How was the complex history of Britain's languages understood by twelfth-century authors? This book argues that the social, political, and linguistic upheavals that occurred in the wake of the Norman Conquest intensified later interest in the historicity of languages. An atmosphere of enquiry fostered vernacular literature's prestige, and led to a newfound sense of how ancient languages could be used to convey historical claims. The vernacular hence became an important site for the construction and memorialisation of dynastic, institutional, and ethnic identities.

This study demonstrates the breadth of interest in the linguistic past across different social groups and the striking variety of genres used to depict it, including romance, legal texts, history, poetry, and hagiography. Through a series of detailed case studies, Sara Harris shows how specific works represent key aspects of the period's imaginative engagement with English, Latin, French, and the Brittonic languages.

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THE LINGUISTIC PAST IN TWELFTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

SARA HARRIS

University of Cambridge
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1. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.17.1, fol. 43v  page 81
2. Sources of English Gloss in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.17.1  82
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>Anglo-Norman Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>Anglo-Saxon England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSL</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidore</td>
<td>Isidore of Seville, Etymologiarum sive originum, ed. by W.M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford):</td>
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Clarendon, 1911; *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)


**PL** *Patrologia Latina*

**RS** *Rolls Series*

**Toronto A-G** *Dictionary of Old English, A–G* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009), www.doe.utoronto.ca

**TRHS** *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

When transcribing from manuscripts, abbreviations have been silently expanded and punctuation modernised. If no other source is indicated, translations from medieval languages are my own.