in Gaul of *uir uenerabilis* for clergy members points to a use as a high status marker not limited to nobility *stricto sensu*. The teenage Modoaldus could not have reached a very high rank in the clergy on account of his young age, and so had to be distinguished through other means, such as birth or family prestige.

**Title and distinction holders, veterans** The inscriptions attached to veterans and to city magistrates are listed in Tables 2.15 and 2.16. These inscriptions all follow or expand the formulary. Quite a few are highly fragmentary. Their language is better than that of the typical Trier inscriptions: they are generally devoid of vulgarisms besides the commonest ones affecting vowels.

These inscriptions belonged to ordinary men who had done well for themselves, but remained of lower education and means than priests, monks, and nobles. It follows that these inscriptions are more modest. Still, that their language is generally better than the average regular inscription would indicate that their owners were able to hire more careful and skilled stonecutters.



Table 2.15: Trier: Inscriptions from high ranked office holders

Holders of high ranked offices	
37	a ueste sacra
107	tribunus
126	uestis sacra
130	ex tribunis
138	cursor dominicus

Table 2.16: Trier: Inscriptions from members of the military

Military	
71	militauit inter Iouianos senioris
130	tribunus

#### 2.4.2 Linguistic conservativeness and social status

The Trier funerary inscriptions are very repetitive, with most adhering to a formulaic that did not change over the centuries. Yet even these most basic inscriptions must have been a sign of prestige. Burials with stone inscriptions or sarcophagi were a minority; Effros (2003, p. 178). Most burials may have been identified through more modest means (wood inscriptions, wood posts, protruding stones, mounds etc), as evidenced by Merovingian funerary archeology<sup>80</sup>. Stone inscriptions belonged to the few citizens that could and that chose to afford them. Within these, a hierarchy emerges.

The most basic inscriptions are the ‘regular’ formulaic ones. They can be executed with more or less care, depending upon the particular inscription. They allow little in the way of personalization. They record the name and age of the deceased, the name and relationship of the dedicator to the deceased, and perhaps a qualifier that marked the emotional connection to the deceased. Regular inscriptions are found at all periods and

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<sup>80</sup>The types of burials and of grave markings vary by region and period; Halsall (1995, pp. 5-17).

Table 2.17: Trier: VL features in status-bearing regular inscriptions

Inscription	No of VL features	Types
37	0	-
71	0	-
101	3	i/e, qui, vixit
107	2	i/e, o/u
126	1	monoph.
130	0	-
142A	0	-
220	1	i/e

they are overwhelmingly more common than other types (they constitute about 85-90% of the total). Their language can be more or less correct depending on the inscription, and they can feature all of the types of vulgarisms.

A small number of regular inscriptions record the social status of the deceased or of the dedicator. The sample is small, but the record of social status is correlated with surprisingly conservative language, that contains very few VL features, and almost always only of the most common vowel-affecting types (vowel confusions, in particular); see Table 2.17. This may indicate that the inscriptions of high social status were made by better trained and more careful stonecutters, and that there was a general care to avoid most VL features. The presence of so many vowel confusions (the i/e confusions at all periods, and the o/u confusions at a late period) may indicate that vocalic mergers were not systematically avoided, unlike the other vulgarisms. Perhaps they were seen as an integral part of the language, and not as features to be avoided.

It appears to me that the conservative language of these status-bearing inscriptions is tied to the level of carefulness of the stonecutters in following good quality, correct models that respect the formulary and that do not contain VL features, than genuine CL proficiency. This evaluation is based upon another group of status-bearing inscriptions.

Some of the irregular but still formulaic inscriptions (the ‘expanded’ formulaic inscriptions introduced at the beginning of Section 2.3) contain indicators of social status (29a, 135, 138, 147, 192, 214). These inscriptions share as characteristic that they feature extensive original text that deviates from the formulary. These inscriptions are recopied and discussed under 2.3.2 and 2.4.1. These inscriptions contain numerous vulgarisms, of the common types affecting vowels, and of the less common types (affecting consonants, and also affecting morphosyntax). I interpret the high number of vulgarisms and the variety of types encountered to mean that as soon as the guideline of the formulary is removed, the stonecutter fails to maintain the CL norm; they write in the Vulgar Latin that must have been perceived as the common educated language of the period.

### **2.4.3 Burial practices and social identity**

#### **2.4.3.1 Grave marking and the Trier inscriptions**

Merovingian archeology has yielded many concurrent methods that would allow for grave marking besides inscriptions<sup>81</sup>: dirt mounds, wooden posts, stones placed in the shape of the body, or a grave bed of stones that protrude above ground. These grave markers would be identifiable only to the immediate family of the deceased. Beyond the lifespan of these family members, these anonymous grave markers would mark the position of the grave, preventing any overlapping, but they would conceivably be mute as to the identity of the deceased.

An observation made on other necropoleis than those of Trier is that the Merovingian people were surprisingly good at keeping graves separate and at identifying them, even for the small pits of cremated remains<sup>179</sup>. Discussing another site in Gaul, Effros gives the example of a widow buried with her husband who had died twenty years earlier<sup>82</sup>. The inscription praises the widow for her devotion to her husband’s grave. There must have

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<sup>81</sup>Effros (2003, p. 184).

<sup>179</sup>Effros (2003).

<sup>82</sup>Effros (2003, p. 181).

been some grave marker during those twenty years, for the widow to be able to identify where to pay her respect, and, after her death, for her kin to lay her with her husband and place the inscription correctly.

In the Trier corpus, there are instances that show that there must have been some types of semi-temporary grave markers that allowed for the identification of a grave decades after the burial. One extreme case is 19: a stone inscription is carved to honor two bishops who were buried some 200 years before. There are cases involving common people. Some Trier inscriptions (6, 27, 57, 68, 70, 97, 158, 179, 222) list more than one person as deceased. It is unlikely that they all died and were buried at the same time. It must be that one person preceded the others by some years or a few decades, and that the grave only received its inscription after everybody was buried.

#### **2.4.3.2 Choosing stone**

While less durable grave markers last a generation or two, stone is very nearly indestructible. Stone inscriptions provide the deceased with long-term identification, desirable for prominent figures or families that could expect to have an enduring presence in the city, or religious figures that would receive local worship, such as bishops. This ties the grave to the world of the living: the deceased can serve a social function still in the community.

Stone inscriptions are a signal of social identity. Burials are performative. The use of stone over materials that are perishable but easier to process and cheaper to obtain means a considerable expense, and therefore are a show of wealth. The use of writing implies literacy, and therefore education, and therefore social status: of the deceased, of the family, of the elite community that cares about the burial.

A burial with stone inscription involves the hiring of trained professionals, the stonecutters, whose expertise included not only carving stone but writing. Stonecutter expertise varied, as can be observed in their craftsmanship carving letters, ornamental details, and writing or recopying text. As I covered in the previous sections, there is a hierarchy in the language of the Trier inscriptions which correlates with social rank, either through the

skill of the stonecutter hired to craft the text and to carve it, or, for clergy members, the most educated members of the community, who wrote their own text or had a colleague write theirs, showing their own literary prowess and erudition.

### 2.4.3.3 Stone and the formulary as identity markers

Stone inscriptions are a conservative choice, as they are a tradition inherited from antiquity. This must have appealed to the Trier elite, as a way to assert its Gallo-Roman identity. Likewise, the formulary that endured throughout the centuries, regulating the text of the inscriptions, was antique and therefore desirable as another Gallo-Roman identity marker.

‘Regular’ inscriptions are found at all periods. They form nearly the entirety of all inscriptions at all periods but the latest. However, for the Latest period, they are few in number and they form a significantly smaller subset of all inscriptions. Of the 20 Latest inscriptions, 13 feature an expanded formulary or do not employ the formulary altogether. In addition, the Latest inscriptions that expand on the formulary do so to a much greater degree than at earlier times. These expanded inscriptions often feature swaths of original text, while earlier inscriptions added only a few words or a clause.

That there are fewer regular inscriptions for the latest period may signal that fewer were produced altogether. It is possible that this is an indicator of diminishing wealth or of changing burial practices amongst the population. The well-to-do but not elite population, who had access before to simpler stone inscriptions, perhaps could no longer afford them and moved towards alternative, less durable means to identify their dead. However, this is one interpretation out of many.

The elite members of the community opted for custom inscriptions more readily, over plainer formulaic inscriptions. When they did make use of the formulary, they did not follow it *paene ad verbum* like in earlier times, but allowed for customization and individualization. The formulary could be done away completely: original inscriptions are commoner. This may be interpreted thus: in the Latest period, the basic formulary was

still understood and followed, but its use was no longer seen as so mandatory and inflexible. This signals a general trend where inscriptions get individualized. This may have been part of a trend towards more ostentatious status markers that asserted the achievements, wealth and education of the individual over his or her Gallo-Roman identity, inherited from antiquity. Of the latest inscriptions that are in good enough of a state to assess their original size, decoration and quality of execution, a substantial portion are indeed of above average size and length, and they feature a variety of decorative flourishes (29A, 97, 134, 135, 147, 193, 194a, 214, 217).

#### **2.4.4 Sociolinguistic variation: conclusions**

As it has been seen throughout this section, there is more to the language of the Trier inscriptions than chronological development. There is sociolinguistic variation.

In order to discern this sociolinguistic variation, it is necessary to examine in detail the inscriptions that bear any social status indicators, be they a direct mention of social status, or indirect hints such as a change in style, register, language, length, or execution. It is also necessary to look beyond Trier to comparanda from other regions of Gaul, as one corpus supplements the other.

Regular inscriptions could be more or less well written. Regular inscriptions that list the professional status of the deceased are on average better written when they adhere to the formulary, indicating that the stonecutter gave his work more care, as models were better recopied. However, status-bearing inscriptions are significantly less conservatively written when they depart from the formulary, indicating that the stonecutters were not able to avoid vulgarisms in their own compositions, when the crutch of the formulary is removed.

Nobles and clergy members could avail themselves of regular inscriptions or of inscriptions that featured original, customized text. Within the clergy, the highest ranked individuals, of exceptional erudition, showcased their craft through original poetry, which formed a literary tradition that was spread throughout Gaul.

## 2.5 Discussion: Dating

Gauthier argues that the conclusions she draws from her linguistic analysis can be used as a reliable dating tool. But there are methodological flaws to her work that undermine her conclusions. The methodological flaws that deal with linguistic issues were first touched upon in Section 2.1.2.6 to justify my analysis. In this section, I offer a more detailed discussion centered on the issues that pertain to her conclusions about dating.

My contribution to the dating of the Trier inscriptional material is to paint a more detailed, nuanced picture, which stays closer to the linguistic data. I have striven to show results that are easily verifiable, with a transparent methodology. This section compares Gauthier's methodology with mine, and summarizes my conclusions.

### 2.5.1 Number of Vulgarisms as a dating tool

First, here are a few preliminary remarks, which summarizes the discussion material presented in Section 2.2 in so far as dating is concerned.

Taking into account all of the vulgarisms together as an aggregate, the general observation is that the average number of vulgarism types per inscription increases over time. The trend is indeed for the average number of Vulgar Latin features per inscription to increase over time. The increase is modest and progressive. For reference, I reproduce for reference Figure 2.20 presented and discussed under Section 2.2.1.3; see Figure 2.23 of this section. In addition, the maximal number of vulgarisms contained in an inscription also increases slowly but progressively over time.

At all periods, most inscriptions contain few (3 or fewer) or no Vulgar Latin features. The early material never contains more than three features, but even at later periods, few inscriptions bear more than four features. It could thus be evaluated that an inscription that bears four or more features is probably late (part of group 3, 4 or 5), but inscriptions containing three or fewer features could originate from any period. Gauthier asserts something similar: she states that any inscriptions containing at least two vulgarisms (of

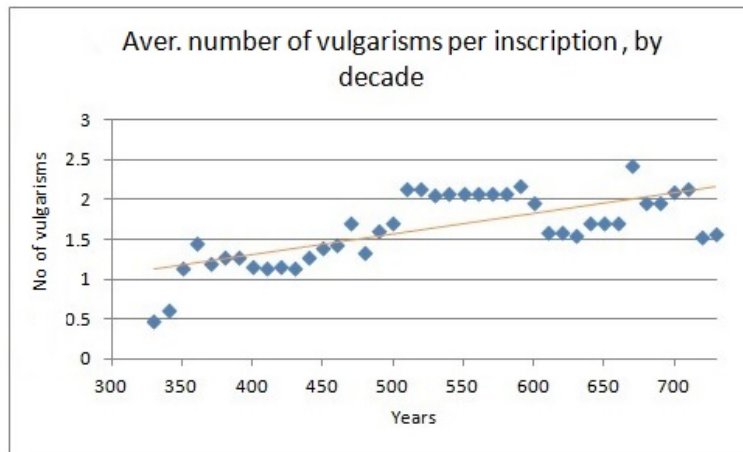


Figure 2.23: Trier: Weighted average number of Vulgar Latin features by decade

the subcategory of vulgarisms that she deems to be late) is assuredly late, beyond any doubts<sup>83</sup>. However, I do not think that it is accurate and reliable to use the presence (or, conversely, the absence) of any or of particular vulgarisms to determine dating. The situation is more complex than this.

First, it should be stated clearly that even at a late date, a significant portion of the inscriptions do not feature vulgarisms, even at a late period, or else have few of them; see Section 2.2.1.2, figure 2.19, and table 2.8. Thus, an inscription featuring few or no vulgarisms can come from any period.

I have put forth another explanation to account for the high number of vulgarisms in certain inscriptions. The number of vulgarisms is very closely tied to whether the inscription is an original composition; see Section 2.4. Adherence to the formulary indeed helps diminish the number of vulgarisms. There are a few exceptions to this: the very small number of inscriptions (3 in Trier) that are tied to high ranked ecclesiastics are written in the most conservative language. Still, in general, original text is strongly correlated with more vulgarisms. The later periods produced more inscriptions that feature original text, and in enough numbers to influence the average number of VL features per inscription. This means that the higher number of VL features found at a late date is tied not only

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<sup>83</sup>Gauthier (1975, p. 77).



to developments within Vulgar Latin, but to sociolinguistics. While most of the inscriptions that contain original text are late, not all of them are. A few are quite early. It would then be inaccurate to date an inscription bearing original text that features many vulgarisms as necessarily late. It is only likelier to be. Thus, an inscription containing several vulgarisms shouldn't receive a late dating automatically. It is important to take into account whether it is an original composition, or a regular formulaic inscription. It is only in the case of the latter that vulgarism count can be used in any way reliably as an indicator of a late dating.

### 2.5.2 Types of vulgarisms as a dating tool

Gauthier distinguishes two groups of vulgarisms, one of which she deems to be early, the other late. For the first group of vulgarisms, she notes the number of occurrences she found in the Trier inscriptions for each particular feature. For the second type, she simply lumps them all together and gives the total number of occurrences of these vulgarisms; the different vulgarisms do not get individual tallies. She asserts that the presence of vulgarisms of the second category in an inscription would point to a late date; Gauthier (1975, p. 77).

First, Veikko Väänänen (Väänänen (1976, pp. 146-147)) pointed out that Gauthier has lumped in her second, deemed late, category of vulgarisms features that are in fact attested quite early in the history of Latin (fall of *-m*, avoidance of hiatus, fall of *n* before *s*). But, beyond this, the different vulgarisms do not all follow the same development. It is important not to group them together, as this hides more fine-grained linguistic development. The different VL features need to be tracked on an individual basis, considering onset, frequency of occurrence, prevalence, and distribution trend. This is discussed under Sections 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and, with respect to o/u confusions, using comparanda from various regions of Gaul, 4.2.3.

Some of these vulgarisms, which Gauthier takes as indicators of lateness, are in fact equally common (or uncommon) at all periods. Prothetic vowels, for instance, do not

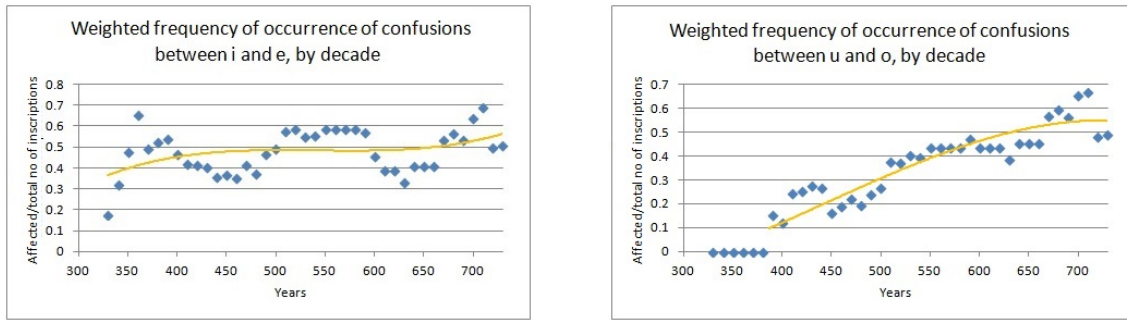


Figure 2.24: Trier: Comparison of the distribution of the two vocalic mergers

affect especially late inscriptions; they are found in a late antique and an early Merovingian inscription. But, even for the particular vulgarisms that are only found in late inscriptions, it is important to note that there are, in fact, very few forms. These vulgarisms are so rare (e.g. there are only two instances of prothetic vowels) that it is difficult to comment with assurance about their distribution, and harder still to use them as a dating predictor.

**The case of the two vocalic mergers** As an example of the importance of tracking separately the development of the various vulgarisms, let me review the examples of the vocalic mergers. The evidence for these mergers is plentiful, allowing for more secure conclusions to be derived.

Comparing side by side the development of these two mergers allows for several observations to emerge. The following two figures have been introduced and discussed under their respective sections, 2.1.4.1 and 2.1.4.2.

**Onset:** The i/e merger is well represented all periods, including at an early date. The o/u merger is not attested before the tail end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c.

**Development:** The frequency of occurrence of the i/e merger increases very slowly and is remarkably stable. This is indicative of a linguistic feature that is well integrated. The o/u merger is at first found only very rarely, but its frequency of occurrence increases rapidly, as it becomes integrated to the language. By 600, the distribution of the o/u merger curve flattens, to resemble that of the i/e merger. By 600, the o/u merger is as well attested as the i/e merger. These two factors, the curve flattening and the same

frequency of occurrence, indicate that by 600 both features are equally well integrated in the Latin of the Trier inscriptions.

Thus, by keeping track of different measurements on language, looking out for independent development, it is possible to isolate finer points of language evolution, that instance tallies alone cannot isolate.

**Socially-conditioned distribution variation** Chronological development alone isn't enough to account for the distribution of VL features. The distribution of vulgarisms (taken individually and together as an aggregate) is not even within the Trier data, when accounting for chronological development. Certain groups of inscriptions feature significantly fewer vulgarisms altogether, fewer particular vulgarisms (but not others), or more vulgarisms, than the rest of the Trier inscriptions of their period.

Social variation is at play here; see 2.4. To sum up. Inscriptions attached to individuals of higher social status tend to avoid vulgarisms if they are of the regular, formulaic type, indicating perhaps the higher level of care that they received; better trained stonecutters either used better models or followed them more closely. However, another group of inscriptions attached to high status individuals actually sees more vulgarisms than on average. These are the inscriptions that feature original text. This may indicate that depending upon the formulary as a composition help influences positively the quality of the Latin, through the use of models. Only a very small percentage of inscriptions are systematically able to avoid vulgarisms altogether; those are the inscriptions attached to the most educated members of the society, the highest ranked clergymen and the members of the monastic orders.

### **2.5.3 Watershed moments as dating tools**

Gauthier sorts the Trier inscriptions into two groups: those that predate 450, and those that postdate 450. She compiles a tally for all of the vulgarisms of each group, and then compares these two tallies to formulate conclusions about the evolution of Trier Latin. The

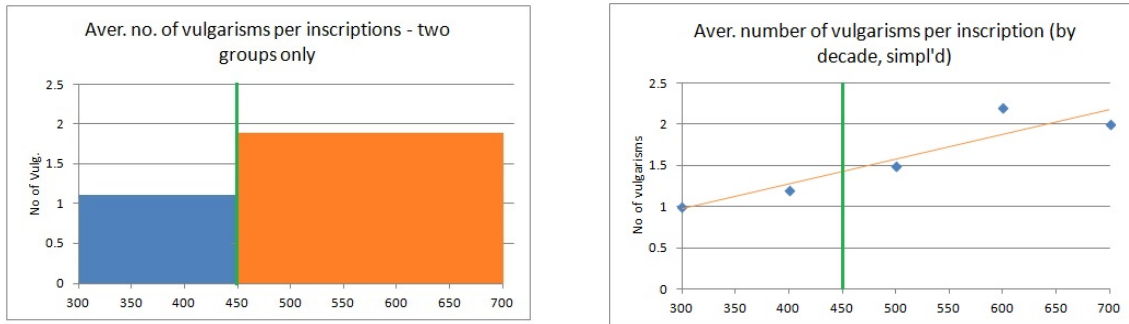


Figure 2.25: Trier: Comparison of vulgarism distributions (two tallies, by decade)

underlying presupposition is that 450 marked a watershed moment in linguistic evolution. This view holds that the dissolution of the Roman Empire was a political event that must have had central linguistic importance, as the inscriptions that predate 450 are taken to be fundamentally different from the inscriptions that postdate 450.

However, the Trier data challenges the presupposition that 450 was a watershed moment in the evolution of the Latin language. The frequency distribution of vulgarisms (taken individually or as an aggregate), does not support the notion of watershed moments, at 450 or at any other point. Indeed, the distributions never feature significant, sudden increases that would characterize a watershed moment.

It is useful to compare side by side the two views; see Figure 2.25. On the left, I have represented the average number of vulgarisms for the pre-450 and the post-450 inscriptions. The vertical green line represents the 450 watershed. This creates two big blocks, with two different levels. This does not allow one to see whether the evolution is progressive or incremental. Importantly, this does not allow to judge whether 450 is even statistically significant for data distribution, or whether it is an arbitrary point. On the right is my analysis, presented in a simplified form, by group (the detailed form, by decade, is available under Figure 2.20). The higher degree of magnification that my method grants leads to a more nuanced, progressive view of language change, which does not support 450 as a watershed.

**The formulary as a dating tool** There are very few irregular inscriptions that belong to the Earliest (2 expanded formulaic) or the Early (0) groups. Those inscriptions feature minimal additions to the formulary. Regular formulaic inscriptions are thus overwhelmingly the norm. Group 3, which straddles the line between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, sees the first innovative inscriptions, showing 5 such inscriptions out of a total of 33. Group 4 contains only one expanded inscription. Group 5 has a mix of expanded and innovative irregular inscriptions (5 expanded formulaic, 8 innovative), out of a total of 20 inscriptions. The Latest group is the only one for which a majority of inscriptions are irregular.

What I derive from this is that regular inscriptions occur at every period; it is not possible to derive conclusions as to the date of an inscription from its adherence to the formulary. On the other hand, innovative inscriptions are likely from the Middle group or later (see 2.4.3 for a discussion of the burial and epigraphic practices of the Trier elite).

## CHAPTER 3

# Epigraphic evidence for the Late Antique and the Merovingian period: *Aquitania Prima*

### Introduction: *Aquitania Prima*

This chapter is concerned with the language of the inscriptions of the Roman province *Aquitania prima* (*Aquitaine première*), which was created under the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. administrative reforms of Diocletian. It corresponds to the modern administrative region of Auvergne, overlapping Limousin, the northernmost Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées and the southernmost Centre-Val de Loire. The region was incorporated to the Merovingian kingdom during their campaigns against the Visigoths in the early 6<sup>th</sup> c. (most of the territory was annexed following the decisive battle of Vouillé, 507).

The majority of the *Aquitania prima* inscriptions come from Clermont-Ferrand and its surroundings. Clermont-Ferrand was the most important city of *Aquitania prima* and it remained a major urban center in the early Middle Ages. The writings of Sidonius Apollinaris, an aristocrat and bishop from Lyon, and of Venantius Fortunatus, an Italian court poet and bishop, are an important source of information on the region in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and early 7<sup>th</sup> c. Clermont-Ferrand is portrayed by these authors as sophisticated and metropolitan, still in touch culturally with Rome, and connected with Paris, Spain and Byzantium.

The region's epigraphic material contains inscriptions by Sidonius Apollinaris and Venantius Fortunatus, along with Apollinaris' epitaph by an unknown author. The quality of the writings of these authors (poems and private correspondence) is an indicator of the

high level of culture and literacy available to the elite. Their inscriptions are another indicator: indeed, they are elaborate, learned and written in careful Latin.

The majority of the inscriptions are written in a simpler and plainer language and style, but a substantial number are longer and more elaborate, and are in part or entirely in verse. These cannot be attached to particular authors or figures, but likely find ecclesiastic provenance. I propose that these inscriptions were modeled after the examples of Sidonius Apollinaris and of Fortunatus, forming a literary tradition of poetic epigraphy among the clergy.

A few of the inscriptions of *Aquitania prima* are late antique, but most are early medieval. The inscriptions taper off in the 7<sup>th</sup> c.

While the language of the *Aquitania prima* inscriptions has received a cursory treatment in their most recent edition (Prévot and Pietri (1997)), there haven't been more careful and more detailed studies. This chapter attempts to fill this gap. In addition, my work seeks to provide a first step in the direction of a contrastive study of the inscriptions of Gaul, by providing another data point in addition to Trier, covered in the previous chapter.

### **3.1 Quantitative and philological analysis of the inscriptions of *Aquitania Prima*.**

#### **3.1.1 Objectives**

The goal of this study is to sketch out the state of the language of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions, isolating regional and social features, and chronological developments. In order to do so, I tracked down the occurrences of various phonological and morphosyntactic features that are characteristic of Vulgar Latin ('vulgarisms'). My study completes and revises the lists of vulgarisms that had previously been compiled by others (see 3.1.2.8). It also provides a discussion of equivocal forms, using Trier comparanda when relevant.

In order to discern chronological development in *Aquitania Prima* Latin, I compiled

a chronology (see Figure 3.1) of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions and evaluated the distribution of the Vulgar Latin features. These developments are then used to present an outline of *Aquitania prima* Latin.

### 3.1.2 Methodology

#### 3.1.2.1 Inscription selection

The latest edition of the late antique and early medieval inscriptions of *Aquitania prima* is Prévot and Pietri (1997)<sup>1</sup>. Prévot's edition contains 62 inscriptions, all but two of which are funerary in nature; in contrast, the city of Trier alone has 237 inscriptions to offer. The smaller number of inscriptions available for *Aquitania prima* and their spread over a large region make results more tentative. Due to this limited pool, I have to be less restrictive in the inclusion criteria to determine the inscriptions selected for study.

I limited myself to the inscriptions that are 1) in Latin, 2) of a minimal length amenable to a linguistic study. Minimal length is determined by the possibility of at least one Vulgar Latin feature. I do not exclude inscriptions based on uncertain or unavailable dating.

I selected 50 inscriptions for study, ordered and listed under Table 3.1.

#### 3.1.2.2 Inscription subdivision

Here is the list of the 50 inscriptions I selected for study from Prévot's edition, ordered geographically; Table 3.1. Most are in prose and are relatively short and simple. Some are in verse, and are longer and more elaborate. I will refer to the latter as the 'literary' inscriptions. A subset of these 'literary' inscriptions are not only metrical and literary, but are especially long and can be ascribed to major literary figures of the region. This subset will be referred to as the 'high-style literary' inscriptions.

The 'literary' inscriptions are accompanied by an asterisk; the 'high-style literary' by

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<sup>1</sup>The inscriptions were first edited in Le Blant (1865) and Le Blant (1892), but as more inscriptions have surfaced since then, I deem it preferable to follow the most recent edition.



two asterisks. The total in parenthesis represents the total of inscriptions minus both types of literary ones.

Table 3.1: *Aquitania Prima*: Geographical distribution of Early Medieval inscriptions

Urban Center	Inscriptions	Total
Bourges and surroundings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5**, 6, 7, 9	8 (7)
Limoges and surr.	11**, 12**	2 (0)
Clermont-Ferrand and surr.	15, 16*, 17*, 20**, 21**, 22**, 23*, 24, 25*, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47*, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57	36 (28)
Cahors and surr.	58*, 59, 60*	3 (1)
Le Puy and surr.	61	1

### 3.1.2.3 Geographical Distribution

The *Aquitania prima* material spans a much larger area than the Trier inscriptions, although Clermont-Ferrand is by far the most prolific site. The very small number of inscriptions from Bourges, Limoges, Cahors and Le Puy makes determining finer regional developments difficult. It is possible, considering the distances at play, that there were regional differences between the Vulgar Latin of each different city center (possibly already in the earliest periods, but likelier perhaps for later ones).

### 3.1.2.4 Chronological distribution

Unlike Trier, the region was not put immediately under Merovingian control. The region was under uncertain and then Visigothic rule during the 5<sup>th</sup> c. It came to be Merovingian in the early 6<sup>th</sup> c. It is possible that this political change is reflected in the language.

However, there are too few inscriptions from the Visigothic period to discern differences.

### 3.1.2.5 Dating the *Aquitania prima* inscriptions

**By indiction** Many of the early medieval inscriptions use dating formulations (by indiction and kings' names) that identify them as coming from one or two (or, rarely, three) sets of years. The inscriptions for which dating can be ascertained by such means are listed under Table 3.2.

**By historical figure** Other inscriptions receive a date range of a few decades, as their agents (dedicator, recipient) can be identified, with a known period of activity.

The inscription by Sidonius Apollinaris was made during his final years. His epitaph is likely to have been written in the years following his death, but, although this has now fallen into disfavor, it has been advanced that it may instead be much later (Prévot and Pietri (1997, pp. 116, 126)). Venantius Fortunatus' career ranged from 550 to 609 and his inscriptions span that period. See Table 3.3 for a summary, followed by my comments, and the relevant inscriptions in Prévot and Pietri (1997) for details.

**By estimate** A number of inscriptions bear no information that would help us date them and they cannot be attached to known historical figures. For some of these, Prévot provides dating estimates, based upon archeological, art historical, epigraphical, or onomastic grounds. She estimates broadly and qualitatively (e.g. “époque mérovingienne tardive”, “époque tardive”), without giving corresponding years. I believe that it is pos-

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<sup>2</sup>580: †Felix / 609: †Fortunatus.

<sup>3</sup>Ruricius II was still working in 549, therefore the inscription must be from 549 or later.

<sup>4</sup>578: possibly †Exocius.

<sup>5</sup>551: †Gallus.

<sup>6</sup>485: †Abraham / 489: †Sidonius Apollinaris.

<sup>7</sup>489: †Sidonius Apollinaris; 491: end of the reign of the Eastern Roman emperor Zeno, referred to in the inscription. The inscription may be a bit later but is likely antique; see above.

Table 3.2: *Aquitania Prima*: Dated inscriptions (by indiction)

n°	Year(s)
59	466
55	501 or 528
51	502/3
50	503
52	511/2 or 526/7
57	526
37	530
41	530?
53	534/48 or 595/612
43	535 or 610
54	537 or 599
44	546 or 606
27	546, 591 or 606
29	555
24	611
31	613-629?
23*	621
47*	637

Table 3.3: *Aquitania Prima*: Dates, Authors and Recipients of identifiable inscriptions

Author	Recipient	no	Date range
Venantius Fortunatus	Felix of Bourges (bishop of Bourges)	5	580-609 <sup>2</sup>
Venantius Fortunatus	Ruricius I and II (bishops of Limoges)	11	549-609 <sup>3</sup>
Venantius Fortunatus	Exocius (bishop of Limoges)	12	578(?) - 609 <sup>4</sup>
Venantius Fortunatus	Gallus (bishop of Clermont)	22	551 or later <sup>5</sup>
Sidonius Apollinaris	Abraham (abbot of Clermont)	20	485 - 489 <sup>6</sup>
?	Sidonius Apollinaris	21	489-491(?) <sup>7</sup>

sible to interpret and refine her assessment further. I reproduce under Table 3.4 her estimates as is, along with the years that I believe should correspond to them (explained next).

As covered in the previous sections, most of the dated inscriptions of *Aquitania Prima* are from the 6<sup>th</sup> century. A few are from the tail end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The dated inscriptions quickly taper off in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, with the latest dating from 637.

I do not see any evidence that would indicate that the undated inscriptions should be later than the rest of the corpus, or that the undated inscriptions' chronological distribution should be otherwise different than that of the dated inscriptions. It is of course possible that additional information may appear that will make it possible to push for a later dating of these undated inscriptions, but until such a time, I hold it as safer to consider that the undated inscriptions should conform to the distribution of the dated ones<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup>We cannot turn to archeology to refine dating any further, as very few of the inscriptions (dated and

Table 3.4: *Aquitania Prima*: Undated inscriptions, with estimate

Prévot's estimate	Corr. years	Inscription n°
début du 5 <sup>e</sup> s.	400-430	15
6 <sup>e</sup> s.	500-600	17*, 32, 33, 42, 60*, 61
début du 7 <sup>e</sup> s.	600-630	36
7 <sup>e</sup> s.	600-640	1, 16*, 25*, 34, 35, 45, 58*
époque mérovingienne	507-640	6
époque mérovingienne tardive	600-640	2
époque mérovingienne tardive/7 <sup>e</sup> s.?	600-640	7, 9
fin de l'époque mérovingienne	600-640	3
époque tardive	600-640	38

While Prévot's estimate "époque mérovingienne" can be taken to mean "507-754" in the strictest sense (from the annexation of *Aquitania Prima* to the Carolingian dynasty), I would push for a more limited set of dates for this region. Effectively, I take "époque mérovingienne" as "507-640". I take "époque mérovingienne tardive", "époque mérovingienne tardive/7<sup>e</sup> s." "fin de l'époque mérovingienne" and "époque tardive" as coterminous, meaning "600-640". This way, the undated inscriptions receive dating estimates that fit with the rest of the corpus.

**Inscriptions that remain undated** I also include in my study inscriptions for which there is no dating and no estimate available. These are listed under Table 3.5.

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undated) were found *in situ* or can be tied to particular necropoleis for which dating is known. This is further discussed in Prévot and Pietri (1997), p. 8-9 for Clermont-Ferrand; on the archeology of the region see also Prévot and Barral I Altet (1989), Desforges (1970), Duval (1996) and Eychart (1969).

Table 3.5: *Aquitania Prima*: Undated inscriptions, without estimate

Undated inscriptions without estimate	4, 39, 46, 48, 56
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### 3.1.2.6 Chronology of the Early Medieval *Aquitania prima* inscriptions

Unlike Gauthier (1975, pp. 95-104) for the Trier inscriptions, Prévot did not attempt to provide a systematic chronology of her inscriptions. Using the Tables 3.2, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.3, I compiled a systematic chronology, Figure 3.1. I included in this graph only the inscriptions I selected for study.

A blue diamond is used to mark the date of inscriptions for which a single date is available (e.g. 466). For inscriptions that have a date range (e.g. 500-600), a grey line marks each boundary, and a blue diamond marks the average value. The grey line is accompanied by an interrogation point whenever a boundary is uncertain. For inscriptions that have multiple date ranges (e.g. 534-548 and 595-612), a grey line marks the boundaries of each date range, and a blue diamond marks the averaged middle value of all of the date ranges. For inscriptions with multiple precise dates (e.g. 501 and 528), each date is marked with an x, and the averaged middle value is marked with a diamond. The inscriptions are ordered by average. Inscriptions that are undated are at the bottom, marked with a straight line.

I subdivide the *Aquitania prima* inscriptions into three groups: Pre-Merovingian (comprising the inscriptions that are Late Antique, Disputed, and Visigothic; that is to say, from 400 to 507), Merovingian (507-600), and Later Merovingian (600-640). The inscriptions are presented in these groups under Table 3.6. Inscriptions that feature multiple possible dates or that have a date range that span two groups have been sorted in the group that corresponds to their middle value (usually the middle group, ‘Merovingian’).

Only a small number of inscriptions predates the annexation of the region by the Merovingians, following the battle of Vouillé (507). Sidonius Apollinaris’ inscription is to be included in this group. These early inscriptions are for the most part Visigothic or Disputed. Unlike for the Trier material where the evidence skews early, there is only one

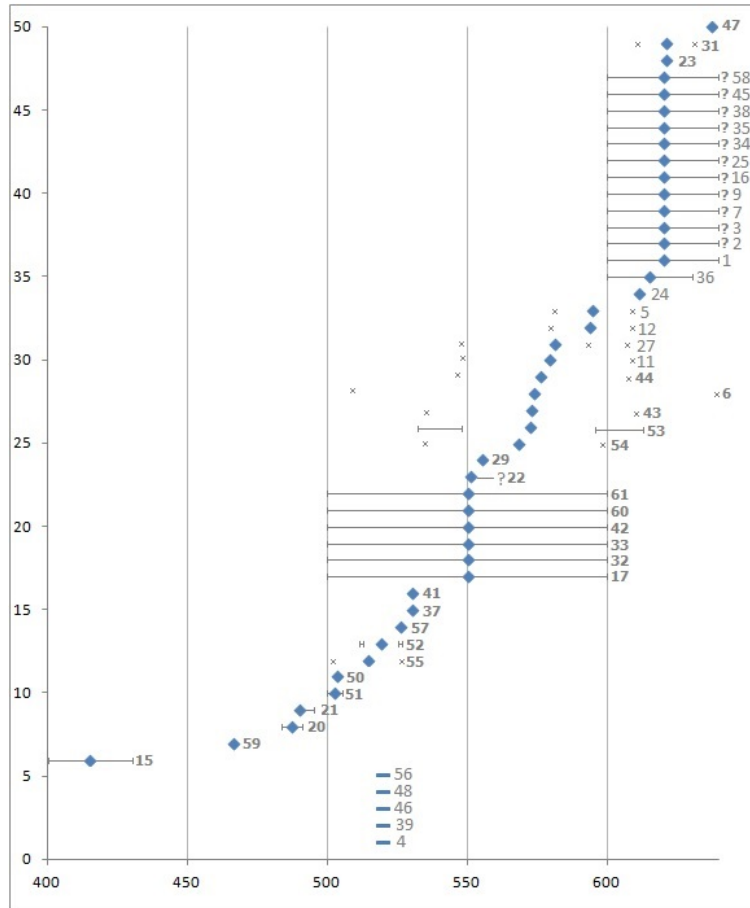


Figure 3.1: *Aquitania Prima*: Chronology of the Early Medieval inscriptions

Table 3.6: *Aquitania Prima*: Chronological subdivision of inscriptions

Period	Years	Inscription no
Pre-Merovingian	400-507	15, 20**, 50, 51, 59
Merovingian	508-600	5**, 6, 11**, 12**, 17*, 22**, 27, 29, 32, 33, 37, 41, 42, 43, 44, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 60*, 61
Later Merovingian	600-640	1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 16*, 23*, 24, 25*, 31, 34, 35, 36, 38, 45, 47*, 58*
Uncertain	?	4, 21**, 39, 46, 48, 56

late antique inscription.

Nearly all of the dated inscriptions are from the 6<sup>th</sup> and the first 40 years of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. The earlier boundary coincides with the beginning of the Merovingian rule over the region. It is harder to explain why the inscriptions taper off, but the latest dated inscription is from 637.

It is important to note that the *Aquitania prima* inscriptions cover a much narrower time period than the Trier material (240 years vs 400) and that nearly all of them are concentrated in a 140-years bracket (500-640).

### 3.1.2.7 Linguistic features studied

The features to be tracked are listed on Tables 3.7 and 3.8. Most of these features are the same ones that I followed in the Trier inscriptions (listed under Section 2.1.2.5). However,



Table 3.7: *Aquitania Prima*: Phonological features studied

Vowels		
	Vocalic merger	/ĩ/ and /ē/ /ũ/ and /ō/
	Monophthongization	/ae/ > /e/
	Other voc. dev.	Syncope V in hiatus
Consonants		
	Word-initial C	/h/- > ∅ Gk aspiration & Gk aspirates <sup>9</sup>
	Word-medial C	Cluster simplification ([ks], [sk], nasals) Gemination, degem. Voicing, devoicing Palatalization Labials and glides
	Word-final C	-/m/ > ∅

some of the Trier features were not found in *Aquitania Prima*, and some features found in *Aquitania Prima* are not found in Trier. My list reflects these differences.

### 3.1.2.8 Previous Studies

The inscriptions of *Aquitania prima* have received very little attention. To the best of my knowledge, the only discussion of the Latin of this corpus is the cursory treatment

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<sup>9</sup>Greek aspirates can occur in any position: word-initial, medial, or final.

Table 3.8: *Aquitania Prima*: Morphosyntactic features studied

Nouns, Pronouns	
	Agreement of relative pronoun

provided in the most recent edition ( Prévot and Pietri (1997, pp. 45-52))<sup>10</sup>, which suffers from various limitations.

In this study, Prévot lists the occurrences of various vulgarisms. However, her listings contain errors, omissions and cases that are in fact open to multiple interpretations (such as purely graphic phenomena, material damage resulting in uncertain reading, manuscript tradition interference; or surface spellings that can be the result of more than one linguistic development).

Prévot does not attempt to provide a synthetic discussion of *Aquitania prima* Latin, beyond her list of Vulgar Latin forms. She does not attempt to identify characteristics that would differentiate it from the Latin of other regions. She does not attempt to discern chronological development, or other internal features (such as sociolectal indicators).

The language and the literary style of Venantius Fortunatus and of Sidonius Apollinaris have been studied more extensively<sup>11</sup>. The focus of these studies has been the literary sources (letters, edited poems etc), while the epigraphic material receives less attention. As Prévot and Pietri (1997) offers a stylistic analysis of each of the inscriptions, I will not repeat this work here. However, she does not attempt to provide a linguistic analysis of these inscriptions, taken as a group, to isolate broader stylistic and linguistic trends, especially vis-à-vis the more copious Trier material. I offer such a study.

My work provides then a major revision and expansion of the lists of forms contained

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<sup>10</sup>The older more general linguistic studies of the inscriptions of Gaul (Pirson (1901), Gaeng (1968)) include material from *Aquitania Prima*, but are not detailed studies of particular sites, as this dissertation offers. The key differences between these general studies and mine are discussed under Section 2.1.2.6.

<sup>11</sup>Some major works on the language and the literary style of Fortunatus consist in George (1995), Collins (1981), Clerici (1970), Leo (1882), Meneghetti (1916), Roberts (1989), Rogers (1969), and for Sidonius Apollinaris, Grupe (1892), Chadwick (1955), Colton (2000), Harries (1996), Zelzer (1994), López (1994), Banniard (1992) and Kretschmann (1870).

in Prévot and Pietri (1997), including much needed discussions of equivocal forms and comparanda. I offer a synthetic analysis of *Aquitania prima* Latin, attempting to isolate regional, chronological and sociolinguistic developments, along with literary trends.

My notes about the limitations of Gaeng (1968)'s study, discussed in Section 2.1.2.6, still apply. To summarize: Gaeng groups together most of Gaul, which risks obscuring finer-grained regional developments. He considers only a small subset of the available inscriptions, and the geographic distribution of these inscriptions is left unclear. With respect to the *Aquitania prima* material, an additional complication emerges. A significant fraction of the AP inscriptions were written by highly educated figures, and can be qualified as 'official', 'metrical' and assuredly 'literary'. Gaeng ignores those, and for the purpose of his study he was perhaps methodologically right to do so. However, these inscriptions contain important sociolinguistic information, which I discuss in this chapter, and which I use, in turn, to shed light upon the sociolinguistics of the inscriptions of Trier.

### 3.1.3 Sample Inscriptions

**Regular or 'formulaic' inscriptions** The *Aquitania prima* inscriptions differ from those of Trier with respect to their formulary, and to the degree of deviation allowed from the formulary. In Trier, the late antique formulary remains used throughout the Merovingian period, unchanged, and tolerating few deviations, except at the latest period; see 2.1.3. The inscriptions that do not use the formulary or that depart from it substantially are few and far between, and tend to be late. In *Aquitania prima*, a significant portion of the inscriptions do not conform to the formulary at all periods, and even those that do show much more flexibility and variation.

At its most minimal, the formulaic inscriptions contain the clause *hic requiescit* X, where X is the name of the defunct. It can be accompanied by *in pace* and/or *bonae memoriae* (or variants, such as *bonememorius*; see under section 3.1.4.3). The clause may be preceded by *in hoc tomolo*. A second sentence, if present, states the length of the life of the defunct, following the form: *Uixit annos* A, and may include the precision

*menses* B. A third sentence, less commonly found, states the month of the year at which the death occurred, *Transiit kalendas* C, and may be accompanied by a mention of the reigning king: *regno domini nostri* D.

It is quite common for inscriptions not to include all of these elements, to maintain the core initial clause but to modify the rest of the formulary, or to depart altogether from the formulary in the second and third sentences.

The following inscriptions are formulaic: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 24, 27(d), 29, 31(?), 32, 33(?), 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57. Of course, some inscriptions are so fragmentary that it is impossible to assess their original length and constituents; they are here noted by an interrogation mark.

(1) 2. 600-640

Hic re  
quiescit  
Lunidia

This inscription features only the core clause of the formulary; it can thus be qualified to be minimalistic. It does not contain Vulgar Latin forms.

(2) 7. 600-640

In hoc to  
molo req  
quescit  
bone m  
emori  
ae Bau  
dulfu  
s arce  
pr(es)b(yster) o  
biit XIII k(a)l(endas) de(cembres)

This inscription features the core clause of the formulary along with some common supplements. It also contains the common second and third sentences. This is a fuller or expanded formulaic inscription.

This inscription contains a few common vulgarisms. Namely, confusion of *o* and *u* (*tomolo*; *tumulo* expected); confusion of *i* and *e* (*arcepresbyter*; *archipresbyter* expected); monophthongization of *ae* (*bone*; *bonae* expected). The Greek consonant  $\chi$ , usually rendered as <ch> in Latin, is here noted by the simplex consonant <c>.

**Irregular non-poetic inscriptions** These inscriptions feature original text that does not make use of the formulaic structure outlined above. In addition, these inscriptions are not metrical, and appear devoid of literary flourishes. Notable examples are: 59, 61.

(3) 59. 400-507

Tumulus neofeti Pauli qui praeces  
sit in pace domini  
ca die nonas nouem  
bris, Leone ter con(sule)

A small subset of the inscriptions feature original text (non formulaic), but, additionally, are extremely short. I put in this category inscriptions whose text does not include a verb. These are not fragmentary formulaic inscriptions; if they are fragmentary, their text does not feature the recognizable formulaic structure. Notable examples include: 6, 15.

(4) 6. 508-600

D(e)posic[i]o bone memorie Allouire

**Poetic or ‘literary’ inscriptions** These inscriptions feature original text that does not make use of the formulary or that departs from it in substantial ways, and, in addition,

they are embellished by stylistic and poetic flourishes. They may be at least partially metrical, or else they approximate meter and poetic language. Notable examples include: 16, 17, 23, 25, 34, 35, 36, 47, 58, 60.

(5) 60. 508-600

Conditus hoc tum[u]lo tegitur  
Gregorius exul  
exulis et P[et]ri quem  
posuere manus  
qui tamen Hispana natus  
tell[u]re supremum  
complet Cadurcis more  
deflenda diem

This inscription contains two faulty elegiac couplets, but is devoid of Vulgar Latin forms; see Section 3.2.3.3 for discussion.

**‘High-style literary’ inscriptions** These inscriptions are especially long and intricate, and are metrical and non-formulaic. They are attached to key literary figures of the region, as dedicator or recipient. These inscriptions are: 5, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22. They are discussed below under Section 3.2.

### 3.1.4 Data

#### 3.1.4.1 Merger between /ĩ/ and /ē/

**Cases** Commonly, /ĩ/ is written as <e>.

This affects conjugation endings: *obiet* (23, 47)<sup>12</sup> for *obiit*, *transiet* (24, 37, 52) for

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<sup>12</sup>47 not in Prévot’s list [p.46].

*transiit*, [abstu]let (35) for *abstulit*, *reqescet* (37) and *requiescet* (41, 42) for *requiescit*, *quiescet* (48) for *quiescit*, *uixet* (48) for *uixit*.

The forms that show <ie> where <ii> would have been expected (*obiet*, *transiet*) may instead be dissimilatory ( /ii/ > /ie/ ), a development found in the Republican period<sup>13</sup>. However, the other forms appear to be unequivocal examples of the vocalic merger.

Affecting nominal endings, there is *reges* (\*26, 31, 44; \*26 and 31 are badly damaged and Prévot reconstructs *reges* only because it is part of the dating formula) for *regis*.

Word-internally, there is *arcepr(es)b(yster)* (7) for *archipresbyter*<sup>14</sup>, *condetum* (16) for *conditum*, [d]euetum (16) for *debitum*, *fragele* (16) for *fragile*, *umeda* (16) for *humida*, *morebus* (16) for *moribus*<sup>15</sup>, *inueda* (23) for *inuida*, *tegetur* (23) for *tegitur*, *extetit* (25) for *extitit*, *fabreca* (25) for *fabrica*, *ponteficalem* (25) for *pontificalem*, *ponteficis* (25) for *pontificis*, *megrans* (25) for *migrans*<sup>16</sup>, *cupeta* (35) for *cupida*, *decemo* (37) for *decimo*, *Dulcetia*<sup>17</sup> (37) for *Dulcitia*, *condeda* (47) for *condita*, *compleuemus* (47) for *compleuimus*, *Candedus* (57) for *Candidus*, *neofeti* (59) for *neofiti* (a variant spelling of neophytus, transliterated from the Greek νεόφυτος), *artefex* (60) for *artifex*. A number of these may be assimilatory (regressive or progressive). E.g. *arc(h)ipres-* > *arc(h)epres-*, *debitum* > *deuetum*, *fragile* > *fragele*, *tegitur* > *tegetur*, *artifex* > *artefex*.

Alternatively, /ē/ is written as <i>: *diuota* (17) for *deuota*, *requiiscit* (38, 46, 54), *requiicit* (51) and *requiscit* (55) for *requiescit*, *requiiscunt* (25) for *requiescunt*, *minsis*<sup>18</sup> (38) for *menses*, *mensis* (42) and *minses* (57) for *menses*, *rigno* (47, 50, 54) for *regno*, *rigni* (23) for *regni*, *rigis* (50) for *regis*.

Prévot (p. 193) reports *tris* (57) (for *tres*, presumably) as another attestation of this

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<sup>13</sup>Weiss (2011, pp. 119, 122), Leumann (1977, pp. 51, 90).

<sup>14</sup>Mistakenly noted under /ī/ in Prévot.

<sup>15</sup>Not listed in Prévot [p. 46], but noted in the inscription's entry.

<sup>16</sup>Mistakenly noted under /ī/ in Prévot.

<sup>17</sup>Not in Prévot's list (p. 46), but commented on under the inscription's entry.

<sup>18</sup>Prévot (p. 47) reports the form as *mensis* in her list; however, both the inscription and her transcription read *minsis*.

merger. However, this is actually the expected accusative plural form: \*tri-ns > *trīs*<sup>19</sup>. It is regularly found in archaic authors such as Plautus, and, while Classical Latin has mostly replaced it by *tres*, it is found in high-style Classical authors such as Cicero, Lucretius, Vergil and Livy. It is unlikely that we are dealing with an archaism here, as 57 features several vulgarisms affecting vowels (*tomolo*, *annus*, *Candedus* (male name), *minses*). However, if such a form were to be found in high-style poetic inscriptions, the argument could be made that it is an archaism, as these poets were educated enough to know of such forms through the Classical authors.

Prévot (p. 47) takes the following as instances of /ē/ written as <i>, assuming underlying accusative plural forms: *septembris* (44, 52) for *septembres*, *decembris* (46) for *decembres*, *nouembris* (59) for *nouembres*. She left out of her list *abrilis* (16) for *abriles*.

These instances are part of dating formulas inherited from antique use, which employ *kalendas*, *nonae* and *idus* followed by a month, where an accusative is the expected case for the month. However, it is not necessary to take these surface *-is* forms as underlying accusatives. They can be accepted as genitives. Medieval Latin charters, chronicles and ecclesiastical calendars yield numerous examples of such dating formulas built with the genitive case, taking the form *kalendas*, *idus*, *nonae* + month in the genitive. Looking at the Merovingian period specifically, the charters yield seven dating constructions that use the accusative (of the type *kalendas Iulias*) and three that use the genitive. These are: *kalendas Novembris* (570/57<sup>20</sup> dated 688; 575/64 dated 691-692), *kalendas Ianuarii* (578/68 dated 694-695). Thus in the Merovingian corpus, dated 619-750, the innovative genitive dating formula competes with the inherited accusative dating formula, the accusative construction being about twice as common. In the slightly earlier epigraphic material of *Aquitania Prima*, eight dating formulas unambiguously use the accusative, while four use the genitive. These are the same proportions as the charters.

There aren't any unambiguous instances where /ī/ is written as <e>. The possible

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<sup>19</sup>Weiss (2011, p. 129).

<sup>20</sup>The first reference number is that of the *Monumenta Historica Germaniae* and the second is that of the *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*.



cases are best accounted for either as /ĩ/ or as other linguistic developments. Some of the forms provided by Prévot as /ĩ/ written as <e> do not actually contain an /ĩ/ (*arcepresbyter*, *megrans*); these are discussed above under /ĩ/.

Prévot presents the personal name *Erena* (54) for *Irena* (transliterated from the Greek Εἰρήνη as possible instance of /ĩ/ written as <e>)<sup>21</sup>. However, this spelling is likely in part the result of the sound changes that happened in koine Greek, which resulted in i-vocalism for both ε and η; the Latin spelling reflects the fact that the two vowels were of the same quality.

*Prencepe*(25) for *principe*<sup>22</sup> may provide a rare case of /ĩ/ that is written as <e>. However, it is more likely a case of the commoner development /ĩ/ written as <e>. The quantity of the initial /i/ of *principe* is problematic. Etymologically, it should be long. However, by Classical or Late Latin, it may have become short, as a result of Osthoff-type shortenings (a long vowel shortens when followed by a resonant that is followed by a consonant<sup>23</sup>). Pinpointing exactly when in the prehistory and history of the Latin language Osthoff shortenings operated has proven difficult, as there appear to have been multiple points at which they occurred<sup>24</sup>, or else it may have been a persistent, continuous process<sup>25</sup>. Evidence has been put forth that a particular type would have been especially late, affecting /ū/, /ĩ/, yielding *ūndecim* > *ũndecim* and *uñdemiae* > *uĩndemiae*<sup>26</sup>. The form *prencepe*, if it is indeed an instance of the standard <e> for /ĩ/ confusion, would support the view that this late round of Osthoff-type shortenings predates the *Aquitania Prima* material.

Rarely, /ě/ is written as <i>: *tenit* (16) for *tenet*, *iouenim* (23) for *iuuenem*. Prévot [p. 47] suggests as alternative explanation that 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation *tenet* may have been

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<sup>21</sup>Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 188).

<sup>22</sup>Not reported in Prévot in any of her lists.

<sup>23</sup>Weiss (2011, pp. 125-6, 371).

<sup>24</sup>Three following Weiss (2011, pp. 125-6).

<sup>25</sup>See Yates (2015) for references and analysis.

<sup>26</sup>Sihler (1995, 77 no 82), Leumann (1977, p. 107), Weiss (2011, p. 371).

reanalyzed as 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation. According to this, *tenēre* > *teněre*. While there are no other instances of a change of conjugation class in the *Aquitania Prima* corpus, there is evidence of this elsewhere in Vulgar Latin; Väänänen (1981, 136 no 314). However, for this particular case the Romance languages actually support VL \**tenīre*, meaning that the change of conjugation class was between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup>; Old Prov. *tenir*, Fr. *tenir*. This *tenit*, then, fits regularly with a 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation class in *-īre/*.

**Distribution** Confusions affecting /*ĩ*/ and /*ē*/ are well attested and found at all periods, including the early material; see Figure 3.2. This is also what is supported by the attestations of /*ĩ*/ written as <e> and /*ē*/ written as <e>; see Figures 3.2 and 3.3. This suggests that the merger was well implanted at an earlier date still than the *Aquitania Prima* material; there is indeed direct evidence of the antiquity of this merger (see section 2.1.4.1 for references and discussion).

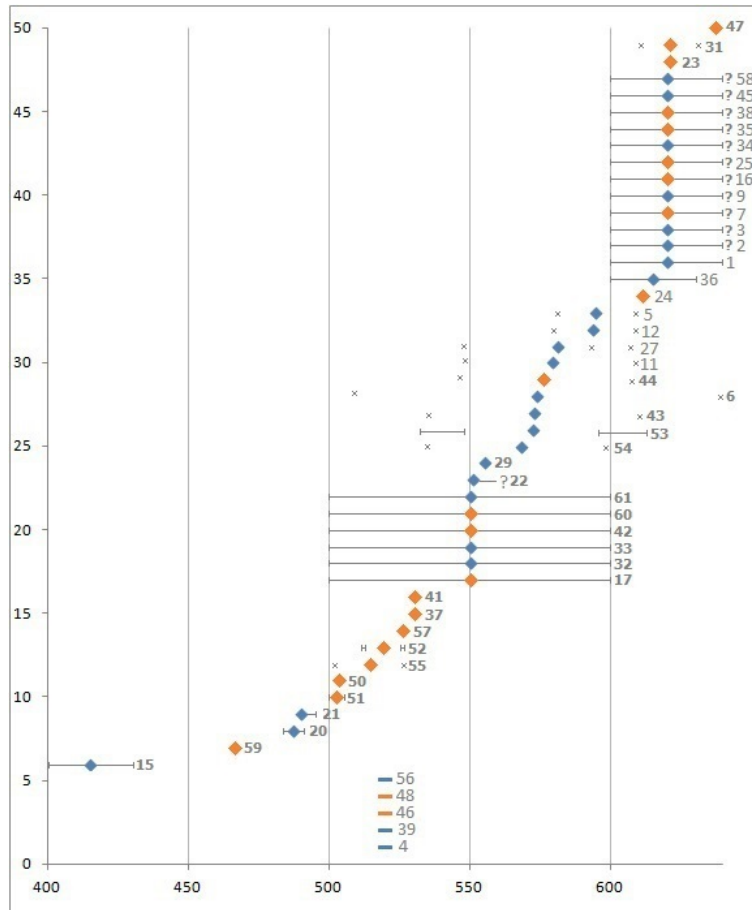


Figure 3.2: *Aquitania Prima*: Confusions between <i> and <e> (all cases)

$/\bar{i}/$  and  $/\bar{e}/$  are not affected by this merger. It is thus not a surprise to see that confusions involving  $/\bar{i}/$  and  $/\bar{e}/$  are very few and far between, and resolutely late; see Figures 3.4 and 3.5. They may be stonecutters' errors or graphic phenomena, more so than indicative of an underlying linguistic reality.

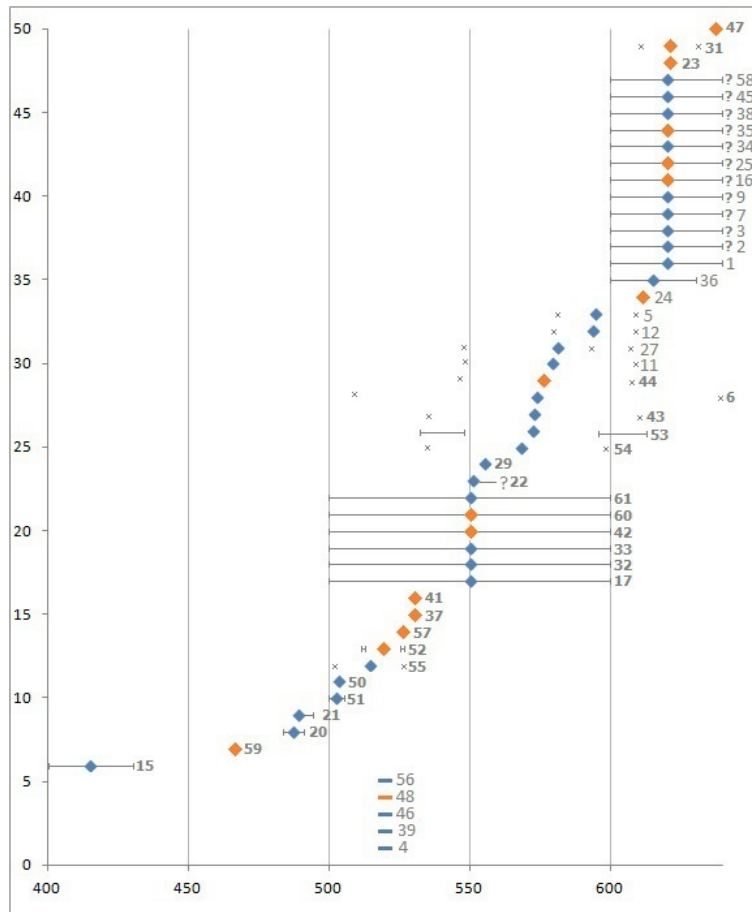


Figure 3.3: *Aquitania Prima*: /ǃ/ written as <e>

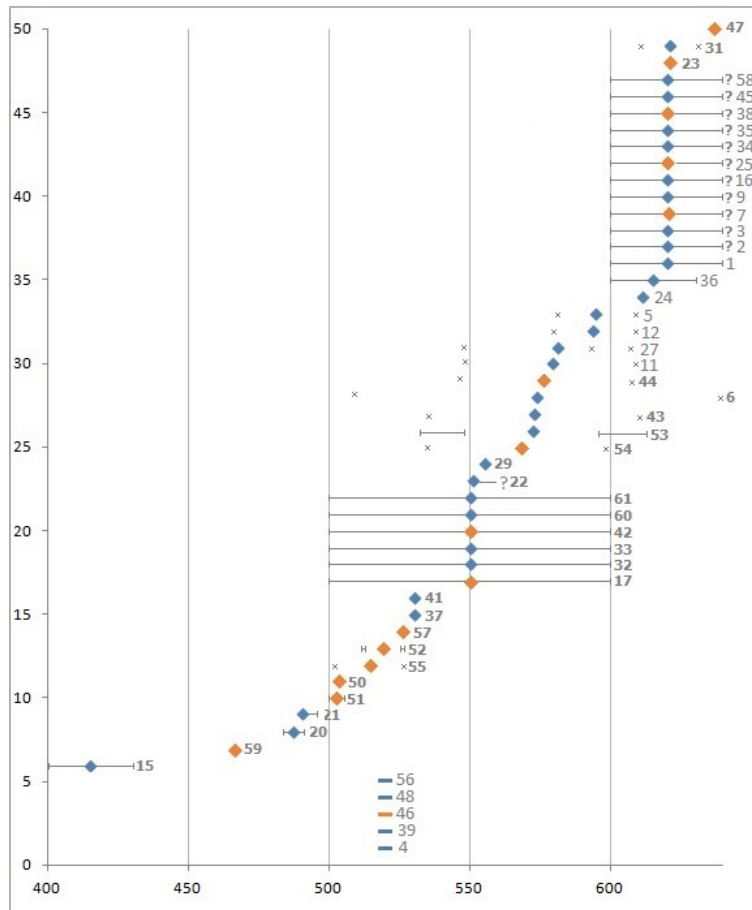


Figure 3.4: *Aquitania Prima*: /ē/ written as <i>

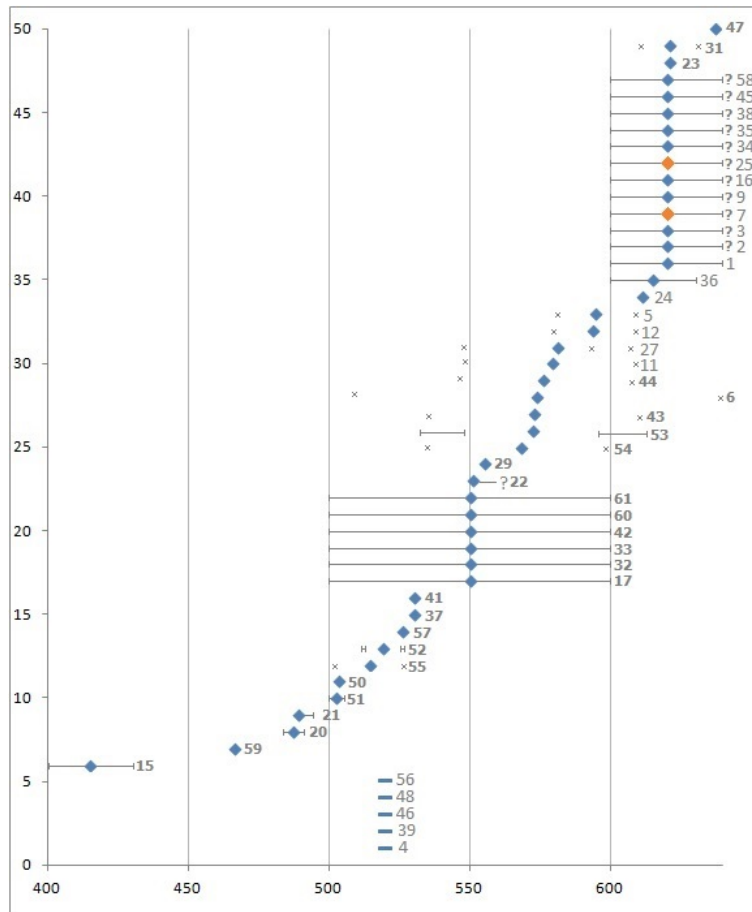


Figure 3.5: *Aquitania Prima*:  $\sqrt{1}$  written as  $\langle e \rangle$

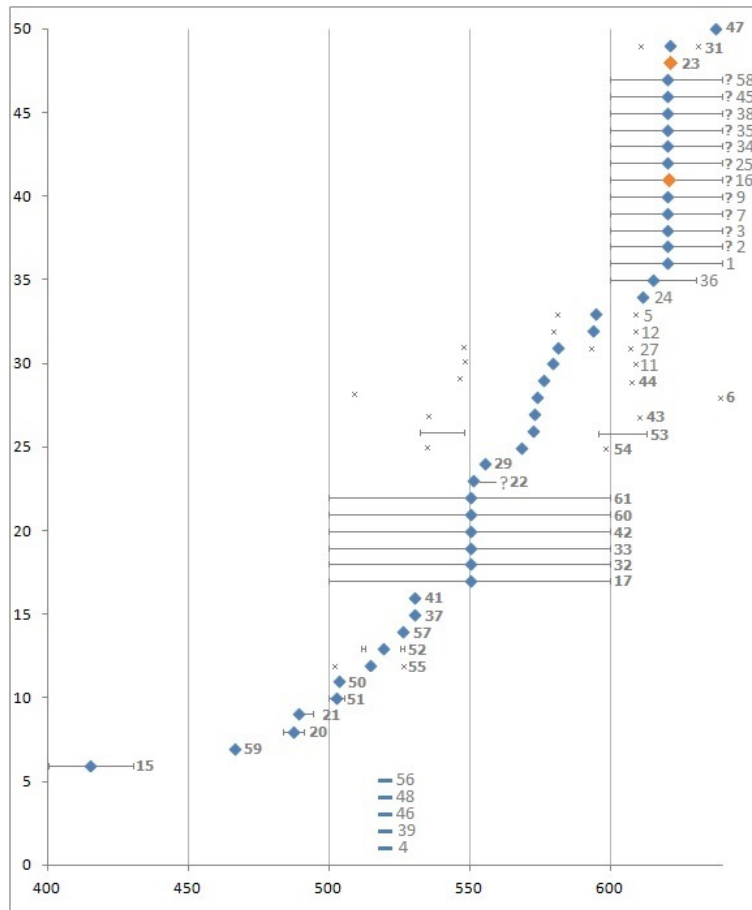


Figure 3.6: *Aquitania Prima*: /ě/ written as <i>

### 3.1.4.2 Merger between /ǔ/ and /ō/

**Cases** Commonly, /ǔ/ is written as <o>. Most examples affect *tumulum*<sup>27</sup>: we find *tumolo* (41, 51), [.]*olo* (44), *tomolo* (4, 7<sup>28</sup>, 16, 23, 29, 36, 37, 38, 39, 46, 52, 53, 57), *thomolo* (48) and *tomulo* (55) for *tumulo*. There is also *famola* (9) for *famula*, *to[lit]* (16) and *abstolit* (23) for *tulit* and *abstulit*, *iouenim* (23) for *iuuenem*, and *mondo* (25) for *mun-do*<sup>29</sup>.

Prévot lists *soboli* (21) for *suboli*<sup>30</sup>. However, *soboles*, for *suboles* (from *sub-* and *oleo*), is attested already in the Classical period in Cicero, Columella, Lucan and others, and it is also found in the later Latin author Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>31</sup>, and is likely an example of regressive assimilation, not of vocalic merger.

Prévot lists *paruolis* (35) for *paruulis*, but this example is not straightforward. *Paru-ulus* and *paruolus* in fact both find Archaic and Classical attestations (forms of *paruolus* are found in Plautus, Cicero and Juvenal notably). The diminutive suffix *-ulus* evolved from *-olus*/, itself from *\*-elo*-<sup>32</sup>. The form *paruolus* is then an archaism in *-olus*/. It has been proposed that *-olus*/ remained a productive suffix in spoken Latin; see Carnoy (1906, p. 60 and n.1). However, it appears to me to be more likely for this case that the preceding /ǔ/ glide is responsible for the maintenance of *-os*/, versus *-us*/; likewise, *seruos* can be found quite late alongside *seruus*.

Prévot takes *mondo* (25) for *mun-do* to be a case of regressive assimilation rather than a sign of vocalic merger. This particular inscription contains many vocalic confusions

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<sup>27</sup>Adams (2013, p. 67) cites the forms *tomolo* and *famola* in particular as examples of this merger in Gaul.

<sup>28</sup>Prévot missed 4, 7, 39 in her linguistic survey (p. 47). While she notes these vulgarisms in the inscription entries of 7 and 39, 4 has escaped her notice altogether.

<sup>29</sup>Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 47) lists *mondo* as the sole example of /ǔ/ written as <o>, but *mundus* in fact contains a /ǔ/ and so should be placed under this header.

<sup>30</sup>Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 47). However, under the relevant inscription, she states that it contains no vulgarisms.

<sup>31</sup>Notably, Columella's *Res Rustica* contains two forms of *soboles* and one of *suboles*.

<sup>32</sup>Weiss (2011, p. 280 and footnote 81).



affecting <i>, <e>, <u> and <o> (*requiiscunt; extetit, fabreca, ponteficalem, ponteficis, megrans, prencepe; , annus; pastur*), including some uncommon confusions (/ö/ written as <u>, /ē/ written as <i>), so this may be idiosyncratic.

Alternatively, /ō/ is written as <u>. Most examples affect *annus*: we find *annus* (9, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27, 30, 32, 37, 38, 42, 45, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57)<sup>33</sup> for *annos* and *annu* (24) for *anno* (abl.), *octubres* (50) for *octobres*, and *denus* (23) for *denos*.

Rarely, /ö/ is written as <u>: *doctur* (25, 34), *pastur* (25), *amatur* (34), *dolur* (35), *senatur* (61). All of the forms affect unaccented vowels in final position before /r/. All of the nouns are 3<sup>rd</sup> declensions in /-or/.

There are no cases of /ū/ written as <o>.

**Distribution** The feature commonly affects the inscriptions that are later than 500. There are already many affected inscriptions from the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It is not possible to discern whether it becomes commoner or whether it remains stable.

The inscriptions that are earlier than 500 are not affected. It is difficult to determine whether we can generalize this further, as there are very few inscriptions that are earlier than 500.

I examined Republican and Imperial material from the region in an effort to supplement the scarce early data; the inscriptions are listed in Rémy (1996). Unfortunately, this earlier material presents some major difficulties. A lot of the inscriptions are badly damaged. In addition, they rely very heavily upon abbreviations, to the point that only the first few letters are left for each words; this of course obscures linguistic information.

The Roman inscriptions that do feature <o> and <u> nearly always leave them intact. I could find only one possible example of confusion, and it is difficult to accept it as a clear example of the vocalic merger, as the inscription is very odd indeed on multiple grounds.

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<sup>33</sup>16 and 25 do not figure in Prévot's list [p. 47], but she notes them under the entries. 30 may have read *annum* correctly, for a deceased child of one year of age, as only *annu* is visible on the stone.

Inscription 36 (approximate dating 1-50 AD) of Rémy (1996)'s edition reads *monim-into Aχχedomari Orbiotali o[biti] fili*.

Nearly all of the vowels of *monumentum* are incorrect. /ǔ/ written as <i> is a spelling confusion arising from the 'sonus medius', or intermediary vowel between /i/ and /u/, attested in Classical Latin. Leumann (1977, p. 87) in fact lists *monimentum* as common variant. /ě/ written as <i> may be indicative of the front vowel merger, already attested in Classical Latin. This first /i/ may also be due to progressive assimilation as a result of vowel harmony; as a reverse example, Leumann (1977, p. 87) gives *monementum*. What is surprising is that there are no other Roman inscriptions of the region that feature these vulgarisms; they are otherwise successfully avoided.

Rémy (1996, p. 107) notes that the deceased person and the dedicator bear Celtic names that are not attested in the region at that time; Addedomaros is only found in Brittany, while Orbiotalos is found in Doncaster (South Yorkshire) and in Noricum (corresponding to a portion of modern Austria and Slovenia). Perhaps these foreign names bear some relation to the inscription featuring unique spellings for the region and the period?

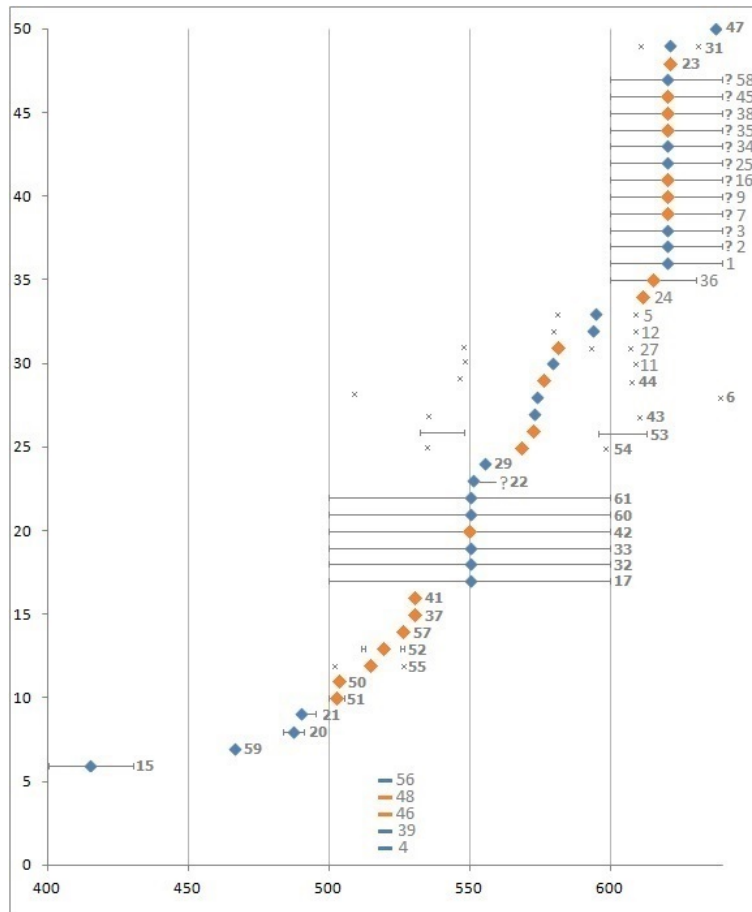


Figure 3.7: Confusions between <o> and <u>

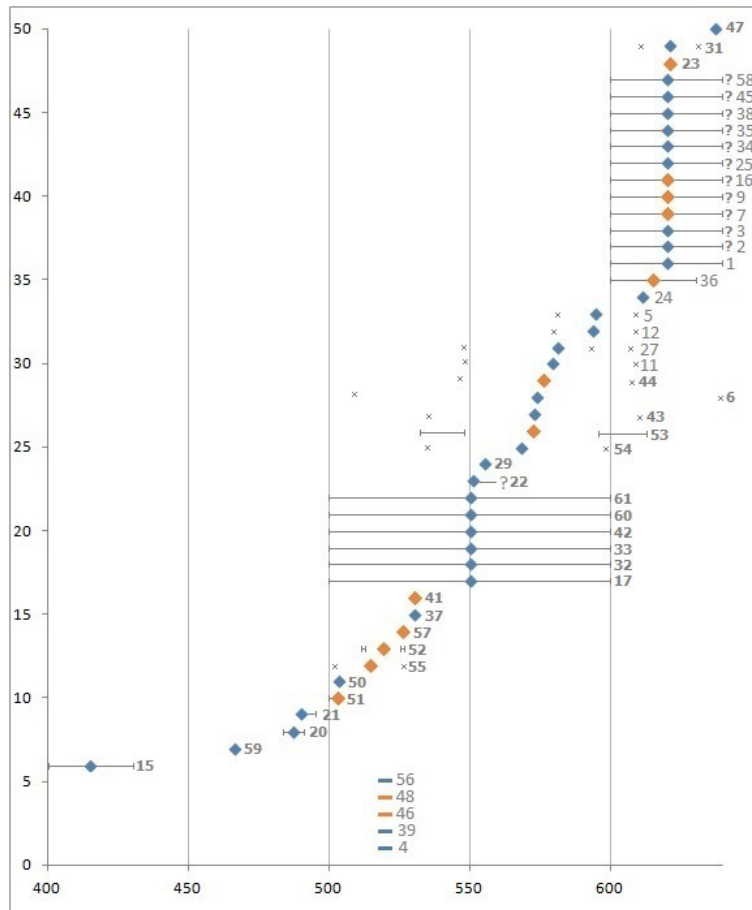


Figure 3.8: / $\ddot{u}$ / written as <o>

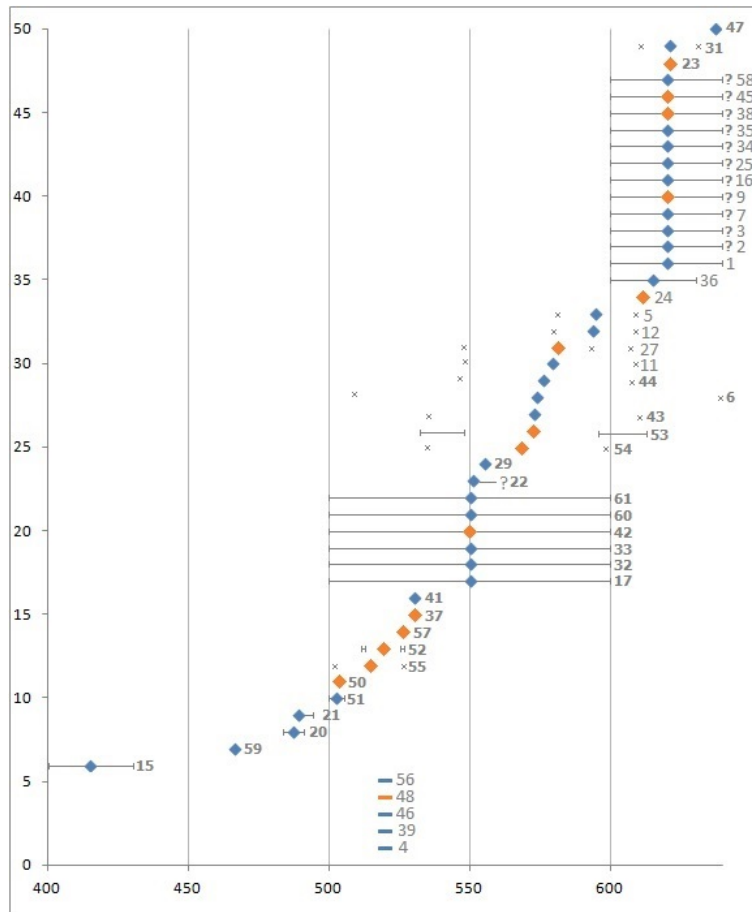


Figure 3.9: /ō/ written as <u>

### 3.1.4.3 Monophthongization

**Cases** /ae/ finds itself monophthongized to /e/, affecting in particular 1<sup>st</sup> declension nouns.

Affecting 1<sup>st</sup> declension endings: *Allouire* (6) for *Allouirae* (female name), *nature* for *naturae* (16, 47), *uite* for *uitae* (36), *pape* for *papae* (21), *militie* for *militiae* (21).

The common formula *bonae memoriae* is also often affected, with one or both members featuring a monophthongized ending, as can be seen on Table 3.9. It is equally as common to find both endings monophthongized as it is to find that the first ending is monophthongized while the second member is preserved. However, the opposite situation (first member preserved, second member monophthongized) finds only one instance. Only two inscriptions actually preserve both endings (37, 42<sup>34</sup>). Three inscriptions feature one preserved ending while the other one is physically destroyed or is otherwise missing (*bonae memori[.]*): 43, 45; *b[.] memoriae* 41), while one features one monophthongized ending and one lost or missing ending (*b[o]ne memori[ae/e]*(46)). This distribution can be accounted for by taking *bonae memoriae* as a unit, whose first member does not require agreement, and whose ending in fact holds little to no value.

That this very common formula was taken as a unit is buttressed by the forms *bonae me[mori]us*(27), *bone memorius* (56). These feature a newly-coined adjective, *memorius*, used as epithet, and correctly agrees with the subject. The first part of the unit, *bon-* (*e/ae*), maintains the same ending as in the original formula, indicating not only that agreement isn't required, but that the ending had lost any value. Effectively these are compounds, of the karmadhāraya type<sup>35</sup>.

The *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions generally do not feature word spacing. It is therefore very hard to tell whether these forms were perceived to be two words or one (that is to

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<sup>34</sup>Prévot (p. 169) reports that this inscription features the vulgarism *memorie*; however, both the inscription and her transcription read *memoriae*.

<sup>35</sup>There are inscriptions from other regions of Gaul that feature the compound *bonememori(us/a)*, listed in Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 147), in Väänänen (1981, 93 no 196) and in Pirson (1901, pp. 245-246).

Table 3.9: *Aquitania Prima*: Alternate spellings of the formula *bonae memoriae*

Variations of <i>bonae memoriae</i>	Inscriptions affected
<i>bone memorie</i>	3, 6, 24, 46, 51, 54
<i>bone memoriae</i>	7, 29, 38, 48, 52, 55, 57
<i>bonae memorie</i>	53
<i>bonae memori[.]</i>	43, 45
<i>b[.] memoriae</i>	41
<i>bone memori[.]</i>	46 <sup>36</sup>
<i>bonae me[mori]us</i>	27
<i>bone memorius</i>	56

say, whether we are dealing with *bone memorius* or *bonememorius*). However, there are a handful of cases where there is a line break between *bone* and *memori(ae/e)* (29, 51, 55, 57), indicating, perhaps, that the two words were perceived as distinct. Still, line breaks are capricious in the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions and can occur any place within a word that is at syllable boundary.

In non-ending position: *celos* for *caelos* (16), *seclis* (21\*\*) for *saeculis*, *ede(m)* (25) for *aedem*, *Cesarius* (48) for *Caesarius*.

Hypercorrection: *pacae* (42) for *pace*, no doubt in anticipation to *bonae memoriae* that immediately follows.

**Distribution** The monophthongization /ae/ ><e> is present at all periods except from the earliest inscriptions. The first affected inscription is from the turn of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Several inscriptions from the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century are affected. The feature remains common throughout the later material.

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<sup>36</sup>Prévot's edition reads *memori[e]*, but it should be noted that the textual transmission only reports *memori*, which could stand for *memoriae* as well as for *memorie*. The actual inscription was lost, but there is an early modern transcription that is available, which appears to reproduce carefully the original letters and symbols, their spacing and layout, and how much was readable.

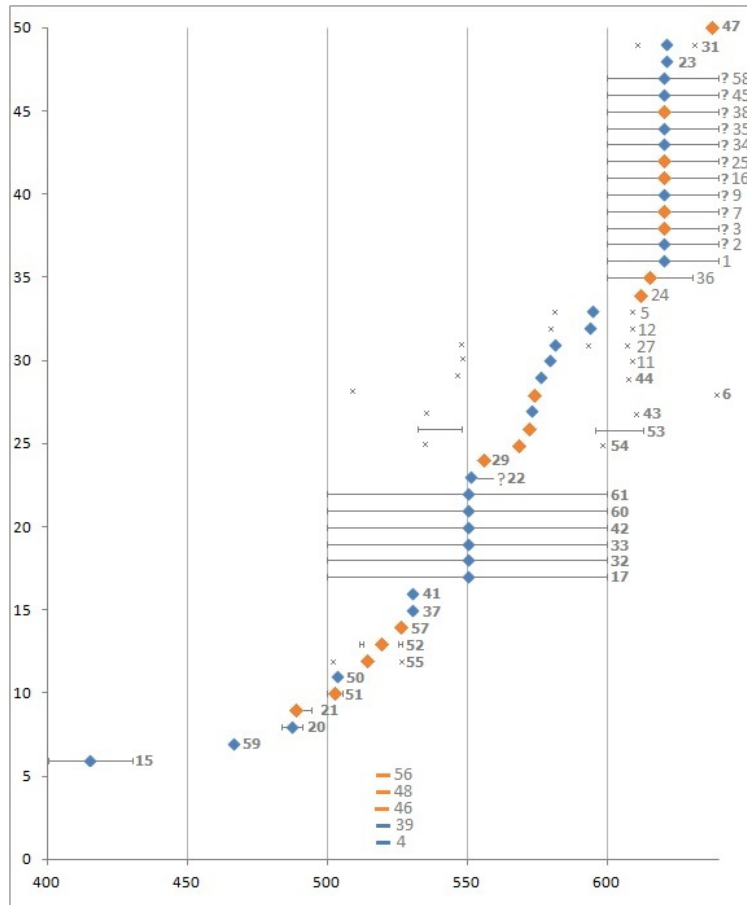


Figure 3.10: *Aquitania Prima*: Monophthongization - /ae/ ><e>

This monophthongization was likely present in *Aquitania Prima* Latin at an earlier date than the earliest inscriptions of this study, as by 500 it was already very firmly implanted. That the earliest inscriptions do not happen to record the monophthongization can be explained by their very small number.

#### 3.1.4.4 Other sound changes affecting vowels

**Syncope** Syncopated forms of *dominus* are attested already in Plautus, and are very common in late antique Latin; Väänänen (1981, p. 42 no 66). It is therefore unsurprising to find *domni* (43, 44, 51) for *domini*. *Domnini* (53) is stranger, but is likely influenced by the nominatives *domn(us/i)*.

Prévot (p. 49) holds that the forms *prtat* (37) for *portat*, *ids* (57) for *idus*, *klendas*



(52) for *kalendas* and *uixt* (57) for *uixit* are abbreviations.

*seclis* (21) for *saeculis* is an expected syncopated form in Vulgar Latin; Väänänen (1981, 42-3 no 67).

The forms *ilias* (37) for *iulias* and *mais* (53) for *maias* are certainly graphic phenomena as they are engraved at the ends of crowded lines.

**Vowels in hiatus** The process that leads to the occasional loss of /i/, /e/ and /u/ in hiatus<sup>37</sup>, can be used to explain the forms *memorae* (32) for *memoriae*, *reqescet*<sup>38</sup> (37) and *requiscit* (39, 53) for *requiescit*, *Sagria* (44) for *Siagria* (personal name), as well as *febrarias* (42) for *februarias*. Alternatively, the forms *Sagria* and *memorae* may reflect palatalized consonants, /s<sup>j</sup>/ and /r<sup>j</sup>/.

This process and <bra> variants of *februarius* are discussed under section 2.1.4.8.

/y/, /yy/ *Madias* (47) for *maias*:

The glide in Classical Latin *maias* is geminate. This spelling may be indicative of hardening, following the scheme: /j̄j̄/ > /d̄j̄/ > /d̄j̄/. A similar process may well be at play with the Trier form *macias*, discussed under Sections 2.1.4.8 and 2.1.3 (regarding inscription 21).

### 3.1.4.5 Sound changes affecting word-initial consonants

The following word-initial consonant-affecting features are found in the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions: loss of /h/, loss of Greek aspirates and of Greek initial aspiration.

/h/- The following instances of missing initial aspiration are recorded: *oc* (37, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55) for *hoc*, *umeda* (16) for *humida*.

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<sup>37</sup>Väänänen (1981, p. 46 n° 79).

<sup>38</sup>Not *reqesqet*, as wrongly reported by Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 49).

*ūmidus*, *ūmeō* are actually more commonly attested forms in CL than their variants *hūmidus*, *hūmeō*, and are in fact more correct, as *ūmeō* derives from PIEs \*uh<sub>1</sub>-mo-; de Vaan (2008, p. 639-640), Ernout and Meillet (1985, s. v. *ūmeō*). The initial aspiration may be a popular spelling that would have related (*h*)*umor* to *humus*. 16's *umeda* is most likely an archaizing spelling. This is indeed a poetic inscription that strives for an elevated, learned expression (although it is rife with vulgarisms); see Section 3.2.3.

Prévot takes *uhic* (9, 47) and *huhic* (25) as 'diphthongized' forms of *hūc*, with 25 showing a 'reinforced aspiration' (meaning, no doubt, that the aspiration is repeated). However, she does not motivate this 'reinforced aspiration', or for that matter the disyllabic initial sequence with /u/. Let's examine the inscriptions to see if a more satisfying explanation can be put forth.

47.

[Debitum] nature qui

[dem co]mpleuemus

[...] mors [.]V[.]P

[... rap?]ere uen[t] ne

[...]rit condeda (5)

[...]qui legis in

[tellege...] ATRO

[...]ECIANO

[...]CETER

[...]IISUETA (10)

[...]II uita uhic

[...]cede pecca

[tor ad] requiem in sede

[aet(erna?) ob]iet sub d(ie) VIII k(a)l(endas) madi

[as an(n)o] XV rigno d(o)m(in)i Dago (15)

[berti re]gis

47's *uhic* (l. 11) may stand for the dative singular of the demonstrative *hic*, *huic*. The leftmost portion of 47 is missing, making textual reconstitution very difficult. However, it is more likely that we are dealing with a form of the demonstrative *hic* than the adverb *hīc* due to the fact that *uhic* occurs on l.11 (out of 16) of the inscription. *Hīc* is commonly found as the first word of a funerary inscription, but is significantly rarer anywhere else, while we can expect a text- and clause-medial instance to be a demonstrative linked syntactically to the deceased, to a family member, to a place of repose etc.

9's *uhic* and 25's *huhic* stand assuredly for the adverb *hīc*.

I take these forms to be a hypercorrection of the common pronunciation /ic/ of the adverb *hīc*. The dat. sing. of the demonstrative pronoun, *huic*, may have caused analogical interference. This may, then, have to do with the breakdown of *hic/haec/hoc*; Väänänen (1981, p. 120 no 271).

**Greek initial aspiration and aspirates** The Greek aspirated consonant  $\chi$  is rendered with a simple stop, *c*, or with an aspirated stop, *ch*; see Table 3.10.

In Trier, most of the words of Greek etymology affected personal names, due to the presence of an expatriate community; see Section 2.1.4.5. *Aquitania Prima* does not appear to have such a cosmopolitan profile, as the names it yields are for the most part Latin (late antique or Christian) and, in the 7<sup>th</sup> c., Germanic; Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 53-55). Greek names are not found. Most of the words of Greek etymology found in *Aquitania Prima* are part of the ecclesiastical language, or belong to the learned register. The latter are indeed found in the more elaborate poetic inscriptions.

In koinè Greek,  $\varphi$ ,  $\theta$ ,  $\chi$ , which were originally aspirates (/p<sup>h</sup>, t<sup>h</sup>, k<sup>h</sup>/) had become fricatives (/f/, /θ/, and /x/). It appears more likely that the Latin spellings in <ch>, <th>, <f> would have been pronounced as fricatives, if they are not simply learned spellings.

Table 3.10: *Aquitania Prima*: Spellings for X

Inscriptions	Forms	
5	Chrysolitis <sup>39</sup>	χ > ch
7	arcepr(es)b(yster)	χ > c
11	choros <sup>40</sup>	χ > ch
11, 58	Christus	χ > ch
17, 22, 35	Christi	χ > ch
20	Antiochique <sup>41</sup>	χ > ch
20	Christo	χ > ch

Table 3.11: *Aquitania Prima*: Spellings for Φ

Inscriptions	Forms	
20	Euphraten <sup>43</sup>	φ > ph
21	philosophando	φ > ph
59	neofeti	φ > f

In addition, for inscription 12, the textual transmission reports *anchora*<sup>42</sup>, and not the more common, and more true to the Greek *ancora*, reflecting ἄγκυρα.

The Greek aspirate φ is rendered by *ph* or by *f*, which may be surface spellings of the same underlying phoneme /f/, as it is likely that the voiceless aspirated stop had already developed to a voiceless fricative; see Table 3.11.

The few instances of θ are rendered with <th> or with <t>; see Table 3.12.

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<sup>39</sup>not listed in Prévot (51).

<sup>40</sup>χρῶσόλιθος. Not listed in Prévot (51).

<sup>41</sup>Ἀντίοχος. Not listed in Prévot (51).

<sup>42</sup>Not listed in Prévot (51).

<sup>43</sup>Not listed in Prévot (51). It correctly uses the Greek accusative of Εὐφράτης.

Table 3.12: *Aquitania Prima*: Spellings for  $\Theta$ 

Inscriptions	Forms	
21, 25	cathedram	$\vartheta > th$
5	chrysolitis	$\vartheta > t$
11	aether	$\vartheta > th$

### 3.1.4.6 Sound changes affecting word-medial consonants

I tracked the following changes that affect word-medial consonants: voicing and devoicing of consonants, degemination and gemination of consonants, palatalization, changes affecting the [ks] cluster, changes affecting consonant clusters with nasals, changes involving glides and labials. There were no other cluster simplifications.

**Voicing and devoicing of consonants** Intervocalic voicing of consonants and of consonants followed by /r/ is a feature of Vulgar Latin, resulting in voiced consonants in all but the more conservative eastern Romance languages; Väänänen (1981, pp. 56-57 no 104-105). The following forms are not surprising, then<sup>44</sup>. /t/ >/d/: *condeda* (47) for *condita*. /p/ >/b/: *abrilis* (16) for *aprilis*, fitting with the daughter languages of the nearby regions; Fr. *avril*, Catalan *abril*. Both of these forms are very late, from the 7<sup>th</sup> c., which fits with Väänänen’s estimates that voicing must have occurred after the 5<sup>th</sup> c.

One case of C devoicing is most likely a hypercorrection. /d/ >/t/: *cupeta* (35) for *cupida*. The stonecutter attempted to rectify what he thought was the product of intervocalic consonantal voicing, positing an original form \**cupita*.

The instances of final C devoicing and voicing are motivated by the same principles: sandhi generated variant forms, which then became lexicalized.

CL has alternatively *sed* ~ *set*, *apud* ~ *aput*; the variants originated as sandhi forms

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<sup>44</sup>And may be analogous to 3.1.5.2.

in AL, but became standalone by CL<sup>45</sup>. To find in *Aquitania Prima set* (23) for *sed* is therefore unsurprising.

Likewise, we find the form *inquid* (25) for *inquit*.

There are some things to say on the topic of the alternation *-quid* ~ *-quit* specifically. A 9<sup>th</sup> c. manuscript of 4<sup>th</sup> c. theologian Ticonius, ms V, contains the forms *quodquod* and *quotquot*, *numquit*, and *inquid* and *inquit*<sup>46</sup>. The Ms V forms *numquid*, *numquit* found in V show an alternation pattern (*-quid* ~ *-quit*) that clarifies the development of *inquit* → *inquid*.

Both sets of forms (Ms V and AP 25) are from the same period. Ticonius' editor, Burkitt, holds that these forms, among others, aren't found commonly in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> c. manuscripts, but that they must have instead been recopied from a significantly older manuscript<sup>47</sup>. This dating fits with Inscription 25, as it is estimated to date from the 7<sup>th</sup> c.; see Section 3.1.2.5 and Table 3.4.

Additionally, it may be that *inquid* received interference with the interrogative pronoun *quis*, and, more precisely, of its n. sing. *quid*. Similarly, the n. sing. of the relative pronoun, *quod*, may have spread, judging at the instances of *quodquod* for *quotquot* of Ms V.

**Gemination, degemination** There is one instance of *ecl[esiae]* (34) for *ecclesiae*. Degeminated forms of *ecclesia* are found in Merovingian Latin. Notably, Gregory of Tours, 6<sup>th</sup> c. bishop of Tours in *Aquitania Prima*, uses degeminated forms extensively in his History of the Franks<sup>48</sup>. They are also an occasional find in Merovingian charters<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup>Väänänen (1981, 69 no 131) quoting the form *set* found in Pompeii inscriptions and Leumann (1977, p. 228).

<sup>46</sup>Burkitt (1894, p. 101).

<sup>47</sup>Burkitt's *stemma codicum* of Ticonius sets a lost 7<sup>th</sup> c. manuscript as source for V, based in addition on a variety of codicological grounds; Burkitt (1894, p. xxix).

<sup>48</sup>I count 223 degeminated forms and 127 geminated forms in the MGH edition; Krusch and Levison (1951).

<sup>49</sup>There are three such forms: *aeclesie* (557/37), *aeclesiae* (557/37, 558/19).

There is one instance of *quatuor* (57) for *quattuor*.

There is only one instance of gemination: *transsi*[.] (48) for *transiit* (perfect) or potentially *transit* (indicative present). The stone is now missing, but reproductions are available. The last letters of this form are impossible to recover due to the fact that the inscription was already partially destroyed at the time at which the earliest reproduction was made. The form may have read *transsi(e/i)t*, as Prévot suggests, or it may have read *transsit* (geminated present indicative).

**Palatalization** The only examples of palatalization in *Aquitania Prima* affect /t<sub>i</sub>/ and are a common type in Vulgar Latin; Väänänen (1981, 54 no 99). See Section 2.1.4.6 for Trier comparanda and discussion. The forms are: *d(e)posic(i)o* (6) for *depositio*, *Innocencius* (16) for *Innocentius*, *nacione* (25) for *natione*, *tercio* (48) for *tertio*.

**[ks] cluster** The [ks] cluster appears to have been maintained, both in word-medial and word final position. <x> spellings are always preserved.

Word-finally: *grex* (12), *uix* (22), *iudex* (21, 36), *artefex* (61).

Word-medially: *wixit* (at least 17 cases), but also *nexi* (11), *laxa* (20), *auxilio* (22), *exul* (20, 60), *exulis* (60).

There is only one form that features [ks] written as <xs>, an archaizing spelling: *sexsaginta* (53) for *sexaginta*.

**[sk] cluster** There is one possible instance of cluster simplification, *requiicit* (51) for *requiescit*. Prévot (p. 50) deems this form the result of the assimilation of [sk] (she does not elaborate on the resolution of this assimilation). This is an isolated instance in *Aquitania Prima*, as otherwise the [sk] cluster is preserved.

Trier and Metz contain the forms [q]uiecet (T132), *requiecit* (T145) *qiec[it]* (Metz 251). Gauthier (1975, p. 68) proposes that /k/ palatalized to /s/ before front vowels, although she does not detail the outcome further. There are other instances of such palatalizations found in Trier, presented under Section 2.1.4.6 and further discussed under Section 4.2.2.

My thoughts on the [sk] cluster are that there may have been a more popular assimilated pronunciation (where [sk] gave way to /tʃ/, /ʃ/ or /s/ or similar), that existed in parallel to the traditional pronunciation<sup>50</sup>. However, it is clear that the cluster [sk] was generally maintained, and that it ultimately prevailed. The volume of forms that feature the inherited spelling <sc>, even in the latest material, hints at more than just the respect of orthographic conventions. And, beyond that, the cluster appears maintained in the Romance languages; e.g. Lat. *obscurus* >Fr. *obscur* (<OFr. *oscur*), It. *oscuro*, Sp. *oscuro*.

**Consonant clusters with nasals** There is only one instance of a consonant cluster simplified in such a way that the nasal is dropped: *trasiit* (51) for *transiit*. This is a development that goes back to Archaic Latin; Väänänen (1981, 64 no 121).

The etymological, unassimilated spelling *conplet* (60) instead of the more common assimilated form *complet* is somewhat surprising. The assimilated forms are a feature of subliterate and epigraphic Latin from the Archaic period onward, while the unassimilated forms became favored in late antique literature, and were part of the formal register; Väänänen (1981, 61 no 113 and footnote 1). While we would expect the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions to be generally subliterate, 60 is in fact a special case, discussed further in Section 3.2.3.

**Changes involving labials and glides** There are two instances where a labial becomes a glide, as per Väänänen (1981, p. 50 no 89). Already in Pompeii, we find *baliat* ~ *ualeat*, *Berus* ~ *Verus* (male name), *Viuia* ~ *Vibia* (female name).

/b/ >/w/: *pleuique* (25) for *plebique*, *deuetum* (16) for *debitum*. *Deuetum* is in fact an interesting intermediate form on the way to Fr. *dette*.

There are a few instances where a labiovelar has been replaced by a plain velar when followed by /i/.

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<sup>50</sup>In a like manner to Fr. *expliquer* finding occasionally a more popular pronunciation *espliquer*; Väänänen (1981, p. 61 no 114).



For the cases of *reqescet* (37) and *requiscit* (55) for *requiescit*, we may be dealing with a purely graphic phenomenon, where <q> is used to render /kw/ (while <c> renders /k/). As for the missing /i/ of *reqescet*, this happens in hiatus; Väänänen (1981, 46 no 79; 221 ref. 79).

The spelling *qinta* (52) for *quinta* may be indicative of an underlying /kw/ or /k/ (namely, /kwinta/ or /kinta/). If /kw/, then <q> is used to render /kw/ as above. If /k/, heralding French *cinque*, then it is dissimilatory.

#### 3.1.4.7 Sound changes affecting word-final consonants

-/m/ Prévot reports *cathedra* for *cathedram* (25) and *ede* for *aedem* (25). This inscription is only available to us thanks to a transcription. It clearly reads *ēde*. The overline is a standard abbreviation sign used in manuscripts, often used when a final -m is omitted in the interest of space. Therefore, we should read *edem*, which has a correct ending.

Inscription 42 reads *septe* for *septem*. This may be a case where final -/m/ was lost. However, a look at the stone reveals that the lettering of this line is especially cramped; the letters become smaller as the line progresses and the space between letters is reduced to the point where the letters touch each other. It is therefore quite likely that the stonecutter omitted the final letter as he ran out of space. The letter M is an especially likely candidate for this. This stonecutter's Ms are especially broad, costing more space on a line than other letters. In addition, it may have been felt that the ending of an invariable word is most obvious and thus least in need of being engraved.

This leaves only *cathedra* (25) as possibly recording a linguistic change.

#### 3.1.4.8 Agreement of the relative pronoun

The agreement of the relative pronoun is maintained throughout this corpus. This may seem surprising, as the Trier inscriptions regularly fail to maintain relative pronoun agreement.

The correctness of the *Aquitania Prima* relative pronoun may be explained by the fact that relative clauses are nearly always found in *Aquitania Prima* in the more elaborate, carefully crafted metrical inscriptions, whereas in Trier, the formulary that is in common use calls for a relative clause. The writers and stonecutters who can craft their own prose are able to respect agreement rules; those who depend upon the formulary struggle to follow complex grammatical rules.

### 3.1.5 Discussion

#### 3.1.5.1 Limitations of the statistical method

Through the previous section, I plotted graphs to illustrate the distribution of the better attested linguistic features found in *Aquitania Prima*. However, in nearly all the cases, the graphs tell the same story: the features are already well attested in the earliest material, and there is no discernible developmental trend. The results are therefore inconclusive.

The statistical method that I employed for the Trier inscriptions is not well suited for the *Aquitania Prima* material. It cannot be used to yield reliable occurrence frequencies for the various linguistic features, or for all of the vulgarisms taken together. Therefore, I did not carry it out. There are several reasons for these shortcomings, which are inherent to the *Aquitania Prima* dataset and to the methodology that I used.

**Dataset and methodological limitations** There are significantly fewer inscriptions amenable to study (50 AP : 125 Trier). This smaller number makes it difficult to detect trends using statistical methods.

The inscriptions span a much shorter extent of time (~240 years AP : ~ 400 Trier). The chronological distribution of the inscriptions is uneven, skewing late, and yielding very few data points for the first 100 years. Effectively, then, the *Aquitania Prima* dataset covers adequately only the period 500-640, or 140 years. This is a much shallower time depth than Trier, making it less likely that trends can be discerned.

The Trier inscriptions' enduring regularity has led to successful results using statistical

analysis. Such a method is strongest when comparing like with like. The great majority of Trier inscriptions indeed share the same basic building blocks, resulting in inscriptions that are about the same length, that follow the same structure, and that contain the same elements. However, the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions do not adhere as strongly to a strict formulary as in Trier; this is discussed above under Section 3.1.3.

The *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions leave a greater place to literary experimentation and to personal tastes, resulting in a range that spans from the spartan to the florid. The more elaborate inscriptions are longer, and, thus, *ceteris paribus*, they are more likely to contain at least one instance of the commoner vulgarisms than shorter inscriptions. These longer, more elaborate inscriptions are found at every period. This stylistic variation skews the distribution of vulgarisms, as it results in an inflated frequency of occurrence of vulgarisms compared to that of Trier. This is due to a limitation in my methodology, which considers in a binary manner whether a particular vulgarism is found in an inscription; this was effective for the terser Trier inscriptions, but does not allow for the variation in length of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions to be taken into account.

In addition, a small but significant fraction of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions were composed by key literary figures of great erudition (6/50 inscr.); their command over the Latin language cannot be taken as illustrative of what was common. Unsurprisingly, these ‘high-style’ literary inscriptions are devoid of vulgarisms. While these inscriptions could be discounted from the *Aquitania Prima* on account of their literary nature, this would result in an even more limited corpus.

At any rate, traditional philological methods appear best suited to tackling the stylistic variation of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions. Hence, I have relied on them heavily throughout the data section.

### 3.1.5.2 Results from the philological method

**/ǔ/ and /ō/** Based upon the Trier dataset, I determined that the merger between /ǔ/ and /ō/ is late antique and that its onset should be placed in the second half of

the 4<sup>th</sup> c. The *Aquitania Prima* dataset contains very few inscriptions that predate 500 AD; unsurprisingly, then, it does not provide very early attestations of the merger. However, *Aquitania Prima* provides additional evidence that by 500 AD the merger was well implanted. *Aquitania Prima* also provides a large number of forms, which supplement significantly those of the Trier inscriptions, paving the way for environments to be isolated. See 4.2.3 for a more detailed discussion.

**[ks] cluster** As in Trier, the *Aquitania Prima* dataset does not simplify the [ks] cluster; simplification was expected due to Romance developments and due to it being a common finding in charter Latin<sup>51</sup>. That the cluster is maintained in both *Aquitania Prima* and Trier indicates that this is likely not an areal feature, due to the distances involved.

**Voicing/devoicing, /b/ >/w/, /k<sup>w</sup>/ >/k/** The Trier inscriptions do not feature these developments, while the comparatively small corpus from *Aquitania Prima* yields a few instances of each of these developments. All of these features are found in charter Latin; Vielliard (1927, pp. 44-59).

These features' absence from the Trier material may be due to conservatism. However, this conservatism would be especially remarkable due to the large number of inscriptions involved, and due to the very late dates of some of these inscriptions. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> c. Trier inscriptions are indeed coterminous with the Merovingian charters, which do feature these linguistic developments. It may seem surprising that the diplomas produced by the royal administration could not avoid the vulgarisms while the Trier stonecutters could.

An alternative explanation is that it may be that these are areal features, and Trier would fall outside of their geographic spread, while *Aquitania Prima* and charter Latin would be affected.

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<sup>51</sup>See section 2.1.4.6 for references and discussion.

## 3.2 The poetic inscriptions of *Aquitania Prima*

Most of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions belong chiefly to the sub-literary prose register. However, a significant portion of the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions feature poetic language, stylistic flourishes, and attempts at meter (or at rhythmical poetry); they can thus be qualified as literary or poetic. I divided these inscriptions into two groups, the ‘poetic’ and the ‘high-style poetic’ inscriptions, based upon the length and level of elaboration of the inscriptions, and upon whether the inscriptions can be attached to known figures.

This section is dedicated to the Latin of these literary inscriptions, listed on Table 3.13. I attempt to identify its characteristics. I attempt to identify levels of literacy, education and erudition.

Table 3.13: *Aquitania Prima*: List of poetic inscriptions

Poetic inscriptions	16, 17, 23, 25, 34, 35, 36, 47, 58, 60.
High-style poetic inscriptions	5, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22

### 3.2.1 Inventory

One major difference between the ‘poetic’ and the ‘high-style poetic’ inscriptions is length, which can be taken as an indicator of the means and education of its author. The non-fragmentary ‘poetic’ inscriptions are 7 to 16 lines long, with most being around the 7 to 10 lines mark. All but one of the ‘high-style poetic’ inscriptions are between 18 and 32 lines long.

The ‘high-style poetic’ inscriptions are connected with high-ranking ecclesiastics. They are concerned with recording their achievements, and so write epitaphs in honor of one another. All but one of these high-style inscriptions were composed by the key Merovingian literary figures Sidonius Apollinaris and Fortunatus, the last one being Apollinaris’ epitaph. The other figures that these inscriptions mention are bishops, congregation founders, abbots and ascetics of importance to the region, and are mentioned in other

period sources (hagiographic, historiographical, poetic). See Section 3.3 for dates and for more information about the inscriptions' authors and recipients.

The 'poetic' inscriptions cannot be ascribed to identifiable historical figures, either as authors or as recipients.

### 3.2.2 The 'high-style' poetic inscriptions

All of the high-style poetic inscriptions are attached to two key literary figures of the region, the bishops Venantius Fortunatus and Sidonius Apollinaris. They were either written by these authors (Fortunatus: 5, 11, 12, 22; Apollinaris: 20), or they were written in their honor (21 is Apollinaris' epitaph). The inscriptions by Fortunatus and Apollinaris have as recipients other high prestige clergy members: bishops and abbots. The author of Apollinaris' epitaph isn't known, but he must have belonged to this circle of very educated high-ranking clergy.

The dates of these inscriptions are for the most part known with certainty; see Table 3.3. The inscriptions by Fortunatus are from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. or the first years of the 7<sup>th</sup>. The one by Apollinaris is from the late 5<sup>th</sup>, and his epitaph may well be from that time period also.

Many of the recipients of these inscriptions became the object of local cults (the Saints Gallus, Sidonius Apollinaris, Felix of Bourges, Abraham of Clermont). The burial, and its accompanying inscription, served a role in worship. The worship of Felix of Bourges, and his burial (tomb and stone sarcophagus) are in fact brought up in Gregory of Tours<sup>52</sup>; inscription 5 was engraved on a chalice that has now been lost.

These high-style poetic inscriptions were carefully produced by and destined to people who possessed a very high level of education (Classical, Biblical and Patristic) and literacy. There are multiple indicators that these inscriptions were the object of a great deal of expense and care. The following paragraphs detail the ways that their language exemplifies this.

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<sup>52</sup>Glory of the Confessors, 100.

### 3.2.2.1 Characteristics

**Length** All but one of these inscriptions are substantially longer than the rest of the *Aquitania Prima* corpus. Four inscriptions are between 18 and 22 lines long. Two are between 30 and 32 lines long. There is only one that is shorter, at 8 lines.

**Meter** Nearly all of the inscriptions are written in elegiac distichs. 21, Sidonius' epitaph, is in hendecasyllable verses, a type of verse that he used in his poetry. It is possible that his epitaph uses this type of verse to honor his work.

The meter of these inscriptions is nearly always correct; see each inscription's commentary in Prévot for faults. At any rate, it emerges as clear that the authors understood Latin metrics.

**Vulgarisms** These inscriptions follow the Classical Latin norm. There are no vulgarisms.

**Grammar** These inscriptions make correct and copious use of complex constructions and grammatical items. They are seldom found in the rest of the *Aquitania Prima* corpus.

In particular, the subjunctive mood is used accurately and subordination is common. Another item that stands out is the number of gerunds (11:10 *colendus*, 12:1 *sociandus*, 21:10 *philosophandus*, 22:18 *tuendus* etc.); these aren't found elsewhere in the corpus.

**Archaisms** These inscriptions feature archaizing etymological spellings that may have been gleaned from Archaic Latin literature directly, through familiarity with these authors, or indirectly, through familiarity with Classical and Late Antique authors who reused Archaic forms.

It is likely that the most educated late antique and early Merovingian literary figures (Fortunatus, Apollinaris) has access to Archaic authors as well as Classical and Late Antique, while others depended upon indirect quotations.

Notably, T23 *inmaturo*, T89 *complexu*, T194a *adgregar* [...], AP 16 *umida*, AP60 *conplet*.

Väänänen (1981, 61 no 113 and footnote 1) notes that late antique formal literature was especially fond of such etymological, unassimilated forms. It is unsurprising then to see the most formal and literary inscription maintain this tradition. And indeed, this fashion continued in the ‘purple prose’ of the Merovingian charters of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, as evidenced by the ubiquitous nobility title *wir inluster*.

**Vocabulary** These inscriptions make use of vocabulary that is reserved to the poetic or erudite register. These lexical items are not found elsewhere in the corpus. They are in fact found in literary authors, and, particularly, in poetry (classical or patristic).

To give but a few examples of this poetic language: 5.3 *chrysolitis*<sup>53</sup>, 11:10: *aether*<sup>54</sup>, 12:1 *tremebundus*<sup>55</sup>, 12:13 *modulamen*<sup>56</sup>, 20: 16 *sagittifer*<sup>57</sup>, 22:12 *belliger*<sup>58</sup>. These includes words of Greek origin (*chrysolithos*, *aether*) that aren’t part of the common Christian ecclesiastic register, words used by the classical and post-classical poets to refer to learned poetic activity specifically (*aether*, *modulamen*), and compound words usually restricted to poetic use (*sagittifer*, *belliger*).

**Classical and Biblical learned references** Sidonius Apollinaris, the two Ruricii, and Gallus were aristocrats. They were members of the old Gallo-Roman elite. It is no surprise then to find that they are eager to assert their ties to Rome, and, in particular, to Classical Rome. Their epitaphs mention their noble Roman lineage, and carefully

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<sup>53</sup>*chrysolithos* is found in Plin. 37, 9, 42, § 126; Prop. 2 (3), 16, 44; Ov. M. 2, 109, inter alia

<sup>54</sup>Commonly found in classical poetry; inter alia, Verg. A. 1, 379; Lucr. 2, 1115; Enn. ap. Varr. L. L. 7; Hor. C. 2, 20, 2.

<sup>55</sup>Lucr 1, 95; Ov. M. 4, 133; Mart. 9, 93, 5.

<sup>56</sup>Found in post-classical poetry; Gell. 13, 21; Macr. Somn. Scip. 2, 12; Sid. Carm. 1, 9.

<sup>57</sup>Ov. M. 1, 468; Cat. 11, 6; Verg. A. 8, 725.

<sup>58</sup>Ov. Tr. 3, 11, 13; Mart. 5, 25; Stat. Th. 12.



highlight their cultural ties to Rome, through the use of references to Roman mythology, history, geography, and literature.

Patrician Gallo-Roman heritage: 11:7-8 the deceased person's Roman lineage is brought up. 11:22 the deceased person is said to have attained a permanent appointment to the Heavens' Senate (*caelis senatus*).

Mention of major Classical figures, sometimes using poetic names found in Classical poetry. 20:16 Roman emperor Titus, 20:17 Alexander the Great and Antiochus, 20:18 Elissa (referring to Dido, queen of Carthage).

Classical mythology, Greek and Roman religion. 11:3 Tartarus, 21:12, the Graces, 22:8 Lares, 20:11 Lemures.

The Trier and *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions often mention soberly the deceased person's Christian faith and values<sup>59</sup>, but the high-style inscriptions broadcast the recipient's (or the author's) biblical and patristic education specifically. These are, after all, inscriptions that were produced by highly educated ecclesiastics, dedicated to ecclesiastics, and destined to be read, no doubt, by ecclesiastics.

References to the Old Testament are common, and must have been a sign of learning. 5:3 Solomon, 5: 6 reference to Abel's sacrifice, 20: 1 Abraham, 22:1 Adam and paradise. In the same vein, 11: 14 reference to the Church father Augustine and the apostle Peter.

References to biblical and classical geography are also common. These are assuredly a show of erudition, as the poets not only mention far-away locations, but use the expressions found in classical literature, and poetry in particular, to refer to them (e.g. 20:15 the crowds of Rome referred to as *Romulei fragores* ('Romulean thunders') and 20:18 *Byrsa* to refer to Carthage). While it is possible that these far-away locations appealed to a sense of exoticism, it is clear that the high ranked clergy did travel extensively, as some of the inscriptions refer to travels and accomplishments abroad<sup>60</sup>. 5:8 *Sarepta*, a Phoenician

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<sup>59</sup>Through the use of Christian imagery, such as a cross or a chrismon, or through language. The deceased person is qualified as *pious*, or his *pietas* is praised, notably.

<sup>60</sup>Notably, inscription 20 mentions Abraham of Clermont's birth in Byzantine Syria, his asceticism, his detention and martyrdom in Egypt, and finally his travels to Clermont, where he established a

city; 20:4 *Euphrates*, 20:7 *Susa*, 20:15 *Romuleus* (to refer to Rome), 20:15 *Byzantium*, 20:18 *Byrsa*.

### 3.2.3 The ‘poetic’ inscriptions

Table 3.14 and its accompanying discussion give an assessment of the poetic inscriptions’ meter and language. See also each inscription’s entry in Prévot and Pietri (1997).

Table 3.14: *Aquitania Prima*: Meter and language of literary inscriptions

N°	Meter	Vulgarisms
16	Faulty	Several
17	Mostly correct	Few
23	Faulty	Several
25	Faulty	Several
34	?	Several
35	Faulty	Several
36	?	Some (+ ?)
47	?	Several
58	?	?
60	Some	Correct

#### 3.2.3.1 Characteristics

These poetic inscriptions share characteristics. They make attempts at meter, although, unlike the high-style inscriptions discussed previously, they are usually unable to follow the classical norm. Likewise, their language features the vulgarisms that are common in the Trier and *Aquitania Prima* corpora, and so the same comment applies: unlike the high-style inscriptions, they are usually unable to follow the classical norm. There are

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congregation.

occasional mentions of proud Gallo-Roman heritage, but how widespread they may have been is difficult to assess due to the small number of inscriptions and due to their often fragmentary nature.

**Meter** Only 17 features nearly correct meter, showing that its author understood metrical poetry. It is composed of two elegiac distichs, which are correct except for one mistake (*fēlīciōre* counted as *fēlīciōre*).

60 is an example of medieval rhythmic poetry. Scanned per the rules of Classical metrics, it contains various mistakes. This is discussed below under 3.2.3.3.

Four inscriptions cannot be scanned successfully (16, 23, 25, 35). These inscriptions rely upon syllable counting to form verses. They may have been cobbled together using bits and pieces of hexameters found elsewhere in funerary poetry, but the lack of identifiable metrical patterns suggests that the authors didn't understand the rules of Latin metrics. That the stonecutters reused text from epitaph to epitaph is discussed under Sections 2.3.3.2 and 2.4.2, regarding the Trier inscriptions 134, 193 and 194.

Four of the inscriptions are so fragmentary as to make it impossible to judge the quality of their meter, beyond identifying that they are poetry.

**Vulgarisms** Most of the inscriptions feature numerous vulgarisms. Only one (60) is written in correct Latin, while 17 contains only one vulgarism of a very common type (i/e confusion: *diuota* for *deuota*).

**Archaisms** Some of these inscriptions make use of learned etymological spellings; see 60 discussed under Section 3.2.3.3.

**Gallo-Roman heritage** 25, the epitaph of Genesius, bishop of Clermont, mentions his Gallo-Roman ancestry as an item of pride: *uir gente romanus nacione clarus*. The aristocracy of the region was commonly of old Gallo-Roman stock, and the bishops were

commonly extracted from these ranks. There are other bishops of Gallo-Roman extraction; see above Section 3.2.2.1.

**Ecclesiastic provenance** Four out of the poetic inscriptions are tied directly to the clergy or to the monastic orders, and in a few cases to some high-ranking members (17: canonized nun, 23: deacon, 25: bishop of Clermont, 34: an undetermined clergy member<sup>61</sup>). This makes ecclesiastic models all the more likely.

The other poetic inscriptions do not mention the social status of the deceased person. In some cases, the inscriptions are highly fragmentary (36, 47, 58), which may account for the silence. However, such silence is common throughout the *Aquitania Prima* material. I argue for a possible ecclesiastic attribution for 16 and 60 below, under Section 3.2.3.3.

### 3.2.3.2 Models

The ‘poetic’ inscriptions must have had the ‘high-style poetic’ inscriptions as models, due to the characteristics that they have in common. There would then have been a late antique and early medieval tradition of learned metrical poetry for high status burials, which prompted well-to-do, educated but not erudite members of the ecclesiastic community to produce faulty hexameters in carefully written but decidedly Vulgar Latin. The elaborate, intricate funerary poetry of authors such as Sidonius Apollinaris and Venantius Fortunatus provided some of the models, but there must have been others. This hypothesis is treated also for the Trier material, for which see Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.

The better educated ecclesiastics, bishops and monks, generally produced inscriptions in conservative language and correct meter; these are the only ones that can respect the Classical norm (e.g. Trier 19, 194A, 219, in addition to the inscriptions of Apollinaris and Venantius Fortunatus). Here, as in Trier, the one inscription attached to a nun (17) exemplifies these qualities. However, surprisingly, 25, attached to a bishop, features sev-

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<sup>61</sup>The expression *amator ecclesiae* found in this inscription is commonly attached to bishops, but here may well refer to a lower ranked clergyman, as no bishops bearing this particular name are known; Prévot and Pietri (1997, p. 158).

eral vulgarisms and faulty metrics. It is worth noting that, unlike most other inscriptions attached to bishops, this one is especially late<sup>62</sup>. Perhaps by then this language had become the norm even in the most educated literature, and so inscription 25 would be as ‘high-style’ as the period would allow. The lower ranked clergy members (23, 34) write poetic inscriptions that contain several vulgarisms and faulty meter.

It is tempting to ascribe some of the other inscriptions of Table 3.14 to this ecclesiastic tradition of poetic inscriptions. In this case, either the clerical status of the deceased wasn’t recorded originally, or this information was lost to material destruction. Inscriptions 16 and 60 are the most likely candidates for an ecclesiastic attribution, in my opinion, as they are most akin to the other ecclesiastic inscriptions, high-style or not.

### 3.2.3.3 Inscriptions 16 and 60: an ecclesiastic provenance?

Inscription 16 and 60 stand out from the rest of the literary inscriptions of the *Aquitania Prima* corpus. These poetic inscriptions may have been modeled after the high-style literary inscriptions of high-ranked clergy members, and so may have been produced by lower-ranked clergy members.

16.

[D]euetum nature quidem comp(le)uer[at] [corpus?]  
 fragele umeda terra sumit non tenit ad [tamen?]  
 hic antra sepulcri sed ha celos quem iusta [fecerunt?]  
 felicem condetum hoc tomolo leuita d(omi)ni  
 hem Innocencius illi nomen ab auo protra[ctum?] (5)  
 beatus in morebus uitam benigna(m) to[lit]  
 uix gesserat annus cum s[...]  
 [...]CO[...] nepoti NS ceda pec[cator?]  
 CIR d(ie) X k(a)l(endas) abrilis

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<sup>62</sup>Genesius bishop of Clermont, †c. 662.

This poem contains numerous vulgarisms of the types that are commonly found in *Aquitania Prima* (vocalic confusions, monophthongization of /ae/). These vulgarisms were accepted in all but the highest register of Merovingian Latin and so may not be out of place here; see Sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.4.2. It also contains the uniquely attested assimilatory form *deuetum*, discussed under Sections 3.1.4.1 and 3.1.4.6.

This poem contains words that belong to the poetic register, such as *antrum*<sup>63</sup>, figures of speech (*antra sepulcri*), and even a learned etymologizing spelling, *umeda*<sup>64</sup>. That it contains these three characteristics is an indicator that the poet strove for an elevated, learned expression, certainly in the manner of the high-style inscriptions found in *Aquitania Prima*, and perhaps in the manner of the Classical poets, to which he may have had access to.

This is an example of rhythmic poetry, which Descombes details<sup>65</sup>.

Thus, while this poem does not follow Classical metrics and orthography, it is composed with care and erudition per the Merovingian standards, and targeted, but did not quite meet, the standards of the high-style poetry found in *Aquitania Prima*. Thus it may have been produced by a lower-ranked member of the clergy.

60.

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<sup>63</sup>Which finds numerous occurrences in Vergil, Ovid, Horace, Martial and Propertius.

<sup>64</sup>See Section 3.1.4.5.

<sup>65</sup>“Les hémistiches ainsi formés se terminent par une cadence paroxytone, sauf les premiers hémistiches des vers 4 à 6 et l’hémistiche final du vers 4. Le rythme final est bien celui de l’hexamètre, sauf au vers 4.”; Descombes (1985, p. 101). She reconstructs:  
 Deuetum natúre | quidem compléuerat [Córpus?]  
 fragele umeda térra | sumit non ténit ad [támen?]  
 hic antra sepúlcri | sed ha celos quém iusta [fécerunt?]  
 felicem cóndetum | hoc tomolo leuíta d(omi)ni  
 hem Innocéncius | illi nomen ab áuo protra[ctum?]  
 beatus in mórebus | uitam benigna(m) tó[lit ...]

Conditus hoc tum[u]lo tegitur  
 Gregorius exult  
 exulis et P[e]tri quem  
 posuere manus  
 qui tamen Hispana natus (5)  
 tell[u]re supremum  
 conplet Cadurcis morte  
 deflenda diem

This inscription contains two faulty elegiac distichs. I set aside the issues with the quantities of the personal names, as these are treated leniently in poetry. However, in the second half of the second pentameter, *deflenda* (abl.) is counted as *dēflendă*, when Classical poetry would have counted *dēflendā*. This indicates that for this hemistich at the least, the poet was operating with an accentual pentameter rhythm, and not the metrically correct quantitative version, and that the inherited vowel quantities had been lost.

Its Latin is remarkably correct. It is not only devoid of vulgarisms, but it successfully makes use of complex grammatical constructions, such as gerunds and relative clauses. Gerunds are generally not encountered in the *Aquitania Prima* corpus, but they are a feature of the ‘high-style poetic’ inscriptions (11, 12, 20, 21, 22 all contain gerunds; only 5 does not have any, and it is significantly shorter than the rest).

The name *Cadurci* refers to the people of Cahors<sup>66</sup>. It is a Classical name, found in Caesar and Pliny. Cahors was then known as *Divona Cadurcorum*, *Divona* being of Gaulish etymology. By late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the name *Cadurci* is found in Ausonius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory the Great. The various Merovingian sources report a variety of spellings, *pagus Cathorcinus*, *Cadurca*, *Cadorca*, *Caturca*. That the author of 60 uses the inherited spelling can then be taken to be an indicator of literary education.

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<sup>66</sup>The following account is found in Hirschfeld et al. (1901, p. 206).

This inscription also features a learned unassimilated etymological spelling, *conplet*, which is another indicator that its author strove for an elevated register. Such archaizing or learned spellings are a feature of the better poetic and of the high-style inscriptions. Subliterary epigraphic Latin is indeed more likely to feature the assimilated spelling *complet*; see Section 3.1.4.6 for discussion and references.

The engraving and the decoration of this inscription are also remarkable by their quality; see Prévot and Pietri (1997, pp. 201-3) for reproduction and discussion.

As I have covered, there are multiple indicators of the care and resources put into this inscription, and of the education and literary aspirations of its author. While it is not as elaborate as the high-style inscriptions found in the region, it is comparable to other poetic inscriptions found in Trier, which were written by monks and bishops; see Trier inscriptions 23, 89 and 194A discussed under Section 2.3.3.2. It is tempting then to attach this inscription to a 7<sup>th</sup> c. high-ranking clergy member (a bishop or abbot, perhaps), who may have been only of local fame and limited literary renown. There are clues as to who this could be: its recipient, Gregorius, came from Spain, but became established in Cahors.



## CHAPTER 4

### Epigraphic Evidence for the Merovingian Period: Contrastive Study of the ‘Late’ Vulgarisms

The previous two chapters consisted in detailed analyses of particular inscription clusters, Trier and *Aquitania Prima*. In this chapter, I provide a comparative study of these inscription clusters, while considering also another data point, that of Vienna. I focus my discussion on linguistic features that tend to occur only at later periods. These may be of use as dating indicators and may shed light upon very late Vulgar Latin.

Gauthier suggested that certain particular linguistic features could be used as dating indicators<sup>1</sup>. However, as discussed under Sections 2.1.2.6 and 2.5, her methodology needs to be revised, since, notably, she grouped together as late vulgarisms a mosaic of disparate features, some of which not late at all. In addition, her conclusions have been deemed premature<sup>2</sup>, due in part to the lack of a contrastive study that would take into account multiple regions. My study aims at remedying to these shortcomings.

#### 4.1 Methodology

The Trier and the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions make clear that the different linguistic features (or vulgarisms) are not attested equally at all periods. In particular, some vulgarisms are exclusively or almost exclusively late; they can thus be called ‘late vulgarisms’.

First, I draft a list of the late vulgarisms, basing myself upon the previous chapters.

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<sup>1</sup>Gauthier (1975, p. 77).

<sup>2</sup>Väänänen (1976, p. 147).

Then, looking at what is known about the history of the Latin and of the Romance languages, I determine whether the vulgarisms that are only attested late in the Trier and the *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions are actually late developments. It is indeed possible that I am dealing with misleading statistics due to the relative scarcity of the data; that is to say, it may be that some particular vulgarisms receive only a handful of attestations, which happen to be late, but can be found in other corpora at early periods and can thus be determined to be well-established early developments. For this purpose, I track the vulgarisms that appear to be truly late in another corpus, Vienna, to see if it confirms their lateness. Finally, I list and discuss the vulgarisms that are confirmed to be late and I describe how they may be used to establish a firm inscription dating.

## 4.2 The ‘late’ features

If we look at the Trier and the *Aquitania Prima* data (using Table 2.18 and the sections corresponding to each vulgarism, and the discussion section 2.2.2.1), it emerges that the following vulgarisms affect later inscriptions: degemination and various palatalizations. In addition, the confusions between <o> and <u> are increasingly common the later the inscriptions. However, we shouldn’t use the presence of these vulgarisms alone as a dating tool. A closer look is needed for each. There are often multiple processes at play, and each carries its own timeline and degree of reliability.

### 4.2.1 Degemination

Most of the examples of degemination<sup>3</sup> are Merovingian, but there are two late antique cases. These late antique cases affect words of Greek origin; it is likely here that the degeminated spellings in Latin reflect Koine phonology, and not Vulgar Latin developments. In one case, it appeared that it is the degeminated koine version of the loanword that became popular in Latin and in the later Romance languages.

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<sup>3</sup>Inventoried and discussed under Sections 2.1.4.6 and 3.1.4.6.

The earliest case is found in Trier: T59 (350-400) yields *Talasia* (female name) from *Θαλασσα* or *Θαλασσιά*). It is dubious that the double sigma sequence in Greek was a phonetic geminate at the time the name got borrowed into Latin, as Koine Greek degeminated widely, as can be found attested in the papyri evidence; Horrocks (2010, p. 274). In all likelihood, then, Latin picked up the degeminated Koine pronunciation, although it continued the inherited spelling. There was never a geminate sequence /ss/ in this name in Latin, then.

The other early instance of degemination also affects a word of Greek origin. *Aquitania Prima* yields the form *ecl[esiae]* (AP34) for *ecclesiae*, dated from the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. This degeminated spelling is actually common among literary authors of the period. Notably, it is very common throughout *Aquitania Prima* author Gregory of Tours, whose writings date from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. As to the other regions, the Vienna inscriptions yield the form *eclisiae* (V98A), dated 557-8, and thus contemporary to Gregory of Tours. Again, as in the previous example, the degeminated spelling in Latin is most likely the result of Koine Greek degemination. Interestingly enough, however, some the Romance languages preserved the degemination, which resulted in intervocalic voicing. Sp. *iglesia* and Fr. *église* cannot be the results of a geminate; the voiced consonant originates from the intervocalic voicing of the /c/ of VL *ecclesia*, itself from the Koine.

The other examples of degemination found in Trier and *Aquitania Prima* (*anus* (T33), *inocentis* (T70), *ano* (T132), *dulcesime* (T138); *quatuor* (AP 57)) share certain characteristics. They 1) do not affect words of Greek origin, 2) they are late or somewhat late<sup>4</sup>.

The Vienna material yields many other forms that share the same characteristics<sup>5</sup>: *oficio* for *officio* (V137: 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c.), *solecetus* for *sollicitus* (V98b: middle of

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<sup>4</sup>T33: 450-500. T70: later than 450. T132: 500-600. T138: 500-600. T57: 400-450.)

<sup>5</sup>I list here the forms reported by the editor (Descombes (1985, p. 152). I verified that each inscription contained the form(s) reported by the editor. However, I was not able to comb through the corpus to find any missing forms.

the 6<sup>th</sup> c.), *enox* for *innox* (V100: 559-561), *resurexionis* for *resurrectionis* (V283: 6<sup>th</sup> c.), *teris* for *terris* (V112: 6<sup>th</sup> c.), *pasus* for *passus* (V271-2: 7<sup>th</sup> c.), *cesint* for *cessent* (V265: 633-4), *gesisti* for *gessisti* (V264: 615-630), *recesit* for *recessit* (V56: end of 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> c.). Vienna also yields a few degeminated forms of *annus* (53: 5<sup>th</sup> c; 160 528; 165 later than 540<sup>6</sup>; 176: 663; 219: 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 6<sup>th</sup> c., or 7<sup>th</sup> c.; 227: 527; 265: 633-4).

While these degeminated spellings are generally not found in the modern Romance languages<sup>7</sup>, this is likely the result of early modern spelling rectifications modeled after CL. The medieval sources in fact feature degeminated spellings alongside geminated ones; e.g. OFr. *ane* ~ *anne*, *inocent* ~ *innocent*, *ofice* ~ *office*, *tere* (and also *ter*) ~ *terre*, *cecer* ~ *cesser*, *resurexion* ~ *resurreccion*<sup>8</sup>.

It is likely, then, that at least some of the early medieval simplex spellings found in the inscriptions are *bona fide* early degeminations, ushering in the OFr. degeminated forms. Of course, some of these spellings may be purely graphic; as a clear example of this, Kiss (1971, p. 74) notes that there are documents that alternate between geminated and degeminated spellings. However, as Kiss also notes (p. 74), the relatively large number of degeminated forms supports undeniably an underlying phonological reality.

Kiss' study of degeminated spellings in the CIL inscriptions lead him to conclude that degemination is found much more commonly in northern Gaul than southern Gaul and Northern Italy; Kiss (1971, p.76). However, the number of degeminated spellings from Vienna appears to disrupt this conclusion<sup>9</sup>. Still, one of Kiss' observations remains valid: that the spread of degeminated spellings appears uneven, varying highly from region to region. While I cannot make pronouncements about most of the regions he considers, I can say that for *Aquitania Prima*, the relatively small number of occurrences may be

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<sup>6</sup>There are reasons to suspect that this inscription may be from Lyons, however; Descombes (1985, p. 520).

<sup>7</sup>One notable exception: Fr. *quatre* < *quatuor*.

<sup>8</sup>Old French spellings show much variation. I selected particular forms listed in the dictionaries which highlight the geminated ~ degeminated variation, but this list is far from exhaustive. The dictionaries I used are *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary* and *French: Base Form Dictionary*.

<sup>9</sup>This may be due to the fact that Kiss didn't have access to the re-edition of the Vienna inscriptions.

due to the relative scarcity of material for this region, and to the fact that a significant portion of the AP material is literary in nature, while degeminated spellings are markedly subliterary. On the other hand, AP's inscriptions cover the target period for this feature to be observed.

I conclude from this that degeminated spellings can be used very cautiously as an indicator of lateness. However, there are several factors at play.

Degeminated spellings can be surface spellings only, resulting from the diminishing command of the inherited spellings in subliterary Latin. These surface spellings are not an indicator of underlying linguistic change; they are not instances of degemination as a linguistic process. These surface spellings are not the most reliable dating marker; such stonecutter mistakes are only likelier to occur at late periods, but there are no reasons why they couldn't occur at any period.

The true cases of linguistic gemination may be admissible as dating markers, provided that they are not grouped together as a monolith, but instead studied subtype by subtype<sup>10</sup>, and that their spread can be determined regionally and chronologically. Kiss' study is a helpful step in this direction, but the additional volumes of the RITG edition will make crucial information available once they come out, which will open up the door for further studies to be carried out.

There is a methodological difficulty. It is of course hard to determine whether a degeminated spelling is surface only, or whether it is indicative of a phonological reality. The medieval Romance languages offers supporting evidence, with the warning that they feature an immense amount of variation, in terms of intra-Romance regional developments<sup>11</sup>. Thus, in my opinion, a better method would be to compare regional evidence with other nearby regional evidence, to see 1) if patterns emerge, and, 2) if we can find a critical number of occurrences, which would support an underlying linguistic reality over scribal

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<sup>10</sup>For instance, loanwords must be studied not just from the point of view of VL, but also of the original language.

<sup>11</sup>In other words, the regional dialects may contain degeminated spellings due to innovations that happened within the history of the Romance languages, and thus would be later than the period that concerns us.

idiosyncrasy. This work could be done with minimal effort once the other volumes of the RITG will be available. For now, what I can note is that we find in Vienna, Trier and *Aquitania Prima* multiple occurrences of degeminated forms of *annus*.

*Eclesia* is a straightforward and unequivocal case of true degemination, and this form is decidedly Merovingian, as literary and epigraphic evidence makes clear. However, comparanda from other regions would be desirable to establish its early history more firmly, so that it could be used more reliably as dating indicator.

#### 4.2.2 Palatalization

There are different types of palatalizations that occurred at various points in the history of Vulgar Latin, such as in late antiquity, at some point during the Merovingian period, or later in the Middle Ages. As an example of the latter type, the palatalization of /k, g/ before /a/ happened very late (Väänänen (1981, pp. 38-39 no 60)), and is indeed neither found in Trier, Vienna nor *Aquitania Prima*. The palatalizations of /t/ and /d/ and of /k/ and /g/ before front vowels occurred earlier (Väänänen (1981, pp. 54-55 n° 99, 100)), during the period covered by the Trier and *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions, and indeed they find attestations in our corpora<sup>12</sup>.

##### 4.2.2.1 /t/, /d/

*Aquitania Prima* yields a handful of instances. One is undated, another is from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c., and two others are from the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. The forms are: *d(e)posic(i)o* (AP6), *Innocencius* (AP16), *nacione* (AP25), and *tercio* (AP48).

The Trier evidence offers fewer instances still, most of which are late. There are two instances of *deposicio* (T29A, T135), both dated 700-730. There is one earlier form, dated 400-500: *Eustasius* (T32), likely from *Eustatius*, itself from the Greek Εὐστάθιος<sup>13</sup>. That

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<sup>12</sup>The forms found in Trier and *Aquitania Prima* are inventoried and discussed under Sections 2.1.4.6 and 3.1.4.6.

<sup>13</sup>An alternative origin may be Εὐσταχῆς, but it is harder to motivate the palatalization of /ku/; this

it is the only earlier form might lead one to suspect that there may be Koine Greek phonology at play, but this isn't the case. This earlier form actually fits with Vulgar Latin development; Väänänen cites epigraphic evidence from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> c.; Väänänen (1981, 54 n° 99)).

Thus, while nearly all the cases of palatalization affecting /t/ and /d/ before front vowels are late, the actual linguistic development is very much Roman. That it is not found outside of personal names until late is an indicator that the Trier stonecutters were good at avoiding it; they were able to preserve the inherited spellings with <t> and <d><sup>14</sup>. It is important to note that the one earlier attestation affects a personal name; the stonecutters may well have been keen to write personal names in a way that reflected their bearers' pronunciation. There is another example of this: the only cases of prothetic vowels affect personal names, as discussed in Section 2.1.4.4. That some particular vulgarisms were part of the spoken tongue but discriminated against in the written language is discussed in Sections 2.2.2.1, 2.4.2 and 4.2.3.10.

According to my analysis, then, palatalized spellings affecting /t/, /d/ can be used cautiously as a marker of lateness when they occur outside of personal names. However, it must be understood that it is not that this particular palatalization is late, but that orthographic conventions were preserved in such a way that palatalized spellings are found only late. Personal names are likelier to reflect pronunciation and thus Vulgar Latin developments.

#### 4.2.2.2 /k/, /g/

Väänänen reports that the earliest inscriptional evidence for this type of palatalization before front vowels is from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> or from the 5<sup>th</sup> c., two centuries later than for /t/ and /d/; Väänänen (1981, 54 n° 99). There is only one instance of this type of

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is discussed in Section 2.1.4.6.

<sup>14</sup>The examples are numerous. To cite but a few: T97 (*tertio*) T153 (*depostionem*), T160 (*Selentia*), T217 (*coniuctione*).

palatalization, found in Trier. T21 has *macias*, for *maias*, through an intermediate form *\*magias*. This case has been discussed under 2.1.3 as part of the sample inscriptions. Its dating, 500-600, fits with what Väänänen reports. *Aquitania Prima* does not have instances of this type.

The changes sometimes found for the [sk] cluster may be in part related to the palatalization of /k/ before front vowels, aided by, or aiding, assimilation, resulting in the cluster's partial or full simplification; see Section 3.1.4.6. [sk] >/s/: *requiicit* (AP51), [q]w*ie*cet (T132), *requiicit* (T145) *qiec[it]* (Metz 251). However, the evidence is sparse considering the frequency of occurrence of this cluster. In Section 3.1.4.6, I take this to be indicative that there was a popular assimilated pronunciation that was generally avoided even in sub-literary Latin of the later periods; this of course presupposes an underlying phonological reality for these assimilated forms.

Looking at Vienna, Descombes (1985, p. 151) takes the well-attested form *pacae* (V46, 68, 90, 98, 171, 289), for *pace*, as indicative that the /ke/ sequence was preserved. Presumably, her argument hinges on the sequence <cae> representing /k/, while <ce> is susceptible to palatalization. I am not convinced that we can use this form to make pronouncements about the phonetic reality of this <c>. There is no doubt that this form is an hypercorrection, meaning that the form was never pronounced with a diphthong; it was pronounced with a regular /-e/ and thus is susceptible to palatalization.

V73 presents the late form *consiensia* for *conscientia*<sup>15</sup>. The sequence /ski/ may first have undergone palatalization of /k/ before front vowel<sup>16</sup>, and then the cluster would have assimilated<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup>Perhaps second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c.; more likely 7<sup>th</sup> c.; Descombes (1985, p. 328).

<sup>16</sup>Per Väänänen (1981, p. 54 no 99).

<sup>17</sup>In a similar fashion to Väänänen (1981, p. 61 no 114), although I do not find exact parallels.



### 4.2.3 The merger between /ō/ and /ŭ/

This section reviews the evidence from Trier and *Aquitania Prima* for the onset and early development of the /ō/ and /ŭ/ merger (referred to as o/u merger throughout), and considers new data from Vienna. The data referred to here has been introduced in the previous chapters of the dissertation, under Sections 2.1.4.2 and 3.1.4.2 in particular. The objective in this section is to compare multiple data points and to present a synthesis<sup>18</sup>.

#### 4.2.3.1 Introduction

One of the major Late Latin perturbations to the Classical Latin Vowel system was the merger of CL /ō/ and /ŭ/ to /o/ and of /ī/ and /ē/ to /e/, brought about by the Late Latin loss of contrastive vowel length. This is illustrated in Fig. 4.1.

It has been claimed that this merger occurred significantly later than the merger of /ī/ and /ē/<sup>19</sup>. However, the evidence presented so far for its onset and early development has proven to be too scant and ambiguous to be convincing, as the very early evidence affects forms that would be especially liable to etymological archaizing spellings or possibly as Oscan influence<sup>20</sup>. The Trier evidence covers the onset and the early development of this merger, providing numerous attestations to the merger, most of which are unambiguous.

CL	ī	ĭ	ē	ĕ	ā	ă	ō	ō	ŭ	ū
		\	/		\	/		\	/	
LL	i		e [e]	e [ɛ]	a		o [ɔ]	o [o]		u

Figure 4.1: Schematized CL >LL vowel development

My contribution is to trace the early history of the merger through a statistical, com-

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<sup>18</sup>This research was first presented at the 2017 International Conference on Latin Linguistics (ICLL) in Munich, at the *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*.

<sup>19</sup>Väänänen (1981, p.30 nos 42, 43).

<sup>20</sup>Powell (2011, p. 115), Adams (1977, pp. 9-11), Adams (1995, pp. 91-91) and Adams (2007, pp. 669-670). The one attempt (Herman (1971)) to provide the merger's onset and early history has been rebuffed by Adams (2007, p. 669-670), who questions the reliability of the survey, the paucity of the evidence, and the methodological choice of the author to conflate four centuries of linguistic development.

parative and philological study of Late Antique and Early Medieval inscriptions from three regions of Gaul: Trier, Clermont-Ferrand, and Vienna. I pay particular attention to the issue of chronology and to data clarity.

**Sample Forms** The merger between /ǔ/ and /ō/ is reflected by a confusion between CL <o> and <u>, resulting in spellings such as *tumolo* or *tomolo* for CL *tumulum*, *tolit* for CL *tulit*, *iouenim* for CL *iuuenem*, *annus* for CL *annos*, *mondo* for CL *mundo*, and *matrone* for CL *matrone*<sup>21</sup>.

#### 4.2.3.2 Trier: Chronological distribution of o/u confusions

Trier offers excellent chronological distribution: it covers 400 years uninterruptedly with a rather even distribution. In particular, it offers a lot of data points for late antiquity, which, as we will see, is a crucial period in the history of the merger. For this reason, Trier will be my starting point.

I retrieved all of the forms featuring spelling confusions between CL <o> and <u>. See Fig. 4.2<sup>22</sup>. The inscriptions that feature o/u confusion are highlighted in red. The unaffected inscriptions are left in black. As can be seen at a glance:

- The earliest inscriptions never feature o/u confusions.
- The earliest affected inscriptions are from the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. (all six are dated 390-440 by the RICG editor).

There are relatively few inscriptions that are affected until the 6<sup>th</sup> c. or so, after which the floodgates are open. Most later (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> c.) inscriptions are affected. This development can be quantified further.

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<sup>21</sup>The complete lists are available under Sections 2.1.4.2 and 3.1.4.2 along with their philological discussion. I repeat them below for convenience's sake, under 4.2.3.8.

<sup>22</sup>This figure is repeated from Section 2.1.4.2 (Fig. 2.7) for convenience.

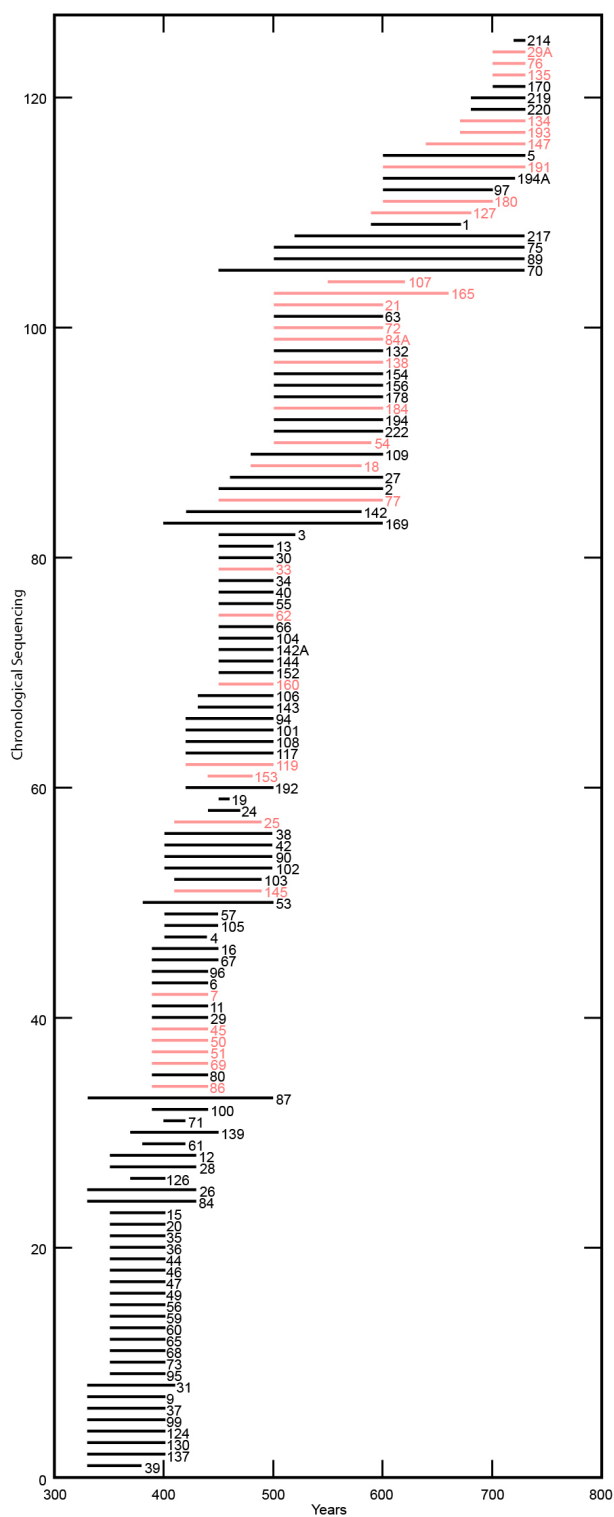


Figure 4.2: Trier: Confusions between <o> and <u>

### 4.2.3.3 Trier: Statistical analysis of distribution of o/u confusions

I computed the frequency of occurrence of <o> and <u> confusions decade by decade, in order to isolate the onset of the merger in the Trier inscriptions, and to track its progression. In order to do so, I determined which inscriptions have a date range that covers a particular decade. I then computed the frequency of occurrence of o/u confusions among these inscriptions. In other words, I determined for each decade the ratio of ‘affected inscriptions’ (inscriptions bearing one or more instances of the merger) to the ‘total of inscriptions’, allowing me to trace the evolution of the merger decade by decade. I take into consideration how broad each date range is, as an inscription with a narrow date range is a much more accurate predictor of what happens at a certain decade, than one with a very broad date range. This is what I mean by ‘weighted frequency of occurrence’.

On Fig. 4.2, each blue diamond indicates the ratio by decade of how many inscriptions feature the merger out of the total number of inscription. The orange line is a polynomial regression<sup>23</sup> that indicates the trend.

As can be observed:

- The earliest instances are dated 390-440 and these are followed by a steady steep increase in frequency.
- In Trier, the onset of the attestations would have happened around 300-350AD, as can be extrapolated from the data trend.
- There is no watershed moment at the fall of Rome or at any other point; there is no sudden sharp increase (or ‘spike’).
- This new feature was integrated over some 300 years. This is shown by the trend slowing down and stabilizing in the 7<sup>th</sup> c.; the curve flattens out.

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<sup>23</sup>A polynomial regression is a tool used in statistics. The relationship between variable  $x$  and  $y$  is modeled as an  $n^{\text{th}}$  degree polynomial in  $x$ . In this case, a polynomial regression performs much better at reflecting the behavior of the data than a rigid linear regression, which would obfuscate the s-shaped curve.

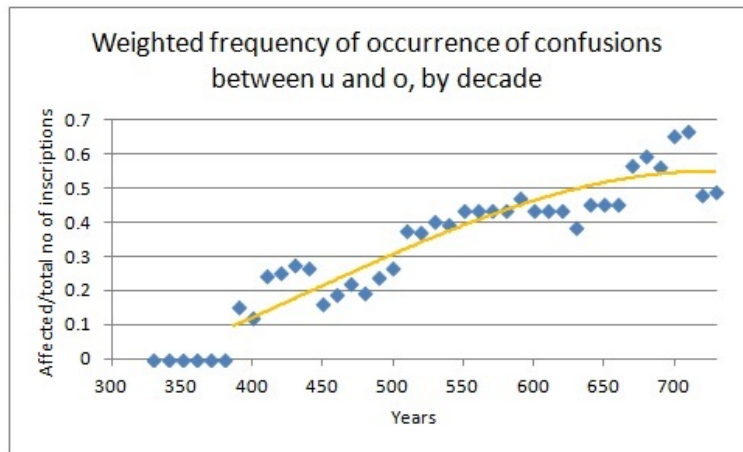


Figure 4.3: Trier: Weighted frequency of o/u confusions by decade

Here, we can observe something striking. The number of attestations of o/u confusions increases rapidly over time, rising from the extremely rare around 390 AD, to the ubiquitous around 600 AD. It then affects one inscription out of two. We are observing the effects from a new development in the Latin language. The curve presented on 4.2 is in fact an example of the typical S-shaped curve associated with the spread of linguistic innovation<sup>24</sup>. According to the S-curve, linguistic change starts slowly, accelerates rapidly, and ends slowly, forming the shape of the letter S. In the case of 4.2, the S-curve is flatter than typical. However, as recently pointed out in the scholarship, the adoption curves of different features may in fact display more or less steep S-curves; Ghanbarnejad et al. (2014) and Nevalainen (2015). The early portion of the S-curve, which precedes the acceleration, does not find attestations in my corpus; this can be expected as the frequency of occurrence at such an early period is extremely low. This is why I have 1) looked at other Latin-speaking regions to search for the very rare very early attestations, and, 2) I extend the orange line of my model to the presumed relative onset of ca. 300-350.

<sup>24</sup>This is a common model used to account for the diffusion of linguistic features. It is presented and detailed in Blythe and Croft (2012), Denison (2003), Labov (1994), Kroch (1989) and Ghanbarnejad et al. (2014). Recently, Nevalainen (2015) noted its limitations, and illustrated the need for it to be applied with flexibility.

#### 4.2.3.4 Comparanda: Statistical analysis of i/e confusions in Trier

It is important to distinguish the S-curve presented on Fig. 4.2 as showing the early stage of an innovation, versus the almost flat trajectory of the e/i merger, which is consistent with a mature change that is already nearly complete.

The /ĩ/ and /ē/ merger predates the Trier data (as there are early forms found already in Pompeii). Thus, we should not expect to see the onset of merger in the Trier data.

Instead, 4.4 indicates that this merger is commonly encountered even at an early period and that this is a well-implanted feature of the language. The development is a slow, progressive increase, similar to the flattened out trend line of the o/u merger in the 7<sup>th</sup> c., indicating that it is a mature change that is already nearly complete.

Fig. 4.4 can be read thus: each blue diamond indicates for each decade the ratio of the inscriptions that feature i/e confusions to the total number of inscription. The orange line is a polynomial regression that shows the trend.

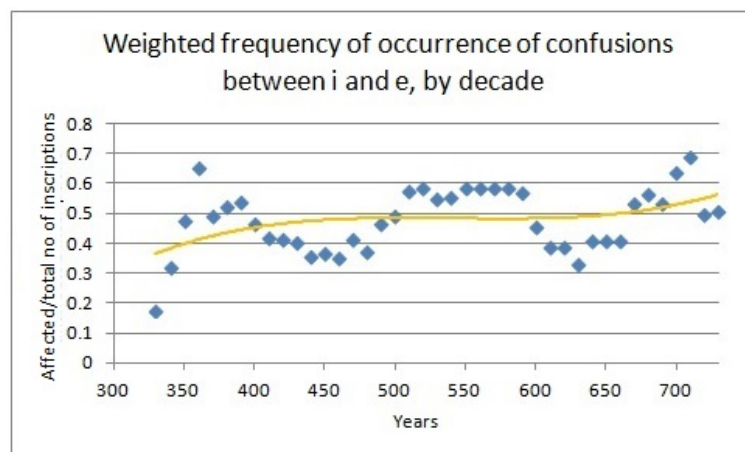


Figure 4.4: Trier: Weighted frequency of i/e confusions by decade

I/e confusions are then present throughout the Trier inscriptions. The slow increase shows that it is a well-integrated feature of the Latin language, as anticipated from the presence of the merger already in Pompeii.

Comparing both figures 4.3 and 4.4, we can observe that by 600, frequency of occurrence for both i/e and o/u confusions is the same. It is about 0.47, meaning that the

inscriptions feature each of the confusions half of the time. This means that by then we are equally likely to encounter i/e confusions as o/u confusions in an inscription. We can conclude that by 600, the / $\ddot{u}$ / and / $\bar{o}$ / merger is as well-integrated feature of Latin as the / $\ddot{i}$ / and / $\bar{e}$ / merger.

#### 4.2.3.5 *Aquitania Prima*: Chronological distribution

This is a less promising dataset, as there are very few *Aquitania Prima* inscriptions that are earlier than 500 and thus could inform us about the merger's onset and early history. Indeed, the earliest instances are 7 cases whose dates range from 502 to 550. There is a steady number of o/u confusions throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> c. inscriptions. This fits with the Trier findings but does not tell us anything new.

#### 4.2.3.6 Vienna: Chronological distribution

This is a much more promising dataset as it covers extensively the period that corresponds to the merger's onset.

The majority of o/u confusions affect *annus* and *tumulum*. I established the chronological distribution of the forms of *annus* for *annos* (acc. pl.) and the forms in *tom-* and *-mol-* for *tumulo*; there are 80 such forms all in all<sup>25</sup>.

This examination yields:

- 3 securely dated (consular dates) 5<sup>th</sup> c. inscriptions (153 dated 495; 259 dated 488; 287 dated 486).
- 3 estimated 'late 5<sup>th</sup>/early 6<sup>th</sup> c.' forms (122, 182, 196).
- 18 instances all in all from the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c.

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<sup>25</sup>There are only 15 instances of o/u confusions that do not affect these words, as per the editor's count; Descombes (1985, p. 47-8). I was not able to look up each of these forms individually to verify their presence or dating. This would need to be done at a later time.

Thus, the Vienna corpus offers a few late 5<sup>th</sup> c. instances and numerous 6<sup>th</sup> c. instances. That there aren't later cases isn't all that surprising, as the Vienna inscriptions date for the most part from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries; there are very few in fact that are later.

The earliest Vienna cases are some 50 years later than those of Trier (which are dated 390-440). This is surprising, as from such a large corpus as that of Vienna, I would have expected early 5<sup>th</sup> or even perhaps late 4<sup>th</sup> c. cases. It could be that looking up all of the o/u confusions would yield the missing very early cases. However, this is somewhat unlikely, as *annus* and *tumulum* yield by far the majority of forms. It could be that we are dealing with a dating bias from the Trier editor. The Trier inscriptions bear only relative dates, approximated by the editor, while many of the Vienna inscriptions can be dated precisely and accurately. It may be that the Trier dating estimates skew a little early, by a few decades, and that the inscriptions dated from the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. should really be pushed to the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. However, since there is no other evidence that the Trier dating may be too early, this explanation isn't very satisfying. It appears then that for now the data must be taken at face value: the Trier cases are simply a bit earlier than the Vienna cases. This may be due to regional variation in the language, in education, or in writing practices.

#### **4.2.3.7 Observations about distribution**

The earliest securely dated instances of o/u confusions consist in 3 instances found in Vienna in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c.

The earliest approximately dated instances consist in 6 instances found in Trier and dated from the tail end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. or first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c., and 3 additional instances found in Vienna dated from the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c.

According to the trend of the frequency of occurrence of o/u confusions, it is possible to predict an onset for these confusions to have occurred around 350.



#### 4.2.3.8 Inventory of forms

I repeat for convenience the forms that feature o/u confusion in Trier and *Aquitania Prima*<sup>26</sup>, and I list for the first time in this dissertation the forms found in Vienna<sup>27</sup>. This inventory of forms is followed by the phonological conclusions that can be derived from them.

The o/u confusion affects forms that contained / $\bar{o}$ / or / $\bar{u}$ / in CL, as one would expect, but there are also a few cases affecting forms with / $\bar{o}$ /, probably by extension (hypercorrection or general confusion). There are no cases of / $\bar{u}$ / written as <o>.

For some of these forms, there are alternative explanations (such as etymologizing spelling (ex. *adoliscens* (T:147) for *adulescens*), regressive assimilation (ex. *mondo* (AP:25) for *mun-do*, or case usage confusion (ex. *ad domino*, for *ad dominu[m]* (T:134, 193))) to the merger. The philological analysis of ambiguous or unclear forms is provided under sections 2.1.4.2 and 3.1.4.2.

**/ $\bar{o}$ / written as <u>** The single most common case is *annus* for *annos* (10 instances in Trier, 17 in AP, 43 in Vienna).

Trier: *annus* for *annos* (25, 29A, 33, 62, 107, 119, 134, 135, 153, 180), *matrone* (138) for *matrone*, *numine* (147) for *nomine*, *ustiarius* (165) for *ostiarius*, *amure* (147) for *amore*.

AP: *annus* (9, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27, 30, 32, 37, 38, 42, 45, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57) for *annos*, *annu* (24) for *anno* (abl.), *octubres* (50) for *octobres*, *denus* (23) for *denos*.

Vienna: *annu* (24), *annus* (9, 23, 24, 27, 30, 32, 37, 38, 42, 45, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57), *denus* (23), *octubres* (50).

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<sup>26</sup>As per my inventory, first presented in Sections 2.1.4.2 and 3.1.4.2. The inscriptions' editors do provide form lists, but I found in them several mistakes and omissions. It was necessary to compile an updated and corrected list.

<sup>27</sup>As per the inventory of Descombes (1985, p. 47-8), which I did not have time to verify.

/ǔ/ **written as <o>** Most examples affect *tumulum* and *titulum*, there are also a few examples affecting the perfect of *fero*.

Trier: *titolo* (7), *titolum* (127, 160) or *tetolum* (25, 45, 50, 51, 69, 72, 76, 77, 84A, 86, 107, 135) for *titulum*, *Fedola* for *Fedula* (a woman's name; 21), *ad domino*, for *ad dominu[m]* (134, 193), *numero* (135) for *numero*, *sous* for *suus* (145), *Francola* for *Francula* (a woman's name; 54), *Ursolus* for *Ursulus* (a man's name, 72), *coniox* (160, 184) for *coniux*, *tomolo* (191) for *tumulo*, *adoliscens* (147) for *adulescens*.

AP: *tumolo* (41, 51), *[.]olo* (44), *tomolo* (4, 7, 16, 23, 29, 36, 37, 38, 39, 46, 52, 53, 57), *thomolo* (48) and *tomulo* (55) for *tumulo*. There is also *famola* (9) for *famula*, *to[lit]* (16) and *abstolit* (23) for *tulit* and *abstulit*, *iouenim* (23) for *iuuenem*, and *mondo* (25) for *mundo*.

Vienna: *iouenim* (23), *soboli* (21), *tolis* (16), *tomulo* (55), *abstolit* (23), *famola* (9), *paruolis* (35), *tumolo* (41, 44, 51), *tomolo* (16, 23, 29, 36, 37, 38, 46, 52, 53, 57), *thomolo* (48)<sup>28</sup>.

/ǒ/ **written as <u>** There is a handful of cases (found in inscriptions from the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. or later).

Trier: *pupulo* for *populo* (135), *pusuerunt* (18) for *posuerunt*

AP: *doctor* (25, 34) for *doctor*, *pastur* (25) for *pastor*, *amatur* (34) for *amator*, *dolur* (35) for *dolor*, *senator* (61) for *senator*.

#### 4.2.3.9 Phonological observations

**Distribution of affected forms** In the Trier and in the Aquitania Prima inscriptions, I found 34 instances of /ō/ written as <u> spread over 6 lemmata, and about 48 instances of /ǔ/ written as <o> spread over 15 lemmata. /ǔ/ written as <o> yields more forms

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<sup>28</sup>In addition, there are also a great many incomplete forms of *tumulum*, which the editor did not list in her inventory of forms, but which I consider in my tally of o/u confusions affecting *tumulum* in Vienna, presented under Section 4.2.3.6.

than /ō/ written as <u>. This may be explained, partially at least, by lemma frequency. Two words containing /ū/, *tumulum* and *titulum*, are extremely common in funerary epigraphy, unsurprisingly enough.

**/ō/ written as <u>** Nearly all of the forms presented above present unaccented vowels in final position before /r/. All of the nouns are 3<sup>rd</sup> declensions in /-or/.

This may be a continuation of a regular process in Latin, that of the raising of /o/ to /u/ in unaccented closed syllables, as part of vowel weakening; in a word-final position, a VC# behave like closed syllable. Such a process would have occurred by the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE, although it was not conditioned by  $\_ /r/\#$ ; Meiser (1998, p. 70), Sen (2012, p. 474). We would be dealing here with a much later wave, this time conditioned by /r/. The rule would take the form of: /o/ > /u/ /  $\_ /r/\#$ .

**/ū/ written as <o>** The affected /ū/ are in accent-bearing syllables as well as in accentless ones, but the merger targets forms with liquids and nasals disproportionately.

Many examples of /ū/ written as <o> affect l-forms; potentially, we may be dealing with the conditioning effects of dark /l/<sup>29</sup>. It may be that a dark /l/ had a lowering effect. This would account for forms such as *titolum*, *tumolo/tomolo*, *famola*, *tolit*, *Fedola*, *Ursolus*, *Francola*.

Looking outside of Gaul, there may be some earlier evidence of /ū/ written as <o> in l-forms and nasal-forms; the CIL yields various Republican forms of *Herculus* written as *Hercolus* (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 1427, 1428, 1579, 1697, 1698, 2645), *Fulvius* written as *Foluius* (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 635, 643, 644), and one instance each of *consultus* written as *consoltus* (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 634), *pulcher* written as *polcher* (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 640), and of *Numuleius* written as *Numoleius* (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 678)<sup>30</sup>. These forms range from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE.

The Antique forms from the CIL and the late antique and medieval forms of Vienna,

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<sup>29</sup>Weiss (2011, p. 117)

<sup>30</sup>These forms are supplied by Tamponi (2016).

Trier and *Aquitania Prima* go directly against the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE wave of vowel raising said to have been brought about by dark /ɫ/, which had also affected /o/ in open and closed syllables; Sen (2012, p. 472-473).

**/ǫ/ written as <u>** Cases of /ǫ/ written as <u> are rare, even at a late period. These are misspellings that are not indicative of any underlying sound changes, as the Romance languages do not support that /ǫ/ was ever merged with /u/. These misspellings must be the result of a generalized o/u confusion brought about by the influx of o/u confusions arising from the merger between /ō/ and /ū/. That is to say, after /ō/ and /ū/ merged, the inherited spellings of /ō/ and /ū/ eventually faded, resulting in spelling fluctuations between <o> and <u>. This fluctuation came to affect words that had originally had a /ǫ/, despite the fact these these words did not play a part in the merger (and find different reflexes in the daughter languages). /ū/ remains unaffected.

#### 4.2.3.10 Sociolectal distribution

I found that the inscriptions that are attached to elite members of the community are better able to avoid certain types of Vulgar Latin features (such as syncope, prothetic vowels, palatalization, consonant cluster simplifications etc.); this is discussed in Sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.4.2. This means that certain Vulgar Latin features were stigmatized; they were part of the common language, but they weren't perceived as desirable in educated language.

In addition, some of these sound changes are only found in personal names, attesting that the stonecutters attempted to reproduce the way a person's name was pronounced, while following the inherited spellings otherwise. This is the case for prothesis and, at all but the later periods, for palatalization. This is discussed under Section 2.1.4.4. Thus, the stonecutters were aware that certain sound changes were not to be written, except in the particular case of personal names.

However, both vocalic mergers (i/e, o/u) very much remain a constant feature of the

language throughout the corpus, once they start appearing in number; they're not avoided even in high status inscriptions. They are seen in the inscriptions of most clergy members, of nobles, of the military and of magistrates. This informs us that the mergers are an integral part of the written language, as commonly written and as written by the elite; they're perfectly accepted as part of 'normative Merovingian Latin'.

There's only the handful of inscriptions attached to the highest ranked clergy (bishops and the monastic orders) that are systematically able to avoid all of the VL features, including mergers. These inscriptions are the only ones that follow the CL norm. This is unsurprising, as bishops and monks would have been the most educated members of the society. Their epitaphs reflect the quality of their education through extremely conservative, archaizing Latin. But these inscriptions are outliers. They're an anomaly.

#### 4.2.3.11 <O>/<u> confusions as a dating tool

The confusions between <o> and <u> can be used as a dating marker, as they do not occur in the earliest material of Trier, Vienna and *Aquitania Prima*, but become commoner over time. The onset and early development of attestations to the / $\bar{o}$ / and / $\check{u}$ / merger in Trier, Vienna and AP is discussed extensively in Section 4.2.3. The following conclusions emerge with respect to dating.

**/ $\bar{o}$ / written as <u>, / $\check{u}$ / written as <o>** There are a handful of republican and imperial attestations that are in fact quite early (2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE and onward), and which are found throughout the Roman world and not just Gaul. These forms are very few in number, but they do exist and attest to the antiquity of the underlying phonological process. There are no affected forms in Trier, Vienna and *Aquitania Prima* that are earlier than the very end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. or the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. The attestations are rarely found at first, but they become very common by the 7<sup>th</sup> c.

It emerges from this that inscriptions found in Gaul featuring these types of confusions are probably not earlier than 490 (the earliest approximate date of the attestations), and

are most likely not from earlier than 350 (the date that the statistical model predicts as earliest possible attestation date according to the behavior of the data).

If one were to date only one isolated inscription featuring these confusions, *ceteris paribus*, it is more likely that the inscription is late or very late, as the merger's frequency of occurrence increases drastically over time. However, it cannot be excluded that it may be relatively early, as there are quite a few instances found throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> c. Therefore, an inscription featuring this merger may be from the very end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. (least likely), 5<sup>th</sup> c. (less likely), or from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> (more likely). However, if one were to deal with a group of related inscriptions, a dating estimate can be more securely given, as the frequency of occurrence of the merger in that group can be compared to that of the Trier inscriptions (Figure 4.2) as benchmark.

**/ö/ written as <u>** The earliest cases of /ö/ written as <u> are from the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. or later. Thus these types of misspellings can be used as dating indicator, with the caution that these arise from stonecutter mistakes and not from linguistic development, which, conceivably, are only more likely to happen at a later period but could occur at any period after the relative onset.

### 4.3 Conclusions about the 'late' vulgarisms

As we've seen, even if some vulgarisms are usually found mostly or only in late inscriptions, they cannot be used straightforwardly as dating indicators. None of them are a sure telltale of lateness, as the editor Gauthier had been hoping for<sup>31</sup>.

It is important to distinguish between spellings that are motivated by underlying linguistic developments and spellings that aren't (true 'misspellings').

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<sup>31</sup>This is discussed in Sections 2.1.2.6 and 2.5.

### 4.3.1 Linguistically-motivated VL spellings

Primarily linguistically-motivated Vulgar Latin spellings are ‘misspellings’ from the point of view of the Classical Latin inherited norm. However, from the point of view of Merovingian Latin, they are more or less acceptable. Many of these Vulgar spellings are indeed well-attested even in the purple prose of the royal charters<sup>32</sup>. Thus, from the point of view of ‘standard’ Merovingian Latin, if I may speak of such a thing, these aren’t exactly ‘misspellings’; they were variant spellings. The subset of Vulgar spellings that I qualify as primarily linguistically-motivated result from a closer relationship between spoken language and written language, and to a shifting linguistic norm, which moved away from that of CL.

These VL spellings depend upon actual changes in the language, and they can of course be dated. This means that for undated attestations, we have a secure *terminus post quem*; the undated attestations are likely to be later than the dated attestations<sup>33</sup>. Most studies limit themselves to this; they set the *terminus post quem* but do not discuss the frequency of occurrence of VL features, and how this may affect the dating of undated attestations.

However, this can be refined further. Whenever the frequency of occurrence of the VL spellings can be determined, we are provided with a probabilistic model that tells us how early or late undated attestations are to be. In the case of new linguistic features, tracing the S-shaped curve helps not only model the data, but allows for predictions for undated data. If we can determine when the steep incline of the S-shaped curve occur (the middle section of the ‘S’), we have an estimate for the likeliest date that should be given to the undated data; an earlier date remains possible, but is unlikely, as attestations are very rare at such an early date.

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<sup>32</sup>Only the writings of the very few bishops and monks that were the most erudite were able to adhere to the CL norm. The royal chancellery certainly did not, and the lower-ranked clergy, the nobles, and the common people certainly did not.

<sup>33</sup>That is to say, it is unlikely that the undated attestations would so happen to provide us with the earliest evidence, *ceteris paribus*.

As I have shown, the i/e merger is in a mature stage of development already in the earliest Trier inscription. What we see of the S-curve is only the topmost section of the ‘S’, an extremely slow increase. The distinct pattern of the S-curve predates our material. However, the o/u merger is at an early stage of diffusion in the Latin language; we can infer the earliest development, and observe all of the rest of the S-curve. It follows, then, that undated instances of i/e confusions can be from any moment in the period covered by the Trier inscriptions, while o/u confusions are more likely to date from the period during which the steep incline occurred, or later.

It is possible to refine the distribution patterns even further considering sociolinguistics. The frequency of occurrence curve gives a general impression of the distribution of the attestations for particular vulgarisms. Certain subgroups of inscriptions and of words are more likely to exhibit particular vulgarisms. I’ve indicated that certain subgroups of inscriptions are more or less likely to exhibit certain vulgarisms (e.g. status-bearing inscriptions containing fewer less common vulgarisms but as many common vowel-affecting vulgarisms; see Sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.4.2) and that some subgroups successfully avoid vulgarisms altogether (e.g. the inscriptions of high-ranked clergy members and monks; see Section 2.4.2). I’ve shown that personal names are more likely to contain certain vulgarisms, and at earlier dates than the rest of the corpus, as the personal names were written down in a way that reflected the bearer’s pronunciation; see Section 2.1.4.4.

Of course, the actual phonological change predates to some extent the earliest written attestations, and the earliest written attestations in one corpus may be centuries later than in other corpora. It is not necessary to posit regional differences to account for the time depth difference between corpora; other factors can be at play such as the chronological distribution of the data of particular corpora<sup>34</sup>, the size of the different corpora<sup>35</sup>, or the degree of linguistic conservatism among particular communities of speakers.

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<sup>34</sup>For instance, the *Aquitania Prima* corpora contains very little late antique material; it cannot be expected to yield forms for the periods that it does not cover or barely covers.

<sup>35</sup>The larger the corpora, the more likely it is to contain early attestations of vulgarisms, *ceteris paribus*.



### 4.3.2 Secondary VL spellings ('misspellings')

There is another types of misspellings, which occurs commonly. I call these misspellings 'secondary', as they occur as a result of the linguistically-motivated spellings presented above.

The secondary misspellings can arise due to surface similarities with linguistically motivated VL spellings, effectively ending up overgeneralizing a pattern. This was likely the case with the o/u confusions affecting not just original / $\bar{o}$ / and / $\bar{u}$ / (which was directly linguistically-motivated), but spreading also to / $\check{o}$ / (this is not directly linguistically motivated; it is therefore secondary) in a later time.

This is closely tied to the phenomenon of hypercorrections. Hypercorrections arise when the stonecutter was aware that there were inherited spellings and was trying to produce them, but ends up overgeneralizing a pattern due to a misguided analogy, producing a form that is unaccounted for in the inherited CL. Of course, hypercorrections can be associated to any linguistic feature. However, the likeliest candidates for hypercorrections are the most common vulgarisms, as the stonecutters were no doubt more likely to be aware of the patterns that give rise to the these common vulgarisms, and were in some cases most keen to avoid them. Besides the cases affecting / $\check{o}$ / discussed above, most of the cases are hypercorrections reflecting the merger of /ae/ with /e/. /E/ written as <ae>: (*aeius* (T68), *aeorum* (T68), *saenior* (T97), *pacae* (abl.) (T38, T68; AP42)). These forms are treated in Section 2.1.4.3. The remaining hypercorrect forms affect /d/ (*cupeta* (AP35)) and, possibly, /h/- (*uhic* (AP9) and *huhic* (AP25)), and are treated in Sections 3.1.4.5 and 3.1.4.6.

Part II

# Documents

## CHAPTER 5

### The material culture of Merovingian papyri and manuscripts

In this chapter, I approach Merovingian papyrus and parchment documents as material culture artifacts. Charters are not only a source for the study of the Latin language - they are also physical objects that were produced with specific purposes and goals in mind, and whose usefulness has persisted, in one way or another, through the centuries.

Charters are a window into the early medieval practice of writing and reading. They are the material evidence of an administrative culture that made extensive use of the written word to communicate and store information. They inform us about institutional archival practices, as they can be used to derive conclusions about document organization, preservation, disposal, and recycling. Charters are a window into the legal history of the Merovingian period and of the later Middle Ages. They inform us about the ways legal disputes were waged and about the importance of written documentation, record-keeping, and evidence production in court cases.

First, I inventory the Merovingian charter evidence, I isolate its characteristics, and I formulate a typology. I then move on to the issue of use. I am concerned about the ways that charters were employed (directly and indirectly), shared, organized, and stored. Finally, I address the issue of charter reuse, or of reception, proposing answers as to why these documents were deemed worth preserving, what roles they came to play in the later Middle Ages, and what they can tell us about the later Middle Ages' perception of the Merovingian period. Thus, throughout this chapter, I am very much concerned with the social aspects of the material culture of manuscripts and papyri.

The Merovingian charters are well known to historians, and are used by them notably as sources for the history of Church and lay foundations, of place names, of Merovingian power structures and agents, and of ecclesiastical and royal legal battles. The Merovingian charters are well documented by historians for their role in medieval forgery: many alleged ‘Merovingian charters’ are in fact partially or wholly spurious, and the genuine ones are notoriously reused as base material for later forgeries. The charters have also provided ammunition to the debates surrounding early medieval literacy. However, to the best of my knowledge, nobody has attempted to offer an inventory and a typology of Merovingian charters and to track their production, use, and reuse.

To be clear, throughout this chapter, I use ‘diploma’ specifically to refer to a charter produced by a king, while ‘charter’ is used for any document, regardless of issuing authority.

## 5.1 Inventory of the Merovingian documentary evidence

I provide here an inventory and a typology of the Merovingian documentary evidence; these will be relied upon throughout the discussions of this chapter. I sorted the evidence into two lists: one for the documents on papyrus, the other for those on parchment. I also include a list of the later documents on papyrus found in Gaul.

Table 5.1 in section 5.1.1 lists the Merovingian documents on papyrus. All of the documents on papyrus are edited and reproduced in volumes 13 and 14 of the *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* (henceforth ChLA)<sup>1</sup>. The *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (henceforth MGH) provides the other main edition<sup>2</sup>. The documents also receive entries in the

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<sup>1</sup>These volumes are listed as Bruckner and Marichal (1981a) and Bruckner and Marichal (1981b) in my bibliography.

<sup>2</sup>Listed in my bibliography as Brühl et al. (2001).

*Trismegistos* papyri database<sup>3</sup>. For some of the charters' attribution and dating, I am at variance with the ChLA and the MGH editors. The tables list the dates and attributions I assign, but I include the ChLA's and MGH's in footnotes.

Table 5.3 in Section 5.1.2 lists the earliest documents on parchment. I stop a little later than the last papyri, at the end of the reign of Childebert III. Again, whenever I disagree with the ChLA, my assessment is in the tables, but the ChLA's is included in the footnotes.

As the scope of the ChLA ends with the year 800, the later documents on papyri and parchment had to be located from other sources, usually the scholarly literature.

I am not concerned with the literary manuscripts. These can be found edited in the various volumes of the *Codices Latini Antiquiores*. The literary papyri have received specific treatment in Santifaller (1965, pp. 126-128).

### 5.1.1 Merovingian and Carolingian documentary papyri

13 of the documents on papyri are royal diplomas, made at the request of an individual or of the Abbey of Saint-Denis. 4 documents on papyri were issued by private individuals. They are all part of the fond of the abbey of Saint-Denis, near Paris, now hosted at the *Archives Nationales*.

Merovingian documentary papyri appear suddenly at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, or perhaps at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup>. They remain at a constant number throughout the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, only to dwindle rapidly at the end of the century. The last diplomas on papyrus are from Theodoric III<sup>4</sup>. Two undated private documents (569 and 592) may be from the late 6<sup>th</sup> century or from the 7<sup>th</sup>, although by my evaluation they

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.trismegistos.org/coll/index.php>  
However, it currently lists erroneously the provenance of many of these documents as being Egypt (the correct provenances are listed in the ChLA; they are all from Gaul and they were all found as part of the fond of the Abbey of Saint-Denis).

<sup>4</sup>See Section 5.2.2.1 below for my attribution of 557 to Theodoric III and on the attribution of 560.

Table 5.1: Merovingian documentary papyri

AN Paris	ChLA	Date	Description
k1 no 3 <sup>bis</sup>	549 (13)	619-620	Private charter
k1 no 4	550	584-629 <sup>6</sup>	Confirmation of privileges by Chlothar II to Saint-Denis
k1 no 5	551	632-633	Confirmation of privileges by Dagobert I to Saint-Denis
k1 no 7 1	552	625	Confirmation of privileges by Chlothar II to Saint-Denis
k1 no 7 3	553	659-673	Judgment of Chlothar III (private individuals)
k1 no 9	554	629-639	Confirmation by Dagobert I (private individuals)
k1 no 10	555	639-657	Clovis II(?) grants his protection to Saint-Denis
k2 no 1	556	639-642	Confirmation by Clovis II (Saint-Denis)
k2 no 2	557	658-675 <sup>7</sup>	Judgment by Chlothar III or Childeric II <sup>8</sup>
k2 no 3	558	654	Confirmation of privileges by Clovis II to Saint-Denis
k2 no 4	559	639-657	Confirmation by Clovis II (private individual)
k2 no 5	560	657-675 <sup>9</sup>	Confirmation by Chloth. III or Child. II to Saint-Denis <sup>10</sup>
k2 no 6	561	659-660	Judgment by Chlothar III in favor of Saint-Denis
k2 no 7	562	659-673	Judgment by Chlothar III in favor of Saint-Denis
k2 no 9	563	691(?)	Exchange of goods between two abbots
k3 no 1 2	569	c. 650(?) <sup>11</sup>	Private will
k4 no 1	592 (14)	c. 650(?) <sup>12</sup>	Private will

should be dated c. 650<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>See below Section 5.3.4.

<sup>6</sup>MGH 627.

<sup>7</sup>ChLA and the MGH lists 658/659 - 678/679 as dating bounds. However, this can be narrowed down. See Section 5.2.2.1.

<sup>8</sup>This diploma cannot be attributed to Theodoric III; it must be from Chlothar or Childeric. See Section 5.2.2.1.

<sup>9</sup>ChLA lists 657 - 688 as dating bounds. However, this can be narrowed down. See Section 5.2.2.1.

<sup>10</sup>This diploma cannot be attributed to Theodoric III; it must be from Chlothar or Childeric. See Section 5.2.2.1.

<sup>11</sup>This is my dating, which I explain under section 5.3.4; the ChLA dating is 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> c.(?).

<sup>12</sup>This is my dating, which I explain under section 5.3.4; the ChLA dating is second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> c.(?).

Table 5.2: Later documentary papyri found in Gaul

AN Paris	ChLA	Date	Description
k7 no 9 1	629 (16)	787-788	Letter to Charlemagne from abbot Maginarius
k7 no 9 2	630	788	Letter from Pope Adrian I to Charlemagne
l 220 n° 3	-	893	Bull from Pope Formosus

Beyond the Merovingian period, documentary papyri become rare; see Table 5.2 for the papyri found in Gaul. During Charlemagne's reign, there are only two letters on papyrus, 629 and 630. Some bulls are on papyri, such as AN L 220 n° 3 (discussed below under subsection 5.3.4 as item 6r and 7r).

### 5.1.2 Earliest documents on parchment

The earliest documents on parchment are from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Two monastic institutions yield documents: the Abbey of Saint-Denis near Paris and the Abbey of Saint-Martin of Tours.

**The Saint-Denis fond** The Saint-Denis fond provides us with 4 private documents, in addition to all of the extant royal diplomas. All of these documents were recovered from its holdings and are now at the *Archives Nationales*.

Theodoric III is the first Merovingian ruler for whom we have diplomas on parchment. The Merovingian and Carolingian kings that followed all used parchment for their diplomas. Indeed, all of the diplomas of Chilperic II (588-591, 593), Pippin (595-600, 602-604), Carloman (605-607) and Charlemagne (until 800: 608-621, 625-628, 631, 637) are on parchment. Nearly all of the private charters (594, 601, 622-624, 628, 632, 633-636, 638) are on parchment; the only exceptions are the two letters on papyrus (629 and 630) mentioned just above.

Table 5.3: Earliest documents on parchment - Saint-Denis fond

AN, Paris	ChLA	Date	Description
k2 no 10	564 (13)	673	Private foundation and donation
k2 no 11	565	677	Judgment by Theodoric III
k2 no 12	566	677	Judgment by Theodoric III
k2 no 13	567	679	Judgment by Theodoric III
k2 no 14	568	680-688	Privilege by Theodoric III to Saint-Denis
k3 no 2	570	688	Privilege by Theodoric III to Saint-Denis
k3 no 2 2	571	690-691	Private donation
k3 no 3	572 (14)	690-691	Judgment by Clovis III
k3 no 4	573	691-692	Judgment by Clovis III
k3 no 5	574	691	Privilege by Clovis III to Saint-Denis
k3 no 6	575	691	Judgment by Clovis III
k3 no 7	576	692-693	Judgment by Clovis III
k3 no 8	577	694	Privilege by Childebert III to Saint-Denis
k3 no 9	578	694-695	Judgment by Childebert III in favor of Saint-Denis
k3 no 10	579	696	Confirmation of Saint-Denis privileges by Childebert III
k3 no 11	580	696	Privileges from the bishop of Chartres Agerad
k3 no 12 1	581	697	Judgment by Childebert III
k3 no 12 2	582	697	Property exchange between abbot and private individual
k3 no 12 3	583	694-711	Privilege by Childebert III
k3 no 13	584	703	Judgment by Childebert III
k3 no 14	585	709	Judgment by Childebert III
k3 no 15	586	709-710	Judgment by Childebert III
k3 no 16	587	709-710	Judgment by Childebert III



**The Saint-Martin fond** A group of 33 fragmentary accounting documents on parchment have been attributed to the Abbey of Saint-Martin of Tours. 29 of these bear Latin text. These documents list tenant farmers and their dues in various goods (grain, wood, etc.) to the Abbey of Saint-Martin.

These fragments were recovered from a 15<sup>th</sup> century book binding, produced in Tours. The hazards of the book trade broke the group apart. While most were donated to the *Archives Nationales* (receiving the call number *Nouvelles acquisitions latines 2654*) in 1968 and were promptly edited<sup>13</sup>, two of these surfaced only very recently when they were put up for auction<sup>14</sup>. Thankfully, the private collectors who own these two fragments allowed for their text to be edited<sup>15</sup>.

The fragments do not bear dates. They are written in a Merovingian cursive minuscule from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup><sup>16</sup>. The documents mention the Abbot Agyricus, whose period of professional activity can be determined to be in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>17</sup>.

## 5.2 The use of papyrus and parchment in Merovingian documents

There are two support materials used by Merovingian charters: papyrus and parchment. The use of papyrus and parchment isn't uniform throughout the Merovingian period. The earliest charters are indeed on papyrus while the later ones are on parchment; there is a transition from one material to the other. This transition can be dated.

The year 677 is often quoted for the transition from papyrus to parchment<sup>18</sup>; however,

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<sup>13</sup>See Gasnault (1970) for history and a brief survey, and Gasnault and Vézin (1975) for an edition. They receive additional treatment and a new edition in the ChLA, Bruckner and Marichal (1985).

<sup>14</sup>Sotheby's (2012).

<sup>15</sup>Gasnault (1995).

<sup>16</sup>Gasnault (1970, p. 87), Gasnault and Vézin (1975, pp. 159-191). See Gasnault and Vézin (1975, p. 15) for a paleographical study.

<sup>17</sup>Gasnault (1970, pp. 92-93), Gasnault and Vézin (1975, pp. 14-15).

<sup>18</sup>The standard treatment is provided in the closing pages of a study of the use of papyrus in antiquity

this date in fact corresponds to the first documents produced on parchment by the royal chancellery. It does not correspond to the transition itself, as a process affecting document production. The details of the transition are complex, and are detailed in the following sections. In a nutshell: until the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, all of the documents are on papyrus, and after this, it depends upon the issuing authority. For diplomas, there is no transition period; the chancellery use of papyrus in document production was reformed to parchment at some point between 673 (last diplomas on papyrus) and 677 (first diplomas on parchment), that is to say either under Childeric II or Theodoric III. Any diplomas earlier than this abrupt transition are on papyrus, while those that are later are on parchment. For private and for institutional charters, the last decades of the 7<sup>th</sup> century marks a period of overlap between papyrus and parchment, with the first parchment documents dated 673 and the last Merovingian papyri being from the 690s.

There is much to say about the choice of support material and, specifically, about the use and disuse of papyrus. The use of papyrus and the eventual transition to parchment inform us as to notarial, accounting and chancellery practices. This transition sheds light on the running of institutional and royal administrations, as well as on private use. It also makes it possible for me to formulate a codicological argument by which to date and attribute documents. In addition, looking ahead at the later Middle Ages, the transition from one material to the other was something that hadn't gone unnoticed, and came to play a role in document and material reuse.

### **5.2.1 The earliest charters: exclusive use of papyrus**

A quick look through the charter catalogs shows that the Merovingian documentary evidence is limited to the last 130 years or so of the dynasty. The first securely dated charters form a cluster that ranges from 619 to the 630s. From this point on to the 670s, papyrus charters are found in steady numbers. During this early period, papyrus is used exclusively as material support for private, institutional and royal charters.

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and in the early Middle Ages: Lewis (1974, p. 92).

There are contenders for an earlier dating still. While there are assuredly no Merovingian charters available for the 5<sup>th</sup> century, for the 6<sup>th</sup>, there are two possible candidates. One diploma, 550, could have been emitted by Chlotar II at any point during his reign (584-629). The editors are unable to refine this dating<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, while 550 could be from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, it may as well be from the 7<sup>th</sup> century. An undated will, 592, has received several estimates. The earliest would place it as solidly 6<sup>th</sup> century: 567-584. The others, including mine, converge towards the more conservative date range of 636 to 700. This is discussed below in detail, under section 5.3.4.

### 5.2.2 The transition from papyrus to parchment: diplomas

All of the diplomas produced by Chlothar III (655-673) and by the kings that preceded him are on papyrus. Until 673, then, the Merovingian royal chancellery used papyrus exclusively. However, all of the diplomas dated 677 and later are on parchment; these are the diplomas of Theodoric III and of the kings that followed. The transition from papyrus to parchment in the Merovingian king's chancellery appears then as sudden, swift, and definitive<sup>20</sup>, pointing to a reform in institutional practice.

The standard narrative (Lewis (1974, p. 92)) sets the switch from papyrus to parchment at the first parchment diplomas that are extant: the transition is therefore dated as 677 and attributed to Theodoric III. However, this does not represent the situation accurately. The transition from papyrus to parchment, as a process affecting chancellery practices, occurred either under Theodoric III, or under Childeric II, who reigned in between Chlothar III and Theodoric III. The fact of the matter is that it is impossible to tell which of the two kings effected the chancellery reform. Since there aren't any original diplomas assuredly from Childeric II, it is not possible to determine whether he used pa-

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<sup>19</sup>Bruckner and Marichal (1981a, p. 6).

<sup>20</sup>Tessier (1962, p. 17) is more cautious: he warns that the paucity of sources makes it hard to determine whether the transition was sudden or progressive. He reports that there are only 13 charters on papyrus. However, there are now 17. In addition, while there are indeed relatively few diplomas that are assuredly by Chlothar (4 diplomas) and by Theodoric (5 diplomas), added weight is given by the fact that all the earlier diplomas are on papyrus, while all the later diplomas are on parchment, without fail.

papyrus or parchment. 677 thus marks the first dated evidence of this transition, but as for dating the transition itself, it can only be said that it occurred at some point between 673 and 677, and that it happened either under Childeric II (673-675) or at the beginning of the reign of Theodoric III (between his accession to the throne in 675 and the first dated diplomas on parchment in 677).

### 5.2.2.1 The latest diplomas on papyrus: attribution and dating

There are two documents on papyrus whose dating and attribution I can refine using their support material: AN k2 n° 2 (ChLA 13 557; MGH 88) and AN k2 n° 5 (ChLA 13 560). AN k2 n° 2 (ChLA 13 557; MGH 88) is a royal judgment ('placitum'). The ChLA and the MGH date it 658/659 - 678/679; its issuing king is either Chlothar III, Childeric II or Theodoric III. Likewise, AN k2 n° 5 (ChLA 13 560) is attributed to either Chlothar III, Childeric II or Theodoric III and receives the broad date range of 657-688. I contend that both 557 and 560 are assuredly earlier than 675, meaning that they must have been produced by Chlothar or Childeric.

557 is in poor shape. The papyrus degradation obscures large sections of text, and the bottom and top portions have been cut away. The first line is missing, on which the reigning king would have been noted. 557 pertains to a property that is disputed between the Church of Rouen and Saint-Denis. The property was a grant, and the granters were the late mayor of the palace Erchinoald and his son and heir Leudesius: [L.5:] "e]rat hoc Echenoaldo qu[o]nd[am ma]i[i]orem] dom[us] contuler[at] et ip[se] L[e]udesius ligetemo orde[n]e". The dates given by the ChLA and the MGH actually rest on these two characters. Erchinoald died in 658, while Leudesius died in 676. More can be gleaned from this line still, but we first need to retrace who were the mayors of the palace and the reigning kings.

Erchinoald had served in the capacity of mayor of the palace until his death in 658. He was succeeded by Ebroin. Ebroin served as mayor until Chlothar's death in 673. The new ruler, Childeric II, cast Ebroin into monastic exile; he also exiled the other pretender

to the throne, his brother Theodoric. Childeric installed a trusted ally, Wulfoald, as mayor; Wulfoald had indeed been his mayor back in Austrasia. Following Childeric's assassination in 675, Wulfoald fled back to Austrasia. Theodoric III was then brought back from monastic exile to serve as king. Leudesius, as the son of Erchinoald, was declared mayor. However, another man had also escaped monastic exile: Ebroin. Ebroin promptly ousted his political rivals from power, including Leudesius, who was assassinated in 676<sup>21</sup>.

Returning to l.5 of 557, Leudesius isn't ascribed any title or magistracy, while the late father is duly noted as having once held the magistracy of mayor of the palace. The Latin, quoted above, makes clear that the title cannot be applied to both men. Leudesius was not currently holding the mayorship, then. Leudesius cannot be included along with Erchinoald as having once held the magistracy. Therefore, 557 must predate Leudesius becoming mayor in 675. It certainly predates Leudesius' assassination in 676, as he too would have been *quondam maiorem domus* then. Therefore, as it was produced between 658 and 675, Ebroin or Wulfoald must have been the current mayor of the palace, and Chlothar III or Childeric II the reigning king. It cannot have been Theodoric III.

Another argument in favor of this attribution is the fact that 557 is on papyrus. As explained in the preceding section, the transition from papyrus to parchment was effected either under Childeric or at the beginning of the reign of Theodoric. After this transition, all of the diplomas of the Merovingian kings are on parchment. Therefore, 557 can certainly be by Chlothar, who produced all of his diplomas on papyrus, or it may be by Childeric, unless at some point it can be determined that Childeric's diploma production was on parchment. However, it assuredly cannot be by Theodoric.

I extend this codicological argument to another diploma. Similarly to 557, the name of the reigning king is missing for 560. While it does mention the king's parentage, this isn't much help, as Chlothar III, Childeric II and Theodoric III are brothers from the

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<sup>21</sup>The events reported in this paragraph are told to us by the *Liber Historia Francorum* and by the Chronicle of Fredegar, summed up with references in Fouracre and Gerberding (1996, pp. 21-23), Heidrich (1989, p. 219) and Geary (1988, pp. 183, 188-190). See also relevant entries of Ebling (1974).

same parents. However, since 560 is on papyrus, it must have been produced by the last kings whose diplomas are on papyrus: either Chlothar or, tentatively, Childeric. It must certainly predate Theodoric III, whose diplomas are all on parchment.

### **5.2.3 The transition from papyrus to parchment: Private and institutional charters**

As evidenced by the document inventory, the transition from papyrus to parchment in private and institutional charters was progressive. Papyrus remained in private use throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but parchment starts being seen in the last thirty years of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, there is assuredly a transition period lasting a few decades. During this transitional period, the Saint-Denis fond contains three private charters on papyrus (563, 569, 592) and three on parchment (564, 571, 582); an equal split. None of the parchment documents predate the 670s, while the papyrus documents range from 650 to the 690s. There are no Merovingian papyri that are later still.

The accounting documents of Saint-Martin of Tours are all on parchment. As noted in section 5.1.2, there are paleographical and prosopographical grounds by which to date them to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century or perhaps to the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup>. If it could be determined that the Tours documents are earlier rather than later, they would provide early evidence of parchment use. However, as it is, their being on parchment points to a later dating, from the 670s forward, an assessment based upon the Saint-Denis fond.

Looking ahead, under Charlemagne, all of the wills, donations and other private and institutional legal documents are on parchment. The 12 private charters written under Charlemagne are on parchment. None are on papyrus. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, then, it appears that private and institutional legal documents were drafted on parchment customarily.

**Outliers: Two Carolingian letters on papyrus** Papyrus appears to have remained in use in private correspondence for some time even though it was no longer in use for legal documents. Papyrus had been the material of choice for letters in Late Antiquity,

as noted by Jerome in the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>22</sup>. I must assume that papyrus was the support of choice in the Merovingian period as a continuation of late Antique use, but no Merovingian letters survive, on papyrus or parchment or on any other support. However, there are two early Carolingian letters on papyrus, both dated 788. One of these was in fact produced by the papal chancellery (AN K7 no 9<sup>2</sup>; ChLA 630), which did maintain some limited use of papyrus until quite late; see ???. Since it is tricky to infer conclusions about Merovingian and Carolingian practices from papal practices, this leaves me with only one Carolingian letter (AN K7 no 9<sup>1</sup>; ChLA 629). This is enough to say that papyrus must have remained available on the market and that it was used at least occasionally in letter writing until the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and perhaps later.

#### 5.2.4 The transition's spread

The data indicates the following. Papyrus is used exclusively in early Merovingian documents, dated 619-670s. For the diplomas, there was a sudden change in material support due to a chancellery reform that took place at some point between 673-677. For the private and institutional charters, there was a transitional period, 670s-700, during which both papyrus and parchment were used. By 700, private legal documents were drafted on parchment customarily, but the use of papyrus appeared to have continued in personal correspondence.

It emerges from this that the royal chancellery practices likely influenced institutional and personal practices. After the royal chancellery transitioned to parchment, institutional and personal use followed suit. This would explain why there is a clean break for the diplomas, but private charters show a transitional period. This would explain why there are no private or institutional charters on parchment before the 670s, that is to say, before the royal chancellery transitioned.

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<sup>22</sup>Bischoff (1990, p.8 and n. 9), Arns (1953, p. 27).

### 5.2.5 Motivating the transition

The early medieval use of papyrus can be understood as a tradition inherited from antiquity. The Roman Empire had spread papyrus far and wide; sources tell us that in 6<sup>th</sup> century Italy, Gaul and Constantinople, its use was firmly implanted and that it was readily available as a market good<sup>23</sup>.

Access alone cannot explain the switch to parchment. Although papyrus was an import good from far-away Egypt, it remained generally accessible in Italy and Gaul. Gregory of Tours informs us that it was commonly available in the 6<sup>th</sup> century<sup>24</sup>. The Arab conquest of the later 7<sup>th</sup> century does not appear to have perturbed the international trade of papyrus, except for isolated events<sup>25</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> century Carolingian letter on papyrus discussed previously (AN K7 no 9<sup>1</sup>; ChLA 629) is an indicator that papyrus could still be obtained in Gaul at that period and that it was still in use. There is evidence from Egypt that the export of papyrus was maintained at least until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and likely into the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup><sup>26</sup>.

However, local shortages could and did occur; there are late antique and early medieval sources documenting this<sup>27</sup>. Thus, it may have been felt that it was unwise to depend upon an imported good, for which access could never be assuredly guaranteed. A shortage of papyrus would yield catastrophic results, derailing the proper running of the chancellery and effectively paralyzing the central administration altogether<sup>28</sup>. The late Merovingian and the early Carolingian period marked an expansion of the royal chancellery; the number

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<sup>23</sup>Lewis (1974, pp. 89-91).

<sup>24</sup>Lewis (1974, pp. 91-92 and n. 8).

<sup>25</sup>Lewis (1974, pp. 91-92 and n. 8).

<sup>26</sup>Lewis (1974, pp. 93-94 and n. 10).

<sup>27</sup>Lewis (1974, pp. 91-92 and n. 8).

<sup>28</sup>There is one such shortage that threatened the Roman Empire under Tiberius, related by Pliny; Lewis (1974, pp. 89-90 and n. 7). While the Merovingian kings were likely not aware of this particular instance, the threat could conceivably have been felt.



of charters available for each king increases over time, and massively with Charlemagne<sup>29</sup>. There is another indicator of increased chancellery activity: the number of active notaries also significantly increased under Charlemagne<sup>30</sup>. This increase in document output must have put pressure on guaranteeing a steady stream of base materials for the chancellery to operate.

Parchment provided an obvious solution. Parchment is a material that could be produced locally, and, thus, it is reliably available. It is also eminently more durable. For these reasons, parchment may well have been an attractive option, despite its production being much more involved and expensive. It is also a material which was familiar to late Merovingian scribes and administrators, as it was by then the material of choice for bound manuscripts. In the Latin West, bound manuscripts were regularly written on parchment already in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and the very latest codices on papyrus date from the 7<sup>th</sup> or the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>31</sup>. In the Merovingian kingdom, the use of parchment would have been spread to documents, imported from book production practices.

In the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, as we've seen, the Merovingian chancellery switched to the exclusive use of parchment. The Papal chancellery, however, moved on to a mixed use of papyrus and parchment in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The balance was more and more in favor of parchment, leaving papyrus a seldom used relic, eventually to be abandoned in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>32</sup>.

It is possible to offer an explanation as to why papyrus remained in continued use in the Papal chancellery, while it fell into disuse into the Merovingian chancellery. The Merovingian and the Papal chancelleries answered in different ways a concern over the

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<sup>29</sup>For the numbers, one only needs to compare the number of diplomas from the Merovingian kings to those from Charlemagne, detailed by McKitterick (McKitterick (2008, p. 298)) and footnote 35.

<sup>30</sup>See McKitterick's research (McKitterick (2008, pp. 204-209)) and footnote 35.

<sup>31</sup>Bischoff (1990, p. 8), Bischoff and Gorman (2007, pp. 1-2). Regarding the last two Latin books on papyrus, see Santifaller (1965, pp. 126-128).

<sup>32</sup>Omont (1904, p. 367) lists nine bulls on papyrus found in Gaul, dated 788-1017; these include the letter discussed above. These are also listed in Santifaller (1953). Lewis (1974, pp. 92-93) reports even later bulls on papyrus; these weren't found in Gaul and they date as late as the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

steady procurement of the base materials on which they relied for document production, and therefore, on which the entire administrative structure relied. The Merovingian solution was to produce all of the documents on parchment, a material that could be obtained reliably and locally. The Papal solution was to produce documents mostly on parchment, but to reserve a few to be produced on papyrus perhaps due to a desire to maintain the traditional practice at least in a limited manner. As a result, as the chancelleries developed and their document production increased, the traditions inherited from Antiquity made way for a new, locally produced material that could be reliably obtained, a usage imported from book production. In this way, both chancelleries guaranteed the production of their documents, in steady and ever increasing numbers.

### 5.3 The reuse and survival of Merovingian documents

I will now try to account for the documentary blank of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are references in Gregory of Tours to the document production of the chancelleries of his period<sup>33</sup>. It is clear then that charters were indeed being produced. Clearly, the complex diplomatic apparatus of the 7<sup>th</sup> century could not have sprung up in existence *sponte sua*. Yet the diplomas and charters evidence seemingly does: the first securely dated documents arrive all of a sudden in the 620s and 630s, and they arrive in significant numbers<sup>34</sup>. A related question is how to explain the relative scarcity of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Carolingian charters dwarf the Merovingian ones, in terms of numbers. While there are 32 original diplomas from all of the Merovingian kings, Charlemagne alone yields 164<sup>35</sup>.

Looking beyond charters, it can be observed that the number of sources increases drastically over time, with material from the 7<sup>th</sup> century or earlier being rare, the 8<sup>th</sup> century marking a first swell, and the 9<sup>th</sup> century being a deluge. The estimate that is

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<sup>33</sup>Halsall (2010, p. 236).

<sup>34</sup>Five charters are assuredly dated 640 or earlier.

<sup>35</sup>I obtained the number of diplomas from Charlemagne from McKitterick (2008, p. 298). We can reconstruct the workings of Charlemagne's chancellery using these diplomas, which relied upon an ever-increasing army of notaries; see McKitterick (2008, pp. 204-209).

often cited quotes that there are 1800 manuscript books or fragments that are earlier than 800, most of which are from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, while there are over 9000 such manuscripts from the 9<sup>th</sup> century alone<sup>36</sup>.

The sudden increase in the number of charters mirrors the development of the manuscript books and fragments. This is a generalized trend, not a special case involving only one type of source. This makes it hard to accept explanations for the scarcity of early charters that rely upon changes in municipal archival practices, in poor archival organization, or in the way legal battles were waged<sup>37</sup>, as these explanations cannot be used for other sources than charters. They may have been a factor, but only among others. Alternatively, ‘the growth of Carolingian literate culture’ advanced by Costambeys, Innes, and MacLean (2011, pp. 17-18) to explain the sudden increase in manuscript books under Charlemagne cannot be used to explain the development of charters, as it is clear that even as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries legal disputes relied heavily upon a complex written apparatus, comprising law codes, jurisprudence, and formularies (in the sense of collections of templates for legal documents), in addition to the actual documentation for the case; see Davies and Fouracre (1992, pp. 7-22) and Rio (2009).

McKitterick advances as possible explanation for the scarcity of early sources, including charters, the poor durability of papyrus, coupled with the vagaries of time<sup>38</sup>. Assuredly, chance played a part in the preservation or destruction of documents, but it is an unsatisfying way to explain away completely the silence of the early Merovingian period. It is worth noting that several, if not most, of the surviving papyri are actually quite well preserved; this undermines somewhat McKitterick’s argument. My personal assessment of the condition of the Merovingian papyri is given in Table 5.4; in addition, the Carolingian papyri 629 and 630 are in good shape, while the bull AN L 220 n° is fragmentary. Some of these papyri are very large indeed (well over one meter in some

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<sup>36</sup>Costambeys, Innes, and MacLean (2011, pp. 16-17 and footnote 46).

<sup>37</sup>Halsall (2010, pp. 236-238) argues that the increased reliance upon the written word in legal disputes created the need for better preservation and organization of legal documents after c. 600.

<sup>38</sup>McKitterick (1992, p. 41); this hypothesis is recuperated in Costambeys, Innes, and MacLean (2011, p. 17), as papyrus is a material that turns brittle with age.

Table 5.4: Physical Condition of the Merovingian papyri

Condition	Manuscripts
Poor <sup>39</sup>	549
Fair <sup>40</sup>	551, 552, 553, 555, 556, 557
Good <sup>41</sup>	550, 554, 562, 563, 569, 592
Excellent <sup>42</sup>	558, 559, 560, 561

cases; the largest are two private charters, recording 1530x325mm (569) and 1435x325mm (592)); their bulk no doubt posed additional difficulties for preservation - yet they were preserved.

Examining the particular charters that have survived, it is actually possible to determine why some of them were preserved; this is tied to the use and reuse of documents. In turn, understanding why these particular charters have survived informs us as to why other documents did not make the cut. This, finally, makes it possible to advance an explanation for the lack of very early documents, and the scarcity of 7<sup>th</sup> century ones. Of course, my explanation is meant to add to the suggestions of McKitterick, Costambeys, Halsall and others, as a combination of factors is likely at play.

### 5.3.1 Forgeries and the preservation of the oldest charters

With the exception of the Saint-Martin of Tours accounting documents, all of the Merovingian documents were found at the Abbey of Saint-Denis<sup>43</sup>. The interest of Saint-Denis

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<sup>39</sup>Extensive loss of text, to the point of obscuring nature of document, or significant portions of content. Readability is very poor.

<sup>40</sup>Some loss of text, affecting particular portions of content or throughout. Readability impeded but not impossible.

<sup>41</sup>Occasional loss of text, not extensive. Readability generally not affected.

<sup>42</sup>Little to no loss of text.

<sup>43</sup>Even under Charlemagne, Saint-Denis yields a large portion of the sources; McKitterick concludes that it was able to preserve documents at an exceptional rate. See McKitterick (2008, pp. 198-199).

can almost always be understood. The diplomas are often confirmations of privileges, judgments over disputed possessions or privileges, or donations and wills (see Tables 5.1 and 5.3 for a brief definition of each document; some are also discussed below under 5.3.4). Most documents mention Saint-Denis as an interested party directly. For those that do not, I can still attempt to figure out Saint-Denis' original interest. 592 is a private will that does not mention Saint-Denis directly, as beneficiary or in any other capacity. However, it records a transfer of rights over the Lagny Villa, a property that eventually came to belong to Saint-Denis, but that switched hands between the king's treasury and multiple mayors of the palace<sup>44</sup>. This isn't the only charter found at Saint-Denis that is about the Lagny Villa; in fact, 570 records that Theodoric III grants the villa to Saint-Denis. Saint-Denis kept both 570 and 592 then as it was especially interested in documenting its rights over a particular property.

It is easy to understand why Saint-Denis preserved such documents as wills and donations at least for some hundred years: the properties or privileges granted could be contested, and proper legal documentation would help ensure a winning outcome. However, there is a point after which, for all practical purposes, these documents are no longer relevant. Documents were no doubt kept for some time beyond their perceived usefulness, yet there must have been some processes by which Saint-Denis purged, or, in archival language, 'deaccessed', older documents that had fallen into irrelevance. These documents could then be either destroyed or, perhaps more commonly, reused, as there was still value in the base materials. An institution that only adds to its archives would find itself overwhelmed by the volume of documents. Thus, a good question to ask is not so much 'why are there not more 7<sup>th</sup> century charters' or 'why are there no charters that are earlier still', but: 'why is it that the charters that we do have have even been preserved? Why were they not purged?'

I will now examine the Merovingian charters on papyrus 556, 557, 559, 560, 569 and 592 along with the two Carolingian letters on papyrus 629 and 630. These documents

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<sup>44</sup>The numerous changes of hand are discussed in Rosenwein (1999, pp. 85-88).

form a significant fraction of the entirety of the papyri evidence (6/17 of the Merovingian papyri and the 2 letters on papyrus written under Charlemagne). All of these documents share in common the fact that they were reused as support for forgeries in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The forgeries they bear on their reverse are meant to pass as Carolingian copies of Merovingian charters. These forgeries were put to use in the battles between the bishop of Paris and the Abbey of Saint-Denis over the independence of the latter, and were paraded in front of the king and the Pope as legal evidence (The details of these historical events are listed under 5.3.4.). Ultimately, Saint-Denis won, thanks to the weight of the written documentation it could produce, which included these forgeries.

The Merovingian and Carolingian papyri of this group were preserved all the way to us not on account of the perceived continued legal value of the original documents. It is likely that most, if not all, had become virtually useless for legal purposes well before the 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they were selected for reuse on account of a few factors (see 5.3.4 for detailed discussion). First, they were chosen because their age and content match that of the forgeries. Second, they were picked because they are on papyrus, a material which, as I have explained, was tied to the Merovingian period, and so would help the forgeries to pass as genuinely old. These forgeries were crafted to serve a precise legal purpose, to act as evidence, and, once it had been served, they were preserved as a record. The actual originals no longer mattered.

We can be certain of this. At some undetermined point, which may have been shortly after the production of the forgeries or much later, some of these documents were glued to a parchment backing, in such a way that only the forgeries were visible<sup>45</sup>. The purpose was likely not to hide the original documents specifically but to strengthen the brittle papyrus; see above Table 5.4 and its discussion. However, the fact that they were reinforced thus makes one thing clear: it was the forged documents that were deemed of interest for future consultation, not the originals.

Geary (1994, pp. 112-113) asserts that in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Saint-

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<sup>45</sup>See subsection 5.3.4 and footnotes 71 and 72.

Denis not only created forgeries, but willfully destroyed older documents, so as to rewrite its institutional past. The forgers would have gone out of their way to destroy the older documents that did not fit their needs, effectively making an ‘alternate past impossible’ (p. 113). Following this view, the 11<sup>th</sup> century marked a documentary bottleneck: a significant portion of the earlier documents that were stored at Saint-Denis were sought out and destroyed, leaving only a small number to be transmitted to the next centuries.

My assessment differs from his in a few ways. We both agree that the 11<sup>th</sup> century forgers likely had access to a much larger pool of Merovingian and Carolingian documents than we do now. This is obvious to me based on how well the forgeries match the originals; there must have been a great many Merovingian documents to choose from in order to make this level of fit possible. Geary (Geary (1994, p. 112)), however, did not notice the match; he asserts instead that the forgers did not care about the original documents and that they did not and could not read them on the basis of the difficulty of the Merovingian script and language. The only thing that mattered to the forgers was that these documents were on papyrus. The parchment backing, he holds, would be proof that the forgers meant to hide the originals. I disagree, on the grounds that we cannot determine when the backing was done (it could be much later than the forgeries), that the backing can easily be interpreted as a conservation measure, and that it is apparent that the forgers took a great deal of care in matching the forgeries to the originals (see below under 5.3.4).

Original Merovingian and Carolingian charters were of crucial importance to the forgers. They were valuable well beyond the reuse of papyrus as base material. Genuine charters serve as models for the forgeries, in terms of the paleography, diplomatics, and language<sup>46</sup>. Genuine charters could also be used to strengthen the legal weight of the forgeries. In particular, the confirmations of previous acts were especially favored for that purpose<sup>47</sup>. The confirmations themselves are genuine, but the charters that they confirm

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<sup>46</sup>This is studied below in section 5.3.4. Regarding diplomatics in particular, see Levillain (1926, pp. 259-299).

<sup>47</sup>Levillain (1926, p. 267).

have been doctored; we may speak of a two-process forgery. Alternatively, a genuine confirmation would get recopied in a doctored form. One such example is provided by Saint-Martin of Tours: a spurious copy of a confirmation by Charlemagne dated 775<sup>48</sup>. It was likely crafted by the Abbey in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century to replace the evidence for owned lands and properties that had been lost in the 854 Norman attack of the Abbey of Saint-Martin<sup>49</sup>. This forged confirmation not only follows the diplomatic conventions of the diplomas of Charlemagne, but it contains land information that would have been difficult to fabricate; therefore, it can be said that it relies closely upon genuine original material. Despite being spurious, this act was based upon actual facts, and can then be trusted to recover place-names.

Thus, monastic institutions such as Saint-Denis made a habit of reusing older documents in their practice of forgery. They reused these older documents as base material (papyrus). They modeled their forgeries after the diplomatics and the paleography of older, genuine acts. They recopied and adapted the genuine acts' text. They also relied upon original documents to support the claims to authenticity of the forgeries. This strategy of use and reuse not only relies upon original charters, but is dependent upon them. This is incompatible with a targeted or systematic destruction of original charters.

Could an argument be made that the monastic institutions needed to destroy the smaller number of original charters that directly contradicted the forgeries? This doesn't appear to have been the case. Indeed, it appears from the inventories of the manuscript holdings of Saint-Martin that in the 13<sup>th</sup> century the original confirmation by Charlemagne still existed, along with a copy<sup>50</sup>. In fact, there are cases where it was possible to recover both forgeries and models<sup>51</sup>. This means that the production of a forgery didn't sign the destruction warrant of the original documents that had been its crucible. The monastic

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<sup>48</sup>Gasnault and Vézina (1975, pp. 14-15 and n.3, 193-199).

<sup>49</sup>Gasnault and Vézina (1975, p. 195).

<sup>50</sup>Gasnault and Vézina (1975, p. 193).

<sup>51</sup>Levillain (1926, pp. 262-263). Later Carolingian examples are discussed on pp. 269-270, pp. 272-275, and pp. 276-282. This last case concerns the bull from Formosus (ChLA 630) presented above as one of the very few Carolingian papyri under section 5.1.1 and as Item 6r and 7r below under section 5.3.4.



institutions were not only the repository but the gatekeeper to their charters. They did not need to destroy the documents that did not fit its needs in order to hide them; they only needed not to put them forth. A safer narrative is preferable, then.

Regarding why we do not have any earlier Merovingian charters: we are at the mercy of what the monks of Saint-Denis deemed worth reusing and, thus, preserving. In the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the monks were especially concerned about defending rights over their institutional independence, the antiquity of which went back allegedly to the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>52</sup>. Thus, they selected as support for their forgeries genuine Merovingian acts on papyrus that could fit this period, directly or indirectly; there was no advantage in selecting documents that were earlier still, if indeed there were any such documents at hand. The earlier charters were deprived of a good vehicle through which to survive: as support for forgeries.

Something can also be said about the original charters that are not tied directly to forgeries. Why did they survive? One answer lies in perceived worth, as enduring legal value, or as potential for reuse.

The diplomas produced by kings remained eminently more desirable than most others. Various types of diplomas (royal judgments, grants and confirmations) form the overwhelming majority of the oldest charters on papyrus (13/17). Nine of these are not directly involved in forgeries<sup>53</sup>, while four bear forgeries on their reverse<sup>54</sup>. However, that some diplomas weren't used directly by forgeries doesn't mean that they weren't of interest to forgers. They may have been kept as they could become serviceable, either 1) at face value, to defend the privileges and rights that they confer, 2) tampered with, to grant other privileges and rights, 3) as general models to emulate when fabricating copies of Merovingian diplomas, 4) to buttress the authenticity of forged documents. Confirmations in particular could be repurposed as part of 'two-process forgeries': in a first

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<sup>52</sup>See Section 5.3.4.3 below.

<sup>53</sup>550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 558, 561, 562.

<sup>54</sup>556 557 559 560.

time, the forgers find a genuine confirmation that refers to earlier documents, then, they forge documents that attempt to pass as copies of the earlier documents. Thus, even the diplomas that do not bear forgeries may owe their survival to medieval forgers, who saw value in their potential.

Private letters and private charters are the least likely candidates to maintain an enduring value, and indeed they form only a small fraction of the extant charters (indicating, no doubt, that most were purged). The few private charters that we have were reused in forgeries in nearly all cases<sup>55</sup>.

### 5.3.2 Manuscript reuse in bindings

The Saint-Martin of Tours evidence provides another account of disuse and reuse. Indeed, two groups of 7 or 8<sup>th</sup> century documents were joined in 15<sup>th</sup> century Tours to form part of the binding of a manuscript: a group of accounting documents on parchment discussed above, and a homily in Greek on papyrus; see 5.1.2. As these older documents were no longer felt to be of use, their only leftover value was in their material (parchment, papyrus). Thus, they were made available for reuse. This reuse led to their survival.

Bindings are a good source of reused manuscripts: parchment is a durable and flexible material, perfect as quire or spine reinforcement, or for making pastedowns and flyleaves, or as a wrap for the entire binding, or even by itself to form a soft binding. Notably, the reuse of manuscripts in bindings extends beyond the Middle Ages. Parchment manuscripts were still used in the bindings of books that are written or printed on paper. The UCLA collections contain multiple examples of manuscripts reused in bindings; some of these involve medieval manuscripts, others involve incunabula<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup>569, 592, 629, 630. There are only two other private charters on papyrus that aren't involved in the making of forgeries, 549 and 563.

<sup>56</sup>This list may not be exhaustive.  
170/743: 15<sup>th</sup> century legal documents and jail records, reused in the binding of a printed book. They were found in the 1940s during the book's rebinding and were discarded as trash; one enterprising binder recuperated them and eventually gave them to UCLA; Gauvard et al. (1999).  
100/Box 179 (olim \*100/177, 170/177): 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, in Caroline minuscule, used as centerfold reinforcement, removed from the binding of an incunabulum antiphonal dated 1499.

Gasnault comments that the manuscripts used in bindings are seldom very old<sup>57</sup>; he concludes that the Saint-Martin 15<sup>th</sup> century binding containing 7<sup>th</sup> century documents is rare and unusual, as it involves documents that are very old indeed. The UCLA evidence paints a different picture. It reveals two instances of 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts reused in 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century bindings. The other three instances involve manuscripts that are contemporary or near contemporary to the bindings. It does not appear then that bindings reusing much older manuscripts are an especially rare find, although it does appear that bindings commonly feature reused manuscripts that are contemporary to them.

The predominance of late manuscripts reused in bindings can be explained by the fact that most bindings are late. This is the case even for relatively early manuscripts; their bindings are seldom original. Bindings are the part of a codex that suffers the most wear and that lasts the least long. It is expected that a manuscript will outlast its original binding. The necessary process of rebinding is accounted for in manuscript production: generous margins are left blank around the text so that there would be no loss of text caused by the page trimming that follows rebinding. The finer the manuscript, the larger the margins. Manuscripts commonly show signs of having been rebound several times (trimmed margins, notably).

Binders through the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period would have made use of whatever manuscripts had been discarded. Naturally, a lot of these discarded manuscripts would have been contemporary manuscripts that were not deemed worth preserving. Since most extant bindings are quite late, the reused manuscripts they contain are quite late too: they are contemporary to each other. Still, there must have been manuscripts from earlier periods, which had gotten discarded only then; the binders could make use of these

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170/676: 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, in Beneventan script, removed from a 16<sup>th</sup> century printed book where it served as front and back pastedowns.

A1 H655b 1477: three 15<sup>th</sup> century or later binding fragments, used as pastedowns and as spine reinforcement of a 16<sup>th</sup> century cookbook.

XIV/Ger/3 (olim 100/178): 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, was used as a rear flyleaf in the binding of an incunabulum.

<sup>57</sup>Gasnault and Vézin (1975, p. 2 n. 7), without giving particular evidence.

too. This accounts for the Early Medieval manuscripts found in Late Medieval and Early Modern bindings, such as those found at UCLA, along with the Saint-Martin of Tours evidence.

Of course, a lot of the early documents used in bindings are now lost: the bindings that needed to be replaced were discarded, and, with them, the reused manuscripts that they contained were discarded too. Then, for the most part, we are left with the hodgepodge of manuscript fragments that can be found in Late Medieval and Early Modern bindings.

### **5.3.3 Conclusions on the reuse and survival of Merovingian documents**

I can finally propose an answer to the question brought up at the beginning of this section, about the survival of the Merovingian and Carolingian documents, and, in particular, of those on papyrus. The documents were first preserved in part due to their legal value, and in part due to the excellent archival practices of their host institutions. There was no doubt a natural, quasi-entropic loss of documents over the centuries, which parallels that of bound codices. This loss is in part due to chance (the ‘vagaries of time’). The relatively poor durability of papyrus may well have played a role in this loss. In addition to this, many documents must have been lost to the necessary institutional practice of deaccession, tied to disuse. Some types of documents were deemed more valuable and thus are more likely to endure, such as diplomas of various types, while others were more easily discarded, such as private charters, letters, and administration documents. These documents could be granted a renewed purpose, legal (as part of forgeries, or as source material for potential forgeries) or simply practical (as part of bindings), thanks to which they were preserved through the centuries that followed. The process of reuse helped secure the preservation of very early documents, which would otherwise have gotten destroyed after having fallen into prolonged irrelevance.

### 5.3.4 The reuse of papyrus in the later Middle Ages: Two undated Merovingian wills on papyrus (Erminethrude's will and the will of the son of Idda) and a group of 11<sup>th</sup> century forgeries from the abbey of Saint-Denis

This section<sup>58</sup> proposes a date of ca. 650 for two Merovingian wills. Previous attempts to date these wills have yielded estimates that range from 567 to 710. The wills are part of a group of Merovingian and Carolingian documents on papyrus with forgeries on their backs that were made in the second half of the eleventh century at the abbey of Saint-Denis, in order to support its privileges and its independence from the bishop of Paris. We can observe that the forgeries were crafted systemically, in order to assure the plausibility of the physical object, the plausibility of the contents, and the plausibility of provenance. The presence of a system allows us to fill in the information that is missing about the two Merovingian wills. Since the forgeries on the backs of the wills deal with the abrogation of Bishop Landry's episcopal rights over Saint-Denis in 652, I posit that the wills should be dated ca. 650, since the forgers would have found original documents that matched their forgeries in this precise way.

#### 5.3.4.1 Inventory

Two undated Merovingian wills, known as Erminethrude's will and as the will of Idda's son, have become well-known among scholars as they may be our earliest charter evidence for the Merovingian period, impacting institutional history, the history of legal practices, and Merovingian Latin linguistics. Many attempts at dating these wills have been made, but none has taken into account the impudent forgeries written on the wills' backs, made in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. at the abbey of Saint-Denis. I have reexamined both the Merovingian

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<sup>58</sup>A version of this paper is published in *Viator* 47 n° 2, 2016, pp. 57-66, titled 'Diplomatic mischief, institutionalized deception: Two undated Merovingian wills on papyrus (Erminethrude's will and the will of the son of Idda) and a group of 11<sup>th</sup> century forgeries from the abbey of Saint-Denis'; I offer here a revised version.

originals and the forgeries in the context of a group of related documents, to provide new evidence for dating these wills, and in the process to illuminate the practice and purpose of the forgeries.

Paris, Archives Nationales (henceforth AN) K 4 n° 1/1 (Erminethrude's will) and AN K 3 n° 12 (the will of Idda's son) are privately-issued wills drafted for a Frankish woman and a Frankish man of means, detailing how their respective possessions and slaves are to be distributed after their deaths to the many institutions and individuals they cared about. Both charters are contemporary copies of Merovingian originals, written on papyrus, stored at Saint-Denis. The top few centimeters of both documents have been cut off, leaving us without dates<sup>59</sup>, and, in the case of the second document, without the name of the testator.

Each will has another document copied on its reverse. These documents, however, are forgeries. Paleographical analyses of these two forged documents have pointed out that they are not only linked, but that they are in fact part of a larger group of forgeries on papyrus, made by the same hand under the same direction, and all written on the backs of genuine documents.<sup>60</sup> The connections between these forgeries go well beyond paleography, however, and warrant a closer look. First, this group of forgeries was instrumental in the disputes between Saint-Denis and the bishop of Paris, and so is deeply tied to the institutional history of Saint-Denis. Beyond this, the fact that there is such a group of several forgeries hints at a system, methodical and therefore predictable, which would shed light on the dating of the original documents. Let us first list the documents and

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<sup>59</sup>Different dates have been proposed for Erminethrude's will, situating it anywhere between 567 and 710, based on the institutions mentioned in the will, one of the will's subscribers, or the transaction history of one of the properties mentioned in the will, the Lagny Villa, which became a Saint-Denis possession. I review and discuss these suggestions in detail below, at the end of this section. The will of Idda's son has not received nearly as much scholarly attention. The ChLA dates it from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but elsewhere in the modern scholarly literature it has been listed as before or around 650. It is dated by some as c. 650 or as earlier than 629. I will examine these contentions in detail later in this chapter.

<sup>60</sup>Atsma and Vézin (1999, p. 682), Hessel (1901, pp. 374-375), Levillain (1926, pp. 255-256).

then examine them in more detail.<sup>61</sup> The documents involved are:

- (1) *Recto*: Erminethrude's will (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K 4 n° 1; ChLA n° 592), s.d. [6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> c.], includes a bequest to Saint-Denis;  
*Verso*: a forged copy of a bull of Pope Zachary (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K4 n° 12; Tardif n° 52), dated 757, at the request of Pepin, confirming the privileges granted to Saint-Denis by Landry, bishop of Paris.
  
- (2) *Recto*: the will of the son of Idda (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K 3 n° 1<sup>2</sup>; ChLA 569), s.d. [7<sup>th</sup> c.], includes a property bequest to Saint-Denis;  
*Verso*: a forged copy of a charter (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K3 n° 11; Tardif n° 10), dated 652, in which Bishop Landry abandons episcopal rights and privileges on the territory of Saint-Denis.
  
- (3) *Recto*: a diploma from Clovis II, s.d. [639-642] and a diploma from Chlothar III, s.d. [658-679] (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K2, n° 1 +2; ChLA n° 556 and 557), confirming, respectively, the possessions granted to Saint-Denis by Dagobert I and the sharing of a property between Saint-Denis and the church of Rouen;  
*Verso*: a forged copy of a papal bull from Stephen II (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K5 n° 41 + 42; Tardif n° 57), dated 757, regarding the number and the dress of the deacons assisting Saint-Denis.
  
- (4) *Recto*: a first diploma from Clovis II, s.d. [639-642], a second diploma from Clovis II, dated 657, a diploma from the son of Clovis II (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN

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<sup>61</sup>The originals dated before 800 are available in the ChLA. For the rest, they have been edited in Tardif (1866), with the exception of the highly fragmentary bull by Formosus, for which a transcription is available in Erdmann (1930, pp. 301-306), and the forged bull of Stephen II on its back, edited in Félibien (1706). List and reproductions of the forgeries are available in Atsma and Vézin (1999, pp. 687-699).

K2 n° 4+5; ChLA n° 559 and 560), s.d. [657-688]; the first diploma confirms the possessions of a certain Amanchildis, the second confirms some land holdings for Saint-Denis first granted under Dagobert I;

*Verso*: a forged copy of a papal bull from Leo III (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K 7 n° 162; Tardif n° 98), dated 798, at the request of Fulrad, abbot of Saint-Denis, confirming privileges granted to Saint-Denis under Pope Stephen II.

- (5) *Recto*: a letter to Charlemagne from Maginarius, chaplain to Charlemagne and abbot of Saint-Denis (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K7 n° 9<sup>1</sup>; ChLA 629), s.d. [787 or 788] to report on his aborted trip to Italy to meet with Adrian I;

*Verso*: a forged bull of Adrian I (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K7 n° 8<sup>2</sup>; Tardif n° 84), dated 786, confirming privileges granted to Saint-Denis.

- (6) *Recto*: first fragment of a papal bull from Formosus (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN L 220 n° 3; ChLA 630), dated 893, confirming the properties that were granted to Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald which had been first confirmed by the Pope Nicholas I;

*Verso*: a forged copy of a portion of a bull by Nicholas I (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN L 220 n° 3 (v); Tardif n° 190), dated 863, confirming privileges of Saint-Denis, addressed to Charles the Bald.

- (7) *Recto*: second fragment of the 893 papal bull from Formosus (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN L 220 n° 3; ChLA 630)

*Verso*: a forged copy of a bull by Stephen II (Paris, Archives Nationales, AN K 15, n° 32; Félibien 37), dated 757, confirming privileges granted to Saint-Denis.



#### 5.3.4.2 The forgers' *modus operandi*

These forgeries were created with care and design, by scribes who endeavored to make the counterfeit documents capable of passing under scrutiny<sup>62</sup>. The forgers paid attention to falsifying older styles of script and the particularities of the handwriting of different types of documents<sup>63</sup>. Most importantly the forgers selected documents on papyrus, a material seldom used in the 11<sup>th</sup> c., but typical of older documents. Using papyrus as the material support of the forgeries was an excellent way for the forgeries to pass as genuinely old<sup>64</sup>. While papyrus becomes progressively rarer and rarer past the turn of the millennium, it had been the material of choice for important documents of earlier periods, and especially of the Merovingians<sup>65</sup>.

Beyond the paleography and the use of papyrus as physical support, the forged documents are closely interrelated with each other and with the originals: they interact with the content of the originals and also with the content of the other forgeries. This can be shown by subdividing the group further to highlight how the forgeries were designed and what purpose they serve. Let us start with the most self-contained and straightforward cases.

First, let us examine items 6 and 7. On the recto of these documents are one or two papal bulls by Formosus, dated 893. The text can hardly be read, as the writing is badly faded and is lacunose due to deterioration of the material support, but it is possible to

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<sup>62</sup>On forgeries crafted at Saint-Denis, and their level of refinement, see Levillain (1926), Atsma and Vézin (1999) and Tessier (1946). Finally, as Geary notes, “Forgery was also a venerable tradition in the [Saint-Denis] monastery” - of course, their technique met with limitations, which allow modern paleographers to recognize their work; see Geary (1994, 111 for the citation, 111-113 for a discussion of the practice of forgery at Saint-Denis).

<sup>63</sup>Hessel (1901, pp. 374-375), Levillain (1926, p. 256) and Atsma and Vézin (1999, pp. 682-684) notably, “Ainsi l’autorité qui a présidé à la réalisation de ces sept documents a bien veillé à différencier graphiquement les bulles du privilège de Landri en employant dans les bulles des lettres qu’elle savait caractéristiques de l’écriture curiale. Nous pouvons cependant observer une capacité à distinguer les particularités essentielles des différentes écritures.”

<sup>64</sup>See Atsma and Vézin (1999, p. 679) on the use of papyrus as support for forgeries of Merovingian documents and papal bulls. All in all, there are forgeries on the reverse of ten Merovingian documents, one letter to Charlemagne and the bull of pope Formosus.

<sup>65</sup>Barbier (2003, appendix 2, no. 8).

make out that it is a confirmation by Formosus of the properties granted to Saint-Denis by the emperor Charles the Bald, which had first been confirmed by Pope Nicholas I<sup>66</sup>. The forged document on the reverse of item 6 also deals with Saint-Denis' privileges, and, significantly, also involves Charles the Bald and Nicholas I.

Next, let us examine item 5. On the recto, we find a private letter. Maginarius was the abbot of Saint-Denis from 784 to 793 and the chaplain of Pepin, Charlemagne and Carloman. He was dispatched by Charlemagne as ambassador to Pope Adrian I. This original document is a letter in which Maginarius informs Charlemagne that he was forced to abort his diplomatic mission after he discovered that an assassination attempt was being plotted against him. The letter was written in 787 or 788. The forged document on its reverse is a bull from Adrian I, dated 786, which grants Saint-Denis the power to elect its own abbot, a key privilege in the history of the institution. It is especially remarkable how well the contents of the original and the forgery of item 5 match in terms of dates (786 for the forgery, 787 to 788 for the original), people (Pope Adrian I), and matter (the Saint-Denis abbot/abbacy).

This leaves us now with items 1, 2, 3, 4, and the reverse of 7. Let us start with the originals. They pertain to the possessions of Saint-Denis; the majority of them involve land<sup>67</sup>. It is striking that all four of the originals date from the 7<sup>th</sup> century (or possibly 6<sup>th</sup>, for Erminethrude's will), and in fact they cluster around the middle of the century: the five royal diplomas all range from 639 to 688. This fact takes on significance when the forgeries are taken into account, as follows.

Pope Stephen II figures in three of the forgeries: items 3 and 5 purport to be bulls of Stephen II, and, on item 4, Leon III confirms privileges granted under Stephen II. It is noteworthy that three of the forgeries are dated 757 (the other two being the document by Landry and the bull of Leon III which confirms the privileges granted by Stephen II).

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<sup>66</sup>For historical context, analysis and transcription, see Erdmann (1930). Levillain (1926, pp. 276-282) discusses a possible model.

<sup>67</sup>Erminethrude's will may also involve properties, such as the Lagny Villa, accepting Atsma and Vézin (1990), or else various goods.

This reuse of people, events and dates fits well with the *modus operandi* of these forgeries: by establishing cross-links through the documents, forged and genuine, it was hoped that the credibility of each individual forgery would be strengthened.

The first two forgeries are very closely linked, since one is the confirmation of the other. In the forgery of Item 2, dated 652, the bishop of Paris Landry abandons episcopal rights and privileges over the territory controlled by Saint-Denis. Item 1 is the confirmation that Bishop Landry indeed abandoned these rights. These two forged documents are very important in the history of Saint-Denis: they were evidence that Saint-Denis lay outside the jurisdiction of the bishop of Paris. This was so crucial that the 11<sup>th</sup> century forgers made doubly sure that Saint-Denis be provided with proof of its independence.

#### 5.3.4.3 The forgeries' purpose

In the light of this, it is possible to understand why so many of the originals cluster around the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century: they were selected by the forgers to match the period of the key event mentioned in the forgeries, the abandonment of episcopal rights over Saint-Denis by Bishop Landry, in 652. Studying this collection of documents, genuine and forged, forces us to take a close look at the early institutional history of Saint-Denis. This is how we may answer the question of why these forgeries were produced, and why their elaboration received such care.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, conflicts arose between the monks of Saint-Denis and the bishop of Paris<sup>68</sup>. To argue their case, the monks of Saint-Denis needed to provide evidence of the key institutional privileges it had hitherto been enjoying and the possessions it claimed: its independence from episcopal authority, its right to appoint its own abbot, various other institutional privileges, and its land-based sources of revenue. It was Saint-Denis' claim to independence, however, that lay at the core of the tensions. It is therefore not a surprise to find that the forgeries all deal with privileges and possessions of Saint-Denis. It is equally unsurprising to see such a focus on the independence of Saint-Denis from the

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<sup>68</sup>These quarrels are well known and well-documented; Levillain (1926, pp. 250-255).

bishop of Paris. Nearly all of the originals also deal with the same matters. The need for Saint-Denis to defend its claims with written documentation led to the elaboration of several sets of forgeries, from forged diplomas by Dagobert to forged bulls by Landry, bishop of Paris, and, finally, to forged confirmations by Merovingian rulers and popes that these rights had been granted. An 11<sup>th</sup> century cartulary forms the main repository of these forgeries<sup>69</sup>. The group of forgeries studied in this chapter is smaller in comparison, but significant nonetheless.

In this dispute, the stakes were high indeed, and the matter was brought to the highest jurisdictions; a bull of Pope Alexander II in 1065 and diploma of King Philip I in 1068 ultimately adjudicate in favor of Saint-Denis<sup>70</sup>. The bull tells the story of how the matter was judged: the two parties were brought before the Holy See, to argue their case to an ecclesiastical court. After deliberations, Saint-Denis was deemed the winning party. The bull does not mention whether documents were presented as evidence to the court. However, the diploma of Philip I reveals that written documentation played a crucial role in this dispute: it indeed states as deciding factor that the edicts of the Merovingian and Carolingian rulers and the privileges of the popes and bishops ought to be forever preserved and followed, and mentions specifically the privileges of Bishop Landry. This implies that the documents were either brought to the king and to the pope and paraded as evidence, or else experts were sent to Saint-Denis to see the documents. At any rate, their authority made law.

The 11<sup>th</sup> century scribe (or scribes) who elaborated these forgeries is covering all the bases: plausibility of the physical object, plausibility of the contents, and plausibility of provenance. Of all the genuine documents available at Saint-Denis that the 11<sup>th</sup> century forgers could choose as support, they selected documents that would lead to the most believable forgery. The use of papyrus helped in that. So did the forgers' knowledge of diplomatics and paleography. The forgeries regularly portray the same characters as the originals (Bishop Landry, the same popes, the same emperors, the abbots of Saint-Denis).

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<sup>69</sup>This cartulary has been studied extensively in Levillain (1926).

<sup>70</sup>Levillain (1926, pp. 250-252), Geary (1994, p. 109), Atsma and Vézín (1990, p. 686).

The forgeries also revolve around the same dates as the originals (clustering around the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century: the forged charter dated 652, the genuine royal diplomas, and quite possibly the two Merovingian wills; 757: the forged bull of Pope Zachary, the two forged bulls of Pope Stephen II).

Why are dates, people and events reused? All of the forgeries attempt to pass as 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century copies of 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century originals. If the date of the document copied on the reverse of another document matches the original document in terms of dates or matter, it looks like excellent archival work on the part of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century copyists. It would appear as though the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century copy was recorded at the back of that specific original because they were meant to be stored alongside one another. This would be the reasoning behind the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century royal diplomas (and possibly the two wills) and the Landry privilege and its confirmation, Maginarius' letter, dated 787/8, involving Adrian I, and the (forged) bull of Adrian I dated 786, and the Formosus bulls involving Charles the Bald and Nicholas I and the (forged) bull of Nicholas I involving Charles the Bald and Nicholas I.

Some of the papyrus documents have glue on them<sup>71</sup>: they were turned over and glued either to another papyrus leaf or to a parchment leaf, with the forgery written on the verso. It has been argued that this would show that the forgers' interest in these documents lay only in reusing the papyrus as raw material, and that they did not care for the actual content of these manuscripts, or worse, that the forgers sought willfully to hide the content of the originals<sup>72</sup>.

This is granting the Saint-Denis monks too little credit. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there

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<sup>71</sup>Namely Erminethude's will, the will of the son of Idda, the diplomas of Clovis.

<sup>72</sup>Geary (1994, pp. 110-112); in particular (p. 112): "However, the content of most of these documents, including genuine diplomas of the monastery's great patron Dagobert I, were of little importance to the monastery as it faced the needs of its time. More important was the papyrus on which they were written. Thus [...] the extant Sandionysian papyri became the raw material for creating a new and more usable past for the monastery. They were turned over, the recto sides glued either to pieces of parchment or to the recto sides of other papyri in order to hide their content, and then they were reused to produce diplomas and privileges more appropriate to the needs of the eleventh century." Likewise, Levillain (1926, pp. 257-258): "[...] on songeait à coller les papyrus sur des parchemins, moins certainement pour assurer la conservation de cette matière fragile que pour dissimuler la fraude en soustrayant aux regards les documents anciens dont on avait emprunté la matière subjective [...]."

would no doubt still have been in Saint-Denis a significant collection of older documents on papyrus, which would make it possible for the forgers to select a document as support that best matched the content of their forgery. There is also evidence that, although the old Merovingian script had become difficult to read, it was not impossible<sup>73</sup>. That the dates and people mentioned match so well, along with the nature of the content of both forgeries and originals, points to deliberate intent: either the forgeries were crafted to fit with the originals, or the originals were selected as support specifically because, out of all the papyri available, they fit best with the forgeries. In either case, the originals were read. How else to explain the forged bull of Adrian I, dated 786, on the back of a letter dated 787/8 dealing with an embassy to Adrian I? Or the Formosus bulls involving Charles the Bald and Nicholas I, which bear a forged bull that also involves Charles the Bald and Nicholas I?

The backing should be understood as serving a practical purpose. The scribes glued the papyrus original to another surface to strengthen it, as papyrus is quite friable. These are also very large, unwieldy documents: Erminethrude's will is nearly 1.5 m. long, the two fragments of the bull of Formosus are respectively .80m and 1.52m long. The forged documents were crafted with a purpose in mind, to be presented as evidence to Philip I and to Pope Alexander II, and so the documents needed to be in good enough shape to be transported, handled and examined. A backing made that possible.

Even though the original was glued to a backing, it could reasonably be pried off; making sure the dates and content matched would be one step for the forgers to take to make their forgery more believable. It is also of course possible that the backing on papyrus or parchment was done at a later time than the forgeries, in which case the forgeries and the pasting would be two completely separate, discrete events.

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<sup>73</sup>Both assertions are in fact accepted by Geary (1994, p. 111).

#### 5.3.4.4 Two undated wills

What can this group of forgeries tell us about the dating of Erminethrude's will and the will of Idda's son? Let us first review the dates that have been proposed for the documents, and then I will move on to my proposed dating, explaining how it interacts with the scholarship.

Erminethrude's will is a copy on papyrus of a Merovingian original<sup>74</sup>. We know this from the fact that the document was transcribed in its entirety by only one hand, including the witnesses' signatures. The first few centimeters of the document have been lost, on which the scribe would have noted the date when the original will was produced, and possibly the date at which the copy was made. Although we are dealing with a copy, it was written not long after the original: the paleography is clearly Merovingian<sup>75</sup>. It was produced for and kept by the abbey of Saint-Denis, which eventually came to possess one of the properties mentioned in the will.

The circumstances of the production of this copy are not clear: the simplest explanation is that it could have been made immediately upon receiving the bequest. Its purpose would then have been to act as guarantee to the bequest, in case of further disputes. It is possible that the abbey produced and archived copies of the legal documents that concerned it, even at such an early date, and even for relatively modest bequests (Saint-Denis is not granted property in the will, the main source of income for which disputes could be expected to arise at a later date). The presence of another Merovingian will made and archived by Saint-Denis, the will of Idda's son, suggests that Saint-Denis did regularly produce and catalog copies of documents that concerned it<sup>76</sup>.

Atsma and Vézin (1990), however, propose an alternative theory, according to which the copy was made to commemorate and attest to the transfer of a particular property,

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<sup>74</sup>A reproduction and a transcription of the will of Erminethrude are available in ChLA t. 14, 72-79, no 592. A translation is available in Atsma and Vézin (1999, pp. 818-826)

<sup>75</sup>Atsma and Vézin (1999).

<sup>76</sup>In this will, Saint-Denis does receive property, however. For a list of all the wills from the Merovingian period, see the second appendix of Barbier (2005).

the Lagny Villa, from the basilica of St. Symphorien (to which it was first willed by Erminethrude) in Paris to Saint-Denis<sup>77</sup>. The property would have changed hands several times in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, leading to two potential interpretations: either the will is from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the Lagny Villa could have come to belong to Erminethrude no sooner than 642, or else, more plausibly, the villa left Erminethrude's hands no later than 636/7<sup>78</sup>. At any rate, under this hypothesis, Saint-Denis made a copy of Erminethrude's will to join it to their records of the property's changes of hands, anticipating that there may be a need to produce such a record if the possession of the Lagny Villa came into question<sup>79</sup>. The text of the original, then, would be from the same years or before.

The will has gathered some interest for the numerous churches it mentions. On the basis of the history of these establishments, Laporte (1986) proposed a new, earlier dating. Under this analysis, the text of the will would have been redacted somewhere between 590 and 645 (more likely before 630)<sup>80</sup>. Barbier (2003, pp. 139-143) proposes an even earlier dating for the text, 567-584, based on her identification of one of the subscribers, a certain Mummolus, as a city official in Paris<sup>81</sup>. While plausible, all of these theories are conjectural. The *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* editors remain conservative, situating the will broadly as 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup>For this hypothesis, see also Barbier (2003, pp. 132-135). It is an attractive hypothesis, although there is no hard evidence that would make it more likely than the simpler story of Saint-Denis having made the copy as a matter of course upon being apprised of a bequest made to them.

<sup>78</sup>See also Barbier (2003, pp. 133-134).

<sup>79</sup>How Saint-Denis would have come across the will, however, is uncertain. The basilica of St. Symphorien may have had a copy.

<sup>80</sup>However, the arguments presented to support this dating rest on convergent circumstantial evidence, a weakness conceded by the author.

<sup>81</sup>However, there are several people named Mummolus active in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, none of which, including the one that Barbier selects, bear the actual title mentioned in Erminethrude's will. There are also three other subscribers to the will, all court officials, Munegiselus, Bauducharius, Eusebius, who are not studied by Barbier. If they were identified successfully, they could invalidate or corroborate Barbier's hypothesis (and, if matches can be made, that could possibly narrow down further the possible dates).

<sup>82</sup>17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century scholarship states the dating as being 700-710 without further explanation, ChLA t. 14, 72. This dating is still accepted by some modern scholars, such as Nonn (1982).



I contend that the earliest dating is incorrect. It is most likely that the 11<sup>th</sup> century scribes responsible for the forged documents were able to read the dates of both wills, Erminethrude's will and the will of Idda's son, as the top portions on which they had been written would not yet have been destroyed. When the scribes were looking for a support for their forgery, they took care to find a document that would match it best. We have seen how closely the forgers matched the date of the forgeries to that of the originals (for instance, with Maginarius' letter and the forged bull of Adrian I). As we have seen, the forgeries on the reverse of Erminethrude's will and the will of Idda's son both deal with events set in 652, when Bishop Landry relinquished episcopal rights over the territory controlled by Saint-Denis. I contend that the dating of both wills also matches the dates of the forgeries appended to them, and is thus within a few years of 650. We have seen that in this group of forgeries, people, events and dates are chosen carefully and deliberately, and repeated over and over again. Five other original documents cluster around the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Assuming that the date of the wills was not far removed from 650, then the forger would have made sure that copying a document attesting to the privileges of Saint-Denis granted around 650 on its reverse would look like excellent archival work on the part of the Saint-Denis 9<sup>th</sup> century scribes. It would seem as though the 9<sup>th</sup> century copy of a mid 8<sup>th</sup> century papal bull was recorded on the back of Erminethrude's will because both the will and the bull dealt with Saint-Denis acquisitions made at the same time. The same is true for the will of Idda's son.

This would then lead us to think that we should place the Saint-Denis copy of both wills roughly in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. In this way, then, the apparent authenticity of the forged document would have benefited from the apparent age of the material support, the paleography and of the dates recorded on the original documents.

It is possible that the Saint-Denis copy of Erminethrude's will was made not upon receiving the bequest but for a separate occasion (as per Atsma and Vézin (1990), who assert that the copy of the will was made at a later date to document a property transfer). It is preferable to hold c. 650 to be the date of the original will, over the date at which

the Saint-Denis copy was made. It is certain that the date of the original will would have been recopied on the now lost top portion of the document, but it is less than certain that the date at which the copy was made would have been recorded. This would make it impossible for the forgers to match the date of the copy. We have also seen that the forgers prefer to match the dates of the events mentioned in the originals.

Still, it is not impossible that the forgers may have matched the date of the making of the Saint-Denis copy of the will. In this case, c. 650 could be the dating for both the original text of the will and the making of the copy. Following Atsma and Vézin (1990), the text should be dated earlier than 636/7; this is close enough to c. 650 to fit. Laporte (1986) suggested a date range of 590-645 for the text of Erminethrude's will based on the institutions mentioned in the will. Likewise, the upper boundary of Laporte's date range would be compatible with my analysis.

The date range suggested by Barbier (2003, pp. 567-584) is too early to fit c. 650. It is possible that the copy should be dated c. 650, but the text could be earlier, perhaps as early as Barbier suggests. In this case, the 11<sup>th</sup> century forgers would have matched the forged documents to the date of the making of the Saint-Denis copy of the will, not to the original date of the will. However, it appears more likely that the forgers would match the date of the original document, which alone holds legal value, and which is the only set of dates that we can believe was assuredly written down.

An early dating for our two wills impacts Merovingian Latin linguistics and institutional history. The earliest dated Merovingian charters are from the 620s. A 6<sup>th</sup> century document would therefore be remarkable. However, it appears more likely that the text of both Erminethrude's will and the will of Idda's son should be dated c. 650.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions

In this chapter, I summarize my results and situate them in the broader debates of the field. I also point out ideas for future work. There are three types of results. The first are results that are of interest by themselves; they inform us about a new aspect of language, material culture etc. Others are of interest when set against the conclusions of others; my results either corroborate or go against particular scholars or commonly held assertions. Finally, there are methodological advancements. These are new methods that I have developed, or methods that I have refined, and which may benefit other datasets.

There are two distinct parts to this dissertation. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 dealt with inscriptions, while Chapter 5 dealt with documents. My conclusions follow this structure.

#### 6.1 Epigraphy

- (1) The repercussions of the fall of the Roman Empire on language: a watershed moment followed by decadence?

The epigraphic data is clear on this: it does not support any watershed moments, at the fall of the Roman Empire or at any other points. It does not appear that political events led to measurable repercussions on language, either overall or at a finer-grained linguistic-feature specific level.

I took all of the linguistic features together as an aggregate and traced the development of this aggregate measurement. This produced a curve that showed a slow, progressive increase in the total number of vulgarisms found in the inscriptions. This is presented in Section 2.2.1.3 and illustrated with Figure 2.20, which I reproduce here (Figure 6.1) for

convenience.

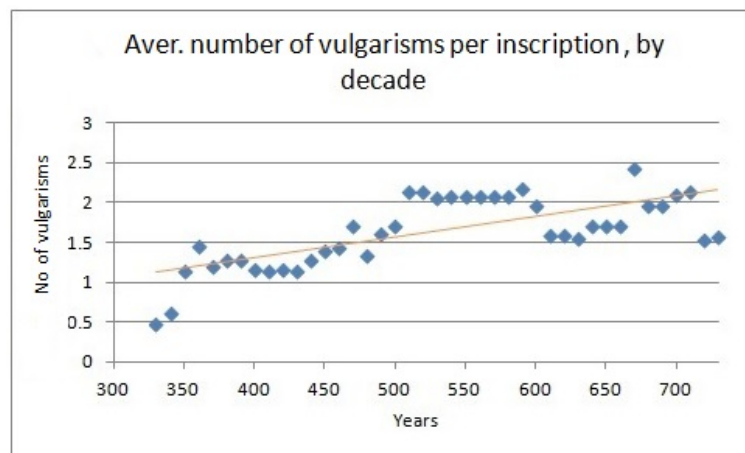


Figure 6.1: Trier: Weighted average number of Vulgar Latin features by decade

This aggregate measurement offers an indication of the general trend of the development of the language. However, it is desirable to track independently the various linguistic features, as this gives a finer-grained analysis of language change. This is so because the different aspects of language evolve at their own speed.

I mapped the development of the linguistic features for which there is enough data: the curves trended towards a slow increase, a marked increase, no increase, or else showed no discernible trend; this is detailed in Section 2.2.2. As illustration, I reproduce the decade-by-decade development trends of the *i/e* (very slow increase) and the *o/u* (marked increase) mergers in the Trier data, first presented in Sections 2.1.4.1 and 2.1.4.2.

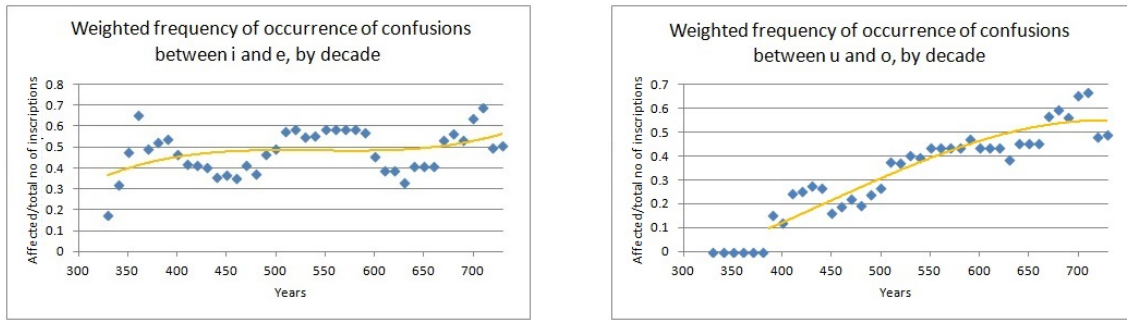


Figure 6.2: Comparison development trends of two VL features (i/e and o/u confusions)

I did not observe sudden spikes at any point and for any features; this further supports my assessment that there were no watershed moments.

My conclusions go against the traditional tales of decadence that are attached to the fall of Rome and to the Merovingian period. This traditional narrative is nowadays being questioned, but it is still pervasive. This is treated at length throughout Chapter 2, but Sections 2.1.2.6 and 2.5 are dedicated to this issue specifically. I go against the Trier inscriptions' editor, Gauthier, who had mapped out language developments as two discrete tallies that took for granted that 450 AD was statistically significant. This obscures the fact that the changes are in fact progressive, and that there are no watershed moments.

(2) Merovingian sociolinguistics and linguistic norm perception: a parallel approach to the chronological

At a given point in time, in a given population, language is used differently by the different communities of speakers. This is best exemplified by the high-style literary inscriptions found in especially large numbers in *Aquitania Prima* (treated in Sections 3.2 and especially 3.2.2), and, to a lesser extent, the more humble literary inscriptions of *Aquitania Prima* (treated in Section 3.2.3) and Trier (treated in Sections 2.3 2.4). These two subgroups of inscriptions (the 'high-style literary' and the 'literary') feature different sets of characteristics that distinguishes them from the majority of the inscriptions.

I determined, from the enduring presence of both types of literary inscriptions across regions, that there was a literary tradition among the higher social classes that resulted

in a particular type of funerary poetry. This can be tied to the performative, societal role accorded to burials, and in particular, to the cult of saints and local prominent ecclesiastics, as some of these inscriptions can indeed be tied to cults.

The high-style literary inscriptions successfully avoid most or all of the vulgarisms. They adhere to the CL norm, then, and, in addition, they follow the modes of expression and metrics of CL poetry. They were penned by identifiable key literary figures of the period, who were bishops that shared a Gallo-Roman aristocratic background.

The literary inscriptions of Trier and *Aquitania Prima* can usually be tied to the lower-ranked clergy, but, at later periods usually, also to the higher-ranked ones. These inscriptions mimic the high-style literary inscriptions, but fail to respect the CL norms and metrics, reverting partially or in full to the Merovingian usage of language and to early medieval rhythmic poetry. However, the profile of their vulgarisms differs from that of the general corpus. Certain types of vulgarisms appear to have been avoided, indicating that there may have been a hierarchy within the language, with some vulgarisms having been fully integrated to the written language and thus being acceptable to use, and others being marked as decidedly vulgar; this is treated in Sections 2.2.2.1, 2.4.2 and 4.2.3.10.

The vulgarisms that remain commonly encountered in the literary inscriptions are the most widespread ones, such as those affecting vowels (monophthongizations, mergers). However, the following are noticeably rarer in the literary inscriptions than in the rest of the corpus; syncope, prothetic vowels, palatalization and consonant cluster simplifications. I derive from this that mergers and monophthongizations had been integrated to ‘good’ written Merovingian Latin much more readily, and thus are as common in the ‘regular’ written language as in the ‘more educated, literary’ language, and are found in fact in all but the most rarefied and learned of poetry (the high-style compositions). The vulgarisms that remained discriminated against in the written language were especially discriminated against in the educated language, leading to a much lower prevalence than expected.

Finally, the regular nonliterary inscriptions constitute the vast majority of inscriptions (95% in Trier). These feature the most vulgarisms. These give the baseline for each period.

What may have been below this —the truly ‘vulgar’ or even the spoken register —can be glimpsed at in personal names. These occasionally feature vulgarisms that are otherwise unattested in the corpora, such as prothesis and palatalizations. The stonecutters must have written these in order to reproduce the actual pronunciation of the person’s name, but otherwise avoided writing them. This is treated in Sections 2.1.4.4 and 4.2.2.1.

(3) Merovingian Latin regionalization: a north/south divide?

Trier Latin remains remarkably conservative even at a very late date. My assessment of Trier Latin is that it is in general more conservative than *Aquitania Prima*, as the inscriptions of *Aquitania Prima* feature more vulgarisms than those of Trier at the same period. This can be observed by examining side by side the Figures of the better attested vulgarisms, which allow for a statistical evaluation, such as the i/e merger (2.1.4.1 and 3.1.4.1), the o/u merger (2.1.4.2 and 3.1.4.2), and the monophthongization of /ae/ (2.1.4.3 and 3.1.4.3). There is an important caveat: the *Aquitania Prima* evidence only covers a short period, and only does so with relatively few data points. It would be worthwhile if similar studies to mine were to be carried out on additional inscription clusters from the north and the south of Gaul, in order to provide comparative conclusions that are more secure.

This conservativeness on the part of Trier is not restricted to language; it is reflected also in the continuous use of the late antique formulary, or collection of set phrases used in epigraphic language. The formulary indeed remained in common use all the way to the 8<sup>th</sup> c. in Trier. However, in *Aquitania Prima*, the formulary was at all periods looser. This is treated in Sections 2.1.3 and 3.1.3.

This goes against the traditional north-south divide, according to which the less Romanized north did away with the Roman culture and CL linguistic norm soonest. According to my view, this thesis is an attempt to project on to the early middle ages the divide between the *langues d’oïl* and the *langues d’oc* dialect continua, found in Old French and later. It is necessary to do away with this divide at the Merovingian period, unless data

can be adduced that would support it. As it is, the data supports instead the dialect geography model of a conservative periphery and an innovative center.

The traditional north-south divide could still be possible, but the hypothesis must be reworked in order to exclude the large city centers of the north, such as Trier, which, under this revised view, would have been enduring bastions of Roman culture. According to this revised hypothesis, the northern city centers remained conservative, while the country innovated, and this innovation eventually took over. However, this is an hypothesis that is very difficult to prove or disprove, as the country yields extremely few inscriptions compared to the city centers. Without a significant enough number of inscriptions from the country, it is impossible to tell whether its Latin differed from that of the cities. The more secure quantitative assessments require the largest amount of data; but even a simpler qualitative assessment is impossible if there isn't enough data. We will have to wait until the rest of the RICG volumes are out to see what the other regions, cities and country alike, yield.

Importantly, the same vulgarisms are found in both Trier and *Aquitania Prima*. Likewise, the same vulgarisms are missing in both sections (such as simplification of [ks]; see Sections 2.1.4.6 and 3.1.4.6). There is little to no evidence of regionalization.

#### (4) Dating using linguistic features: the use of the S-shaped curve

While the theory is simple (certain linguistic features are only found late; therefore inscriptions that contain these must be late), the application is thorny. This is discussed in Sections 2.5 and 4.3.

The simplest way to go about doing this would be to find the earliest attestations of a feature, and to say that any undated attestations are likelier to be later than this. I propose to refine this model.

The diffusion of a linguistic feature generally follows an S-shaped pattern: the attestations are at first extremely rare, then they increase drastically in prevalence, and then, once the feature reaches maturity, the curve flattens again. It is possible, provided there



is enough evidence, not just to find the earliest attestations, but to evaluate the profile of the S-shaped curve. The swell in frequency of occurrences (the middle part of the ‘S’) provides us with a probabilistic indicator that we can use for dating purposes.

In order to carry this out, we need to retrieve all of the attestations of a linguistic feature. We then need to map out the variation over time in the frequency of occurrence of the attestations. This will yield the general development of the feature within a corpus.

The earliest attestations within a corpus form a relative onset, valid for that corpus. However, it is likely that there are earlier attestations still outside of the corpus. These can be searched for in the corpora of other regions and of earlier periods. It is desirable to find them, as this helps situate more broadly the relatively small window into the development of a feature that any one corpus can yield.

Features that are beginning to diffuse (the lower part of the ‘S’) find very few attestations. In order to sketch the very early development of these features, it is good to search across corpora for early attestations, as any one corpus alone is unlikely to contain more than a few attestations, if any. However, if several regions yield a few very early attestations, then we have solid evidence for the very early history of this feature.

However, such a search across corpora may yield forms that result from a variety of unrelated linguistic processes, and it would be unwise to conflate them together. This is more likely to occur if comparing evidence that is separated by centuries. For this reason, it is important to keep in mind the general history of the Latin language, and not just search for particular patterns.

In order to illustrate this method, I’ve taken two examples of linguistic features that are at very different stages of development; these are presented in Sections 4.2.3.3 and 4.2.3.4. 1) The  $\text{ĭ}/\bar{\text{e}}$  merger, which is in a mature stage already in Trier, shows only the flattened out portion of the S-curve. 2) The  $\bar{\text{o}}/\bar{\text{u}}$  merger, which is much earlier in its development, shows the S-curve pattern nearly in its entirety. As for the very early history of the  $\text{o}/\text{u}$  merger, I have offered an estimate, based upon my statistical model and based upon comparanda from Republican and Imperial Gaul and Italy.

We can use the method I have just presented to make predictions about undated attestations. Any undated attestation featuring i/e confusions could come from any point in the span that is covered by our corpora, and in fact, *ceteris paribus*, could technically predate our corpora by quite a bit. This is so because we know that this feature has already reached maturity. We would need earlier corpora in order to determine when the swell in frequency of occurrence occurred; this would then provide a better estimate for the earliest likely dating. As for the o/u confusions, we can see when this swell occurred. We therefore have this dating estimate.

(5) Most vulgarisms actually predate Late Vulgar Latin; except when they do not

A major failing of the study of Gauthier is that she took Trier Latin in isolation, losing track of general Vulgar Latin developments. She conflates the relative onset of features (namely, the onset within a corpus of the attestations of a particular linguistic feature) with the time at which they sprung up in the history of Latin, resulting in her regarding certain vulgarisms as early medieval, when in fact there is ample evidence that they are much earlier. This is treated in Sections 2.1.2.6 and 2.5. In order to avoid this mistake, throughout this dissertation, I have situated each linguistic feature within the development of the Latin language, in addition to the corpora's relative onsets and distribution of prevalence.

This has led me to single out certain vulgarisms as being mostly or entirely late (palatalizations, degeminations, the o/u merger). I reserved a more detailed comparative treatment in Chapter 4 for those 'late' vulgarisms. It emerges that none of them, by themselves, are a sure telltale of lateness. Nearly all of these found some not-quite-late attestations.

It is necessary to distinguish between different subtypes of palatalizations and degeminations (e.g. dental vs velar palatalizations), as the different subtypes do not necessarily date from the same period. Beyond this, there are special cases. Notably, degeminated spellings involving Greek loanwords are especially early. These actually result from koine developments, and not from Vulgar Latin developments; see Section 4.2.1.

It is necessary to distinguish between linguistically- and secondarily-linguistically motivated misspellings, as this affects the certainty of dating estimates. / $\bar{o}$ / written as <u> and / $\bar{ö}$ / written as <u> are primarily linguistically-motivated, as evidenced by a wealth of Vulgar Latin evidence and by the Romance developments. We know that these types of o/u confusions reflect *bona fide* vocalic mergers. However, the late instances of / $\bar{ö}$ / written as <u> were created in analogy to linguistically-motivated o/u confusions; these are secondary developments. This type of mistake is only likelier to happen at a later date, but could reasonably occur at any point after the S-curve swell in the merger's attestations.

## 6.2 Documents

### (6) Isolating and motivating the transition from papyrus to parchment

The earliest Merovingian documents are on papyrus exclusively. The latter ones are on parchment. I showed that the royal chancellery first transitioned to parchment as part of an institutional reform in the 670s. I explained that this reform provoked the adoption of parchment in the next decades of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. among institutional and private practice, affecting private correspondence last. This is treated in Sections 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.5. The finer-grained details of the transition from papyrus to parchment allowed me to lay out codicological grounds by which to date and attribute documents, presented in Section 5.2.2.1.

### (7) Explaining the silence of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> c., and the relative scarcity of Merovingian documents: reuse and deaccession

An outstanding question is how to explain the documentary blank that precedes the 620s, and the sudden appearance of a relatively large number of charters in the decades that followed. This is treated in Section 5.3.

I have shown that a large portion of the Merovingian evidence that has survived did so because it was reused in the making of forgeries in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. These forgeries

dealt with events that allegedly took place in the 650s. The forgers took pains to select documents from that period to serve as support for their forgeries. The Merovingian documents were preserved on account of their renewed legal value, resulting from the forged documents that they bear; this explains why they were preserved with such care. Hence, the documents that were not from the decades that are close to the 650s were deprived of a good vehicle through which to survive, and were destroyed.

The documents that did not survive were most likely not destroyed due to institutional rewriting of history, as had been suggested by Geary (1994, pp. 112-113). This can be shown by the examination of the medieval process of forgery, which called upon a very intricate interplay between originals and forgeries, and which forced institutions to keep on preserving older documents. These documents were most likely not lost massively to material destruction, as had been suggested by McKitterick (1992, p. 41); the extant papyri are indeed almost all in very good shape. Instead, I propose that the archival process of deaccession was at play: documents that cease to be useful must eventually be purged by their host institution.

#### **(8) Dating Merovingian documents using later medieval forgeries**

I detailed the systematized process by which forgeries were made in the later Middle Ages, and how interwoven the forgeries were with the original. In turn, I was able to use the forgeries to fill in missing information about the Merovingian originals, such as dates. This is done in Section 5.3.4.

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