CHAPTER 4

"Heirs of Romanity"

Welsh Nationalism and the Modernism of David Jones

Standing before a judge in the Welsh town of Caernarfon, Saunders Lewis, a playwright and the president of *Plaid Cymru*, defended the right of conscience. The offence for which he and his associates Lewis Valentine and D. J. Williams then stood accused

> is not in dispute. We ourselves were the first to give the authorities warning of the fire, and we proclaimed to them our responsibility. Yet we hold the conviction that our action was in no wise criminal, and that it was an act forced upon us, that it was done in obedience to conscience and to the moral law, and that the responsibility for any loss due to our act is the responsibility of the English Government.[1]

The men were under indictment for arson to His Majesty's property, a deed that "feloniously" violated sections 5 and 51 of the 1861 Malicious Damage Act.[2] Before dawn on September 8, 1936, the three had crept onto the grounds of a Royal Air Force Armament Training Camp on the Llŷn Peninsula. There they allegedly thrashed a one-armed night watchman and set fire to the aerodrome and military buildings. "It was an [*sic*] glorious fire: we didn't need lights," Lewis remarked; the blaze was kindled simply with "petrol and a syringe."[3] Later that morning, the conspirators turned themselves in at a police station in nearby Pwllheli, but before doing so, Lewis handed over a letter written in Welsh to the inspector on duty. There he declared the grave purpose he and his accomplices had in mind:

> Ever since the intention to build a Lleyn bombing camp was first announced we, and many of the leaders of the public life of Wales, did everything we could to get the English Government to refrain from

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[1] Saunders Lewis, "The Caernarfon Court Speech (13th October 1936)," in Lewis (1973) 115.
[2] The 1861 Act is available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/24-25/97/contents/enacted.
[3] As quoted in Jenkins (1998) 39, 41.

> placing in Lleyn an institution which would endanger all the culture and traditions of one of the most Welsh regions in Wales. But in spite of our pleading, in spite of the letters and protests forwarded from hundreds of religious and lay societies throughout the whole of Wales, and although thousands of the electors of Lleyn itself signed a petition imploring prevention of this atrocity, yet the English Government refused even to receive a deputation from Wales to talk over the matter. Lawful and peaceful methods failed to secure for Wales even common courtesy at the hands of the Government of England. Therefore, in order to compel attention to this immoral violation of the sure and natural rights of the Welsh nation, we have taken this method, the only method left to us by a Government which insults the Welsh nation.[4]

In court over a month later, Lewis pressed his defense of the "one of the most Welsh regions in Wales." Before the trial commenced, he demanded that all jurors be competent in the Welsh language, but the judge, Wilfred Lewis (1881–1950), deemed his request a "farce," insisting that Lewis and the other defendants address the court in English.[5] However, when called to enter a plea, Lewis replied in Welsh, incensing the judge who then reputedly berated him into compliance with "the emphasis of a barrister cross-examining."[6] By attempting to enter his plea in Welsh, Saunders Lewis was not simply flouting the judge's authority but attacking the official proscription of the language in British courts – courts that had outlawed it since the Tudor-era dismantling of Wales' own legal system, *Cyfraith Hywel*. The Laws in Wales Acts, passed by the Parliament of Henry VIII between 1535 and 1542, had banned the language on the grounds that Welsh had allegedly provoked "some rude and ignorant people" to make "distinccion and diversitie betwene the Kinges Subiectes of this Realme and hys subiectes of the said dominion and Principalitie of Wales."[7] Because of such "dyvysion murmur and sedicion," the Crown established "like Fourme" for Wales, hoping to eliminate "sinister usages and customes" that differed from those of England: "all othes of officers iuries and enquestes and all other affidavithes verdictes and Wagers of lawe" were "to be geven and done in the

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[4] "To the Chief Constable of Caernarvon," 7 September 1936, as in "Fire at R.A.F. Camp, Malicious Damage Charge, Welsh Nationalists Sent for Trial," *The Times* (September 17, 1936) 9.

[5] As noted on a trial ticket, Caernarvon Winter Assize, Winter, 1936 – County No. 5, by "Mr. J. Williams, Welsh Board of Health, Market Street," National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. See also Jenkins (1998) 60.

[6] Jenkins (1998) 57.

[7] "The Act of Union of England and Wales, 1536," as transcribed in Rees (1938) 81.

Englisshe tonge."[8] Despite his many attempts to force the issue by testifying in Welsh, Lewis felt the court-provided translator was so inept that he made his closing statement in English. The destruction of the "monstrous bombing range in Lleyn," he told the court, had been done in "defence of Welsh civilization, for the defence of Christian principles, for the maintenance of the Law of God in Wales."[9] He and his accomplices were without guilt for the "universal Christian tradition" had pushed them "to preserve the life of a nation … to defend it from any mortal blow, by all means necessary short of taking human life unjustly or breaking the moral law."[10] By refusing "the absolute power of the State-God," Lewis believed they had resisted a government whose aim was to "shatter the spiritual basis" of Welsh identity in its native language and literature.[11] Welsh, he insisted, was not simply a cherished native growth but in fact "the direct heir in the British Isles of the literary discipline of classical Greece and Rome. And it is a living, growing literature, and draws its sustenance from a living language and a traditional social life."[12] "[W]eaned on the milk of the West," Wales remained the only place in Britain to have been fully part of the Roman Empire:

> [T]he fact remains and obtrudes like a rock through the centuries – this nation of Wales stands today on the very territory it occupied – the *only* territory it occupied – when Wales was a part of the Roman Empire. You English call us Welsh, and the name Welsh means Romans. Please do not believe the comic old-fashioned idea that the word means *foreigners* and that your ancestors drove mine out of England into Wales and then dubbed us *foreigners* … There never was any great drive of the Welsh out of England, and your name for us recognises that we are the only nation in the British Isles who were once a part of the Roman Empire.[13]

While the poet-painter David Jones viewed the actions of Lewis, Valentine and Williams in a largely sympathetic light, the influence that their Welsh-Wales nationalism exerted on his literary output – specifically the 1952 poem *The Anathemata* – was complex. Jones admired efforts to preserve the Welsh tongue, but the notion that it comprised an untouched cultural or linguistic purity – one that could then be mobilized into more coercive forms of political action – did not persuade him. Compelled by the example of Joyce, Jones felt that the history of the British Isles' "Celtic hinterland" was too hybrid, too marked with "deposits" from many languages and cultures for its "complex heritage" to serve any ideology of demographic or linguistic purism.[14] Nevertheless, Jones was magnetized by Lewis' claims linking the classical discipline of Greece and Rome to Welsh. Drawn to contemporaneous scholarship on the matter of Rome and its reception in early British history, he too believed that *Romanitas* was present in Wales, but Romanity for Jones, broadly understood, represented not a purity to be preserved but a model of synoptic cultural translation – one that inhered in early Welsh civilization and there synthesized many fragments of cultures and languages together, each leaving their distinctive characteristics untouched by the whitewash of an imperial ideal. The classical legacy left by Rome was thus, as he saw it, no crude acculturating force: it required no "loppings off of meanings or emptyings out" of cultural or linguistic difference but instead provided the possibility of radically integrating diverse forms of genius across wide gulfs of variation.[15] As such, *The Anathemata* is a poem of mottled origin, one whose "sustained attention to detailed particularity" employs various linguistic forms to present "something richer than mere antiquarianism."[16] Its "metamorphic form," its "series of fragments, fragmented bits, chance scraps really," Jones shaped into an eccentric collage, a "displaced epic" whose linguistic hybridity he enmeshed with the rhythms of Catholic liturgical practice and his own complex reception of *Romanitas*.[17]

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[8] Rees (1938) 81, 95–96. Lewis had then recently savaged the Laws in Wales Acts in *The Listener*. See Lewis (1936) 915–16. On the sweeping change the Tudors brought to Welsh law, language and religion, see Williams (1993) 253–78; R. Brinley Jones (1970) 33–54; and Blank (1996) 130–35.

[9] Lewis (1973) 126. See also Chapman (2006a) 24–42.

[10] Lewis (1973) 123.

[11] Lewis (1973) 125, 126.

[12] Lewis (1973) 115. On classical allusions in the creative work of Saunders Lewis, see C. Davies (1995) 131–42.

[13] Saunders Lewis, *Y Ddraig Goch* (November 1927), trans. by Dafydd Glyn Jones in Lewis (1973) 33; Lewis (1936) 915.

For Saunders Lewis, the assertion of a genealogical claim on the classical world was not simply a political maneuver.[18] Bolstered by recent scholarship on Roman Britain – such as the work of R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943), J. N. L. Myres (1902–1989) and Charles Norris Cochrane (1889–1945) as well as that of the nationalist historian Arthur Wade-Evans – Lewis felt that hard facts had indeed proved that the Welsh were

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[14] Jones (1959) 305. Jones (2016) [10]. On Jones' debt to Joyce, see Staudt (1994) 129–38.

[15] David Jones, "Preface to *The Anathemata*" in Jones (1952) 24.

[16] Wray (2019) 420.

[17] Corcoran (1982) 86; Jones (1952) 34; Dilworth (1988) 152.

[18] On Welsh cultural identity and classical studies in the nineteenth century, see C. Davies (2009) 35–47.

"heirs of Rome," modern inheritors of classical antiquity with the so-called "blood of the West in their veins."[19] According to Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*, both peoples, that of Rome and that of Britain, could claim descent from Aeneas of Troy through Ascanius, his son.[20] As such, the Britons were kin of the archaic Roman kings at Alba Longa, and even the Latin epithet first used to describe those of Welsh descent, *Britanni*, had been given to honor, it was said, Britain's patriarch, Britto, the grandson of Aeneas.[21] With a shared lineage, the Welsh could assert what Arthur Wade-Evans called "the same high origin as the Romans, the Britons being, as one very early document puts it, *filii Romanorum*, sons of the Romans, of the stock of Troy."[22] Accordingly *Romanitas* took hold with ease in medieval Britain, for the Welsh were "already Romans," Wade-Evans argued, "before they realized that they were Britons."[23] However, by the beginning of the fifth century, the Western Empire began to deteriorate: imperial garrisons were abandoned across Britain, and new dangers emerged to threaten its Roman settlements. Germanic tribes – Angles, Saxons and Jutes – had invaded Britannia along its eastern shore, slowly driving the Britons west and forcing some to forsake their Christianity and their Romanity for "Barbaria and paganism."[24] "The mind of Roman Britain," was, he claimed, thus splintered then into "a Roman and Christian mind in the West, and a non-Roman and non-Christian mind in the East."[25] Yet, though Britannia's "Roman cities" lapsed into "a state of decay," some of the Britons were said to have clung to their classical identity.[26]

> They stood for Romanitas, 'Romanity', which was the 'conservatism' of the time. But they were set in the midst of a barbarized *Britanni*, who (now that they were free) were beginning to assert themselves, slackening

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[19] "I believe that the Latin relations of Welsh are more important than the Celtic. Our language is partly Celtic; but our literature and culture and a great part of our speech are Latin. We too are the heirs of Rome, and for that reason it is deplorable that Latin is no longer compulsory throughout the Welsh University, and it is even ludicrous that there should be Welsh Honours graduates having no Latin." Saunders Lewis (September 10, 1925) Thomas Jones Papers, CH, H1/7, as in Chapman (2006b) 106.

[20] Wade-Evans (1938) 38.

[21] Banished from Italy for accidentally killing his father, Britto "arrived in this island, which took a name from his name, to wit, Britain, and he filled it with his own stock, and he dwelt there. From that day Britain has been inhabited even to this day." Wade-Evans (1938) 39.

[22] Wade-Evans (1950) 1.

[23] Wade-Evans (1950) 1.

[24] Wade-Evans (1950) 10.

[25] Wade-Evans (1950) 11.

[26] Wade-Evans (1950) 9.

> in what attachment they felt towards Roman traditions, including Christianity, the official religion of the empire. In other words, Barbaria was gathering strength throughout the area governed by the Roman cities, and a prolonged tension set in between it and Romanitas.[27]

Despite the spread of *Barbaria*, Welsh loyalty to the "Roman way of life" went undiminished.[28] "Romanitas triumphed in Wales and Cornwall as against Barbaria," but "the opposite occurred in England" where, as Wade-Evans insisted, the natives had succumbed to an insidious foreign power brought from the east: they had become "barbarized or as the Romans might say 'Saxonized'."[29]

Although the historical revisionism of Welsh-Wales nationalists regarded the Roman character as safely preserved in the early medieval period, Wade-Evans, Lewis and others sympathetic to *Plaid Cymru* likened new more modern threats to the 'Saxonized' barbarism of late antiquity. The recent growth of industrial capitalism, particularly in South Wales, was considered a blight on the country's rural economy, devastating farming communities and furthering the spread of English. Such development had promised to raise the material fortunes of Wales, but throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, a precipitous decline in the trade of coal and steel had depressed the economy in South Wales, producing what one historian has called "a fundamental decay in the entire fabric of the economic life of the coalfield, and in those communities that depended on it for their livelihood."[30] Saunders Lewis blamed modern industrialism writ large, casting it as an English import set to ravage the landscape and wean Wales from its native language.[31] While a lecturer at University College, Swansea, Lewis encouraged the eradication of English from the cultural, political and religious life of Wales. A new national consciousness could take shape, he thought, only in a Welsh-language national literature. Attempts to invent a hybrid vernacular, a so-called Anglo-Welsh dialect of English, had been unsatisfactory. Though such idioms – he wrote when reviewing the drama of John Oswald Francis (1882–1956) – could possess the "local colour that some Welsh interjections and emphatic repetitions may give," these generated "only tolerable English plays about Welsh life … To read them or see them acted would be fit penance for a soul in purgatory."[32] Marred by what Lewis saw as 'impure', exploitative origins in industry, labor unions and English journalism, the "awkwardness of Anglo-Welsh" was a poor fit for literary work of any kind.[33]

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[27] Wade-Evans (1950) 9.
[28] Wade-Evans (1950) 9.
[29] Wade-Evans (1950) 11, 12.
[30] Morgan (1981) 214. See also J. Davies (2007) 514–20.
[31] See Lewis (1939) 9. For further discussion of this lecture, see Chapter 4, pp. 164–67. See also Lewis (1975) (pamphlet first published in Welsh by *Plaid Cymru*, 1926; reprinted with an English translation).

> Welshman have had to learn English in the worst of schools. Labour leaders of Cockney dialect, an army of unemployed who came from all industrial parts of England to help exploit the mineral wealth of South Wales, railways from Lancashire carrying the vowels and idioms of Manchester to the valleys of Snowdon, these have been our teachers of English. From these and the newspapers we have formed our Anglo-Welsh speech, and no feebler stuff is spoken in these islands.[34]

Despite his remarks Lewis had himself once tried to solve Wales' "problem of language" with his own Anglo-Welsh.[35] Enchanted by the desire to "find an English diction that would interpret the native speech of the Welsh," he admired the drama of Ireland's National Theatre, thinking "the works of Yeats, Synge, Patrick (*sic*) Colum, the Irish," had offered an idiom "close enough to the rhythms and grammatical patterns of Welsh to provide a possible and plausible English."[36] Certain factions within the Irish Literary Revival had effectively translated the essence of Irish Gaelic, creating an authentic Anglo-Irish hybrid based upon the speech of the "southern peasantry."[37] That success inspired Lewis, and in 1921 he sought to "suggest in English the rhythms and idioms of Welsh" with his own "Anglo-Celtic" drama, *The Eve of Saint John*.[38] Yet, before the play was published, he felt the work had become a conventional product of imitation rather than invention. "The fault of my own attempt to render that richness," he wrote, "is that it suggests too often a convention of Anglo-Celtic dramatists, – instead of something fresh and living. But perhaps thus to state the problem will rouse some other to its solution, and that shall be my excuse for publication."[39] Lewis would remain an ardent admirer of Synge, Yeats and others associated with the Irish Revival. Indeed he continued even to attribute something of his fervor for *ysbryd cenedl* – the Welsh "national spirit" – to the Irish, but no national writer in Wales, he thought, could follow their path for revival.[40] Anglo-Welsh would never raise the collective, national consciousness with a "rich, expressive, individual, powerful" literature in English – certainly not by the same measure that Anglo-Irish had forged what Yeats called "a national tradition, a national literature … Irish in spirit" though "English in language."[41]

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[32] Lewis (1919) 4. See also Lloyd (1988) 100–14.

[33] Francis was said to use the "horrible jargon of men who have lost one tongue without acquiring another." Lewis (1919) 4.

[34] Lewis (1919) 4.

[35] Lewis (1919) 4.

[36] Lewis (1955) 12. A. T. Davies (1961) 9, as translated in Griffiths (1979) 4.

[37] Lewis (1919) 4.

[38] Lewis (1921) [1], [2].

[39] Lewis (1921) [2]. "I spoke of it as an Anglo-Celtic convention, and it was in that convention that I wrote *The Eve of Saint John*. This was my first play, and so far my last in English. I couldn't be satisfied with its diction and I settled the issue by turning and learning to write in Welsh. It was the logical thing to do." Lewis (1955) 12–13.

Nevertheless, the history of English in Ireland proved useful in Lewis' attempts to analyze the contemporary problem of language in Wales. In a 1938 lecture entitled "Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?" he examined this matter at length, again praising Anglo-Irish as a language "rich in traditional idiom and folklore and folksong."[42] The English used by the modern Irish theatre had risen during the eighteenth century, he asserted, by way of the country's Protestant Ascendancy, a rural ruling class committed to fostering its spread among the peasantry. "[U]ncommercialised and untouched by industrialism," English flourished for more than 150 years in the "insulated environment of a separate and Catholic countryside," soon becoming a national tongue, an "English dialect, the English of Ireland."[43] By the turn of the twentieth century, with a decline in spoken Irish, Anglo-Irish became the dominant form of "native speech," its gestation having turned the tongue into something linguistically distinctive, "something rhythmically and emotionally and idiomatically separate from all the dialects of progressive and industrialised England."[44] Bled of its "echoes or rhythms of the English literary tradition," Anglo-Irish could be used effectively, he thought, not for "interpreting Ireland for English readers" but for "interpreting Ireland to herself."[45] In Wales, by contrast, the work of national interpretation was far different:

> English is to-day penetrating the Welsh countryside as never before, so that one might suggest that it may yet evolve as it evolved in Ireland, that "the best is yet to be." No. It is penetrating the countryside just at the

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[40] A. T. Davies (1961) 9.

[41] Lewis (1921) [2]; Yeats, "To the Editor of *United Ireland*" (December 17, 1892) in Yeats *CL1* (1986) 338. See Introduction, pp. 2–3; Chapter 1, pp. 53–55; Chapter 2, pp. 105–08.

[42] Lewis (1939) 7.

[43] Lewis (1939) 7.

[44] Lewis (1939) 7.

[45] Lewis (1939) 7.

> moment in history when the creation of dialect seems beyond the powers of the countrymen.[46]

Unlike the Irish, the Welsh were not learning their English from landed nobility, nor were they able to cultivate their dialect in a rural society largely sheltered from direct influence of English political and commercial interests. The English of Wales was instead the very "language of industrialism," and like the industry brought into the country, its inroads had a disastrous effect on Welsh-speaking peoples.[47]

> The extension of English has everywhere accompanied the decay of that culture, the loss of social traditions and of social unity and the debasement of spiritual values. It has produced no richness of idiom, no folksong, but has battened on the spread of journalese and the mechanised slang of the talkies. There is a Welsh accent on our English, – it is the mark of our foreignness, – but there is no pure dialect.[48]

For Lewis, the effect of English on Welsh had made impossible even the notion that "a separate literature, having its peculiar traditions and character" could be considered or "acknowledged as Anglo-Welsh."[49] Although English was spoken then with a "Welsh accent," Anglo-Welsh was not "the speech of an organic community," for "[w]hatever culture there has been in the mining valleys of South Wales has been the remnant of the social life of the countryside, and has been Welsh in speech."[50] Where Wales remained distinctively Welsh, it was so most in its own language, and where the country was becoming 'Saxonized', an alarming decay of the Welsh tongue was evident.[51]

> Every scholar who knows and cherishes the Welsh dialects is aware that in the last 20 years there has been an alarming deterioration in the standard of their purity and richness. Industrialism has invaded the countryside with the motor bus, the radio, the chain stores of the market towns, the schools and the cinemas. There is no longer a self-contained rural

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[46] Lewis (1939) 10.

[47] Lewis (1939) 9.

[48] Lewis (1939) 10. On the history of Anglo-Welsh and its differences from Welsh in this period, see Morgan (1981) 241–71.

[49] Lewis (1939) 5.

[50] Lewis (1939) 10.

[51] As farming communities suffered in Wales, the Welsh language declined rapidly. In 1911 the British census suggested that roughly 43.5 percent of the population in Wales still spoke some Welsh. By 1931 this number had dropped to 36.8 percent. The 1951 census – the first taken since before the Second World War – reported a greater loss. Just 28.9 percent of the population reported being conversant in the language. On the decline of Welsh, see J. Davies (2000) 78–108, as well as Tanner (2004) 186–218.

> community. There is only the outer fringe of industrialism. Farming is now merely ranching. Rural life has lost its independence and its creative powers. And as it grows anaemic it grows Anglicised.[52]

Because no legitimate vernacular, "no pure dialect," had yet taken the place of the native tongue, Lewis urged his contemporaries to abandon English entirely.[53] "We cannot therefore aim," he asserted, "at anything less than to annihilate English in Wales … It is bad and wholly bad, that English is spoken in Wales. It must be deleted from the land called Wales: *delenda est Carthago*."[54] The language had allegedly devastated Welsh farming communities, and what was needed for restoration was not Anglo-Welsh but the purity of Welsh alone-an ancient language whose historic links with Roman literature could be touted to defy the encroaching influence of capitalism.

> To create a Welsh-speaking Wales is the surest way of building up a country within which the oppression of international capitalism cannot dwell. Of course, our socialist friends are quite unable to grasp this. So enmeshed are they in the coils of nineteenth-century materialism that they do not see that economic oppression will ultimately be defeated by spiritual forces.[55]

If, however, Welsh suffered extinction, the Britto-Romanic sources that had made the country "direct heir" to classical antiquity would be lost.[56] Such a reality would enfeeble not only Welsh but civilization across all of Britain – even that of the so-called "Anglo-English."[57] Citing J. W. Mackail's 1895 treatise *Latin Literature*, Lewis likened the contemporary linguistic crisis to the phenomenon of "new Latinity" that settled over the Roman Empire in the latter stages of its decay.[58] The "influx of provinces into literature" had moved then with such "continually accelerating force" that literary strains from "Gaul, Spain, and Africa" appeared "side by side with Italy," just as Italy herself sunk "towards the level of a province."[59] Latin was thus transformed: no longer a pure *urbanus sermo*, it had evolved from "that austere and noble language which was the finest flower of her civilisation" to something that could "be written in another than the Roman manner."[60] By parallel, a loss of Welsh or other Celtic languages promised to generate a number of deleterious provincial dialects whose influence on 'purer' strains of English would mitigate the 'native' strength of "Anglo-English." To neglect the "national life" of Celtic countries, to leave their cultures and their languages subject to such "undirected drifting" posed a radical threat to English literature itself: Wales, so hybridized, Lewis thought, would "give no new colour to a borrowed tongue, nor any folksong. It will wear its English like a shroud."[61]

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[52] Lewis (1939) 10.

[53] Lewis (1939) 10.

[54] Saunders Lewis, excerpted from "Un Iaith i Gymru" (August 1931), translated as "One Language for Wales," in D. H. Davies (1983) 77–78. The Latin translation of the Greek original used by Lewis is the common, abbreviated form of the sententia: *Ceterum autem censeo Carthaginem delendam esse*. For Greek variation of the phrase, see Plutarch's "δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ Καρχηδόνα μὴ εἶναι", in *Plutarch's Lives, Marcus Cato*, chap. 27. See *Plutarch's Lives, with an English Translation by Bernadotte Perrin* (1914), Loeb edition, vol. 2: 382. Attributed to the Roman senator, Cato the Elder, its reception has been examined in Thürlemann (1974) 465–75. See also Gordon (2017) 31–32.

[55] Lewis, as quoted in Dafydd Glyn Jones, "His Politics," in Lewis (1973) 32. On language purism as political doctrine in Wales, see D. H. Davies (1983) 73–79 and Morgan (1981) 206–9. See also Darryl Jones (1996) 31.

[56] Lewis (1973) 115.

[57] Lewis (1939) 14.

[58] Lewis (1939) 14; Mackail (1895) 167.

As Lewis pressed his defense in Caernarfon, the immediate question of whether the fire on Llŷn constituted arson and malicious damage went undecided. The trial ended in a hung jury, with legal officials transferring the case to the Central Criminal Court at London's Old Bailey. There, in January 1937, *y Tri* ("The Three") were found guilty. Their defense on grounds of conscience was rejected, the judge castigating them for acts of "common anarchy."[62]

> You three men – educated men – have resorted to a most dangerous and wicked method of calling attention to what you believe to be the propriety of your views. It is not for me to express any opinion. All I can say is that this a plain case of arson and malicious damage, not to houses in which people reside, but to empty places, and doing damage to a large amount. I must sentence you all, as it would be in ill accord with the legal history of this country if it should be understood for one moment that justice is not administered properly because of some reason put up by an accused person which is not a reason for doing what he did, but merely an opinion which he says is the basis of his offence.[63]

Though Lewis, Williams and Valentine were sentenced to serve nine months in prison in the second division, the spectacle the trial provided proved somewhat advantageous for *Plaid Cymru*. As John Davies has suggested, the fire and the ensuing legal battle "aroused deep feelings in Wales," feelings that were, on the whole, sympathetic to Lewis and his accomplices (though many had doubts about both Lewis' Catholicism and the conservatism he adopted in leading the party).[64] Membership in *Plaid Cymru* began to tick upward as "the circulation of the Party's papers rose," but even then rising enthusiasm and increased public exposure did not easily "translate itself into electoral success. The party organizer, J. E. Jones, making the best of a bad job, spoke of the late 1930s as a period of 'consistent strong slow progress'."[65] That slow progress did, however, instigate significant change five years later, when officials in Parliament – under further pressure from Lewis and William George (1912–2006) the nephew of the former prime minister David Lloyd George – reconsidered the Tudor-era language statutes governing British courts. In passing the Welsh Courts Act (1942), Parliament formally enfranchised Welsh as a legal language in the United Kingdom, providing what Saunders Lewis had sought, namely "the provision and employment of interpreters of the Welsh and English languages for the purposes of proceedings before courts in Wales."[66]

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[59] Mackail (1895) 167; Lewis (1939) 14.
[60] Mackail (1895) 168; Lewis (1939) 14.
[61] Lewis (1939) 14, 10.
[62] Fishlock (1976) 12.
[63] Jenkins (1998) 115.

By this measure alone Lewis' legal fight was beneficial to the cause of Welsh Wales. The controversy surrounding the trial of *y Tri*, however, reverberated in circles well beyond barristers and policy makers. Among those who followed the story was the painter and poet David Jones. Reading the *Times* and *Catholic Herald*, Jones thought the Llŷn fire had been a courageous act, one which moved him so deeply that he attempted to contact Saunders Lewis while he was still incarcerated at Wormwood Scrubs in West London. In June 1937 Jones wrote to Lewis' wife, offering one of the six author's copies he had received of his first literary work, *In Parenthesis* (1937), a book which had then received praise for being an "epic of war … like no other" composed of "words as hard and bright as the things they signify."[67]

> Dear Mrs Saunders Lewis, I wanted to send to your husband a copy of my book, just published called "In Parenthesis" … I do not know your

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[64] J. Davies (2007) 575–76.

[65] Jenkins (1998) xiv–xv; Chapman (2006a) 25.

[66] The Welsh Courts Act, 1942 may be accessed at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/5–6/40/contents. The 1942 law has since been superseded by the Welsh Language Acts of both 1967 and 1993.

[67] Read (1937) 457.

> husband personally but I very much wish to give him this copy of my book if he will accept it. It deals largely with Wales & might interest him.[68]

Margaret Lewis forwarded the message to Lewis, who had in fact already heard of *In Parenthesis*, having perhaps read James Agate's review of the "masterpiece" in the *Daily Express*.[69] Eager to read it, he asked her to keep the book for the time being, on account of prison rules (on release inmates were expected to leave behind books they had received while incarcerated).[70] Two weeks following his release from prison – an occasion that saw *y Tri* feted with "bonfires … lit in North Wales to celebrate their homecoming" – Lewis began *In Parenthesis* and wrote Jones the first letter in what became a lasting friendship.[71]

> We had our big show of welcome and speechifying yesterday, and from the moment of coming out of prison I had to be preparing for that. But now that it's over I propose at once to read "In Parenthesis". In fact I shall begin after posting this, because the mist and rain are surging towards me over Holyhead mountain, and only a near foreground of shining grass and much protruding grey rock and one grey-rock farm and one whitewashed cottage are visible. It's to be a soaked afternoon of Autumn. I'll write again to you when I've read it. Thanks seem inadequate.[72]

Throughout the next thirty-seven years, Jones and Lewis debated contemporary matters touching on the religion, art and politics in Britain and Wales, for in both being veterans of the First World War and converts to Roman Catholicism, they shared common experience, a common creed as well as similar artistic passions and cultural concerns.[73] As Geraint Evans notes, this friendship with Lewis helped sow curious yet crucial elements in Jones' creative work and, more broadly, in the emergence of literary modernism in Welsh writing at large – linking the metropolitan "London modernism of T. S. Eliot" with the "Welsh radicalism of Saunders Lewis."[74] Jones often wrote Lewis, wondering, as he once explained,

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[68] David Jones, Letter to Margaret Gilcriest Lewis (June 21, 1937) MS File #22724E, folio 91, National Library of Wales (NLW), Aberystwyth. See "Mr. Saunders Lewis, an Appeal and an Explanation," *Catholic Herald* (June 4, 1937) 2, as well as Evans (1987).

[69] James Agate, as in Dilworth (2017) 190; See Saunders Lewis, Letter to Margaret Gilcriest Lewis (July 19, 1937) in Lewis (1993) 626.

[70] Dr. Gwent Jones, Letter to Margaret Gilcriest Lewis (July 4, 1937) in Lewis (1993) 619.

[71] "Welsh Nationalists Released," *Ballymena Observer* (September 3, 1937) 9; See also "Welsh Leaders, Released Professor on Their Action," *The Scotsman* (September 13, 1937) 11, as well as "Welsh Nationalist Welcomed Home, Speaks in English – and Tells Why," *Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror* (October 18, 1937) 8.

[72] Saunders Lewis, Letter to David Jones (September 12, 1937) David Jones Papers, CT 1/4, folio 4. National Library of Wales (NLW), Aberystwyth. The "speechifying" to which Lewis alludes refers to the speech he gave at the Caernarvon reception of September 11, where he declared that, "The position is transparently clear; Wales is in slavery; it is treated as a subject race." "Welsh Leaders, Released Professor on Their Action," *The Scotsman* (September 13, 1937) 11.

[73] On Lewis and Jones' friendship, see Dilworth (2017) 279–81, and Dentinger (2004) 222–34.

> how *you* are, not only because I wonder how you are in health as a friend naturally would, but because I wonder what you are thinking touching the matters ~~we ha in~~ in which we have a mutual involvement and understanding, – a sort of ~~cyd~~ *cydgyfarfyddiad* – (if that's the ~~right~~ right word) where those three highly complex & usually dissevered 'things': the *res Walliae*, the Catholic religion, culture and *ars*, are intermuddled. You are the only person among my various good & dear friends to whom I can share without any chance of misunderstanding ~~on those three matters~~ *where those three matters*, ~~conjoin~~ so to say, conjoin.[75]

Yet, though the two men were likeminded with regard to "dissevered 'things'," Jones never sought the role of being a public intellectual or a reputedly national poet; he was rather a reluctant figure, a creative recluse who, though he shared something of Lewis' scorn for the "modern, post-Methodist, petite bourgeoisie," assessed political matters in a mostly cautious manner. Jones did admire activism on behalf of saving Welsh, but he considered *Plaid Cymru* "very far from satisfactory."[76] "There's no real cutting edge," he once told Lewis.[77] The party's aims were like all "political things" "so boring & superficial, in fact, damned silly."[78]

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[74] Evans (2019) 459.

[75] David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (December 3, 1967) MS File No. 22724E, folio 50, NLW. The Welsh term *cydgyfarfyddiad* denotes a "meeting-together," a "concurrence" or a "conjoining." See its entry in Thomas (1967).

[76] Dilworth (2017) 280; David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (23 December 1961) MS File #22724E, folio 37, NLW.

[77] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (December 23, 1961) MS File No. 22724E, folio 37, NLW.

[78] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (23 December 1961) MS File No. 22724E, folio 37, NLW. Nonetheless Jones' active support for the Welsh nationalist cause was often assumed by others. In November 1963 he was asked to stand for election as president of the London branch of *Plaid Cymru*. He "felt it an honour" to be considered, but Jones felt he was "wholly unsuited for such an office" especially since he "was not actually a member of *Plaid Cymru*, & could not speak Welsh." Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (November 23 [22?], 26, 1963) MS File No. 22724E, folio 46, NLW. It should also be noted that after stepping down as president of *Plaid Cymru* in 1939 (and later losing the University of Wales by-election in 1943), Saunders Lewis began to take a dimmer view of the party's left-leaning approach to Welsh politics and independence. Lewis would soon become, as Tudur Hallam writes, an "awkward father figure" for later generations of Welsh nationalists. In 1962 Lewis complained to David Jones of the leftward shift in the "nationalist party that I partly founded." It had become "a nest of Aldermaston Anglo-Welsh socialists, and I loathe them. I wish I could get back to Italy, stay there, and hear no more ever of Wales."

Jones' lack of enthusiasm was not born, however, from indifference or disregard for the condition of Wales. On the contrary, from a young age he possessed a certain nostalgia for Wales – what he later described as his "Welsh affinity," a devotion that drove him to begin a concentrated study of the myth, history and literature of Wales.[79] Many times, from as early as age sixteen, Jones had tried to teach himself Welsh but fluency eluded him. As he later complained,

> I ~~don't~~ can't speak or read Welsh & being inordinately stupid with regard to learning languages, find it hard to conquer – I *do* wish I had known ~~knew~~ it from when I was young – it's so awfully hard to learn any language – however much one's desires impel one to try – when one is middle-aged, at least I find it so. The more memory seems to get so faulty as one gets older.[80]

Jones failed to learn the language not because he was "inordinately stupid" but rather because Welsh had largely fallen out of use in his childhood home. His father, James Jones (1860–1943), did sing songs to him "in Welsh, and the clear-vowelled Cymraeg and perfect pitch without any sign of effort filled me with wonder, certainly with pride, and a kind of awe," but Jones grew up a "Londoner, brought up entirely in an English setting."[81] Nonetheless, he still felt the gravity of "that sense of 'otherness'," an otherness caught up in the reality in which the "Muse of History" had placed him, "one half Welsh, if one half Cockney, with a dash of Italian."[82] With this mixed ancestry Jones felt Welsh, but he also desired to express the cultural hybridity of his "immediate forbear's – *patria*."[83] "[T]hose of us who chance to be in some way 'Welsh' cannot

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Saunders Lewis, Letter to David Jones (April 4, 1962) David Jones Papers, CT 1/4, folio 41, NLW. On Lewis' legacy and political influence, see Hallam (2019) 507–28.

[79] On this "affinity," see David Jones, "Some Notes on the Difficulties of One Writer of Welsh Affinity Whose Language Is English," as in Jones (1976) 55–65. On Jones' early encounters with Wales, both in his family and in his reading, see Dilworth (2017) 17–21, 29–30 as well as Dilworth (2012) 25. On Jones' interest in Wales as a historical site, see Dilworth (2000) 67–88.

[80] David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (July 22, 1948) MS File No. 22724E, folio 1, NLW. Jones' failure to gain fluency in Welsh remained a source of bitterness throughout his life: "It is impossible to explain the sense of frustration, – genuine bitterness, grief is not too strong a word. Of course one can *feel* the way the language behaves and perceive its felicities and be read in Welsh history and the splendour of its *chwedlau* and realise the unique character of its complex metric. *But* that is not to *know* the language. It is a scientific fact that the ability to learn things by rote, begins to get more difficult from an early age and rapidly so after one is say 20, and learning by rote is virtually essential in the case of languages … And I chance to be a dunderhead in languages and was wholly concerned with the visual arts of drawing and painting until 1928 when I began to make written works." Jones (1974) 4.

[81] Jones (1972) 8; Jones (1976) 56.

[82] Jones (1972) 8; Jones (2016) [4].

[83] Jones (1976) 56.

(except by total silence)," he explained, "do other than continue to draw upon such fragmentary bits and pieces of our national heritage as may be available to us in an alien tongue," to somehow convey "in English, what, at its subtlest & best and most incantational is locked up in the ancient tongue of Britain."[84]

It should be noted that Jones' regard for both the alleged purity of his father's Welsh ancestry and the "Welsh strains in the English genius" emerged in an all too precarious moment, when a variety of new mendacious forms of nationalism were fanning out across Europe throughout the 1930s – with devastating consequences.[85] Jones' growing interest, therefore, in both studying and reenvisioning the early history of the Welsh may be seen in the stark context of some of these new nationalist ideals; and Jones himself was not entirely unaware – or ignorant in the least – of the potential parallels: he unabashedly professed fascination with the rise of fascism across Italy and Germany, writing in May 1939 that there was indeed "much in both the Fascist and Nazi revolutions that demand our understanding and sympathy. They represent, for all their alarming characteristics an heroic attempt to cope with certain admitted corruptions in our civilization."[86] As Tom Villis has suggested, this approbation for Hitlerism echoed "many of his Catholic contemporaries, too, in viewing Nazism as the lesser of many evils. There is a suggestion that Nazism is not only a lesser evil than communism, but also a lesser evil than liberal capitalism."[87] Jones' statements on Hitler, however, were also marked by some reluctance and a bit of skepticism, too. *Mein Kampf* was "amazingly interesting in all kinds of ways," he explained to Harman Grisewood (1906–97) just weeks earlier,

> but pretty terrifying too. God, he's *nearly* right – but this *hate* thing mars his whole thing, I feel. I mean, it just misses getting over the frontier into the saint thing – he won't stand any nonsense or illusions or talk – but, having got so far, the conception of the world in terms of race-struggle (that's what it boils down to) will hardly do. But I do like a lot of what he says – only I must admit he sees the world as just going on *for ever* in this steel grip. Compared with his opponents he is grand, but compared with the saints he is bloody. And I think I mean also by saints – lovers, and all kinds of unifying makers. Anyway, I back him still against all this currish,

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[84] Jones (1976) 58, 61.
[85] Jones (1976) 59.
[86] Jones, as quoted in Villis (2018) 79.
[87] Villis (2018) 50.

> leftish, money thing, even though I'm a miserable specimen and dependent upon it.[88]

By contrast, Saunders Lewis and those sympathetic to *Plaid Cymru* were more unequivocal, if generally unspecific, about the rising threat of fascism: Wales' national interests had to be defended against any form of "bureaucratic control and Fascist totalitarianism … Some corners of the continent may escape this fate, Ireland, perhaps, and Portugal; it would be splendid if we could say Wales too, but that depends on the success of the Nationalist movement in Wales."[89] Lewis' opposition to fascism remained conservative, motivated by his own decidedly eccentric, right-wing brand of Catholic communitarianism. Thinking Nazism essentially anti-Christian (an ideology of Marxist origin no less), he was convinced that it would be destroyed neither "by revolution" nor by a "return to the Liberalism of the last century" but rather "by patiently and laboriously building up new ideals in small communities and some small countries. Men will have to develop anew," he wrote, "and, at first, on a small scale, new communities in the shadow of the industrialism of the modern State. And that is a task that cannot be accomplished without a faith, as strong as the faith of the Nazis. But a different faith."[90]

Despite Jones' dalliance with fascism, he largely sought to evade the contemporary political struggles of Europe and remained more interested in exploring and immersing himself in various historiographical and aesthetic representations of early Welsh Romanization. Convinced that the first strains of Welsh genius had received an enduring shape in late antiquity, Jones insisted that a "Brythoneg-Rhufeinig link" had been cultivated throughout the "three or four centuries of Roman occupation" during the *Provincia Britannia* (AD 43–410), a time when "the deposits of the Hellenistic-Roman world" were said to have "infiltrated the indigenous 'Celtic' culture."[91] The infiltration had been so complete, so effective, he thought, that even in the twentieth century, Wales could not "escape the via Romana."[92] "[O]wing to a vast complex of causes," the country still possessed a "*direct* connection" with the ancient Greeks – one which had been enmeshed "through Rome."[93] "Even at the lowest level of mere debate," he told Lewis,

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[88] David Jones, "To H. J. G., 24 April 1939" in Jones *DG* (1980) 93.

[89] Lewis (1941–42) 2, 3. On *Plaid Cymru's* disavowal of European fascism, see R. W. Jones (2014).

[90] Lewis (1941–42) 8, 3, 8.

[91] "Brythoneg-Rhufeinig" meaning in Welsh: "Brythonic-Roman." David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 12 [11?], 1971) MS File No. 22724E, folio 73, NLW. David Jones, Letter to Michael Richey (April 19–27, 1965), David Jones Archive, Burns Library, Boston College.

[92] David Jones, "The Eighth Letter" (November 13, 1961) in David Jones (1996) 40.

> it was possible to say to the anglicizers: "We emerged from within the Roman *imperium* & are the *only* people left in this island who did. In fact our native princes ~~spring~~ sprung from a line of Latin officials, &, in contrast to Gaul the Brittonic speech continued side by side of Latin throughout the 4 centuries of Roman occupation. – we are the heirs of romanity. How can we think of Meirionnydd without thinking of Marianus, or *Padarn Beis Rhudd* without recalling Paternus, etc."[94]

Yet, though Jones felt Romanity still remained palpable, there existed across Britain "an astounding disregard of the historic roots of the Cymry."[95] For more than 1,500 years the "Brythoneg-Rhufeinig link" had linked Wales with a Roman source, but growing Anglicization and ever encroaching modernity seemed, to his mind at least, to threaten that classical patrimony.[96] Intent on lessening his own ignorance, Jones devoted himself to the study of these historic roots, reading both recent works by R. H. Hodgkins (1877–1951) and other histories of the period published in the previous century. He admired Hodgkins' *History of the Anglo-Saxons* – calling it a "really beautifully done book, some lovely illustrations in it, and proper *maps*" – but he did feel that Hodgkins' writing had done little to upset the dominant (but wrong) Victorian understanding of Roman Britain.[97] His history, like previous accounts, still saw largely only progressive movement – the upward path of social and political development from the annihilation of Roman Britain to the present day, with distinctive periods passing "from the Roman culture of the later Empire through sub-Romanism to a Celtic and a Christian renaissance."[98] The nineteenth-century English historians Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92) and John Richard Green (1837–83) had likewise insisted on the success of the "English conquest" of Britain after the fall of Roman rule.[99] According to Green, proof of the sheer "completeness of this destruction of all Roman life" was evident everywhere, Britain having become

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[93] Ancient Greece, as Jones saw it, could only be grasped through the "via Romana": "I love Greek art better than anything, almost," he wrote, "but, owing to a vast complex of causes, our *direct* connection with it comes through Rome. It's rather like the business of religion. *Quite apart* from the truth or untruth of it, it seems to me that only by becoming a Catholic can one establish continuity with Antiquity. I've put this *badly*, but you'll see what I mean. We *can't* escape the via Romana – not if we are Western men." David Jones, "Eighth Letter to Richard Shirley Smith" (November 13, 1961) in David Jones (1996) 40 (emphases in the original).

[94] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 12 [11?], 1971) MS File No. 22724E, folio 73, NLW. Saunders Lewis later addressed their mutual interest in Wales' Roman inheritance in a televised interview on the BBC on March 15, 1965. Noting the inspiration Jones took from "Roman antiquity and Roman art," Lewis insisted that he thought "the Welsh are Romans," a notion – which though then not widely recognized – Jones had "done a great deal to help to get it recognized." "[T]hat is a great contribution of yours, not to Wales so much, as to the whole of the British Isles and its memory of its own past." Hunter-Evans (2014) 29. See also Evans (2019) 460–61.

[95] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 12 [11?], 1971) MS File No. 22724E, folio 73, NLW.

[96] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 12 [11?], 1971) MS File No. 22724E, folio 73, NLW. For Jones' extensive discussion of "vernacularization," see his letters to Saunders Lewis (January 4, 1962) folio 38–39, (October 3, 5, 1964) folio 47, (December 3, 1967) folio 50–51, (October 12 [11?], 1971) MS File No. 22724E, folio 73, NLW. Jones was fond of using the phrase *Fuit Ilium*, from *Aeneid* (2.325) to express a certain cultural pessimism about the historical fortunes of Wales. See, for example, David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (December 11, 22, 25, 1955) MS File No. 22724E, folio 11, NLW. See also his notable watercolor lettering, *Cara Wallia Derelicta* (1959), which contains a reference to the same line.

> the only province of the Empire where Rome died into a vague tradition of the past. The whole organization of government and society disappeared with the people who used it. Roman roads indeed still led to desolate cities. Roman camps still crowned hill and down. The old divisions of the land remained to furnish bounds of field and farm for the new settlers. The Roman church, the Roman country-house was left standing, though reft of priest and lord. But Rome was gone … Its law, literature, its manners, its faith, went with it.[100]

Freeman similarly insisted that, as Rome perished, the influence of its language and religion dissipated as well; even its legal tradition was thought to have exercised "no influence upon our insular jurisprudence, until, in times after the Norman Conquest, the civil law was introduced as something utterly exotic … The municipal institutions of the Roman towns in Britain utterly perished."[101] As Jones saw it, Hodgkins had not effectively altered the gross imperial narrative of his predecessors, for though his "most scholarly piece of work" had indeed "enormously developed the details" of the period with "new archaeological evidence," it left "the *main pattern*" of Victorian historiography "much unchanged."[102] He also was

> too much of the Teutonic school to please me – but all the same in a nice kind of way … He is unable to be anything but a bit superior about the Welsh; it comes out in the oddest ways. But at *least* he admits that with

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[97] David Jones, "To H. J. G., 20 July 1935," in Jones *DG* (1980) 75.

[98] Hodgkins (1935) vol. 1: 72.

[99] Green (1878–80) vol. 1: 7; Freeman (1867–76).

[100] Green (1878–80) vol. 1: 32.

[101] Freeman (1867–76) vol. 1: 17–18.

[102] David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 3, 5, 1964) MS File No. 22724E, folio 47, NLW.

> the loss of the Island to the 'steady', prudent etc. Teutons, they in their hills wove, as he would say, a web of magic and imagination round the story of their defeat, which in turn gave to the world the Arthurian cycle.[103]

Though Jones found little of sympathy in Hodgkins' work, he felt a new historical consensus was slowly coalescing against the pervasive 'Teutonic' understanding of Roman Britain. No longer could the link between the 'native' Briton and invading Roman be characterized through the "traditional English view," namely that "between Britons and Romans there was an initial cleavage of race, language, and culture which to the last was never really bridged."[104] On the contrary, the recent scholarship of R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943) offered a more nuanced theory, one that admitted the possibility of greater overlap or cultural hybridity:

> [T]he two cultures, Roman and British, were not absolutely foreign to one another, just as the two physical types were not really distinct. One of the strongest reasons for the success of the Roman Empire is that it included a number of peoples who were so far homogeneous both in race and in civilization that they could blend into a single whole without doing violence to anything in their natures.[105]

Unlike the imperial regimes of contemporary Europe, the Roman Empire possessed the power to legitimize a broad range of cultural and linguistic differences within its territories. For that reason, Collingwood believed that the Britons had not sacrificed their 'native' character while in the grip of Roman colonial power: "the Britons did not remain a mere subject race, held down by a Roman army. They became Romans; Romans in speech, in habits, and in sentiment. But this Romanization did not involve an unnatural warping of the British character."[106] Having taken unto themselves "a full share in the Roman civilization and a flourishing Romanized life of their own," they became inheritors of what Charles Cochrane later called *Romanitas*, a phenomenon that somehow

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[103] Jones, "To H. J. G. 20 July 1935," in Jones *DG* (1980) 75.

[104] Collingwood (1924) 12.

[105] Collingwood (1924) 14–15. Collingwood's view, though markedly different, built upon that of his teacher, Francis John Haverfield (1860–1919). His book, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (1905), cast Romanization as a "complex process with complex issues." "It did not everywhere and at once destroy all traces of tribal or national sentiments or fashions." Though those traces did eventually dissipate, "the process worked with different degrees of speed and success in different lands." Elements of the tribal under Roman rule "remained at least for a while and in certain regions, not in active opposition, but in latent persistence, capable of resurrection under proper conditions." Haverfield (1905) 22.

[106] Collingwood (1924) 14.

"transcended all purely 'natural' bonds."[107] "Amid the wreckage of empires founded on tyranny and exploitation," Rome "stood alone," he asserted, "as the project of a world-community united by ties of the spirit. As such, it was genuinely *political*; it went beyond race, beyond colour, and, in all but a few exceptional instances, beyond religion as this was envisaged by antiquity."[108] Yet, even as Rome encouraged all to rise above racial, ethnic and religious differences, *Romanitas* did not demand that local "heterogenous elements" be repudiated; they were organized rather "in support of the imperial idea. Under the aegis of Eternal Rome, Greek and Latin, African, Gaul, and Spaniard remained free to lead their own lives and achieve their own destiny."[109]

More recent scholarly work has complicated or dispensed with the concept of Romanization altogether, noting that a greater emphasis on diverse regional expressions, social variability and the "infinitely varied" forms of cultural hybridity are as important to the analysis of "the Roman cultural package found around the empire" as seeking to identify "elements of homogeneity."[110] "[M]uch of what we identify as 'Roman' culture in provinces like Britain," David Mattingly observes, "in fact came from the other provinces in northern and western Europe, rather than from Italy or even the Mediterranean region."[111] Moreover, Romanization is itself "not a Roman concept" of the period but is often employed as a more contemporary "unilateral, unidirectional and progressive" notion that tends to crudely reduce "the question of cultural identity to a simple binary opposition: Roman and native."[112] A critical difficulty with this approach is, as Richard Hingley notes, its denial of the many multivocal negotiations of the so-called native/Roman dynamic prevalent across the empire, not only among the archaeological traces left by provincial elites but more widely in the so-called non-elite aspects of local material culture, where variations in acculturation and Roman reception, in the "hints of ways of life … are far too complex to be categorized through the use of Romanization theory."[113]

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[107] Collingwood (1924) 14. Cochrane (1940) 73. Cochrane developed his views regarding the "formal discipline of *Romanitas*" in *Christianity and Classical Culture* (1940) 114–76, 179–80, a book Jones saw as a "most illuminating" study. See David Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (February 3, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 43.

[108] Cochrane (1940) 72–73.

[109] Cochrane (1940) 115, 73.

[110] Mattingly (2006) 15. See also Millet (1990) 1–8.

[111] Mattingly (2006) 14–15.

[112] Mattingly (2006) 14.

[113] Hingley (2005) 93.

> The Roman world did not operate according to simple and well established rules, and the ideas that we use to study it may sometimes collide and contradict. In other words, we need to think further than the useful but simplistic image of 'Roman' identity. The combination of a number of competing approaches enables us to keep a focus upon the power-relations that were used to the create empire, while considering its character as a variety of overlapping networks of power and identity.[114]

Too often "a tension between the local context of individual societies and the creation of Roman cultural coherence" is still said to dominate scholarly discussions – with Rome's "civilizing mission" among the 'native' provinces of empire lurking in the background.[115] The history of that tension in scholarship, Mattingly suggests, was likely conditioned by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century "involvement of European scholars at the time in their own world of colonization and empire."[116] The stress often laid upon the "benign aspect" of Rome's colonial reach might therefore be read as implicit encouragement at the time that imperial states of Europe imitate its apparent "accommodation with local cultures," perhaps even to further advance what Collingwood had called "a society of peoples in which intercourse was nowhere checked by barriers such as separate races or even nations."[117]

Nonetheless, Collingwood's notions surrounding the complex transmission of classical culture, the synthetic fusion of Roman and Briton, attracted Jones' interest in aesthetic representations of civilizational hybridity. In *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (1936), an extensive study Collingwood coauthored with the archaeologist J. N. L. Myres (1902–89), Jones found a more appealing vision of Roman Britain than he had yet encountered. Its ancient civilization was one marked by competing cultural and linguistic forces – forces native, foreign, Briton, Roman and Anglo-Saxon – through which common syntheses slowly appeared, an essential hybridity that Jones would later describe as Britain's "complex heritage."[118] What he admired in Collingwood and Myres was not simply their belief that the Britons were not "a mere subject race" but the insistence rather that Roman Britain's collapse was born of conflicts too complex, too local for the linear narratives of contemporary historiography.[119] These times, "the darkest centuries in English history," they wrote,

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[114] Hingley (2005) 93.
[115] Hingley (2005) 48; Mattingly (2006) 14.
[116] Mattingly (2006) 14.
[117] Mattingly (2006) 14, 13. Collingwood (1924) 15–16. On Collingwood's 'Roman' and 'anti-exceptionalist' vision of history, see Browning (2004) 73–96.
[118] Jones (2016) [10].

> were times whose quality cannot be portrayed without serious distortion in those broad and rational sequences of cause and effect so beloved by the historian. The conflicts are too complex, issues too obscure, the cross-currents too numerous, and the decisions too local, to make possible the application of any single formula to their solution; and it is at least reassuring sometimes to remember that, if we found such a formula, we should unquestionably be wrong. *Uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum.*[120]

Inadequate evidence had kept the ruin of early Britain from sight, and little of "the flotsam and jetsam left by the ebb tide of Roman imperialism" could help historians craft a credible narrative of social progress.[121] The "character of the times" was too obscure, so much so if one were left "with little more than a blurred impression in our minds," that blurred impression would represent "more faithfully than any clear-cut picture the spirit of the age."[122] For Jones, the work of Collingwood and Myres marked an important shift of approach among a growing number of historians and linguists.[123] That which began "in Myers [*sic*] contribution to *Roman Britain*," he told Saunders Lewis, introduced "a more definite change in [F. M.] Stenton, & in Peter Hunter Blair's Cambridge paperback *An Introduction to A. S.* [*Anglo-Saxon*] *England* [where] some of the fruits of re-questioning show themselves."[124] Both Stenton and Blair accepted as axiomatic that obscurity clouded early British history; that fact alone disproved what Freeman, Green and Hodgkins assumed, namely that "Rome was gone" from the religion, law and literature of Britannia.[125] It suggested rather – as Myres claimed – that contemporary methods of historiography were too coarse, too crude to detect the traces of Romanity that remained following the Western Empire's collapse. The "pro-'Anglo-Saxon'" bias of previous research – its devotion to the "broad and rational sequences of cause and effect so beloved by the historian" – could not untangle the forces that, in driving Roman civilization to ruin, still somehow translated something essentially Roman into Welsh.[126] "[W]e shall never now know the truth," Jones confessed, "for instead of more recent specialist research making the 'pattern' or 'lack of pattern' clearer it makes it much more complex."[127]

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[119] Collingwood (1924) 14.

[120] Collingwood and Myres (1937) 455–56. This passage is partially excerpted (and slightly misquoted with Jones writing "appreciation" instead of "application") in a letter "To T. F. B, 16 May 1942," in Jones *DG* (1980) 119. Jones noted the quotation as "jolly nice to end a book of great learning and sweat like that." The Latin phrase contained therein – translated roughly as "not by one pathway alone can one come to so great a secret" – is taken from the appeal Quintus Aurelius Symmachus made to Valentinian II in AD 384. Symmachus wrote the emperor pleading that the pagan Altar of Victory be restored to the Roman Curia. His petition was denied and later rebutted by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. See section 3.10 of *Symmachi Relatio III* in *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar. Die dritte Relatio des Symmachus und die Briefe 17, 18 und 57 des Mailänder Bischofs Ambrosius*, trans. and ed. Richard Klein (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 104–6.

[121] Collingwood and Myres (1937) 451.

[122] Collingwood and Myres (1937) 455, 456.

[123] On the evolving reception of Anglo-Saxon history at this time, see Keynes (2003) xvii–xxxv. See also Mattingly (2006) 3–20.

[124] Jones refers to Stenton (1943) and Blair's *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England* (2003), first published in 1956. Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 3, 5, 1964) MS File No. 22724E, folio 47, NLW.

Though "that chaos" of the fifth and sixth centuries seemed too obscure to elucidate in historical form, its concealment still stirred Jones' imagination;[128] and precisely because he was ignorant of this key moment – because he was denied a more exacting knowledge of the acculturating forces at work in Welsh identity – Jones began to envision a poetic style that would 'document' the multilinguistic hybridity of early British history. Though drawn somewhat superficially to the advocacy of *Plaid Cymru*, he thought no native purity – whether racial, ethnic or linguistic – had ever existed on "*ynys hon*, 'this island'": British civilization was too "subtly meshed indeed," he argued, "intricated (very much so) with our common Western deposit, the mythos of Hellas and of Rome, together with the Aramaean mythos of the Mabinog Iesu."[129] Even when the Saxons, Angles and Jutes had invaded, their migration had not compromised the "mythos of Wales" in any sense.[130] It was not so much Anglo-Saxon civilization, Jones maintained, as those "blasted Vikings and the Isamlic [*sic*] assault of the 7th–8th–9th centuries that really destroyed the *romanitas* of the West rather than the Germanic invasions of the 5th & 6th centuries."[131] Roman civilization had once fused with the Celts; so too could it have "assimilated" the Anglo-Saxon.[132] Thus Jones found himself out of step with contemporaneous calls for greater Welsh purity, for "*at every possible level*," he once told Saunders Lewis, "'Englishness', in a thousand small ways, penetrates what remains of 'Welshness'."[133] The animus of politicized Anglophobia was an ahistorical phenomenon, an equal threat even to Welsh bilingualism. "[T]he English," he observed, "have been with us for about a millennium and a half, so they can be regarded as naturalized by now."[134] No obliteration of English nor indeed of Welsh was needed but rather a greater awareness of "those chancy twists and meanders of history and of quasi-history" that had formed Britain's culturally mixed character.[135] It was the sheer ignorance of this "complex heritage," this hybrid linguistic and cultural history, that had to be rooted out for "none of us, whoever we are," he asserted, "should neglect to recall those things which have determined what we are."[136]

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[125] Green (1878–80) vol. 1: 32.

[126] Jones, "To H. J. G. 20 July 1935," in Jones *DG* (1980) 75; Collingwood and Myres (1937) 455.

[127] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 3, 5, 1964) MS File No. 22724E, folio 47, NLW.

[128] Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (October 3, 5, 1964) MS File No. 22724E, folio 47, NLW.

[129] Jones (2016) [10], [7–8]. Jones often elaborated on the broadly hybridized character of Celtic identity, insisting that the "early deposits of Wales are intricated with those of Ireland as well as with the Romanic thing so one has to be very cautious in trying to disentangle the *materia*." Jones, Letter to Michael Richey (April 19–27, 1965) Boston College, Burns Library.

[130] Jones (2016) [7].

[131] Jones, Letter to Michael Richey (April 19–27, 1965) Boston College, Burns Library.

[132] Jones, Letter to Michael Richey (April 19–27, 1965) Boston College, Burns Library. On Jones' view of Anglo-Saxon culture, see Johnson (2010) 89–109.

With such understanding contemporary poets could "under certain circumstances and given a perceptive response, vitalise the things of England."[137] In recent literature, Jones noted, no lesser invention than the sprung rhythm of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89) had been forged from traces of Welsh, from his "study of *cynghanedd* and his stay in Gwynedd."[138] Fascinated with the "instress and charm of Wales," Hopkins learned of *cynghanedd*, or "consonant-chime" as he called it, at St. Bueno's College in North Wales.[139] There in 1875 he began composing *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, using "certain chimes suggested by the Welsh Poetry [he] had been reading (what they call cynghanedd)."[140] Yet, because of that, Hopkins came to think *The Deutschland* possessed "a great many more oddnesses [that] could not but dismay an editor's eye."[141] For Jones, however, those oddnesses reflected Hopkins' creative imagination, his desire to expose English prosody to the linguistic charge and foreign timbre of Welsh poetry. Of his use of Welsh, Jones wrote, "sometimes, hundreds of years later, things that have become formulae, provide a renewal of life in some unexpected context perhaps in another language, & of this Hopkins is a most outstanding example."[142] Without fully understanding the "exacting but invigorating nature of Welsh metrical forms," Hopkins set off a "creative explosion" in English, one to which most readers – even his confidant Robert Bridges (1844–1930) – had remained "totally blind," even "to the nature of the possible *cyd-gysylltiad* ['interconnection'] of *the causes*" behind it.[143] His "English metric," however, became one "of very great felicity, subtlety and strength," and not because he cultivated mere convention but because he had sought out a foreign world – the "hidden things of Wales" to "vitalise the things of England."[144]

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[133] Jones made this remark when discussing Emyr Humphreys' novel *A Toy Epic* (1958). He admired the book for its realism and alternating perspectives on growing up in "the four corners of Wales." David Jones, Letter to Saunders Lewis (June 2, 1959) MS File No. 22724E, folio 14, NLW. See also Humphreys (1958) 7. Humphreys' novel has been said to set forth a "tribal view of Welsh identity as a linguistic community – rooted in farming and Nonconformism – that continues to survive under the surface of an ever-encroaching, English-speaking modernity." Webb (2019) 546.

[134] Jones (2016) [9].

[135] Jones (2016) [4].

[136] Jones (2016) [10], [4].

[137] Jones (2016) [11].

[138] Jones (2016) [10].

[139] Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Journal for 1874," in Hopkins (2015) 601; Gerard Manley Hopkins, "26–7 November 1882 to Robert Bridges," in Hopkins (2013b) 551. On Welsh influence in Hopkins, see Lilly (1943) 192–205.

[140] Hopkins, "5–10 October 1878 to Richard Watson Dixon," in Hopkins (2013a) 317.

[141] Hopkins (2013a) 317.

Yet, though Hopkins had already manipulated Welsh to expand the poetic range of English writing, Jones felt that he could still delve more deeply into the "entailed inheritance" of British history to fertilize new literature.[145] Drawn from the country's complex linguistic history, a new multilingual style might demonstrate

> basic things: the early mixed racial deposits, the myth (mythus) that is specifically of this Island, and the Christian Liturgy, and the Canon of Scripture, and the Classical deposits … a great complex of influences and interactions which have conditioned us all.[146]

However, as a self-described "'English monoglot'," Jones was not fluent in any other language – not in Welsh nor even in Greek or in Latin, languages whose reception he thought especially critical to the Welsh "mythos."[147] Unlike some of his contemporaries, he had not enjoyed a rigorous university education in classics, nor had he read Latin or Greek intensively at either the Camberwell School of Art (1910–14) or the Westminster School of Art (1919–21).[148] By middle age, as he composed

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[142] David Jones, Letter XXIII to Aneirin Talfan Davies (November 27, 1962) in Jones (1980) 86.

[143] Jones (1980) 87, 86. For Jones' view of Hopkins, see Berenato (2018) 101–267, as well as Staudt (2018) 321–25.

[144] Jones (2016) [10], [11].

[145] Jones (2016) [11].

[146] Jones (1952) 40.

[147] Jones (1952) 11. See Jones (2016) [7].

[148] While living at Ditchling and Capel-y-Ffin during the 1920s, Jones regularly associated with many others who had received greater formal education in classics. His friend René Hague (1905–81) had gone up to Oriel College, Oxford, on a classics scholarship, but as Dilworth notes, Hague was "sent down for spending (and being unable to repay) the funds of a drama society." Jones' associate, Douglas Cleverdon (1903–87) likewise studied classics at Jesus College, Oxford,

The Anathemata, Jones often complained about his lack of a "public school or university background," believing that he might be "a good writer, if I knew all about these root languages but it's hard otherwise."[149] Like the Welsh he had so often tried to learn, the Latin and the Greek he retained were largely self-taught, but Jones longed for a capable tutor: "I do wish I knew Latin," he told his friend Louis Bussell in 1945, "I've been trying to conjugate the verbs 'to come' & 'to adore' but it's all too complicated at 50!"[150] His ancient Greek, however, was worse. In 1952, when thanking Rev. Desmond Chute (1895–1962) for sending him an engraved Greek inscription, Jones noted that, "I can't read Greek but someone staying in this house translated it for me and I like the sound of it and what it says very much."[151] As he aged, Jones regularly upbraided himself over his lack of fluency in both languages as well as Welsh, believing that his ignorance had, lamentably, been marred by collective amnesia – some aspect of a "memory-effacing Lethe" – afflicting contemporary civilization.[152] "'Only as you get older,'" he complained in an interview for *The Guardian*,

> "you get so much slower. I hate it – taking twelve times as long to try to say something, and then not getting it right. And there's this terrible ignorance one is trying to make up all the time. I can't command even one

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while Rev. Martin D'Arcy (1888–1976), a Jesuit priest whom Jones befriended in 1922, excelled in Greek and Latin, having taken a first in 'Greats' from Campion Hall, Oxford (1912–16). See Dilworth (2017) 90–91, 94–95, 76–77.

[149] Johnston (1964) 321. David Jones, Letter to Harman Grisewood (March 19, 1940), as cited in Staudt (1994) 130.

[150] David Jones, Letter to Louis Bussell (March 14, 1945) Burns Library, Boston College. On Jones' Latin, see Miles (1990) 45.

[151] David Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (December 29, 1952) in Jones *IN* (1984) 25.

[152] Jones (1952) 16. Jones often linked the diminishment of Welsh with the decline of Greek and Latin, perhaps most notably when complaining at length about the decrease of Latin in the liturgies of the Catholic Church. He lamented the preference for the vernacular as the dominant liturgical language (see Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963) chap. 1, 3.36.2): "I think our boys are making the same mistake as those classical dons who used to say that the teaching of the Greek and Latin languages was maintained because it taught men to think clearly, to write clear English, to become competent civil servants or what not. Apart from being largely balls, the reasons are utile and so-called 'practical'. What the dons ought to have said was that the classics were an integral part of our Western heritage and should be fought for on that ground alone. Our Church leaders have even more reason to guard that heritage – for it is saturated with the sacral. It's not a matter of knowledge but of love. It's a terrible thought that the language of the West, of the Western liturgy, and inevitably the Roman chant, might become virtually extinct … I believe it's only part of the Decline of the West. Perhaps I'm talking balls, I don't know. But the *kind* of arguments used I find highly unsatisfactory, and they have just that same tang that distresses me so over the language of my father's *patria*. They prove by statistics that the Welsh language is dying and that it has no practical value anyhow. Damn such bloody arguments." Jones, "To H. J. G. 6 July 1964," in Jones *DG* (1980) 209.

> language besides English" (he has taught himself to read a little Welsh but not to speak it). "If I'd gone to school, at least they'd have taught me Greek and Latin."[153]

Despite such "terrible ignorance," Jones remained committed, however, to test his fragmentary knowledge of Welsh and the classics in a polyglot style whose density would resemble the "shape in words" he first made in *In Parenthesis* (1937).[154] There the soldiers' experience of the Great War, its "complex of sights, sounds, fears, hopes, apprehensions, smells, things exterior and interior," had been drawn together as though it were the "landscape and paraphernalia of that singular time and of those particular men."[155] Using some material he had started in 1939, he began drafting *The Anathemata* in earnest in January 1948.[156] Convinced by Collingwood's dictum that to "study history" was a means "to attain self-knowledge," Jones was eager that his new work traverse not simply "a singular time" as *In Parenthesis* had but cut across a broad trajectory of British history, language and mythology; it would illustrate therein something of the "whole argosy of mankind."[157] He therefore drew on "the Welsh and Latin languages and a great many concepts and motifs of Welsh and Romanic provenance," phenomena that remained still part, as he put it, of the present "writer's *Realien*, within a kind of Cockney setting."[158] Additionally, he used Greek, French, German and Anglo-Saxon for an effective ἀνάμνησις of late Roman Britain, a multilingual *prosimetrum* that enacted in collage the "extraordinary mix-up of the break-up of the phenomenally mixed mess-up of Celtic, Teutonic & Latin elements in the Britain of the early dark ages."[159]

Though he insisted that *The Anathemata* was "neither a history of the Britons nor a history of any sort," Jones grounded his stylistic principles in a declaration from the *Historia Brittonum*: *coacervavi omne quod inveni*, "I have made a heap of all that I could find."[160] As Nennius had composed "partly from writings and monuments of the ancient inhabitants of Britain, partly from the annals of the Romans and the chronicles of the sacred fathers," Jones stitched his verse from "mixed data" whose stylization might shed light on a period in British history where the "cross-currents" of cultural evolution had thus far eluded rationalization and clear narrative structure.[161] The poem's hybrid idiom thus reflected the "halting, broken & complicated and Babel-like" character of Roman Britain and, for that reason, Jones refused to nativize its "mixed data" by translating foreign fragments into familiar English; instead he offered his readers explanatory footnotes in the interest of "mere politeness."[162] To get at "something of this historic situation" only "fractured & fused forms," only "hyphenated words," he wrote, could best transmute the ethos of upheaval and linguistic fluidity endemic to that era.[163] *The Anathemata*, though "in no real sense concerned to experiment with words, with forms," he wrote, could not sacrifice the "overtones & undertones evoked by the words used," not if the poem were to excavate more deeply the hidden metamorphoses of Romanity.[164] In the poem's third section "Angle-Land," Jones depicted these metamorphoses in bricolage, writing of the waste moors and fens on Crowland, where the "ancra-man," the Mercian hermit, Saint Guthlac, had settled in AD 699.

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[153] Roberts (1964) 7.

[154] Jones (1937) x.

[155] Jones (1937) x.

[156] Dilworth (2017) 259.

[157] Collingwood (1993) 315; Jones (1937) x; Jones (1952) 106n2.

[158] Jones (1952) 11.

[159] David Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (January 26, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 34. Borrowing the Greek Christ used when consecrating bread and wine, Jones insisted that poetry could hallow, bless and curse, and was thus, by parallel, "a kind of *anamnesis* of, i.e. is an effective recalling of, something loved." Like the transubstantiation accomplished at Mass, the poet's task was to "uncover a valid sign," to re-embody ancient fragments, to re-present them and thereby "propagand" the presence of the past. See Jones (1952) 21, 27. On *anamnesis* and *The Anathemata*, see Miles (1990) 1–22, Heath-Stubbs (1998) 128–33, and Williams (2005) 58–63.

[160] Jones (1952) 9.

> Past where the ancra-man, deeping his holy rule
> in the fiendish marsh
>   at the *Geisterstunde*

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[161] Jones (1952) 9; Collingwood and Myres (1937) 456.

[162] Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (January 26, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 34; Jones (1952) 9; Orr (1966) 100. Jones' footnotes were met with palpable disdain. "[P]eople have said," he told Peter Orr in 1964, "that they think that notes are pedantic, *I* think they are the reverse, because it is useless to pretend that there's a common culture existing, as there might perhaps still be in different parts of the world where the poet would be understood because he was within a confined and received and inherited tradition. I would give anything to have Dante's annotations to 'Il Paradiso', for instance. After all, one might say even the word 'Aphrodite' might not be understood now by lots of chaps, and as civilization gets more complicated I think that the place for explanation may be in notes, it seems only mere politeness." Orr (1966) 100. See Conclusion, pp. 250–52.

[163] Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (January 26, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 34.

[164] Jones described his method at length in a self-deprecating way to Desmond Chute: "My 'method' is merely to arse around with such words as are available to me until the passage takes on something of the shape I think it requires & evokes the image I want. I find, or think I find, the process almost identical to what one tries to do in paintin' or drawin'. Having tried to the best of one's powers, to make the lines, smudges, colours, opacities, translucencies, tightnesses, hardnesses, pencil marks, paint marks, chalk marks, spit-marks, thumb marks, etc. evoke the image one requires as much as poss., one only hopes that some other chap someone looking at the picture, may recognize the image intended." Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (December 29, 1952) in Jones *IN* (1984) 24.

on *Calangaeaf* night
heard the bogle-*baragouinage*.
Crowland-*diawliaidd*
Wealisc-man lingo speaking?
or Britto-Romani gone *diaboli*?
or Romanity gone *Wealis*?[165]

According to legend, Guthlac had struggled with demons on Crowland where torments were expressed in Old Brythonic murmuring, the primitive tongue once widely spoken across Roman Britain.[166] With the rise of Anglo-Saxon, that language had all but disappeared by the eighth century, but the hermit, however, heard its strange pitch, its *strimulentas loquelas* lingering out on the marshes, and he thought it, according to the poem, the babble and "bogle-*baragouinage*" of devils.[167] What Guthlac encountered was not, however, simply an execration of the demonic, the *diawliaidd* of Brittania come again, it was a remnant of the Britto-Romani, the once powerful people who had for more than four centuries reputedly absorbed *Romanitas*. Jones hoped, by setting Latin, Welsh, Anglo-Saxon, German and French against each other at this moment, that he could give voice to the synthetic agglutination of Anglo-Saxon England.[168] Driven out to the wastelands of Crowland, what remained of the Roman had "gone *Wealis*," passed among outlaws on the fringe of civilization. With sweeping multilingual style, Jones reflected the "unintentional, unconscious hybridization" of "historical life and evolution of all languages" in this period following the collapse of Roman rule.[169] Elsewhere in "Angle-Land" his hybridization of the Roman is enacted as paradox – as both dispersal and a kind of transubstantiation – a metamorphosis of what once had been distinctively Latin into 'new' linguistic forms in Welsh, English, French and German.

Is Marianus wild Meirion?
is Sylvánus
Urbigéna's son?
has toga'd Rhufon
(gone Actaéon)
come away to the Wake

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[165] Jones (1952) 112.
[166] As recounted in section 34 of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci Auctore Felice*. See *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac: Texts, Translation and Notes*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) 108–11; see also Rhys (1901) 676–77; as well as Jackson (1953) 235–37.
[167] Colgrave (1956) 110.
[168] On this passage see Robichaud (2007) 157–62.
[169] Jones (1952) 112. Bakhtin (1981) 358.

in the bittern's low aery?
along with his towny
Patricius gone the *wilde Jäger?*

From the *fora*
to the forests.
Out from *gens Romulum*
into the *Weal*-kin
dinas-man gone *aethwlad*
cives gone wold-men
… from Lindum to London
bridges broken down.[170]

The "toga'd Rhufon" – the urbane Roman once a "*dinas*-man" – has been driven from the center of imperial power, and like Actaeon, turned stag on Mount Cithaeron, he appears Romanized yet "forced," as René Hague (1905–81) argued, "back into a life of hunted and hunter."[171] Likewise, the "towny Patricius [has] gone the *wilde Jäger*," and Sylvánus too, his Latin toponymic, has been pushed from the city though he remains "Urbigéna's son," the offspring of a 'city-born' mother. The rise of Anglo-Saxon civilization had irrevocably altered the intricate synthesis of the Roman and the Brythonic, the classical and the Celtic; and in these lines Jones sought to scatter the Roman into uncharted forms of language and culture. The *gens Romulum* had become *aethwlad*, "outlawed" on an island country where their classical inheritance was now, bit by bit, being metamorphosed by the "*Weal*-kin" of medieval England.[172]

In layering this passage with foreign borrowings Jones stretched his idiom across the "densely wooded, inherited and entailed domains" of language and its histories in Britain.[173] In so doing he fashioned a macaronic form that functioned, as Christopher Dawson (1889–1970) suggested, like the Hisperic Latin of sub-Roman Britain. The Celts of that age, Dawson told Jones, had inventively deployed the Roman tongue, making up "'new words because they liked the sound of them, whereas with you," he wrote, "it is a question of increasing the density & meaning."[174] Though Jones pled ignorance to Dawson's claim of a parallel between Late Latin and his "'Davidic English'," he was flattered: "Dear

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[170] Jones (1952) 112–13.

[171] Hague (1977) 138. See also Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (3.162–205). *Dinas* is typically taken as "city" in modern Welsh, but its roots are in related words for "fort" and "citadel." See Thomas (1967).

[172] On the contraction of *Romulorum* to the unusual and mistaken genitive form, *Romulum*, see David Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (January 26, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 31, 35n1.

[173] Jones (1952) 20.

[174] Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (February 4, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 46. "According to Nora Chadwick, in a passage marked by Jones, Hisperic Latin 'consists of a highly specialized

Xtopher, he always thinks that chaps are as learned as he is himself," he wrote, "I fear I don't know at all what the 6th Cent. Celts did to the Latin language."[175] Nonetheless Jones thought Dawson's analogy "pertinent & meaningful," for he had "*never* known him to make a wrong guess yet, not where historical comparisons were involved."[176] Nowhere was the suggested parallel more apparent than in the neologisms and his hyphenated forms. In the above-cited passage the word "*Weal*-kin" is a "germane example," for, as Jones noted, to keep the literal meaning, he might have written *Wealcyn*, the Anglo-Saxon word for 'Welsh race' or 'Welsh people'.[177] Yet to do this, he argued, would have marred the poem with "a dead word, a student's word"; "It would have been just a straight A. S. word," he explained,

> taken from any Anglo-Saxon document … but by hyphenating *Weal* with 'kin', the word can be made to take on a certain life, because we still use the word 'kin' and can't see it without thinking of 'kith', whereas *cyn* is remote, & anyway I believe is pronounced 'kune' or something like it.[178]

Alternatively, Jones could have translated it "'Welshmen' or 'Welsh folk'," but this too, he thought, "would have given no historic undertone, or, in the case of 'Welsh folk' a rather bogus, or 'poetic' or dated feeling."[179] By joining an Anglo-Saxon root to a more familiar modern word Jones believed he could balance the native against the foreign, the more contemporary against the more ancient, compressing in a single compound the "Babel-like" character of Roman Britain. In doing so he syntactically scattered the *gens Romulum*, pushing the semblance of a 'pure' Latinity out into a neologism whose hybridity symbolized something of Britain's metamorphic history.[180]

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and fantastic vocabulary containing a large foreign element and an extremely artificial figurative style combined with alliteration'. Certainly this suggests 'parallels' with 'Davidic English'." Miles (1990) 47.

[175] Jones *IN* (1984) 46.

[176] Jones *IN* (1984) 46.

[177] Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (January 26, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 34. For reference, see *wealh* and *cyn* in Toller (1898) 1173. See also *-cyn* in Toller (1921) 761; and Jackson (1953) 227–28.

[178] Jones *IN* (1984) 34.

[179] Jones *IN* (1984) 34.

[180] Jones *IN* (1984) 46. Saunders Lewis admired Jones' foreignizing of "nouns, especially the proper nouns." Their presence could make readers "more aware of life richly meshed in complexities … 'Poetry is the song of deeds' he says, and he is the poet of proper names. He loves more particularly the names that travel and change, and by their changes tie up the centuries and are some clue to them." After hearing an excerpt of *The Anathemata* read on the BBC in 1958, Lewis told Jones "how very, very much I was moved by it. And you were well served; the production was

As noted – Jones was, on the surface, sympathetic to the cause of Welsh Wales, but more intimately he also expressed a deep wariness towards publicly engaging in political advocacy. British modernity did bear, he felt, "a resemblance to the beginnings of the Dark Ages," but no mere change in official policies towards Welsh alone would redeem the time.[181] On the contrary, for this "late and complex phase of a phenomenally complex civilization," Jones saw the art of writing his poetry itself as a more significant act of political resistance and remembrance, one wherein he could bear witness to the deep cultural memory of Britain's classical and Celtic traces.[182] In the preface to *The Anathemata* he wrote:

> When rulers seek to impose a new order upon any such group belonging to one or other of those more primitive culture-phases, it is necessary for those rulers to take into account the influence of the poets as recalling something loved and as embodying an ethos inimical to the imposition of that new order.[183]

Although Britain was "very far removed" from a time when "the poet was explicitly and by profession the custodian, rememberer, embodier, and voice of the mythus," Jones felt that he remained a "dangerous" figure for rulers of a "new order," dangerous on account of his ability and authority to evoke and recall the ethos, forms and civilizational fragments of earlier "culture-phases."[184] The residue of those fragments and forms, Jones argued, still remained part of the vast fabric which patterned the present age, and it was critical that the poet embody that fabric, to 'propagand' its fullness however inimical it might be to the "imposition" of a "new order."[185] In this sense Jones believed poetry to be "inevitably 'propaganda'," not political pamphleteering but an art that gave "real formal expression"

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sensitive and human, Cockney voices and Welsh and plain chant all made an understanding unity of your poem, a reflection of all you were putting together in your lines. Yes, it was good." Saunders Lewis, Letter to David Jones (April 7, 1958) folio 18. David Jones Papers, CT 1/4, NLW. See Lewis (1967) 114–15.

[181] Jones, "Art in Relation to War," in Jones (1978) 147.

[182] Jones (1952) 21.

[183] Jones (1952) 21.

[184] Jones (1952) 21.

[185] Jones (1952) 21. Saunders Lewis saw this aspect of Jones' literary work as radically anti-imperial. Writing later to Jones about his poem "The Tribune's Visitation," Lewis called the work both "moving and terrible. An indictment of all empires, of all that destroy the local thing, not merely military conquests but industrial and commercial expansions; and it's all put into the mouth of the representative of all that uniformity, – and it even kills willingly its own fountain-head, its own local thing. So that the poem is a cry to the England of today also, – for the English lares as well as the Welsh are being quite forgotten. It's a very contemporary poem." Saunders Lewis, Letter to David Jones (December 31, 1969) folio 58, David Jones Papers, CT 1/4, NLW.

to that which "propagands the reality which caused those forms and their content to be."[186] If *The Anathemata* could be said to document the time-worn hybridity of *Romanitas*, its legacy could not easily serve forms of ideological nativism. To cede the "very subtly meshed" past to either the notion of Welsh purity or an 'accessible' English would be tantamount to imposing "new order" on a 'primitive culture-phase' "inimical to the imposition of that new order."[187] *Romanitas* was too centripetal a force, not a static phenomenon but a catalytic agent through which the "survivals" from "an older condition of culture" could be successively translated into new hybrid shapes.[188] To represent it in poetry was thus not so much a nostalgic obsession for Jones – the seeking after a 'pure' past or 'lost' origin – as an obsession with its power to forge continual cultural and linguistic evolution in the future. For this reason, *The Anathemata* has been said to radiate "an incomparable imaginative reach over vast temporal spans."[189]

Jones' attempts to depict the synoptic transmission of many 'Romes' into British civilization were indebted, without doubt, to his immersion in Britto-Romanic sources and the study of its histories, but the complex influence of James Joyce proved pivotal to him as well. Joyce's preoccupation with the so-called "Celtic hinterland" long dominated his thinking about the "formal problems" of literary art.[190] Saunders Lewis had likewise once expressed admiration for Joyce, confessing that a Dedalean impulse to "fly by the nets" of nationality, language, and religion drove him to enlist and fight in the First World War.[191] By the war's end, however, Lewis had eschewed Joyce entirely, for his experience, he felt, had taught him that Welsh identity was "not a net but a root."[192] Rejecting the novelist as a "waste of ingenuity" crippled by "self-torment and self-analysis," Lewis embraced the far-right *l'enraciné* nationalism of the French novelist Maurice Barrès (1862–1923) instead.[193] It was not Joyce who had immersed himself in Ireland's 'rootedness', he argued, but rather the dramatic verse of Yeats, Synge, Lady Gregory and Pádraic Colum. Their work contained a "[p]oetic speech and regionalism and nationalism" that could be an example for Welsh writers, perhaps even the beginning of "an answer" to the central problem plaguing its national life, namely the "all-invading industrialism of the time."[194] By contrast with the Irish theatre, Joyce had rejected the notion that "[p]oetry and poetic drama needed roots in a community."[195] While he remained "of Irish race," he had refused, Lewis argued, to "write for Ireland."[196] For David Jones, however, Joyce's work not born of hate or disregard of country, "because of all artists ever," the novelist was "the most dependent on the particular, on place, site, locality."[197] Despite a "life-long exile" on the European continent, Joyce had no less feeling for "his natal place," his self-imposed banishment having served "only to sharpen, clarify and deepen his devotion to the *numina* of place, not of any place, but of this place, Eblana … '*Hircus Civis Eblanensis*'."[198] As Jones saw it, Joyce's loathing for the rigid ideological structures specific to his experience of Ireland – those 'nets' of race, language and crude persuasion so despised by Dedalus – had pushed many critics to regard him wrongly as an iconoclast. "The notion that Joyce was destructive is so ludicrous," he wrote, "because nobody could have been more concerned with informing every word and every jot and tittle with some sort of significance. It was rebellious, of course, rebellious against superficiality and preconceived notions."[199] It was in fact that very rebellion against the preconceived and conventional which had made Joyce's work "absolutely incomparable" in its devotion to 'local' character of particular places in language and in landscape – for Joyce could show, Jones explained, how "one word, even a comma," could "have more facets of meaning" and "recall more things than any writer that I know."[200] He understood the "amalgam" of "Celtic deposits," how these "incorporated pre-Celtic ones and these together underlie the Germanic-Latin fusion" and could therefore generate a sonic or linguistic hybridity "in as compact a space as possible" matched to the stratigraphic sequence of a specific place.[201] "All great things are like that," Jones insisted, "I mean, you just strip off layers and you find more underneath, and you strip off another and there is more underneath."[202] Joyce's "thick description" of Dublin life had indeed satirized the Revival's forced marriage of ideological nationalism and contemporary literature, but it did so, Jones thought, in "absolute fidelity to a specified site, and the complex historic strata, special to that site."[203] In this way Joyce had not broken faith with Ireland but balanced the complexities of its chaotic history against contemporary reality; the "immemorial thought-patterns of a genuine 'folk'" he enmeshed in a "modern industrial slum-culture" and "saloon-bar folk-lore."[204]

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[186] Jones (1952) 21.

[187] Jones (2016) [10]; Jones (1952) 21.

[188] The English anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) defined "survivals" in *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (1871), as those "processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved." Tylor (1871) vol. 1: 15.

[189] Carne-Ross (1980) 42.

[190] Jones, "James Joyce's Dublin," in Jones (1959) 305. See also Jones (1952) 26. On Jones' debt to Joyce, see Staudt (1994) 129–38.

[191] In a 1955 interview broadcast on the BBC Home Service, Lewis recalled the notorious words of Stephen Dedalus: "When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets." Joyce *Portrait* (1993) 230, as in Lewis (1955) 12. On Lewis' military service, see Chapman (2006b) 20–38.

[192] Lewis (1955) 12.

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[193] Saunders Lewis, Letter to Margaret Gilcriest (October 20, 1920) in Lewis (1993) 425. See also Humphreys (1983) 217–19.

[194] Lewis (1955) 11.

[195] Lewis (1955) 11.

[196] Lewis (1939) 7.

[197] Jones (1959) 304. See also Jones (1952) 26.

[198] Jones (1959) 304, quoting the Latin of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (215.26–27): "Latin me that, my trinity scholard, out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan! *Hircus Civis Eblanensis*!"

[199] Orr (1966) 103.

[200] Orr (1966) 103.

Although the impulses that shaped *The Anathemata* were, as Jones once told W. H. Auden, "indebted" to "stupendous old Joyce," the work was seen by some critics as a form of "seedless fruit" when compared with Joyce and the earlier writings of Eliot and Pound (as well as Jones' own *In Parenthesis*).[205] Hugh Kenner, in his 1954 review for *Poetry*, complained of the poem's lack of "voice."[206] "We get a word, and a word, and a word," he argued,

> we don't hear anyone speak. Mr. Jones is a scrupulous bard with a word-hoard, and the words are cleanly and lovingly juxtaposed. But the juxtapositions remain oddly antiseptic. They are always evocative, in a quickeningly un-sensual way; but one keeps looking at the footnotes to see what it is that they are supposed to evoke.[207]

Where in *In Parenthesis* Jones had inflected the Cockney "speech and habit of mind" of Private John Ball and others as a "perpetual showing", one that revealed both the past narrative in the present and the present narrative in the past, the allusions of *The Anathemata* seemed "less systematically ventilated," its deposits of "Welsh and Romanic provenance" insufficiently linked to "our contemporary, less intimate, larger unities."[208] Although Jones did think himself beholden to Joyce – "*Lux perpetua luceat ei.* But what person of my generation could not be?" – he grumbled at the suggestion that his work was derivative, perhaps no more than a "'direct imitation'."[209] As he saw it, he had not derived his style: he felt rather that he and Joyce shared a parallel "civilisational situation" with respect to their 'natal places', that they were motivated by "*absolute* necessity to find a 'form' that somehow or other 'fits' the contemporary situation."[210] "I see how perfectly natural it is for critics to suppose," he observed,

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[201] Jones (1959) 305; Orr (1966) 103.

[202] Orr (1966) 103.

[203] Geertz (1973) 3–30, esp. 5–6, 9–10; Jones, "Notes on the 1930s," in Jones (1978) 46.

[204] Jones (1959) 304. See also David Jones, Letter XXIII to Aneirin Talfan Davies (November 27, 1962) in Jones (1980) 88.

[205] Jones, "To W. H. Auden, 24 February 1954," in Jones *DG* (1980) 161. Kenner (1954) 295–301. See Miles (1990) 74–76.

[206] Kenner (1954) 298. See Conclusion, pp. 254–56.

[207] Kenner (1954) 298.

> that I based my 'style' on Joyce. Of course, I knew about him. And an Irishman read to me *Anna Livia Plurabelle* in the nineteen-twenties and I was deeply impressed. But I believe the truth is that a given civilisational situation will, necessarily, produce the same problems for people of certain sorts of perception, and that therefore, both in form and content, their work will show an affinity that looks like direct borrowing but which is, in reality, a similar response to an identical 'situation' on the part of persons of similar perception.[211]

Faced with pressure to advance Celtic 'purity' in language and literature, Joyce was skeptical: composing his work in exile, he too remained "elusive of social or religious orders," trying, like Dedalus, to "learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world."[212] Yet, as Jones noted sympathetically, the self-imposed exile Joyce endured did not drive him from Ireland but only deeper into a more intense examination of its "vast fabric," into the very "lore of semantics" that evoked the country's history and hybridity.[213] It was Joyce's development of this lore – "this language thing" – that most attracted the admiration of Jones.[214] Though the result often seemed like "verbal chaos," his "linguistic virtuosity" was "not an 'emancipation' from the rules of language."[215] On the contrary, what "knowledge of language and its structure" Joyce did have informed a technical and thematic brilliance that exposed "affinities not previously caught, because it concertinas history."[216] Jones likewise composed his own polyglot *prosimetrum* from something of a parallel position with respect to Welsh history and the far-right politics of Saunders Lewis. Eager to distill a new experimental idiom, he forged a vernacular whose webs of multilingual connection seemed "endless … the possibilities infinite."[217] Nonetheless, Jones still felt that a radical deprivation – stemming in part from inadequate exposure and lack of formal instruction in the "root languages" of Welsh, Latin, Greek and Anglo-Saxon – had hampered his abilities as a poet, especially as compared with Joyce. His ignorance, however, proved inventive, essential even in shedding light, both linguistically and historically, on the "shared and objective world to which each of us," he thought, "is attached by the same texture of living strands."[218] Yet Jones still worried that the complicated archaeological structure and style of *The Anathemata*, its sheer allusiveness and difficulty, would be too much for most readers in the contemporary world – a world that would at times regard his work as eccentric, obscure and prone to a kind of spiritual solipsism. "[I]t is a very, very painful process," he confessed,

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[208] Jones (1937) xi; Kenner (1954) 298; Jones (1952) 11; Jones (1937) xi.

[209] Jones, "To W. H. Auden, 24 February 1954," in Jones *DG* (1980) 161, 160. In his review of February 1954, Auden defended the originality of *The Anathemata*, writing that "Joyce certainly, and Dante probably, have had a hand in Mr. Jones' development, but his style is in no sense an imitation. Nor is this verse as 'free' as at a superficial glance it looks." Auden (1954) 68.

[210] David Jones, Letter to William Hayward (July 12, 1961) in Jones (1979) 58. See also David Jones, Letter to John Johnston (May 2, 1962), as discussed in Johnston (1964) 321–22.

[211] Jones, Letter to William Hayward (July 12, 1961) in Jones (1979) 58.

[212] Joyce *Portrait* (1993) 188.

[213] Joyce *CWJJ* (1989) 165. Lewis (1967) 115.

[214] Jones, Letter to Harman Grisewood (March 19, 1940), as in Staudt (1994) 130.

> I found in writing *The Anathemata* that I went out so far on limbs, as it were, that I couldn't get back again to the main trend with any sort of intelligibility … You see an enormous number of facets of the thing, and one thing suggests another, but if you aren't very careful it takes you too far from the concept and you can't get back to it again except at very great length, and that might be artistically bad.[219]

Nonetheless, with the "living strands" he did know, in the tongues he cherished, Jones shaped into *The Anathemata* a culturally hybrid vision of the classical, one which moved the contemporary reception of *Romanitas* beyond baser forms of ideology, beyond nativism and Welsh-Wales purism, to recall the "deep roots and the ancient springs" of Britain's "mixed mess-up" in history.[220]

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[215] Raine (1974–75) 5.

[216] Raine (1974–75) 5; Lewis (1967) 115.

[217] Jones, Letter to Harman Grisewood (March 19, 1940), as in Staudt (1994) 130.

[218] As in Staudt (1994) 130; Raine (1982) 126.

[219] Orr (1966) 99.

[220] Raine (1982) 126; Raine (1974–75) 5; Jones, Letter to Rev. Desmond Chute (January 26, 1953) in Jones *IN* (1984) 34.