

Official and Unofficial Latin Words in 11th- and 12th-Century England

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EARL AND THEGN, SHIRE AND SHERIFF, are English terms of considerable importance for the governance of England in the 11th century. I say ‘terms’ advisedly to reflect the precise sense of what they denote, because, although all three words carry a range of possible meanings, they are also part of what we must call official terminology. Putting such terms into Latin demands the creation of equivalent terms out of the Latin word-hoard, and it is well established that the Latin terminology of Anglo-Saxon England before the Norman Conquest was different from the Latin terminology adopted in England after the Conquest. The intentional replacement of pre-Conquest terminology with words current in the Latin of Normandy was driven more by the susceptibility of the older usage to misunderstanding than by any partiality to what was more familiar.

What is less well understood is what any deviations from accepted terminology in Latin may represent both before and after the Conquest. This chapter will highlight a range of words intentionally used as substitutes for official terminology. It is straightforward for a dictionary to observe official usage by marking it as a definable sense, but it is more difficult to deal with words whose meaning has been temporarily appropriated because the writer chose not to use the official word. This comes down to recognising that one word has been used in place of another and therefore understanding, behind the substitute word, the sense of the word not used. The observation that different writers may substitute different words for the same term introduces a level of complexity that challenges orderly lexicography. Yet lack of guidance on such points has left editors insecure and translators floundering.

1. Terms in Official Use Before and After the Conquest

Before turning to examples of substitution, I set out the official terminology. Old English *þegen* ‘thegn’ was rendered into Latin as *minister* by the draftsmen

of Edward the Confessor's chancery, defining the status of thegns who attested the king's diplomas. This was a Latin usage very long established in England and justified by etymology from the verb *þegan* 'to serve': a thegn served the king. After the Conquest, the Latin word that takes its place in the usage of the Chancery is *baro*, Anglo-Norman *baron*, 'worthy man', which carried the appropriate connotations of a man of high status in the current Latin of Normandy, where *minister* would not be understood in the appropriate way; instead of learning that it had a defined high-status sense in England, Normans saw only its wider meaning, a servant of one kind or another. So, *minister* before the Conquest, *baro* after the Conquest are terms in the official Latin vocabulary for the same person of rank. One was equated with the other, though speakers of English continued to use thegn and speakers of French continued to use *baron*, so that the one translates the other in either direction. Contextual replacement is, in fact, limited. In Latin diplomas *minister* was added after the name of an attesting thegn, but *baro* is never used in this way, nor perhaps any other word to reflect thegnly rank. The one possible exception is a charter for St Martin's Minster in London, dated at Whitsun 1068; after the attestation of earls, two names are followed by the word *princeps*, where 'thegn' is my best guess at the sense (*Act. Will. I* 181 p. 599). When royal writs changed their language from Old English to Latin, after May 1070, instead of greeting 'alle mine þegenas' of a particular shire, the king greeted 'omnibus baronibus suis' (with change from first person to third). Two later writs, both apparently authentic, surprisingly retain the Old English word with a Latin termination: 'omnibus thegnis suis' (1078 × 1083, *Act. Will. I* 160), 'taignis de Hereford' (1087 × 1091, *Regesta* 335a). It is rare to find *baro* in the singular, though a legal treatise perforce uses it: 'Si quis baro comitatus contra uicecomitem placitet', 'unusquisque baro uel thainus' (*Leg. Hen.* 30. 1, 41. 1b). Of course thegn and baron are not perfect equivalents, even in their contemporary context, because each term was rooted in its own society, but the Conquest brought mingling of fact as well as language. And we should be wary of the modern word baron, which only later came to be narrowly defined as a particular degree of rank.

Dux and *comes* are another comparable pair of words, both representing in England the term earl. English *ealdorman* and *eorl* were conventionally *dux* in pre-Conquest Latin. While a Norman user of Latin would think *minister* too lowly for baron, *dux* was too exalted a word for earl. After the Conquest, in the year 1067, we see *dux* used in the old way, so that a Norman act for the abbey of Jumièges was attested by the English earl Waltheof as *dux* (*Act. Will. I* 159), and in 1068 an English diploma for Worcester by Normans newly appointed to English earldoms, 'Willelmus dux', 'Rocgerus dux' (*ibid.* 345). Still in 1068, Earl Waltheof and Earl William fitz Osbern attest for Wells Cathedral as *dux* (*ibid.* 286), but in 1069 in a diploma for Exeter Cathedral

earls from both nations are styled *comes*, ‘Rodbertus comes’, ‘Eduuinus comes’ (ibid. 138). From then on *comes* is the standard word for English earl and for French count in Latin official documents.

The replacement of *minister* by *baro* and of *dux* by *comes* released the Latin words used before the Conquest for new uses after it. In official use *dux* was rare, retained only at the higher level, the duke of the Normans, the duke of the Aquitanians, the duke of Brittany, all of this without prejudice to its unofficial uses in line with the classical and international senses of the word. The word *minister* remained common in official language as the term for the king’s officials below the rank of sheriff around the English shires. It represented the English reeve and the Norman bailiff until *balliuus* was imported alongside *minister*. Before the Conquest such men are barely visible in documents in Latin, but I should say that the word used was usually *praepositus*. This word may be regarded as having a wide range of senses, but it retained the terminological sense of reeve in rural contexts and in urban or burghal contexts it can be equated with the French import *prevost*, provost (which derived from it), while it also has ecclesiastical senses that need not concern us in this discussion. The alternative early usage was *praefectus*, which shows similar development but is less commonly found. The post-Conquest use of *dux* and *minister* was a subsidiary consequence of the change in core terminology.

Two other terms are institutionally important and also show this kind of replacement, though it is less transparent. In Old English the *scirgerefa*, ‘shire reeve’, was the man at the top of a pyramid of royal officials in a shire, but his appearance in Latin documents is hard to detect. Two of King Æthelred’s sheriffs are called *praepositi* in 995, ‘Æpeluuig meus prepositus in Bucingaham et Winsige prepositus \on/ Oxonaforda’ (S 883), and it is perhaps likely that another lies behind ‘prefectum meum’ (S 926) in 1012. Only direct association with a shire differentiates sheriff from reeve if the same Latin word is used for both. After the Conquest the sheriff is viewed in relation to the earl and styled *uiccomes*, though the roles and relationship of *uiccomes* and *comites* in England are different from those of *visconte* and *conte* in Normandy. In an official context we have seen *dux* in two diplomas from 1068, but a third from that year introduced *comes*; in two of these diplomas sheriffs are styled *minister*, ‘Urs minister’, ‘Osebearn minister’, as if sheriffs were like other reeves, but this was a short-lived transitional use as the conquerors defined their terms (Sharpe 2016). The higher status *uiccomes* is first seen in England in 1069 in the diploma for the bishop of Exeter, following examples of *comes* and preceding a few reeves from both nations, now styled *minister*, ‘Leofnoðus minister’, ‘Hugo minister’, ‘Raulfus minister’ (*Act. Will. I* 138). There is clearly thought behind this as the Normans came to understand or redefine the role of the sheriff.

Linked with the Norman emphasis on *comes* and *uicecomes* the shire itself is usually Latinised as *comitatus* ‘county’, sometimes as *uicecomitatus* ‘shire’ rather than ‘shrievalty’, ‘in uicecomitatu Estsexse’, ‘in uicecomitatu Northfolc’ (HERM. ARCH. 9, 36). This particular use may reflect the disappearance of earls from most shires and their replacement in the shire court by the sheriff. The English word *scira* appears in post-Conquest Latin, conspicuously in Domesday Book, for example, ‘homines de scira non portant testimon(ium)’ (DB I 141ra). It continues long after this in connexion with the name of the shire and still longer with reference to the duty of attendance at shire courts. A rare example sees the two words in parallel: ‘si in eodem comitatu sit, ...; si in alia scira sit, ...’ (Leg. Hen. 41. 2a). The Latin for a shire in pre-Conquest England is not so consistent, but *prouincia* is commonly used, ‘in prouincia Midelsexorum [*Middlesex*] in regione que dicitur Geddinges [*Yeading*]’ (S 100), ‘in prouincia Cantiae [*Kent*] in regione Eastrgena [*Eastry*]’ (S 128), but contrast ‘in regione Suðregie [*Surrey*]’ (S 1438), ‘in regione que nominatur Suthfolca [*Suffolk*]’ (S 1639), now using *regio* for shire. Divorced from the territorial name, *prouincia* and *regio* may not be recognised as likely to denote a shire. Both words continue in unofficial use after the Conquest as classical words that could and would be understood as ‘shire’, and alongside them a French usage was also naturalised, *pagus* for AN *pais*. So, where William of Malmesbury writes ‘pagus Warwicensis’ (W. MALM. *Wulfst.* I 1), John of Worcester writes ‘in prouincia Warewicensi’ (J. WORC. 588). Henry of Huntingdon used the Latin word as a gloss on the English word, ‘per quamquam sciram, id est prouinciam, Anglie’ (H. HUNT. *HA* VI 36).

The consistency of post-Conquest *uicecomes* and *comitatus* as the official words contrasts with the less well-defined, perhaps less official, vocabulary before the Conquest; variations are all the more likely to be treated as differing in sense rather than just in wording substituted for the ordinary terms.

The circumstances that gave rise to the change in official language no doubt faded to a considerable degree over time. Within a generation or two it is difficult to take a clear view on the ethnic lines that may have persisted in Anglo-Norman society. If in the reality of life after Conquest English thegns and Norman barons appear less and less distinct in our sources, this may be in part because the new terminology took the place of the old. Latin texts and French texts predominate over English texts, but the Peterborough chronicler in 1124 still wrote of the king’s thegns alongside Henry I’s justice Ralf Basset, ‘Des ilces geares [...] held Raulf Basset 7 þes kinges ðæines gewitenemot on Leþecæstrescire at Hundehoge’ (ASChr (E) 46). In English speech thegns lived on undocumented, and it is not possible to know when *baron* was first adopted into English. Written sources in Old English run out, leaving a gap in the record; Middle English *baroun* is not attested for another century, so AN *ber*, *baron*, and Latin *barones* appear dominant as the word takes on a

narrower definition in the 12th and 13th centuries. Earl continued to be the English term for a French count, whether or not the count had come to England; conversely AN *cuens*, *conte* is the term for an English earl in French speech and writing; but in Latin *comes* is the one word used in royal documents.

This is official terminology, and the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* ought to recognise the distinct pre- or post-Conquest senses of *baro*, *comes*, *comitatus*, *dux*, *minister*, *praefectus*, *praepositus*, *prouincia*, and *uiccomes* as they are used in official documents and more widely. The first four and the last two are accorded numbered senses, but *minister*, *praefectus*, and *praepositus* were less satisfactorily treated, a reflection of the way in which the Dictionary for some time moved away from historical context towards a looser linguistic approach.

2. Substitution of Classical Latin Words

Latin words different from official usage in England after the Conquest are substituted in several distinct contexts. One extraordinarily rich seam for observing administrative vocabulary is provided by the records of the Domesday survey of England, between primary records produced by groups of clerks in different parts of England and the more systematic work of the scribe who edited and wrote Great Domesday Book. Analysis of the variation in terminology found in this large and complex body of sources may be read elsewhere (Thorn 2016). A simple illustration of substitution, however, is provided by Bishop Robert Losinga's restatement of what the survey provided: 'totius Angliae facta est descriptio in agris singularum prouinciarum, in possessionibus singularum procerum, in agris eorum, in mansionibus, in hominibus [...]' (Stevenson 1907: 73–4). Here *agri* stands for hides, *prouinciae* for shires, *proceres* for barons, and *mansiones* for manors, all terms for which the scribe of Great Domesday Book would have used words with no place in Classical Latin. It would be difficult to understand Robert's description if we had not the Domesday records themselves.

3. Translations as a Control for Sense in Context

Now for our key terms of earl and thegn, shire and sheriff, the clerks of the Domesday survey mainly used the official vocabulary. We need to determine what words make up the alternative or unofficial vocabulary that could be substituted for the official terms. We have no very obvious Latin–Latin paraphrase to turn to, but translations between Old English and Latin provide one

route towards answering the question. By observing Latin words used to express an English word in the constrained context of translation or close following of a source, we can expect to learn their contextual uses. This helps to prepare us for reading the same words in texts where writers were free to pick their own vocabulary, so that we can improve our chance of recognising when a word is used in a contextually specific sense.

Examples will serve to illustrate this. So, under the year 1066, John of Worcester writes: 'Haroldus, Goduini ducis filius, ... a totius Anglie primatibus ad regale culmen electus' (J. WORC. 600). McGurk has translated this 'was elected by the primates of all England to the dignity of kingship', no doubt to alert readers of the translation that an unusual word was used in the Latin. John was following a Latin translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but in the Old English texts available to us now there is no matching phrase. Another derivative of the same Latin text differs in just one word, 'a totius Anglie principibus ad regale culmen electus' (S. DURH. HR 179). Stevenson's translation gives 'by the princes of all England elected to the royal dignity' (Stevenson 1855: 544). Stevenson no more thought princes were the electors than McGurk thought primates were, but each opted for the closest English word rather than asking what was meant in the context. Of course one should also ask how often these two words are used in their respective sources, but there is no ready answer. Simeon's reading is surely secondary, a sign that he thought 'primatibus' misleading but 'principibus' perspicuous. If we try to envisage their Old English source, two words appear likely, 'þæm heafodmannum' ('by the chief men') or 'þæm þegnum' ('by the thegns'). How close the two words are in import I hesitate to judge. For the election of the king, however, one may think rather of 'þæm wítum' ('by the wise men'), that is by the great council of the land, made up of those of high office and high rank. In a narrower context, one writ of Edward the Confessor from Bury St Edmunds has 'alle mine þeynes on Norfolke and on Suffolke', Latinised, with north and south reversed, as 'cunctisque primatibus australibus et aquilonaribus' (S 1068). A letter of King Cnut, written in English in 1027 but preserved only in post-Conquest Latin, is addressed to the two archbishops by name 'omnibusque episcopis et primatibus et toti genti Anglorum tam nobiles quam plebis' (W. MALM. GR II 183. 1; J. WORC. 512–18; GAS 276–7; Conc. Syn. 506–13). Winterbottom has translated this as 'to all his bishops and chief men', McGurk as 'to all his bishops and leading men', but a comparison with an earlier royal letter, from 1020, in Old English, points towards a more restricted sense: 'Cnut cyning gret his arcebiscopas 7 his leodbiscopas 7 Þurcyl eorl 7 ealle his eorlas 7 ealne his þeodscype, twelfhynde 7 twyhynde'. Between bishops and people (*þeodscype*), high and low, the English letter has earls, and by analogy this may be the sense of 'primatibus' in the later letter. The same Latin word, therefore, may be used by different writers to represent different

words in Old English carrying very different meanings, in the case of *primas* earl or thegn. In the Latin letter of 1027 *principes* refers always to foreign rulers. The translator was attuned to the changeover in official language following the Conquest. He writes ‘precipio omnibus uiccomitibus et prepositis uniuersi regni mei’ (W. MALM. *GR* II 183. 6; *GAS* 277 § 12), ‘sheriffs and reeves’, and the less common pairing ‘omnes episcopos meos et regni prepositos’ (II 183. 8; § 16), ‘all my bishops and the reeves of the kingdom’ (concerning the collection of taxes for the church). It is unclear why he did not use a more transparent word in the address clause. A fully satisfying exploration of how we may better understand such words demands word-indexed or searchable texts of more than a few works in the two languages. In individual contexts, authorial preference may fix on a particular usage or on variation, and it would be well to test for that. One should aim to analyse the vocabulary of each text, to establish the range of words that might be used for our key terms, and to distinguish the varying uses of each word. Such a study would be long, and here I can only point the way toward how we may learn better to understand the texts by better understanding the words in their different contexts.

There are three types of translation available to us that allow us to investigate the interactions of our chosen terms in Latin and in English. First, unofficial Latin versions of Old English writs are a very obvious and closely connected source. Second, translations of Old English laws into Latin reflect many details of technical language; the presentation of traditional laws in post-Conquest Latin, for example in *Leges Henrici* and *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, allows greater freedom than exists in line-by-line translation. In the 11th and 12th centuries historical narrative was composed in England in Old English, but the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was rendered into Latin more than once. Narrative is less constrained to use official vocabulary than documents are, but translations allow us to form a deeper sense of how individual words were understood than simple inference from context and a broad knowledge of Latin vocabulary. This is our third type of translation.

4. Unofficial Translations of Old English Writs

Translators of Old English writs, faced with the word thegn, could call on a range of different Latin words to express the term. The most common word used is, not surprisingly, *barones*. Translators after the Conquest who knew the use of such documents would have been familiar with the current official usage. Where the Latin translator has used *ministri*, we may well suspect that the translation was made at a very early date, in some cases perhaps even

before the Conquest. Two Old English writs from Hereford, for example, may have been put into Latin in 1061 for the new Lotharingian bishop: ‘Edwardus rex saluto Haroldum comitem et Oseburnum et omnes meos ministros in Herefordensi comitatu amicabiliter’ (S 1102). *Comes* is probably to be judged as long-established Continental usage, but ‘ministros’ here represents the high-status sense peculiar to England: thegns. Sometimes a Latin word is substituted that does not convey what the term properly denotes, but instead shows that the text as preserved is a Latin translation, not a writ drafted in Latin, which would have *baro*. The translator may not have had the experience to use the correct Latin term or he may have wanted to emphasise that he was rendering an English term that might for him not have had the exact equivalence of the Latin term that would have been used by a chancery draftsman. Choice of words needs scrutiny as potentially indicating how close the translator was to understanding the context. So, a letter preserved only in Latin at Abingdon is addressed ‘Godwino comiti et Hermanno episcopo et Kinewardo et ceteris nobilibus de Bearrucscira salutem’ (S 1404). The text is datable to 1045 × 1048; the translation in my view is likely to date from the 11th century, and *nobiles* is clearly a plausible interpretation of thegns, which would be easily understood by anyone familiar with the context. A legal translator used the word in connexion with thegns, ‘cum XLVIII tainis plene nobilibus’, translating ‘mid eahta 7 feowertig fulborenra þegenas’ (*Quad.*, GAS 392), and where King Alfred’s code refers simply to *þelfhynde man*, the Latin adds a gloss, ‘qui est plene nobilis, cuius wera sunt duodecies C solidi’ (*Quad.*, GAS 19; *Leg. Hen.* 76. 4a). A writ of King William in English from St Augustine’s abbey, surviving in both languages, has ‘ealle mine þegnas’ in English and ‘omnes meos optimates’ in the Latin rendering (*Act. Will.* I 80). A writ of King Edward from the same archive shows ‘ealle mine þegnas on Kent’ (S 1091) rendered as ‘omnibus suis baronibus Cantie’. The retention of the first-person adjective is a sign that William’s writ was translated more closely to the English than Edward’s, but the choice of *optimates* is to my mind a further sign that the translation was early. We have already seen *primates* used in a writ from Bury St Edmunds. Another word used is *proceres*. Bilingual acts of King Henry I are based on an act of William I, addressed to ‘ealle mine biscopes 7 mine eorlas 7 mine gerefan 7 ealle mine þegenas’ (*Act. Will.* I p. 305); in Latin, thegns become *proceres*, with unexpected precedence over sheriffs, ‘episcopis, comitibus, proceribus, uiccomitibus ceterisque suis fidelibus’ (*Regesta* 840). In one Latin translation of a writ, thegns is surprisingly translated as lovers, ‘ceterisque dilectoribus suis in Kancia salutem’ (S 1090), possibly to reflect the dropping of *freondlice*. The translation is otherwise a sound version of a sound writ. If the word were ‘dilectis’, we should have a widespread style, common at a later date, that we also find in a fragment from a translated writ of King William, ‘Will(el)mus

rex salutat Will(el)mum episcopum et Spegn' uicecomitem et omnes dilectos meos London' anglicos et saxonicos amicabiliter' (*Regesta* 85), though we may wonder at seeing AN *engleis e sexiens* replace OE *frencisce ond englisce*.

Simply adding a Latin inflexion to the Old English word occurs in a few Latin writs but, perhaps surprisingly, not in those composed in English and only translated into Latin. Six acts of William I, all apparently authentic, for several different beneficiaries, and all datable after the adoption of Latin, were composed using thegn with a Latin termination, 'omnibus thennis francigenis et anglicis de Cantuariensi comitatu' (*Act. Will. I* 70, 1070 × 1083, for Canterbury), 'omnibus taunis [*?l. tannis*] de Chent' (*ibid.* 72, 1070 × 1083, for Canterbury), 'omnibus tamnis [*?l. tainnis*] de Chent' (*ibid.* 84, 1070 × 1083, for St Augustine's), 'omnibus thegnis suis' (*ibid.* 160, 1078 × 1083, Jumièges), 'omnibus tainnis' (*ibid.* 191, 1085 × 1087, London St Paul's, which also has 'tainos' in the tenor of the act), 'omnibus suis teignis in episcopatu Rofensi' (*ibid.* 227, 1070 × 1087, Rochester). A seventh, of doubtful authenticity, uses *tainus* in the address, 'omnibus tainis francis et anglicis in Wiltescire', but 'baronibus meis' in a highly unconventional witness list (*ibid.* 341, 1078 × 1085, Winchester). This act relates to a transaction disputed early in the reign of Henry I, and one may suspect that it was reworked at that time. The most convenient explanation for these six authentic acts is that one draftsman in the chapel royal in this period did not think the foreign word *barones* adequately represented the English word thegns, and he was permitted to write the king's charters without using the official term. The scribe of Great Domesday Book used both words many times, and both appear also in the hands of different official scribes in Exeter Domesday. It is apparent therefore that the habit of direct Latinisation from Old English existed among clerks serving the king. The actual number of instances in which such scribes use *baro* or (as entered in the *DMLBS*) *thegnus* (and how they choose to write this borrowing) may reveal something, but a study of this kind remains to be undertaken. The work of Domesday clerks shows much freedom in the formation of new words, something which contrasts with the official Latin of the king's writs. The sporadic appearance of thegns in Latin dress represents a noteworthy crossover in practice.

5. Old English Laws in Latin

Translators who rendered Old English law texts into Latin worked in a different way from the translators of writs. The texts were technical, but the translators unofficial. These are our second type, and they seem to have been impelled by some kind of terminological veracity to avoid the normal Latin

equivalents for such words. There are three distinct translators of Old English law-codes, and each follows his own idiolect. So the anonymous author of *Quadripartitus*, writing, as I would argue, around AD 1100 and in any case not after 1108, used *thainus* many times, both in direct translation from Old English and in composing in Latin. Examples include ‘thainus regis’, ‘cyninges þegen’ (*GAS* 127). The same writer, in his *Leges Henrici*, used *thainus* and *baro* with almost equal frequency, with no distinction, and occasionally paired the words as equivalent (*Leg. Hen.* 35. 1a, 41. 1b, 80. 9b, 87. 5). A second translator, the author of *Instituta Cnuti*, also from the early 12th century, perhaps 1121 × 1123, adopted the phrase *liberalis homo* to render English thegn, often retaining the English as well. The author of *Consiliatio Cnuti*, somewhat later in the 12th century generally used the neologism *uirro*, sometimes *uirro* (*GAS* 295), based, it appears, on the etymology of *baro*, AN *ber* ‘man’ + *-on*. Once, however, he rendered *ðegen* as *procer*, adding ‘uel uirro’ (*GAS* 325). These translators follow through from the individual words to related phrases, so the Old English phrase ‘to woruldworðscipe si he þegenlage wyrðe’ becomes in *Quadripartitus* ‘et ad honorem seculi taini lege dignus est’, in *Instituta Cnuti* ‘secundum dignitatem seculi liberalitatem quam angli uocant þegenscipe’, and in *Consiliatio Cnuti* ‘ad honorem seculi sitque uirronis priuilegio dignus’ (*GAS* 290–91). Liebermann’s edition, printing the three versions in parallel to the Old English, allows one to see these substitutions occurring over and over again. Although each translator used different equivalents, each used them with a high degree of consistency that makes their individual usage personal. There is no reason to treat their usage as part of the common word-hoard, but where we find it, very rarely, elsewhere, it may be taken as a sign that the Latin translations were actually studied.

These two contexts lead to entries in the Dictionary that do not reflect natural language, even though their use, however idiosyncratic, reflects thinking about such terms in the transition between one language and another, in this case English and Latin. Under the noun *liberalitas*, the Dictionary has defined a distinct sense, ‘status of thegn’, with two examples from *Instituta Cnuti*. Under the adjective *liberalis*, there is again a distinct sense, ‘noble, having the status of a thegn’, with four quotations from the same translator, all showing his expression for thegn, *liberalis homo*, together with a fifth quotation which is the only justification for the sense, ‘uir nobilis et liberalis qui feodum habet sex militum’, from a private deed of Roger de Valognes (*Eng. Feudalism* 260). It is tempting to think that the deed was drafted by a clerk who had studied *Instituta Cnuti*. The coinage *uirro* is entered as a distinct lemma *uirro*, again made up of quotations from just one translator, appropriately contextualised in the quotations, and one thought-provoking example, ‘Videns igitur presbyter quod nil proficeret si cum episcopo contenderet, quesiuit sibi patronos, scilicet Osulfum et Godingum et Atferthum et alios

quam plures uirrones [v. l. uiriones], qui eum apud episcopum deprecarentur' (*Lib. Eli.* II 32). This is so unnatural that it really does appear that the writer of *Liber Eliensis* has been reading *Consiliatio Cnuti*, now known to us in a single copy. He employs the expression just this once, not enough to show that it came readily to him. Nonetheless, in both these examples the quotations in the Dictionary lead one to a meaningful deduction. The conventions of lexicography disguise whether or not the editors had actually come to that conclusion.

Since the author of *Leges Henrici* was also the translator of *Quadripartitus*, we have seen that, when able to organise his work for himself, he uses much the same vocabulary as when translating. *Thainus* is common, *baro* has a prominent place. The adjective *nobilis* came up once, conveying the sense that thegns were 'full-born'. He uses *optimates* just once, but in context it seems likely that it is not meant to define the rank of thegn: 'Nemo enim stultus aut inprobus debet esse iudex, set optimates quique secundum modum suum qui non personam set opera diiudicent per legem prouincie' (*Leg. Hen.* 9. 9). In his hands the word *princeps* denotes the ruler, usually the king: 'Edwardi beatissimi principis' (ibid. 8. 6), 'soli iustitie uel misericordie principis' (ibid. 11. 16). One passage leads us to wonder how this writer uses *ministri*: 'Si pax in terra sit, consilio principis et ministrorum eius agatur' (ibid. 83. 2; cf. 82. 2c, 'principi uel ministro suo demonstratur'). We know that he does not use it in the old way for thegn; he uses it according to post-Conquest convention to mean 'reeve': 'alia [sc. soca] pertinet uicecomitibus et ministris regiis in firma sua, alia pertinet baronibus socam et sacam habentibus' (ibid. 9. 11); 'hec sunt dominica placita regis; nec pertinent uicecomitibus uel apparitoribus uel ministris eius ... in firma sua' (ibid. 10. 4). Others besides the king had steward and reeve, 'dapifer uel minister eius' (ibid. 33. 2a). He does also use *praepositus* 'reeve', 'pertinent uicecomitibus uel prepositis eius' (ibid. 19. 1), 'si quis dapifer uel prepositus uel minister' (ibid. 61. 10), but I think he does not use it for sheriff. Perhaps any likely alternative to *uicecomes* would by Henry I's time have been too confusing. In this light 'consilio principis et ministrorum eius' is difficult to interpret securely, and the translation, 'on the advice of the king and his officials' (Downer 1972: 257, 259, 403), still needs interpretation.

The vocabulary of *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, another 12th-century legal treatise, is very much in line with official practice, *comes*, *uicecomes*, *baro*, *comitatus*. For reeves, however, he uses neither *minister* nor *prepositus* but *prefectus* (*Leg. Ed. Conf.* 24, *GAS* 649).

There exist also some legal translations made ad hoc, which present examples of more lively interest. A major example is provided by Edgar's Whitbordesstan code, which one manuscript preserves in both languages, with the Old English following the Latin version (*GAS* 206–15). The writing is dated by Neil Ker to the mid-11th century, and he notes an addition on the flyleaf datable to the time of Bishop Wulfstan between 1062 and 1095

(Ker 1957: 92, 94). Here we find a variety of relevant words: *his witum*, ‘cunctis obtimatibus regni’ (*GAS* 206 § 1); *gif geneatmanna*, ‘si quis in seculo militans’ (§ 1. 1); *minum gerefan*, ‘prepositi nostri ac magnati omnes’ (§ 1. 5); *to ælcere byrig 7 on ælcere scire hæbbe ic mines cynescipes gerihta, swa mine fæder hæfde 7 mine þegnas hæbben heora scipe on minum timan*, misrendered as ‘concedo omnibus per uniuersi regni mei prouincias et ciuitates mihi militantibus eandem legem et gratiae donum, quod habuerunt et possederunt in magnis uel minimis patris mei temporibus’ (§ 2a). From these examples we see *optimates* equated with *þa witan*, for which Latin translators ordinarily use *sapientes*, the wise men who formed the king’s great council; *praepositus* for reeve or perhaps sheriff, linked with *magnatus*, a word that leads off in another direction; and both *geneat* ‘follower in war’ and *þegen* ‘thegn’ rendered by *militans*, an unusual interpretation in the last case but not incredible, as shown by an instance in Domesday Book, ‘tainus uel miles regis dominicus’ (*DB* I 56va).

6. Old English Narrative in Latin Translation

Our third type of translation, Latin versions of Old English narrative, has all the potential complexity of translating writs and laws, but the textual extent is very much greater. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in its various forms, was translated into Latin more than once, but little has been done to exploit the interaction of the two languages. The best known Latin version is the text shared by John of Worcester and Simeon of Durham, from which we have already quoted. Rarely consulted is the Latin epitome known as the F-text, cited in the *DMLBS* as *AS Chr.* (Baker 2000). William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta regum Anglorum* and Henry of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum* have the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle behind them over long stretches of their Latin, but readers too rarely compare the two languages. The Dictionary has occasionally made such comparisons, of which only two are relevant to our key terms: ‘de toto suo comitatu’ in John of Worcester, *ofer eall his eorlðom* in the original, in a passage where *prouinciae* is used for the shires that form his earlðom; ‘cui rex consulatum Estangle dederat’ in Henry of Huntingdon, *eorlðom* in the original. The Latin F-text of the Chronicle did not aim for one-to-one translation. In the same annal, s. a. 1036, ‘Leofric eorl 7 ealle ða þegenas be norðan Temesan’ becomes ‘Leofricus comes et tota nobilitas a parte aquilone fluminis Tamisie’, while ‘Godwine eorl 7 ealle ða betstan men on Westsaxan’ becomes ‘dux Godwinus et omnes optimates in pestsexan’ (Baker 2000: 115). Did he mean to rank one earl above the other by using *dux* and *comes*? Or were they synonymous to the translator? How near to synonymous

are the thegns of Mercia, north of the Thames, and the best men of Wessex to the south? The phrase *betste men* so easily translates as *optimates* that it is tempting to see the English phrase as itself a calque on the Latin word, which had signified the political elite since classical Latin. One more example must stand for any wider comparisons: under 1091 we read in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle E, ‘Ðas forewarde gesworan XII þa betste of þes cynges healfe and XII of þes eorles’, rendered by Tucker, ‘Twelve of the best men on the king’s side and twelve on the count’s swore to this agreement’. The Latin version copied by John of Worcester and Simeon of Durham reads, ‘hanc conuentionem XII ex regis et XII ex comitis parte barones iuramento firmauerunt’, translated by McGurk, ‘this treaty was ratified by the oaths of twelve barons on the king’s side and of twelve on the duke’s’. Henry of Huntingdon rendered it in different words but the same sense, ‘hoc pactum iurauerunt duodecim principes uice regis, duodecim uice ducis’, Englished by Greenway, ‘twelve magnates swore this agreement on behalf of the king and twelve on behalf of the duke’. The setting is in Normandy, OE *eorl* has become *comes* or *dux*, but the person was Duke Robert of Normandy. The two dozen men were surely *barons* in French, which the English chronicler chose not to equate with thegns. Faced with *betste men*, John made them *barones*, the standard Latin term, and Henry made them *principes*, which I should regard as the substitute word in a more classical Latin. McGurk has got the plain sense, Greenway’s ‘magnates’ begs its own questions. Neither translator used *optimates*. Much more could be learnt from such comparisons, but what is most needed is a clear picture of whether individual translators in effect create their own stable terms in Latin or vary their usage between different applicable words.

7. Latin in Normandy and England

Faced with all this unofficial vocabulary, we should bear in mind the question whether or not the Norman conquest of England influenced the words chosen as substitutes for official terms. Here the *DMLBS* cannot help us, because it does not illustrate the usage of texts written in pre-Conquest Normandy. For that we can get a relevant perspective from Lucien Musset’s *index rerum* to the ducal acts from before 1066 (Fauroux 1961: 455–71). Here six lemmata stand out and are in many cases cross-referred: *baro*, *optimates*, *primates*, *primores*, *princeps* (in various senses), and *proceres*. With the exception of *baro*, all had some currency in both England and Normandy before the Conquest, which is hardly surprising for words of classical Latin.

8. Recognising Substitution in Context

At last we reach the fruit of this discussion, the recognition of contexts in which Classical Latin words must be understood contextually as substitutes for official terms. Many Latin writers chose to avoid the usual official Latin terms, usually for reasons of literary taste, and called instead on a range of other Latin words by way of substitute. This can be misleading, because common words used have a range of senses in Latin unrelated to the precision of the standard terms or of the underlying terms in English or French, while more exotic words can be very hard to contextualise. Unless we recognise that a word has been substituted for a usual term, then we misunderstand the passage. It is all too rare to find editors or translators who address this question. Michael Lapidge provides a model note, asking what *miles* might mean in a passage of Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Oswaldi*, 'ealdorman' or 'thegn', reviewing three words recognisably used by the author for ealdorman, the conventional *dux* and the substitutes *comes* and *princeps*, before deciding that *miles* in context here means not soldier, not knight, but thegn (Lapidge 2009: 18). The usage is in the Dictionary with examples from Bede, glossed from the Old English translation, and from royal diplomas, but it is not flagged for what it is. Dictionaries do not make a practice of defining senses as terminological substitutions, and the *DMLBS* is no exception. The technical vocabulary of lexicography ought to have a word for this form of expression. Substitution is an overriding aspect of usage: thegn is rendered *baro* even if *baro* carries some misleading connotations, and vice versa, because that is the compromise made in official language. Failing to recognise substitution where a Latin author has preferred to use a Classical word is to miss the writer's underlying precision. The comparisons we have made with Latin translations from Old English have served to build up a body of examples to help when we are reading free text. We have seen *primates*, *principes*, *nobiles*, and *optimates* used in contexts where the underlying term was thegns or *barones*. When we find one of these Latin words used in a Latin source from England in the 11th or 12th centuries, we need to ask whether the word is used as a substitute for a defined term. We have seen, however, that some of these words were used in more than one sense, perhaps even substituting for different terms in different contexts. To establish the range of actual uses is no simple task: many sources must be reviewed and the evidence gathered and subjected to examination. This is what lexicographers do, and in some cases the Dictionary has provided entirely adequate guidance in the matter, even if the lexical character of substitution is not explained. For other words, equivalences have been entirely overlooked or treated in a way that is not directly helpful to the user.

Take the word *praeses*. The Dictionary has gathered examples of its use in senses relevant to our discussion but offers as definition ‘reeve, sheriff, ealdorman’. Giving three words with very different meanings is no way to define what is offered as a single sense. Can the seven quotations be separated into senses? If so, then surely they should have been.

- 956** (11c) *precibus et suasionibus Brihtnothi regalis praesidis* CS 937;
 is pro quodam crimine comprehensus a regis praeside LANTFR. *Swith.* 25;
 presidis Eadrici fit ductus et ante tribunal WULF. *Swith.* II 306;
 preses, *scirgerefa* ÆLF. *Gl.* 110;
 in illo autem conventu comitatus assint episcopus et praeses [*se ealdorman*]
 (*Cons. Cnuti* 18. 1) GAS 321;
 preses provintie W. MALM. *GP* V 277;
 ne .. cogaris in centuria, aut foro prasidis, vel proconsulis .. reddere rationem
 J. SAL. *Pol.* 396C.

The example from *Consiliatio Cnuti* is obviously ‘ealdorman’, since that is the Old English word translated; rendering the same passage from Old English into Latin, *Quadripartitus* used *aldremannus*, *Instituta Cnuti* the more contemporary equivalent *comes*. Ælfric’s Glossary on the other hand provides an equally straightforward equation with ‘sheriff’. John of Salisbury had sheriff in mind, referring to the hundred court or the court of a sheriff. *Proconsul*, standing in relation to *consul* ‘earl’ as *uicecomes* ‘sheriff’ to *comes*, looks like a synonym, but John distinguishes *praeses* ‘sheriff’ from *proconsul*, applied to justices in eyre, ‘que uero de presidibus aliisque iudicibus dicta sunt, debent et apud proconsules, quos nostrates vulgariter dicunt justitias esse errantes, obtinere’ (J. SAL. *Pol.* 576C), while sometimes using plainer language, ‘de uicecomitibus, et iusticiis, que, ut uulgari nostro utar, recte dicuntur errantes’ (580A).¹ The quotation from William of Malmesbury highlights the link with *prouincia* ‘shire’ but does not show the context, the torture of a dumb man to see whether he could be made to speak; the story concerns a modern miracle, so ‘sheriff’ is certainly the sense in William’s mind, though Winterbottom’s translation avoids any such English rooting, ‘the governor of the region had more than once put him to the torture’. The pre-Conquest examples from the paired prose of Lantfred and verse of Wulfstan appear to point in the same direction, but they date from a time when the ealdorman presided in the shire court. The similarity between ‘a regis praeside’ and ‘regalis praesidis’ is meaningful: the sheriff was always the king’s officer, but in the late 10th century, was the ealdorman also looked on as the king’s

¹A decisive signal of the distinction is provided later in the text, ‘illustis comes Legecestrie Robertus, modeste proconsulatum gerens apud Britannias’ (J. SAL. *Pol.* 626D), entered in the Dictionary under *proconsulatus* and correctly defined as justiciarship.

representative? The Frenchman Lantfred uses the foreign word *gastaldus* in the same context of the same individual, ‘gastoldo regis’, an officer who manages royal estates and presides in local courts. The 956 diploma of King Eadwig for Worcester (S 633) certainly refers to someone of high standing, Brihtnoth, urging the king to give five hides of land to the church. We know little about 10th-century sheriffs. It is tempting to choose ealdorman, therefore, rather than someone of more obscure rank. We have no list of ealdormen, but we have a charter of King Eadwig from the same year, ‘donauī Byrhtnðo ministro meo’ (S 617), coming from the Abingdon archive, while the Worcester archive has preserved a diploma of King Edgar from 967, ‘meo fideli ministro Brihtnotho’ (S 751). I find no Ealdorman Brihtnoth before the late 10th century, Byrhtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, who has been given a date-range 956–991 (*PASE*), the first term seemingly on the basis of S 633. We cannot, and need not, resolve the question: there are quotations to show *praeses* used in the distinct senses of ealdorman and sheriff.

When Orderic uses *praesidatus*, it is likely that what he intends is shrievalty, and a quotation is so entered under this lemma: Hugo de Grentemaisnil qui presidatum Gewissorum, id est Guentane regionis, jam habuerat ORD. VIT. IV 4; Chibnall translated this ‘who was governor of the Gewissae, that is the region around Winchester’ (ibid. pp. 220–1). The passage deserves annotation. King Alfred is called ‘rex Gewissorum’ (ibid. 240), *praesidatus* (acc. pl.) is translated sheriffdoms (ibid. 265), and Orderic refers also to Warin who held ‘praesidatum Scrobesburie’ (ibid. 262), while Hugh de Grantmesnil ‘praesidatum Legrecestrae regebat’ (ORD. VIT. VIII 3). On this basis Hugh can be confirmed as sheriff as well as castellan of Leicester, and there is a *prima facie* case for thinking he should be added to the obscure list of sheriffs of Hampshire (Green 1990: 44, 53). To call him ‘governor of the Gewissae’ is simply to misapprehend the meaning of the text. The Dictionary is now there to help with this usage.

The difficulty of recognising substitute terms is minimised when the Latin words used belong to a historic context far removed from England in the 11th and 12th centuries. These immediately force us to ask what is the underlying sense.

The word *consul* has a long history as equivalent to *comes*, and it was widely used to mean ealdorman or earl; under the relevant senses in the Dictionary Ronald Latham directed the reader to compare the equivalent senses under *comes*. Similarly *consulatus* represents the office or jurisdiction of a *consul*, which may be translated as earldom in some contexts and as shire in others, just like *comitatus*. We have seen that Ælfric’s Glossary defined *praeses* as sheriff at a period when other evidence pointed more strongly to ealdorman; so with *consul*, it is glossed as *gerefa* by Ælfric, who then glosses

proconsul as *undergerefa*. Ælfric, it appears, has made up a scheme of his own, which should not be allowed to impose on our understanding. The Dictionary offers a few examples of *proconsul*, unhistorically treated, but it is naturally taken to mean sheriff by analogy with *uicecomes*. Likewise *uiceconsul*, for which the Dictionary offers one clear example from Exon Domesday: ‘B. viceconsul habet unum manerium quod vocatur Chetellescoma’ (*Dom. Exon.* 312b). The initial B. is not just saving space here, it is the reading of the manuscript; Baldwin was sheriff of Devon at the time of the Domesday survey. A less perspicuous substitution is *uicedominus*, used by two authors within a few years either side of 1100: Leofstanus, said to hold the *uicecomitatus* of East Anglia in the late 10th century, is also called ‘loci uicedominus infamis’ (*HERM. ARCH.* 2), while a legist who regularly used *uicecomes* at one point presents us with this series of office-holders and ranks attending shire courts, ‘episcopi, comites, uicedomini, uicarii, centenarii, aldermanni, prefecti, prepositi, barones, uauasores, tungreuii et ceteri terrarum domini’ (*Leg. Hen.* 7. 2). A false charter from Crowland in the name of King Eadred used it: ‘+ Ego Bingulf uicedominus consului. + Ego Alfred uicecomes audiui’ (*S* 538), both attesting between *comites* and *ministri*, and perhaps both imagined as sheriffs.

Another example of a word far removed from the English context is *satrapa* derived via classical Latin and Greek from Old Persian. A charter of King Æthelred is helpful here: 1004 × 1014 Ælfrēdus dux et Brihtnoðus dux et Eadricus dux et Ælfsius satrapa regis et Ufegeat satrapa regis et Fræna satrapa regis *CD* 1300 (*S* 908). The *duces* are obviously ealdormen in line with official usage. The king’s satraps are therefore king’s thegns, an unofficial word despite the official context, and this is not out of line with Ælfric’s thinking: ‘princeps *ealdormann* .. primas *heafodmann*, satrapa *þegen*’ *ÆLF. Gram.* 300. The Dictionary has separated these two examples between different senses, incorrectly in my judgement, ‘nobleman, minister of king or sim.’, ‘one engaged in mil. service on behalf of king or nobleman, mil. officer’. The plain sense thegn has been overlooked. The use of *satrapa* as ‘equivalent to count’ is recorded from William of Jumièges and Orderic, and here one sees a formulation close to what I have called substitution, supported by evidence of equivalence. Orderic liked the word, but he used *comes* much more. It may be only tasteful variation that leads to this kind of obscurity, ‘Rodbertus comes, Willelmi Aucensis satrapae filius’ (*ORD. VIT.* III 11); Chibnall’s ‘Count Robert son of William lord of Eu’ (*ibid.* p. 140) surely does not get it. In an English context, ‘Egelnodum .. Cantuariensem satrapam aliosque complures alte nobilitatis’ (*ORD. VIT.* IV 2) was rendered as ‘Æthelnoth “governor” of Canterbury’ (*ibid.* p. 197), an admission of incomprehension, placed by the Dictionary under an unhelpful definition,

‘nobleman, minister of king or sim.’. The context is immediately after the Conquest, when Æthelnoth was among those taken to Normandy as hostages. He was certainly not one of the earls also named. Green has listed him as a possible sheriff of Kent. Or he may have been reeve of the borough of Canterbury. Neither quite counts as high nobility.

Two other words taken over from classical antiquity enter the picture in a small way. The word *senatores* applied in an English context is found almost exclusively with reference to the pre-Conquest period. The Dictionary defines as ‘(Eng.) ealdorman, member of the witan’, but the six examples quoted all imply members of the king’s council and in no case is ealdorman relevant. It appears that *senatores* is perceived as an acceptable classical usage in preference to *sapientes* ‘witan’, a calque that positively requires the Latin reader to perceive the English usage underneath. This is quite widely used, for example in *Quadripartitus: eallum minum ealdormannum 7 ðam yldestan witan minre ðeode* ‘omnium aldermannorum meorum et seniorum sapientum regni mei’ (*GAS* 89), *med his witan* ‘uenerando sapientum eius consilio’ (*GAS* 278). Other Latin words used for *witan* should not be ignored, but they have not yet been gathered from the Latin versions of English texts. We have already referred to King Harold’s election by the *witan*, referred to as *primates* by John of Worcester and *principes* by Simeon of Durham. The F-text of the Chronicle uses *principes*, s. a. 978 *her ealle ða yldestan Angelcynnes witan gefeollan at Calne of anre upflorian* ‘hoc anno cuncti principes Anglie congregati in uno solario apud Calne’ (Baker 2000: 84), where the version behind John of Worcester opted more literally for ‘totius Anglie maiores natu’ (J. WORC. 428); s. a. 1016 *Eadric ealdorman 7 þa witan* ‘Edricus et principes Anglie’ (Baker 2000: 110). The writer here is avoiding both the term *witan* and the sense of councillors, choosing instead a word that more directly communicated the rank of men involved. Someone reworking an Old English text at Canterbury in the 12th century expanded ‘oð þa witan’ (S 1211) to ‘apud optimates et principes et sapientes regni’ (S 1212), presumably for the sake of greater clarity.

Words such as *consul*, *satrapa*, *senator* reflect a preference for the classical lexicon over the contemporary. The main reason for choosing substitutes seems to have been the sense that the usual terms were either used improperly in relation to classical Latin, as with *comes*, ‘companion’, or were simply not proper Latin, as with *barones*. Some authors were more fussy, others use classicising and everyday side by side, and in many contexts the everyday Latin was used without embarrassment. In some hands the adoption of classical words can be challenging. Orderic uses *tribunus* and *centurio* with greater frequency than clarity, and less common words are often puzzling. Aelfric’s Glossary, not necessarily a reflection of usage, gives us ‘praetor vel praefectus vel praepositus vel quaestor, *burhgerefa*’; neither *praetor* nor *quaestor* was

contextualised in England, and in Normandy it is not at all clear what office was held by Warin *pretor*, named in a deed for the abbey of Jumièges (*Act. Will. I* 164 p. 547). Ralph Niger would complain of Henry II's filling of minor royal and local offices with undesirables, 'seruos, spurios, caligatos, cubili, mense, regno, prefecit et ex iis questores, pretores, proconsules, tribunos, municipes, forestarios super prouincias constituit' (R. NIGER *Chr. II* 167), and it would make a nice parlour-game to guess the French words in his mind. The passage was quoted under *municeps*, *praetor*, *proconsul*, *quaestor*, and most fully under *tribunus*, as well as for *caligatus* 'wearing hose', never shedding light on the sense of any word. Writers of the late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman period were not seeking obscurity, and for the most part they expected their readers to see through classical substitutions for familiar terms. Most modern readers seem not only to have lost the facility to do so but, to a large degree, ceased even to be aware that any such process of recognition was called for.

9. How Much have we Missed? The Dictionary and Translators

Translation is not the same as understanding. If William of Malmesbury chose to present a county sheriff in ancient dress as the governor of a Roman province, the translator may choose to preserve that lexical recontextualising. The reader, however, needs to know that words denote something strictly meaningful in an Anglo-Norman context. The Dictionary defines not only meaning but meaning in context, English against Continental, legal against ecclesiastical, and so on. We may run a test on its success in relation to our terms by noting the lemmata under which our terms are used in definitions:

ealdorman: *aldermannus*, *comes*, *consul*, *praeses*, *praesul*, *princeps*, *senator*, *tribunus*.

earl: *comes*, *consul*, *dux*.

count: *comes*, *consul*, *praefectus*, *satrapa*.

sheriff: *gastaldus*, *praeses*, *proconsul*, *uicarius*, *uicecomes*, *uiceconsul*, *uicedominus*.
(I omit here classicising substitutes in Bernard André's *Life of King Henry*, *dumvir* and *praetor*, oddly used alongside vernacular *scireuus*.)

shire, county: *comitatus*, *consulatus*, *gastaldius*, *pagus*, *plaga*, *praefectura*, *prouincia*, *scira*, *uicecomitatus*.

reeve: *balliuus*, *exactor*, *gastaldius*, *grafio*, *ledgreueus*, *praefectus*, *praepositus*, *praeses*, *praetor*, *proconsul*, *propositor*, *prouosta*, *riuus*, *socarius*, *tungreuius*, *uillicus*.

thane: *baro*, *miles*, *nobilis*; thane (Scot.) *thegnus*.

thegn: *liberalis*, *thegnus*, *uirro*.

baron: *baro*, *uirro*.

There is a lesson in such a listing. With earls and counts and sheriffs and shires, there is some measure of confidence, but with ealdorman more insecurity and more misleading guesswork. Reeves appear in many contexts, but it is noticeable that the standard post-Conquest word *minister* was not so defined, nor was *minister* defined in its pre-Conquest sense of thegn, despite the 10th-century example quoted under *miles* ‘thane’, ‘meo fideli ministro ac militi’ (S 578). Under *minister* 3, ‘one who acts under the authority of another, an official, agent’ completely fails to explain usage in English sources. Apart from *thegnus* (a lemma under which various forms are gathered), the words defined as thegn or thane do not adequately represent actual usage. And again for baron, only *baro* and the invented word used by *Consiliatio Cnuti* are actually so defined. Many of the words that denote thegns and barons in 11th- and 12th-century sources have gone unrecognised. The vague treatment of *procer* avoided any thought of context, ‘member of the social elite of a country, culture, or organisation’. Before the Conquest we may add in the words defined with reference to the witan, *doctores* in two diplomas, *sapientes*, *senatores*, *senatus*, and in the recondite Latin of Æthelweard *sinclitus*. Words that we have seen used to mean thegn such as *optimates*, *primates*, *primores*, *principes* are not so defined. Nobleman, however, is used to gloss—I cannot say to define—*aldermannus*, *comes*, *consul*, *dominus*, *magnas*, *magnatus*, *optimas*, *patricius*, *princeps*, *probus*, *satrapa*, and *senator*. Magnate is used to gloss *baro*, *comprinceps*, *magnas*, *magnatus*, *primas*, and *summas*. These Latin words will often denote more precisely a man in a particular office or a well-defined rank or position.

A similar deficiency may be found in published English translations of Latin texts from the 11th and 12th centuries. Words that denote thegn or baron, but are not the obvious official terms, are translated by words of less definable sense, ‘leading men’, ‘chief men’, ‘magnates’. Yet it is hardly possible that the thegns or barons of official sources are absent from unofficial texts. We need to be much more aware of the different possibilities when interpreting unofficial Latin.

Take the word *princeps*, a classical word with a range of senses. Sense 8a in the Dictionary gathers many senses into one, ‘ruler of principality or dependent territory, high-ranking nobleman or royal official, prince; (in Pre-Conquest Eng.) ætheling or ealdorman’. Quotations under 8a do little to support these several definitions. Common uses such as ‘ruler’ under sense 7 are divorced from an English context and thinly illustrated, ‘duke’ with reference to William of Normandy appears as 8c, but there is little here to help readers of 11th- and 12th-century sources. The first quotation under 8a, from an 8th-century Kentish charter, is ‘consilio quippe atque consensu omnium optimatum et principum gentis Cantuariorum’ (S 33). It may be anachronistic to say ‘the thegns of Kent’, but that would be its 10th- or

11th-century equivalent. An original charter of 863 refers to the beneficiary as ‘meo fideli ministro et principi meo Eðelredo’ (S 332), reminiscent of ‘meo fideli ministro ac militi’ (S 578). A 10th-century confection names the donor as ‘Goda optimas ministerque regalis’ (S 1206), again joining *minister* with a Latin word of rank. St Paul used ‘fidelis minister’, and the stock phrase in charters is ‘meo fideli ministro’, which may be best translated ‘to my faithful servant’; the added words, *princeps*, *miles*, *optimas*, emphasise the rank of thegn that was so often denoted by *minister* alone.

After the Conquest, *principes* appear in contexts where *barones* might be expected. The pairing of earls and barons, *comites et barones*, is inescapable in official texts. In the 1090s Herman the Archdeacon writes about William I’s Easter court at Winchester in 1081, the setting for which a bilingual diploma was composed but never authenticated: ‘presentibus Anglie optimatibus cunctis, archiepiscopis, episcopis, et abbatibus, comitibus singularumque regionum Maioris Britannie principibus’ (HERM. ARCH. 27, f. 56v), which Licence translates as, ‘in the presence of all the magnates of England: the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and earls, together with the leading men of every region of Greater Britain’. From examples already considered, there is a case for saying rather: ‘in the presence of all the witan of England, (comprising) archbishops, bishops, and abbots, earls and thegns of every shire of the island of Britain’. In the same text, ‘comitum principumque’ (HERM. ARCH. 23), ‘earls and princes’, might very well be taken for ‘earls and barons’. Against this we can quote the bilingual diploma from Bury, in which ‘ceterique principes regni mei’ is rendered ‘ealle þa heafodmenn ures rices’ (*Act. Will. I* 39 pp. 206, 207). A generation after Herman, Eadmer of Canterbury’s *Historia nouorum* uses *comes* for earl or count. He uses *barones* when copying documents, the letters of King Henry and Archbishop Anselm, but in his own prose his preferred word is *principes*, which might be rendered as barons, ‘consilio episcoporum et principum suorum’, but which is nowhere used in a phrase in which it must mean barons. It is always the king’s *principes*, the *principes* of the realm, the bishops and *principes*, as if embracing earls and barons. Where he can be tested against other readings, he uses the word alongside OE *heafodmen*; so, *Historia nouorum* p. 145, on the men who were ready to desert King Henry for Duke Robert, ‘maiores regni’ and ‘principes’ in Eadmer are both renderings of *heafodmen* in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle E, s. a. 1101, where John of Worcester uses ‘principes’ and ‘quidam de primoribus’. Henry of Huntingdon avoids the word *barones*, it appears, using it only twice. First, s. a. 903, ‘Adelwoldus baro regis’ (*HA V* 14) renders the Old English text, ‘Eadwold cynges ðegn’. Otherwise, I find the word only s. a. 914: ‘omnesque consules et meliores barones qui appendebant ad Bedefordiam’ (*HA V* 16), where the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle BCD has ‘þa eorlas ealle 7 þa yldestan men’. There is some similarity with another phrase, s. a. 1095, ‘omnes

meliores consulis proceres' (*HA VII 4*), where John of Worcester and Simeon of Durham have 'omnes meliores comitis milites', but here the Old English reads, 'ealle þa betste of þes eorles hirede'. Nonetheless, where Henry says 'tam praesules quam consules et principes assensum Stephano praebuerunt' (*HA X 1*), 'whether prelates, earls, or magnates' in Greenway's translation, it is surely the case that *principes* is used to mean 'barons'. No definition of magnate as a medieval historian's word would exclude earls.

The words we use in reading our sources make a difference to our historical understanding. I warned earlier about the hazard represented by the word barons in the post-Conquest England. If we thought of the same men as thegns, the Norman Conquest would appear as a less stark boundary in time, and we should be less at risk of imagining William II's reign through the image of Henry II's or John's. Within our Latin sources, the relative paucity of *barones* in narrative sources appears to reflect the reality that baron becomes a widespread expression only in the later 12th century. By then office-holding earls are seen more as titled nobility, and the latter-day thegns, the main body of the elite, has divided into two ranks, barons on the national stage and knights in the shires. It is surprising, in a society very conscious of status, with the word *baro* available to denote official status, to find vaguer undefined terms preferred. A test for the absence of the word from a range of texts earlier than (say) *Gesta Stephani* may deliver a surprising result. The commonest general word seems to be *principes*, in this usage always plural, and it deserves more attention to decide whether it was really intended as a term of rank and, if so, how best to translate it for this period. The Warene Chronicle speaks of *principes Normannorum*, *principes Anglorum* (*Chr. Warene* 4, 6, 8), translated as 'magnates', a word connoting (to my mind at least) men of real power more than just rank. The context in which we choose our words may be as sensitive as that in which 11th- and 12th-century writers chose theirs.

10. Summing Up

A systematic survey of language has not been possible in such a short paper as this, but it is to be hoped that the discussion will help to alert readers and translators to the way Latin words were used. It has shown that the Dictionary has been inconsistent in its approach, and that the kind of guidance provided under one word may be lacking under another. The greater ease of recognising substitution for terms such as earl and sheriff over thegn and baron is not necessarily surprising: office is always easier to define than rank. Difficulties over words for ealdorman and shire are probably more due to lack of

sensitivity to context. Even where one does recognise substitution, it would be possible to take the view that a translator should preserve in the target language the flavour of words used in the original. To do so risks losing the historical context in which words may carry specific weight.

Let me end with two short passages to stimulate thought. In the first case the author was Lotharingian, in the second case Flemish, but both lived in England before and after the Conquest. Herman the Archdeacon tells us that Ethelred was chosen king and ‘honorifice diadematus in regis uilla Kingestune nomine a suis primoribus’ (HERM. ARCH. 2), Licence, ‘crowned with honour by his nobles at the royal town of Kingston’, but the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which Herman himself used, suggests a more precise sense, ‘he wæs æfter þæm swyðe hrædlice mid micelum gefean Angelcynnes witan gehalgod to cyninge æt Cyngestune’. *Primores* are not nobles here but councillors, something clear in context as well as in the underlying English. In the second passage we have no such aids:

Cui deuote prandenti, unus suorum principum, cum furiosa ironia irruens, ‘Pulcre,’ inquit, ‘rex tot gentium, ad unius nescio cuius transmarini mortui declinauit sepulcrum; et relictis tot legionibus, sine duce oberrantibus, ad regni et optimatum suorum iniuriam, despicabili hic accubitu pastinatur.’

[King Athelstan was eating with Abbot Ælfnoth at St Augustine’s, when] one of his ealdormen, rushing in with angry sarcasm says, ‘What a sight! the king of so many nations has gone to visit the tomb of some dead foreigner, and leaving so many troops wandering leaderless, to the injury of his realm and his best men, here he is fed at this contemptible dining-couch.’

The text is Goscelin’s *Miracula S. Augustini*, c. 4. In context *princeps* has an individual significance, since the chapter title is ‘De quodam principe qui ... in baratrum absortus est’, and a few lines after the passage he is again referred to as ‘memoratus princeps’. The man is not just one of the king’s leading men, and here, I suggest, we may have an example of *princeps* as ‘ealdorman’. How to understand ‘optimatum’ is less clear; nothing guides one towards thegns or nobles, but I have used a phrase from Old English, his best men. In reading such texts, it is proper that we think of the language in context, both the precise context of the passage and the linguistic context of the author’s habits. We can and should do better than read Latin words only against the usage exemplified in a good Latin dictionary. Reading in the historical context of our texts, both period and place, is the justification for a *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*.

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