

J.E. Lloyd and his intellectual legacy: the Roman conquest and its consequences reconsidered,¹ by E.W. Williams

In an earlier article,² the adequacy of J.E.Lloyd's analysis of the territories ascribed to the pre-Roman tribes of Wales was considered. It was concluded that his concept of pre-Roman tribal boundaries contained major flaws. A significantly different map of those tribal territories was then presented. Lloyd's analysis of the course and consequences of the Roman conquest of Wales was also revisited. He viewed Wales as having been conquered but remaining largely as a militarised zone throughout the Roman period.

From the 1920s, Lloyd's analysis was taken up and elaborated by Welsh archaeology, then at an early stage of its development. It led to Nash-Williams's concept of Wales as 'a great defensive quadrilateral' centred on the legionary fortresses at Chester and Caerleon.

During recent decades whilst Nash-Williams's perspective has been abandoned by Welsh archaeology, it has been absorbed in an elaborated form into the narrative of Welsh history. As a consequence, whilst Welsh history still sustains a version of Lloyd's original thesis, the archaeological community is moving in the opposite direction. Present day archaeology regards the subjugation of Wales as having been completed by 78 A.D., with the conquest laying the foundations for a subsequent process of assimilation of the native population into Roman society. By the middle of the 2nd century A.D., that development provided the basis for a major demilitarisation of Wales.

My aim in this article is to cast further light on the course of the Roman conquest of Wales and the subsequent process of assimilating the native population into Roman civil society. This will be pursued through a three-stage analysis.

Initially, in the period prior to the Roman conquest, the focus will be on the political inter-relationships that existed between key Brythonic tribes. The manner in which different tribes responded to the threat posed by the Romans and the divergent strategies adopted by the Romans in consolidating their control over them will then be considered. Finally, the way in which key western tribes were then assimilated into Roman society during a period extending through to the middle of the second century will be discussed.

The background to the Roman Conquest

In the century prior to Roman conquest of 43 A.D., the southern half of Britain appears to have evolved into three distinct political zones. In the south-east were located the new continental elites characterised by their coin-issuing societies, amongst whom the Catuvellauni pursued a strongly expansionist strategy.³ To the north were located the Brigantes. For a considerable period after the initial Roman conquest of southern Britain,

¹ I am grateful to Dr D.Stephenson, R. van Kemenade and R. Suggett for their comments on this article. The responsibility for the views expressed and for any errors is entirely mine.

² Williams E.W. 'J.E. Lloyd and his intellectual legacy; the tribes of Wales reconsidered' in the *National Library of Wales Journal* vol. 36 no.2 2015 pp.1-68

³ Cunliffe B., *Iron Age Communities in Britain* (Routledge, London 1991) 3rd ed. chapters 7 & 8 pp.130-79

they appear to have been largely isolated from those broader developments. Between those two zones lay an extensive territory dominated by the Cornovii. They needed to sustain a precarious position as new social forces matured in the region south of them.

The nomenclature employed to refer to these polities is in itself potentially contentious. John Collis has highlighted that Roman authors referred to the polities of Gaul and Britain as *civitates*, but that the concept has often been translated into English as 'tribe'. He noted that *civitates* could be translated as 'state', implying an advanced social condition, whereas 'tribe' implies a lower level of social organisation. Collis sought to overcome the difficulty by establishing a distinction between the 'city states' of the Mediterranean littoral and 'tribal states' of the Mediterranean hinterland.⁴

Another means of overcoming the difficulty would be to refer to the entities in question as 'tribal kingdoms', for coin inscriptions reveal that prior to the events of 43 A.D., relatively stable ruling dynasties had emerged throughout much of south-eastern Britain. The difficulty is that in areas beyond those coin issuing areas, it is far more difficult to identify such dynasties.⁵ The triumphal arch dedicated to Claudius in 51 A.D., does provide an indication of the importance of kings within Britain, for a surviving fragment of the inscription does refer to 'REGES BRIT'. A full reconstruction of the inscription has suggested that it records the surrender of eleven British kings, but larger numbers of kings have been proposed and are consistent with the content of the surviving fragments. It should also be noted that the inscription does not seem to contain reference to any form of social leadership other than that of kings.⁶

The key issue is that in considering the polities of pre-Roman Britain, the nature of their social structure needs to be recognised. Those polities were clan-based societies which were united into broader entities by military elites. Those elites were seemingly headed by kings, who in turn were possibly evolving a dynastic role for their families. It is evident that the military elites in question did exercise effective military control over particular territories.⁷ As such identifying those polities as either 'tribal states' or 'tribal kingdoms' or in short, as 'tribes' is justified. Outlining the developments which led to the emergence of the land of the Cornovii as a polity provides a means of considering the evolution of that tribal state.

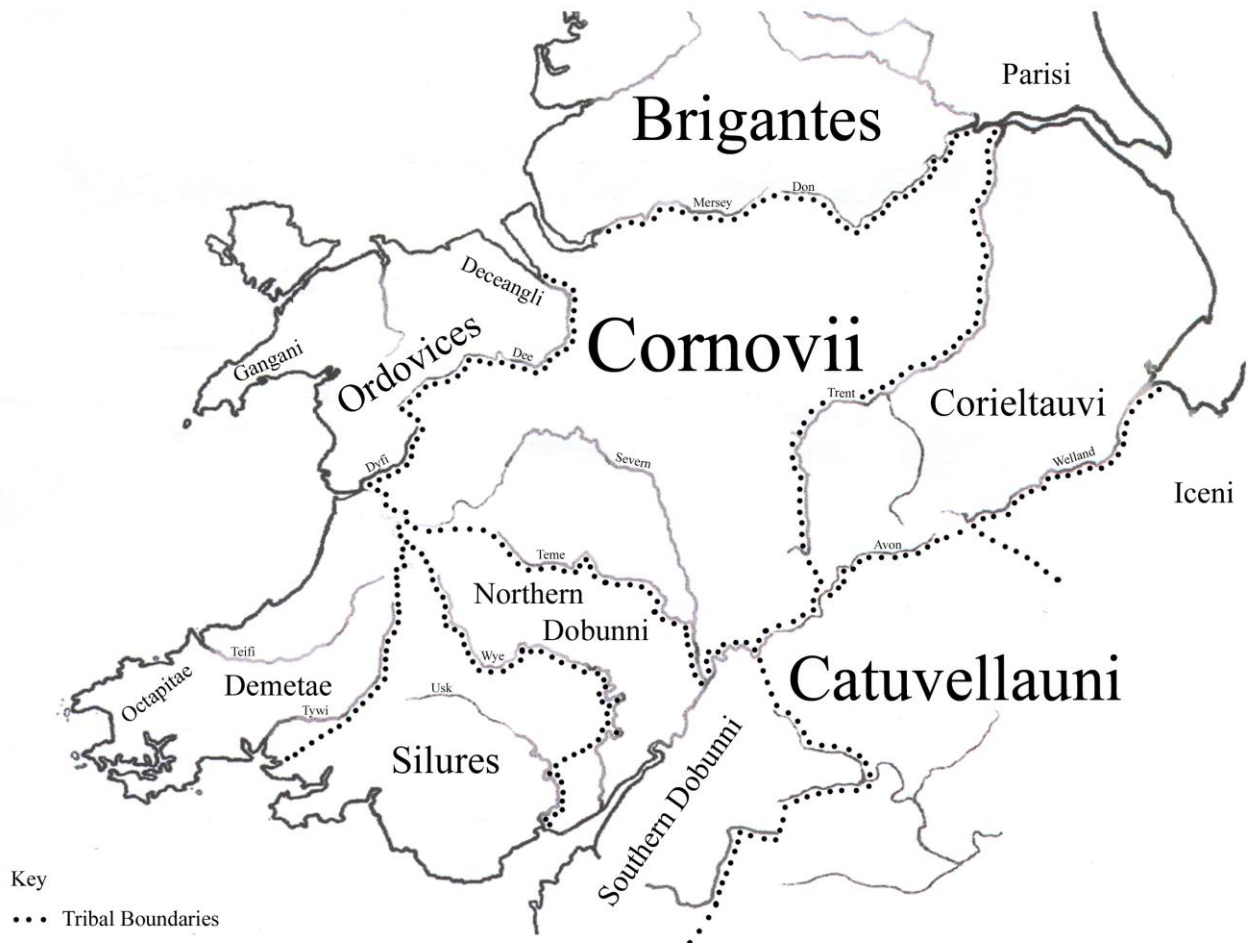
⁴ Collis J. 'The polities of Gaul, Britain, and Ireland in the Late Iron Age' in Haselgrove C. & Moore T., (eds.) *The Later Iron Age in Britain and beyond* (Oxbow Books, Oxford 2007) pp.523-8 With regard to his visits to Britain in 55 and 54 B.C. Julius Caesar in one instance refers to the polities of Britain as '*nationes*' but otherwise consistently refers to them as '*civitates*'. See du Pontet R. (ed.), *C Iuli Caesaris de bello Gallico* (Clarendon, Oxford 1900-08) lib. iv, cap. 20-38 & lib. v cap. 91-23. For '*nationes*' see lib. iv cap.20

⁵ Op cit Collis J. in Haselgrove C. & Moore T., (eds.) 2007 p.527

⁶ Frere S., *Britannia* (Pimlico, London 1994) p.52 & Barrett A.A., 'Claudius' Victory Arch in Rome' in *Britannia* vol.22 1991 pp.1-19. See in particular pp.11-14

⁷ Whether they sustained specific legal systems is beyond the scope of this paper.

Map 1. The Cornovii within their Iron Age context



Prior to the emergence of that system, Britain appears to have been a land of clans who were served by religious intellectuals known to posterity as the Druids (Latin *Druides*,⁸ Welsh '*Derwyddon*'). The impetus which led to the development of the tribal system, of which the Cornovii were a part, emerged from the south, with the long-standing links between Brittany and the area referred to in the archaeological literature as Iron Age Wessex being of particular importance. According to Barry Cunliffe, that relationship dated back to at least the period 800 – 500 B.C.

The harbours of the Dorset coast and the immediate hinterland appear to have served as a contact zone linked by the sea to Armorica and by the river-system traversing a wide tract of heath, to the heartland of Wessex – a zone the

⁸ Op cit du Pontet R. (ed.) 1900-08) lib. vi, cap. 13

importance of which was further enhanced by rare local commodities such as salt, shale and iron.⁹

Cunliffe describes a crucially important departure within Iron Age Wessex from around 600 to 400 B.C., involving the development of a militarised core area characterised by strongly defended hillforts.

Complex entrance fortification and the presence of quantities of sling stones ... are a reminder of the need for defence, while evidence of periodic burnings, together with mutilated human remains from a number of forts, leaves little doubt that attacks were not infrequent. ... That warfare was endemic is a strong probability.¹⁰

Through military action, the old clans lost their autonomy and were amalgamated into tribes dominated by military elites based in hillforts. In the period 400 to 100 B.C., Cunliffe regarded that hill fort dominated zone as having been extended to the south coast and northwards to the Severn estuary, and then through the Welsh Marches to the coast of north Wales. From around 300 B.C. it also broadened eastwards into the North Downs and westwards into east Devon.¹¹ For Cunliffe, the unity of that zone is revealed through a number of its aspects.

One notable feature of the hillfort-dominated zone is the broad similarity throughout of styles of construction, material culture and economy. But certain regional variations are apparent. In the form of hillfort entrances, for example, it is possible to distinguish two localized methods of constructing entrance hornworks, one centred on Hampshire, the other on Dorset, while recessed guard chambers are a recurring feature in the Welsh borderland and the Jurassic ridge. But even more noticeable are different regional styles of pottery decoration ... each of which seems to have originated in the fourth century BC and had, by the second century, developed highly distinctive decorative motifs. Moreover the firmness of the boundaries between the styles suggests that they may represent distinct tribal groupings, the decoration being a conscious demonstration of the ethnicity of each group... The distribution of [Malvern pottery of the] West Midlands styles ... is a close fit to the northern Dobunni. Thus the tribal groupings, known historically and numismatically in the first century AD, are already recognizable as ethnic entities in ceramic styles going back to the third century BC or even earlier.¹²

Cunliffe saw the development which entailed the emergence of tribes such as the Cornovii and the Dobunni and the Deceangli as emanating from those early links with

⁹ Cunliffe B., 'Iron Age Wessex: continuity and change' in Cunliffe B. & Miles D. (eds.), *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, Oxford 1984) pp.12-45. See in particular p.13

¹⁰ Cunliffe B., 'Settlement hierarchy and social change in southern Britain in the Iron Age', in *Analecta Prehistorica Leidensia*, vol. 15, 1984 pp. 161-81. See in particular pp.166 & 168

¹¹ Ibid see fig. 3 p.167

¹² Ibid p.168

southern Britain and Brittany. In that context, Iron Age Wessex emerged as a core area from which military elites dispersed to establish control over particular territories. With regard to the development of the hillforts located to the north of the Severn estuary, on the basis of his excavations at Midsummer Camp, S.C. Stanford came to similar conclusions.

What does seem a real probability is that the hillfort wave of c.470 B.C. did involve new people under whose stimulus large defences were constructed around old as well as new hillforts. It seems that from the start of this new era a new pottery industry was established on different rock outcrops, some close to the Malverns. Although they produced many plain vessels they sold many more decorated with simple stamped motifs usually arranged in a single row just below the rim and occurring particularly on vessels with internal rim grooves. ... (I)n the absence of adequate local Bronze Age prototypes we are bound to conclude that the new style of pottery was introduced fully-fledged into this area at the same time as the new hillforts were being built. There is nowhere else in Britain where one can look for a source of the combined stamped decoration and internal grooves. Like the curvilinear-tooled Glastonbury ware of the south-west, its inspiration is surely north-western France and it must in some way be related to the stamped wares of Brittany...¹³

The work of A.H.A. Hogg and H.N. Savory suggests that during the same period a parallel process was underway in the areas to the west of the Cornovii, Dobunni and Deceangli, but with the impetus coming from regions of the European mainland to the south and west of those areas which gave rise to developments in Wessex.¹⁴

During a subsequent historical phase dating from around 150 B.C., new incursions occurred into south-eastern Britain from areas to the east, that is from the southern Belgic areas of the continent. In the period prior to the Roman conquest of 54 A.D., these it seems were to displace the earlier military elites who had permeated the area from Iron Age Wessex, resulting in the emergence of new ruling strata within south-eastern Britain.¹⁵ The evidence as displayed in particular on coinage, points to those societies as having developed their own royal dynasties well before the Roman conquest.¹⁶ Amongst those new forces, the Catuvellauni were to play a crucial expansionist role which may well ultimately have triggered the Roman conquest.

It appears that prior to the emergence of those new forces within south-eastern Britain, the Cornovii had already become a crucial power in the politics of the midlands of Britain. H.N.Savory highlighted the military evidence which points to such a conclusion.

¹³ Stanford S.C., *Midsummer Hill, an Iron Age hillfort of the Malverns* (Published by author, Hereford 1981) See in particular pp.163-4. See also Cunliffe B. 'Britain, the Veneti and beyond', in the *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 1 1982 pp.39-68, See in particular p.40

¹⁴ Op cit Williams E.W. *National Library of Wales Journal*, vol 36 no.2 2015 pp.1-68. See in particular pp.57-62

¹⁵ Op cit. Cunliffe B., 1991 pp.106-7

¹⁶ Op cit Collis J. in Haselgrove C. & Moore T., (eds.) 2007 pp.523-8

It is ... difficult to resist the conclusion that at some stage in the fifth or fourth centuries B.C. a large area in the west Midlands and the Marches came under the same rule, vested presumably, in a royal dynasty and served by men who maintained a standardised tradition of military engineering over a long period.¹⁷

Such a territorial unit could only have been that which by Roman times had secured an identity as the land of the Cornovii. Moreover, whilst it is customary to refer to the Cornovii as a tribe, Savory regarded it as likely that they would have had a royal dynasty.

With that tribal system having emerged well before Julius Caesar's initial contacts with Britain in 55 and 54 B.C., the issue arises as to how that system evolved in the subsequent period prior to the Roman conquest of 43 A.D. This will be addressed by focusing initially on the Cornovian experience.

The extent of Cornovian territory would certainly have called for a degree of centralised control, but it would also have required substantial economic resources to sustain its ruling elite. An initial issue which needs to be considered concerns the capacity of the land of the Cornovii to fulfil such a role.

The vast agricultural potential of Cornovian territory is self-evident but a further issue concerns the extent to which the Cornovii had other resources at their disposal in the form of ores and minerals, whilst also participating in broader trade.

With regard to the first aspect, it is apparent that the Cornovii were in a position to exploit a considerable array of metallic ores. One of their key hillforts was located on a site at Llanymynech, Powys, which contained deposits of lead, zinc and copper. It is known that copper ores from the Welsh Marches and possibly from the Llanymynech area were being exploited by the 3rd century B.C., with some of the artefacts deposited at Llyn Cerrig Bach in Anglesey being fashioned from Welsh ores.¹⁸ Moreover, within the British context the Cornovii had unrivalled access to one of the most important mineral resources of their time, namely salt.

Salt was of particular importance to Iron Age society, for not only is it essential to human life but it was also a key commodity for preserving meat, the production of butter and the processing of leather and cloth.¹⁹ In the prehistoric context, salt could be produced through the evaporation of sea water and that approach was pursued on a number of coastal locations in southern Britain as well as on the north west coast of Europe, on sites

¹⁷ Savory H.N. 'Welsh hillforts: a reappraisal of recent research' in op. cit. Harding D.W. (ed.) *Hillforts* (Academic Press, London 1976) pp.237-91. See in particular p.266

¹⁸ Dewey H. & Eastwood T., *Special reports on the mineral resources of Great Britain, vol 30. Copper ores of the Midlands, Wales, the Lake District and the Isle of Man.* (H.M.S.O., London 1925) See pp.56-7 & Northover J.P., 'Analysis of Iron Age Bronze metalwork from Llyn Cerrig Bach' in Lynch F., (ed) *Prehistoric Anglesey* (The Anglesey Antiquarian Society, Llangefni 1991) 2nd ed. pp.392-3. For a brief overview of the development of the Llanymynech site see also <http://www.fcet.staffs.ac.uk/jdw1/llanymynech.html>

¹⁹ White R. & Barker P., *Wroxeter. Life and death of a Roman city* (Tempus, Stroud 1998). See p.34

located in Holland, Belgium and France.²⁰ That was a very slow and cumbersome process. By contrast any ruling elite having control of salt springs or rock salt was in a position to acquire wealth and power. This can be illustrated by reference to Continental precedent.

From around 1,500 B.C. salt springs constituted the key means of exploiting the salt resources of Hallstatt, Upper Austria, but from around 1,000 B.C. rock salt began to be mined. During the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., seemingly on the basis of trade in salt, the region's rulers acquired considerable wealth which in turn led to artistic creativity and gave rise to rich funerary assemblages. Archaeologists have defined that milieu as 'Hallstatt culture'.²¹

Within Britain, the Cornovii were in a similarly privileged position, controlling three of the four inland brine springs of the island. Those springs were located on the Cheshire plain, at Northwich, Middlewich and Nantwich. A fourth area of springs was located to the south at Droitwich, within the territory of the Dobunni.²² What is of particular significance is the pattern of trade that emerged in relation to Cornovian salt.

The function of the earthenware containers in which the salt was evaporated and transported has only recently been understood. As late as 1965, two leading archaeologists suggested that the containers in question were Iron Age ovens.²³ Only after their purpose was understood has it been possible to begin to identify the pattern of trade in Cornovian salt. That process is as yet only at an early stage and the broader issue of the significance of that pattern of trade remains to be considered in depth.

Elaine Morris has considered the extent to which salt produced within the territories of the Cornovii and Dobunni had been traded within Wales and the Marches. She identified a pattern whereby there had been some trade in Droitwich salt throughout the Severn basin from as early as the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Subsequently, the evidence for the distribution of Droitwich salt within the territory of the Dobunni becomes far more abundant. By contrast, within the territory of the Cornovii and specifically within the northern Severn basin, finds of Droitwich salt become far less numerous.²⁴ This points to the possibility that from the fifth century B.C., Droitwich salt was being excluded from Cornovian territory.

As compared with the Dobunnian salt industry, the development of trade in Cornovian salt may have occurred a little later, with the earliest sherds of their salt containers dated to the late fifth century B.C. Initially trade appears to have been restricted to a core area centred on the Cheshire plain and the adjacent region of the Severn valley. Subsequently,

²⁰ Riehm K., 'Prehistoric salt-boiling' in *Antiquity* 1961, vol. 35, pp.181-91

²¹ Barth F.E., 'The Hallstatt salt mines', in Kruta V., Frey O.H., Rafferty B. & Szabó (eds.) *The Celts* (Thames and Hudson, London 1991) pp.163-6

²² Op cit White R. & Barker P. 1998 p.34

²³ Gelling P.S. & Stanford S.C., 'Dark Age pottery or Iron Age ovens?' in the *Birmingham Archaeological Transactions*, 1965 vol.82 pp.77-91.

²⁴ Morris E., 'Prehistoric salt distribution: two case studies from western Britain', in the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, vol. 32 1985, pp.336-79. See in particular pp.346-7 7 350-1

trade in Cornovian salt enjoyed a far wider market, extending throughout the territory of the Cornovii as well as the adjoining lands of the Ordovices but also permeating into the northern territory of the Dobunni and to a limited extent displacing Droitwich salt in the area to the south of the Severn estuary. Moreover, it appears that Cornovian salt was competing with Dobunnian salt within the northern areas of Silurian territory.²⁵

More recent archaeological research has revealed an even wider domain for Cornovian salt, with sherds of Cornovian salt containers being found at a number of sites to the east of the river Trent in both Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. This has led to speculation that salt from Cheshire was transported down the river Trent and sold along that route.²⁶

With regard to finds discovered at Enderby, and Elms Farm, Leicestershire, Patrick Marsden and Elaine Morris present the following assessment.

The discovery of these sherds ... is a major expansion of the distribution of Cheshire salt in ceramic drying and transportation vessels from what was the known distribution in the mid-1980s ... It is now quite clear that the salt transported in these special and visually distinct containers, or salt packs, must have been well-prized to be traded such distances, particularly when salt could have been obtained from the Fenland region which is nearer than Cheshire.²⁷

Cornovian salt was thus being traded beyond the river Trent within the territory of the Corieltauvi. It is difficult to assess what conclusions should be drawn from the above, for in the Iron Age complex patterns of trade already existed. This is evident from excavations at Beaumont Leys on the outskirts of modern Leicester where a well-crafted quern made of millstone grit was discovered, the raw material for which had probably originated from beyond the immediate area. Excavations also revealed blue glass beads which had been imported into Britain from the 6th century B.C., as well as shale fragments sourced from Dorset.²⁸ In that context, it seems that the importation of a limited range of specialised commodities was the norm, but the pattern of trade in which the Cornovii were engaged appears to have extended beyond such limits.

In addition to their trading activities in the midlands of Britain, there is limited evidence that the Cornovii were involved in trade focused on Continental markets. That appears to have been conducted through a port located at the northern tip of the Wirral peninsula,

²⁵ Ibid pp.367 & 371-3

²⁶ Knight D., 'Excavations of an Iron Age settlement at Gamston, Nottinghamshire' in *Transactions of the Thorton Society*, 1992, vol.96 pp. 16-90. See in particular p.65 and map p.86. Sherds of Cheshire salt containers were also discovered at Enderby, Leicestershire. See Sharman J. & Clay P., 'Leicester Lane, Enderby: an archaeological evaluation', in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 1991 vol.65 pp.1-12 See in particular pp.10-11

²⁷ Marsden P. & Morris E.L. 'The Iron Age and Roman Pottery' in Meek J., Shore M. & Clay P. 'Iron Age enclosures at Enderby and Huncote, Leicestershire' in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 2004 vol.78 pp.1-34 See in particular pp.12-3

²⁸ Thomas J., *Two Iron Age 'aggregated' settlements in the environs of Leicester. Excavations at Beaumont Leys and Humberstone* (University of Leicester Archaeological Service, Leicester 2011) Leicester Archaeological Monograph no. 19. See in particular pp.158-9

known since Viking times as Meols. The port in question was apparently used from Neolithic times for coastal trade to the north and west, with Ireland and the Isle of Man constituting more distant destinations. In turn Meols provided access to inland routes, down the Dee and Mersey estuaries.²⁹ During the 19th century, the site of the ancient port was heavily eroded by the sea with the result that a significant number of artefacts were brought to light. Amongst those were three Carthagian silver pieces as well a number of silver coins minted by the Coriosolites, an Iron Age polity who were heavily engaged in maritime trade and whose territory was located in Armorica. This discovery indicates that ships from the European mainland were visiting Meols to trade and that the site may have been an *emporium* through which Cornovian goods could be exported.³⁰ The nature of the broader social context also needs to be taken into account.

It is reasonably clear that from the early Iron Age, Britain was already being integrated into a pattern of trade encompassing parts of the adjacent coastal areas of mainland Europe and the Mediterranean coast. The latter is revealed in particular by a Greco-Roman lead anchor stock discovered in 1974 at Porth Felen off the tip of the Llŷn peninsula. On the basis of expert advice, George C. Boon, a leading archaeologist at the National Museum of Wales, dated the find to 'the fifth century B.C., if not earlier'.³¹ It is thus apparent that in the centuries prior to the Roman conquest of southern Britain, the sea lanes of the west were already busy with craft of various sizes engaged in a trade which at its most extensive would have reached Armorica and the Mediterranean. This reality is underlined by a key event in the Roman conquest of Gaul.

In 56 B.C. the tribes of Armorica rebelled against the newly established overlordship of Rome. Julius Caesar informs us that in the resulting sea battle, a combined Armorican naval force of about 220 ships challenged a Roman fleet and was defeated by them.³² Prior to those events, a significant proportion of that Armorican force would have been engaged in trade across the channel and up the west coast of Britain. Evidence of that pattern of exchange has been found in the form of coin finds made at various locations in Britain. At Hengistbury Head near to the Isle of Wight, excavations revealed coins of the Coriosolites in particular, but also coins of other Armorican tribes such as the Osismii and the Namnetes.³³ Caesar also referred to the ships of the Veneti sailing frequently

²⁹ Bu'lock J.D., 'The Celtic, Saxon, and Scandinavian settlement at Meols in Wirral' in *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 1960 vol.112 pp.1-28

³⁰ See op cit White R. & Barker P. 1998 pp.32-4 & Hume A., *Ancient Meols, or some account of the antiquities found near Dove Point on the sea coast of Cheshire* (John Russel Smith, London 1863). Also Laing J. & Lang Ll. 'A Mediterranean trade with Wirral in the Iron Age' in the *Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin*, 1983 vol.9 pp.6-8 & Chitty G. & Warhurst M., 'Ancient Meols' in the *Journal of the Merseyside Archaeological Society*, 1977, vol.1 pp.19-22

³¹ Boon G.C. 'A Greco-Roman anchor-stock from North Wales' in *The Antiquaries Journal*, 1977 vol.57 pp.9-30. See in particular 'Addendum' pp.25-6. In 1976 George Boon succeeded H.N Savory as Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales. He was created Curator in 1987, a post he held until 1989. See Obituary: George Boon by W. Manning, in *The Independent*, 20.9.1994 p.31

³² Op cit du Pontet R. (ed.) 1900-08 lib. iii, cap.14 & Wiseman A. & P. (trns.) *Julius Caesar, the battle for Gaul* (Chatto & Windus, London 1980) See bk.3 par.14

³³ Op cit Cunliffe B. 1991 p.163

back and forth from Britain.³⁴ It was noted earlier that silver coins minted by the Coriosolites had been found at Meols.

This indicates that the Cornovii were in a position to acquire considerable wealth not only through the exploitation of their agricultural resources, their metallic ores and salt, but also through trade, including trade with continental Europe. Those resources could have provided an economic basis for the maintenance of their far-flung homeland. Their military capacity is also worthy of consideration. The situation within Armorica may cast some light on the issue.

In 52 B.C., in what was to prove to be their last great struggle against the Romans, the Gallic tribes assembled a huge military force at Alesia. In his account of the conflict, Caesar refers to the Armorican *civitates*³⁵ 'tribes' – of which he names eight – as contributing a combined force of 30,000 men.³⁶ It is thus apparent that each of those tribes had the capacity to raise and supply a military force of over 3,000 men to participate in a conflict waged in southern Gaul, around 400 kilometres from their tribal homelands. Over what timescale they had developed such a capacity is not known. However, given that the tribal system which emanated from Iron Age Wessex appears to have had its roots in the Armorican tribal system, that background does provide a possible indication of the military capacity of those tribes and the process which led to the emergence of the kingdom of the Cornovii. The defeat of the Gallic tribes at Alesia may also have had consequences for the Cornovii.

Julius Caesar's victory and the integration of Gaul into the Roman Empire created a new context for the established trade route linking Armorica, Hengistbury Head and western Britain. With Gaul under its control, Rome was in a position to develop four trade routes linking Britain to the Mediterranean. Subsequently, Roman trade appears to have been channelled primarily through the ports of south-eastern Britain, and it has been suggested that the Romans may have agreed exclusive trading deals with allied tribes within that region. Whilst it is apparent that the older trade routes did not completely collapse, that reorientation of trade may have had serious implications for the Cornovii.³⁷ Nevertheless, the little evidence that is available indicates that by then they had already established a strong trading position within central Britain and that may well have been sustained until shortly before the Roman invasion. That aspect will be considered briefly with particular reference to the salt trade.

³⁴ Op cit du Pontet R. (ed.) 1900-08 lib. iii, cap 8 & op cit Wiseman A. & P. (trns.) 1980 bk.3 par.8

³⁵ Op cit du Pontet R. (ed.) 1900-08 lib. vii, cap 75 & op cit Wiseman A. & P. (trns.) 1980 bk.vii par.75

³⁶ Ibid bk.7 par.75

³⁷ Cunliffe B., 'Relations between Britain and Gaul in the first century B.C. and the early first century A.D.' in Macready S. & Thompson F.H. (eds.) *Cross-Channel trade between Gaul and Britain in the pre-Roman Iron Age* (The Society of Antiquaries of London, London 1984) pp.3-23. See in particular pp. 5-8. Seemingly reflecting contact with the more easterly Normandy area and possibly the emergence of a new Seine-Solent axis of trade, a new type of pottery emerged at Hengistbury Head in the period 100-50 B.C. See also op cit Cunliffe B. in Cunliffe B. & Miles D. (eds.), *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, Oxford 1984) pp.12-45 and in particular pp.33-4.

As discussed earlier, the territory of the Dobunni and the Cornovii contained important sources of salt which were extensively traded. That pattern of trade can be seen as casting some light on the underlying power structures of both kingdoms. Elaine Morris has argued that the salt resources of the Dobunni may have been under centralised control, with Droitwich salt having sole access to markets within the tribe's own territory. Morris argued that a very different situation existed in the lands of the Cornovii, with the widespread trade in Cheshire salt pointing to the absence of centralised control.³⁸

Whilst one can accept Morris's analysis of the former aspect, her analysis of the latter is open to challenge, for while trade in Cornovian salt was extensive, that does not imply that it was not subject to centralised control. The evidence presented by Morris can be interpreted as indicating that trade in salt within the territory of both the Dobunni and Cornovii was ultimately to be subjected to centralised control. The overall pattern of trade between the two territories is reasonably clear.

Before the establishment of a Cornovian salt industry, Dobunnic salt had a limited presence within Cornovian territory. After the establishment of the Cornovian salt industry, it appears that Dobunnic salt was then excluded from Cornovian territory. In turn, from the fourth century B.C., there is evidence that Cornovian salt did permeate Dobunnic territory to a considerable degree.³⁹ Why then would the Dobunni have allowed Cornovian salt to displace their own?

That pattern of trade can be viewed as indicating that at some point the Cornovii had established overlordship over those lands of the Dobunni which lay to the north of the Severn estuary and had used their ascendancy to ensure that Cornovian salt was traded within Dobunnic territory. Whilst it is recognised that there is limited evidence on which to base such a conclusion, the subsequent course of events supports this analysis. Initially, the implications of an extension of Cornovian territorial control to include overlordship over the northern Dobunni will be considered.

Earlier it was argued that the Cornovian homeland provided its rulers with access to a number of key estuaries, namely the Dyfi, Dee, Mersey and Humber estuaries. By establishing their overlordship over the lands of the northern Dobunni, the Cornovii would also have secured control over the Severn estuary.⁴⁰ That would have been a development of major strategic importance, for it would have enabled the Cornovii to establish the Severn-Trent line as their frontier with the new dynamic tribal elites of the south-east. With a view of that scenario, Cunliffe's conclusion regarding the nature of Cornovian society should be noted.

³⁸ Morris E.L., 'Production and distribution of pottery and salt in Iron Age Britain' in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 1994 vol.60 pp371-393. See in particular p.385.

³⁹ Op cit Morris E. in the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 1985 vol. 32, pp.336-79. See in particular figs.5, 6, 9, 10, 11 & 12. See also op cit Cunliffe B. 1991 pp.469

⁴⁰ With regard to the earlier relationship between the northern Dobunni and the Silures see op cit Williams E.W. in the *National Library of Wales Journal*, vol 36 no.2 2015 pp.1-68. See in particular p.62

In the century or so before the Roman Conquest, the area seems to have continued to develop along earlier lines uninfluenced by the social and economic systems of the south-east. Many of the hillforts were kept in defensive order and a little pottery and fine metalwork was imported from outside the area but, ... there was little discernible change ...⁴¹

Having established the Severn-Trent line as their frontier, the Cornovii were in a position to block the influence of the newer coin-issuing and market-orientated tribal kingdoms of the south-east from permeating further north. That granted the Cornovii a position of strength whilst also rendering them a key target for the expansionist forces of the south-east, the most prominent of whom were the Catuvellauni. In that pre-Roman context, the Cornovii thus appear to have dominated the midlands of Britain.

Within that territory their dominance was not complete, for on their western boundary two other tribes were establishing sub-regional hegemonies. They were the Ordovices and the Silures. In the period prior to the Roman conquest, the Ordovices appear to have dominated the Deceangli⁴² while the Demetae can be viewed as having initially established a supremacy over the Octapitae before themselves succumbing to the overlordship of the Silures.⁴³ As a consequence, prior to the Roman conquest of 43 A.D. the power structure of the midlands of Britain appears to have been characterised by important patterns of overlordship and subordination, the implications of which were revealed during the course of the conquest.⁴⁴

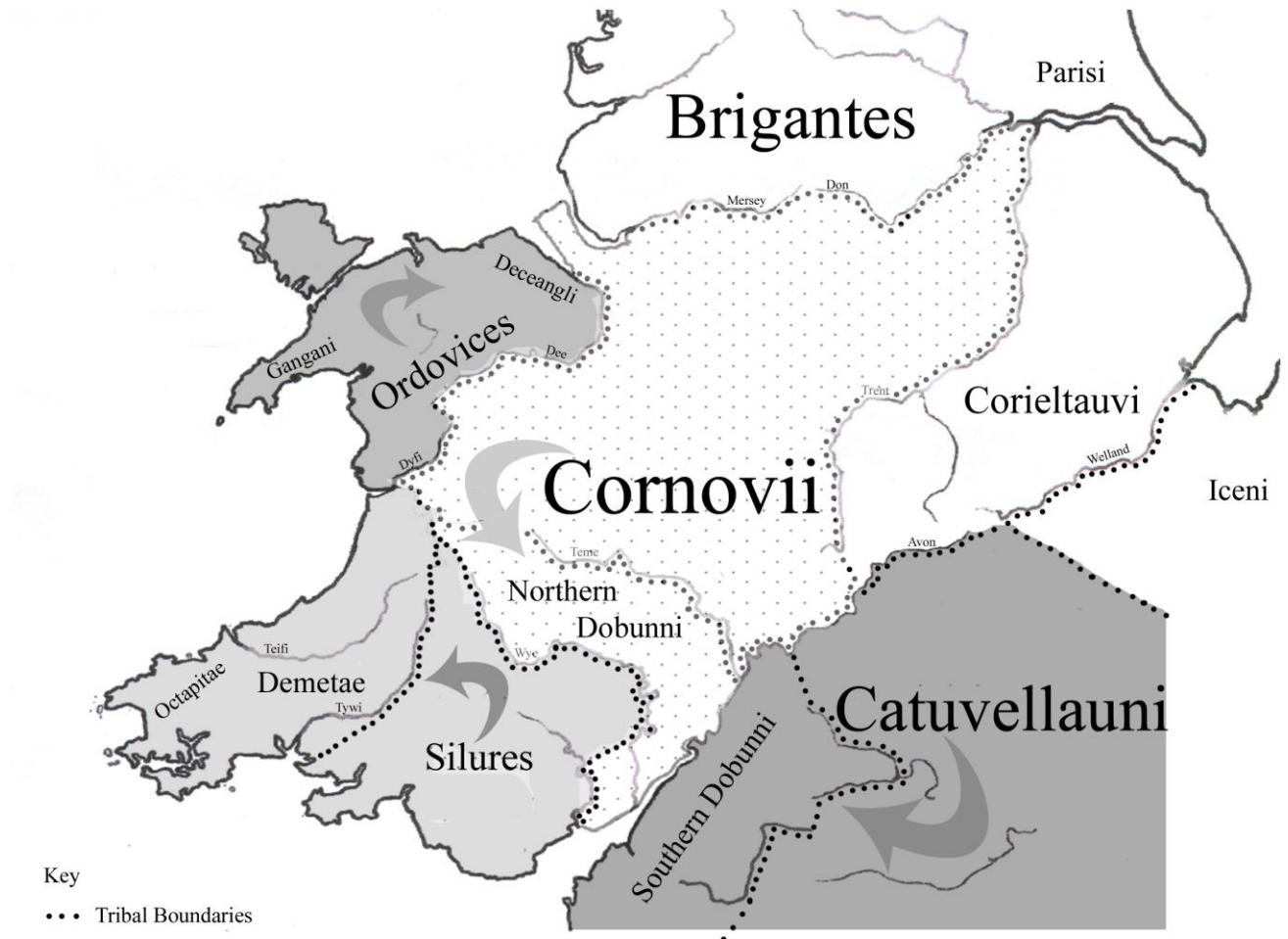
⁴¹ Op cit Cunliffe B. 1991 p.189

⁴² Müller C., (ed.) *Claudii Ptolemæi Geographia* Bks i-v (Institutum Francicum, Paris 1883-1901) Bk.2 Ch.3 par.11 & Rivet A.L.F. & Smith C., *The place-names of Roman Britain* (Batsford, London 1982) pp. 141-3. Ptolemy does not refer to the Deceangli, mentioning only the Ordovices. That in itself suggests that the former had been conquered by the latter.

⁴³ Rackham H., (ed.) *Pliny; the natural history* (Heinemann, London 1947) Bk. 4 ch.16 par.103 Pliny the Elder regarded Ireland as being only thirty miles beyond the territory of the Silures, an assertion which implies that the Silures exercised overlordship over both the Demetae and the Octapitae.

⁴⁴ Toby Driver viewed the situation very differently, regarding pre-Roman Wales as a land of minor 'tribes' who united in the face of the Roman threat. As noted above, according to this analysis, an earlier clan-based society had already been integrated into ever larger tribal units well before the Roman conquest. The Classical authors such as Pliny the Elder, Ptolemy and Tacitus, are unanimous in characterising Wales as a land of large regional polities. That evidence should not be cast aside lightly. See Driver T. , *Architecture, regional identity and power in the Iron Age landscape of Mid Wales* (Archaeopress, Oxford 2013) BAR. British Series 583. See in particular p.42.

Map 2. Patterns of overlordship within central Britain c.40 A.D.



The context described above, whereby the Cornovii dominated the region to the north of the Severn-Trent line, was sustained until shortly prior to 43 A.D., but appears to have changed dramatically directly before the Roman invasion of Britain. The Catuvellauni, the key expansionist power of the south-east of Britain, appear then to have been the catalyst for major change.

The evidence suggests that following Julius Caesar's incursions into southern Britain in 55 and 54 B.C., the Romans had pursued a strategy of containing the expansionist aspirations of the Catuvellauni. This was to involve the Romans in establishing alliances with a number of tribes within south-eastern Britain, as a result of which they achieved a moderate degree of stability. Nevertheless, that approach did not succeed in entirely containing the Catuvellauni, for the Romans failed to sustain the autonomy of their key

ally, the Trinovantes.⁴⁵ In 9 A.D., with the Romans having lost three legions in Germany, Cunobelin, the leader of the Catuvellauni, appears to have taken advantage of the consequent weakening of the Roman position to conquer the Trinovantes and to transfer his own capital to Camulodunum, the former capital of the Trinovantes.⁴⁶ To the Romans, such a departure could only have underlined the need to keep a wary eye on the growing power of the Catuvellauni.

During the remaining years of his reign, whilst seemingly securing further territorial advances, Cunobelin appears to have recognised the need to allay Roman concerns. Despite that, following his death at some point in the period 40-43 A.D., his sons adopted a very different approach. In southern Britain they over-ran the remnants of the Roman aligned Atrebatian kingdom and the southern Dobunni.⁴⁷ To the north the archaeological remains and subsequent course of events suggest that they also conquered the Cornovii,⁴⁸ thereby establishing themselves as the dominant power in Britain. This could only destabilise relations between the Catuvellauni and the Roman Imperial authorities. From the Roman perspective, as the dominant kingdom within southern Britain, the Catuvellauni could be viewed as potential supporters of rebellion against Roman rule in northern Gaul. The continuation of such a threat could not be countenanced and as a consequence that situation may have triggered the decision to invade southern Britain. The little evidence we have of the events which led to that departure is confined to a vague comment by the Roman author Suetonius who refers to Britain being

... tunc tumultuantem ob non redditos transfugas.⁴⁹

...at that time in a state of disturbance, because of the refusal to return certain fugitive dissidents.⁵⁰

Other than the possibility that those 'deserters' were the newly deposed ruling family of the Cornovii, a dispute over the return of deserters would hardly have constituted an adequate motive for the Romans mounting a major military campaign to conquer southern Britain. By contrast, the emergence of the Catuvellauni as the dominant military force in Britain would constitute a credible explanation for the Roman decision to invade.⁵¹ The course of the Roman conquest casts further light on the internal politics of southern Britain in the period prior to the Claudian invasion.

⁴⁵ For the background to the formation of this alliance see op cit du Pontet R. (ed.) 1900-08 lib. v, cap. 8-23 & op cit Wiseman A. & P. (trns.) 1980 bk.5 pars.8-23. Also op cit Frere S. 1994. See pp.16-26

⁴⁶ Op cit Frere S. 1994. See pp. 27-33

⁴⁷ Ibid p.45

⁴⁸ This will be discussed in due course.

⁴⁹ Rolfe J.C. (ed. & trns.) *Suetonius, De vita Caesarum* (Heinemann, London 1965 vol.2) Lib.v, Divus Claudius par xvii

⁵⁰ Translated by D.Stephenson, who notes that 'transfugas' was used in this instance in the fairly specific sense of persons who had gone over to the enemy.

⁵¹ Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.48. The Roman decision to conquer southern Britain constituted a major strategic commitment. They allocated a force of around 40,000 men to the task.

The course of the Roman conquest of southern Britain

With the Romans having landed on the south coast of Britain, the Greek historian M. Cassius Dio Cocceianus⁵² provides a brief description of the course of the subsequent war against the Catuvellauni. It is a description which confirms that prior to those events, the Catuvellauni had achieved a dominant military position within southern Britain. Regarding the accomplishments of the Roman commander, Plautius, Dio stated:

... he first defeated Caratacus and then Togodumnus, the sons of Cynobellinus, who was dead. (The Britons were not free and independent, but were divided into groups under various kings.) After the flight of these kings he gained by capitulation a part of the Bodunni, who were ruled by a tribe of the Catuellani; and leaving a garrison there, he advanced farther and came to a river.⁵³

Dio's account needs to be approached with caution, for neither was he an eye-witness to those events nor did he live in the contemporary context. An initial issue arises with regard to the tribal name 'Bodunni'. This, it appears, entails the conflation of the names, Boduocus and Dobunni. According to Sheppard Frere's interpretation of the course of events, in the context of the Roman invasion of Britain, Boduocus was one of the leaders of the Dobunni. The tribal name Bodounni can thus be viewed as a corruption of the name Dobunni.⁵⁴

With regard to the account itself, J.G.F. Hind has argued persuasively of the need to interpret Dio's narrative in a manner which recognises one of the key assumptions which classical authors brought to the composition of such works. The main body of the text was prefaced by an introductory account setting out the geographical and political context.⁵⁵ Given this background, Dio's account sheds considerable light on the travails of the Dobunni.

Prior to the events of 43 A.D., it points to both the northern Dobunni and the southern Dobunni as having been conquered by the Catuvellauni. Without such a victory the military forces of both factions of the tribe could not have been called up by the Catuvellauni to fight on their behalf against the Romans. It also reveals that the divisions within the tribe ran sufficiently deep that when the battle for Camulodunum was lost, the allegiances of two elements diverged. One faction continued to oppose the Romans whilst the other became their ally. That would have reflected the historical division between the section of the tribe located to the north of the Severn Estuary as compared to the other located to the south. The deeper historical origins of that divide need to be traced.

⁵² Grant M., *History of Rome* (Weidenfield & Nicolson, London 1978) See p.394. Cassius Dio Cocceianus lived in the period c. A.D 155-235.

⁵³ Cary E., (trans.) *Dio's Roman History* (Heinemann, London 1968 vol.7) Bk.60 par.20.1 & 2

⁵⁴ Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.54

⁵⁵ Hind J.G.F., 'A. Plautius' campaign in Britain: an alternative reading of the narrative in Cassius Dio (60.19.5 – 21.2)' in *Britannia* vol.38 2007 pp. 93-106. See in particular p.97

Earlier it was argued that considerably before the Roman invasion of Britain, the development of the Cornovian salt trade pointed to the northern Dobunni as having been subjected to the overlordship of the Cornovii. By contrast, their coin use suggests that the southern Dobunni had been influenced by the Atrebates located to the south. Initially they were content to use coins issued by the Atrebates, but from around 35 B.C. they began to issue coins of their own which were modelled on those of the Atrebates.⁵⁶ Given the historical division that existed between the two factions of the tribe, the question arises as to how the Catuvellauni could have commanded the forces of both factions.

The Catuvellauni could have established their overlordship over the southern Dobunni through direct military conquest but conquering the northern Dobunni would have posed a different challenge. From the Catuvellaunian perspective, the northern Dobunni would have been located in a remote mountainous region. So as to avoid outright defeat, their military forces would have been in a position to retreat tactically into the upper reaches of the Wye. Given this context, it is questionable whether the northern Dobunni were ever defeated militarily by the Catuvellauni. Rather, it is likely that the Catuvellauni exercised overlordship over the northern Dobunni as a consequence of their having previously conquered the Cornovii.

Having been defeated by the Romans, the manner in which the overlordship of the Catuvellauni unravelled bore important implications for the course of future events. Dio's account suggests that having allied themselves with the Romans, the Roman commander Plautius provided the northern Dobunni with a garrison to serve as a defence against attack by anti-Roman forces.⁵⁷ Where that garrison was located raises broader issues.

Given that during the initial phase of the conquest, the Romans did not advance beyond the Severn-Trent line, there is a possibility that the Romans provided the ruler of the northern Dobunni with a defended enclave to the south of the Severn-Trent line, within the territory of the southern Dobunni. That would be in keeping with a broader understanding of the historical context, for following the events of 43 A.D. two rulers of the Dobunni – Boduocus and Corio - continued to issue coins. The coinage of Boduocus was confined in its circulation to the area of modern day Gloucestershire, whilst that of Corio circulated in the territory of the southern Dobunni which lay beyond that enclave.⁵⁸ This suggests that having declared his support for the Romans, Boduocus was granted the part of modern day Gloucestershire that lies to the south of the river Severn as a base from which to rule the northern Dobunni.

The importance of this to the interpretation of Welsh history should be observed. Given that the northern Dobunni had aligned themselves with the Romans on the field of battle,

⁵⁶ Op cit Cunliffe B. 1991 pp.170

⁵⁷ Op cit Hind J.G.F. in *Britannia* vol.38 pp. 93-106. See in particular p.96

⁵⁸ Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.54 . It should be noted that the limited nature of the coin evidence poses a major interpretive challenge. For an alternative interpretation of the coinage sequence see Van Arsdell R.D., *The coinage of the Dobunni* (Oxford University for Archaeology, Monograph 38 1994) See in particular pp.21-42.

a tribal faction occupying a substantial portion of the territory of latter day Wales was already allied to the Romans from that initial point in 43 A.D. As a consequence, from the earliest stages of the conquest, the anti-Roman Wales envisaged by a sequence of authors from Lloyd to Nash-Williams, simply did not exist. The tribes of the west were already divided in their response to the Roman challenge. The subsequent course of events needs to be considered with that background in mind.

In the initial conquest of south-eastern Britain, the Romans established the Severn-Trent line as the provincial frontier and did not transgress beyond it into the territory of the Cornovii. At that juncture, given that the ruling dynasty of the Cornovii had seemingly been defeated by the Catuvellauni and had probably sought refuge on the Continent, the Romans may have entertained the possibility of re-instating them in power. Ultimately, the events of 47 A.D. undermined that possibility.

Tacitus informs us that in that year, in a context in which the new provincial governor Publius Ostorius Scapula was about to assume his responsibilities,

... effusis in agrum sociorum hostibus eo violentius ...⁵⁹

... hostile forces had broken violently into the territory of the [Roman] allies.⁶⁰

Having retreated west before the Roman advance in 43 A.D., it is possible that Caratacus subsequently crossed the Channel to secure refuge in Armorica. That is suggested by the name of a hillfort in Finistère, known as Kercaradec, 'the fort of Caratac'.⁶¹ However, by 47 A.D., Caratacus and his retinue seem to have relocated into Cornovian territory.⁶² In a context in which the new Roman provincial governor was about to assume his responsibilities, it appears that Caratacus led his retinue from that base, across the Severn-Trent frontier, to challenge the Imperial position within the province of Britannia. For him, the obvious objective would have been to drive the leader of the northern Dobunni from his enclave to the south of the Severn-Trent frontier so as to eliminate his ability to control the territory of the northern Dobunni. That in turn would have consolidated Caratacus's own position in the territory to the north of the Severn-Trent frontier. The reasons why Caratacus was able to pursue such a strategy also need to be explored.

In 47 A.D., had the Cornovii still constituted a coherent military force which was allied to Rome, it is unlikely that Caratacus could have located himself within the lands north of the Severn-Trent frontier, for the forces of the Cornovii might well have driven him out. By contrast, had the Cornovii possessed substantial forces which were aligned with Caratacus, the threat posed to the Romans would have been significantly greater than that which emerged. On that basis, it appears that by 47 A.D. the Cornovii no longer

⁵⁹ Furneaux H., *Corneli Taciti, Annalium* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1891, vol 2) Liber xii cap.31

⁶⁰ Translated by D.Stephenson

⁶¹ Wheeler M & Richardson K.M., *Hill-forts of northern France* (The Society of Antiquaries, London 1957) See pp.54-61

⁶² Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.60

constituted a coherent military force. As a consequence, Caratacus was able to occupy their territory unopposed. From that base he appears to have delivered a decisive blow against the enclave controlled by Boduocus, for in the period following those events he ceased to issue any further coins.⁶³ It appears that Caratacus did achieve his initial objective of establishing the territory of the Cornovii and the northern Dobunni as a base from which to mount a challenge to Roman control of the lands to the south of the Severn-Trent frontier. The difficulty for Caratacus was that his success triggered an overwhelming Roman response.

The seriousness of the threat posed to Roman rule is highlighted by the manner in which the Roman Governor, Ostorius, responded, for as a first step he decided to disarm all tribes located within the province of Britannia.⁶⁴ Moreover, given the strategy Caratacus had adopted, any plan the Roman authorities may have entertained of re-establishing the former Cornovian ruling elite in power was undermined. In the new context it became necessary for the Romans to secure control of Cornovian territory. Accordingly, in 48 A.D. the Roman army advanced beyond the Severn-Trent frontier.⁶⁵ The nature of the campaign which they waged to secure control of the lands of the Cornovii and northern Dobunni also contrasts markedly with that waged in the lands to the south-west.

In his account of the battles fought to conquer two tribes - seemingly the Durotriges and the Dumnonii - Suetonius noted that Vespasian had found it necessary to capture over twenty hillforts (*oppida*). Modern archaeology has revealed evidence of those battles. Excavations at Hod Hill brought to light a barrage of *ballista*, whilst war graves at Maiden Castle revealed injuries inflicted by Roman weapons. Capturing those hillforts entailed the defenders being driven from the ramparts by long-range *ballista* prior to the gates being burnt.⁶⁶

According to this analysis, the Durotriges, the Dobunni and the Cornovii were led by military elites having shared origins. As a consequence, had the Dobunni and the Cornovii been autonomous tribes who were hostile to Rome, the conquest of those areas would have followed a similar course to that seen within the land of the Durotriges, with control of each hill fort being fiercely contested. There is however no evidence of such a campaign having been waged within the lands of either the Cornovii or the northern Dobunni.

When the Romans launched their assault on Cornovian territory, it appears that Breiddin hillfort was taken without a battle, allowing the defences of the entrance to be carefully dismantled.⁶⁷ In an article published in 1977 C.R. Musson, the excavator, noted that,

⁶³ Ibid p.65

⁶⁴ Op cit Grant M. (trans.) 1975 p.264-5 (bk. 12)

⁶⁵ Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.61

⁶⁶ Op cit Rolfe J.C. (ed. & trans.) 1965 vol.2. Lib.viii, Divus Vespasianus par iv, i & op cit Frere S. 1994 p.58

⁶⁷ O'Neil B.H. St. J, 'Excavations at Breiddin Hill Camp, Montgomeryshire, 1933-5' in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1937, vol. 92 pp.86-128. See in particular pp.96-7 (Period III) & Musson C.R., 'Excavations at the Breiddin 1969-1973' in op cit Harding D.W. (ed.) 1976 pp. 293-302. For a general overview, see also

(t)here is nothing to show whether the fort [Breiddin] was still occupied at the time of the Roman conquest ...⁶⁸

The nearby hillfort, Ffridd Faldwyn, had been allowed to deteriorate prior to the Roman conquest.⁶⁹ This evidence supports the view that prior to the Roman invasion of 43 A.D., the Catuvellauni had already conquered the Cornovii, disbanding the Cornovian military and decommissioning many if not all of their hillforts.

In 48 A.D., in crossing the Severn-Trent frontier, the Roman objective was not to conquer the Cornovii but rather to defeat Caratacus and his retinue. That proved to be a lengthy undertaking. The course of that struggle is well known, with the Romans initially succeeding in driving Caratacus from the territories of the Cornovii and the northern Dobunni into the lands of the Silures, thus securing control of a vast tract of the area we now know as central Wales.

By then the region under their command extended from the Dee estuary in the north, to the Dyfi estuary in mid Wales down to the Severn estuary in south Wales. That highlights the extent to which Lloyd's concept of a militarised Wales, Mortimer Wheeler's concept of Wales 'as a frontier-land',⁷⁰ and Nash-Williams's concept of the Welsh frontier as 'a great defensive quadrilateral',⁷¹ were fundamentally misconceived. In principle, having secured control of the lands of the Cornovii and the northern Dobunni, the Romans were in a position to begin the process of preparing those lands to be transferred to Roman civil control, but in practice the continuing struggle against Caratacus may have delayed that process.

Arnold C.J., *The Archaeology of Montgomeryshire* (C.J. Arnold & The Powysland Club, Welshpool 1990) chapter 5

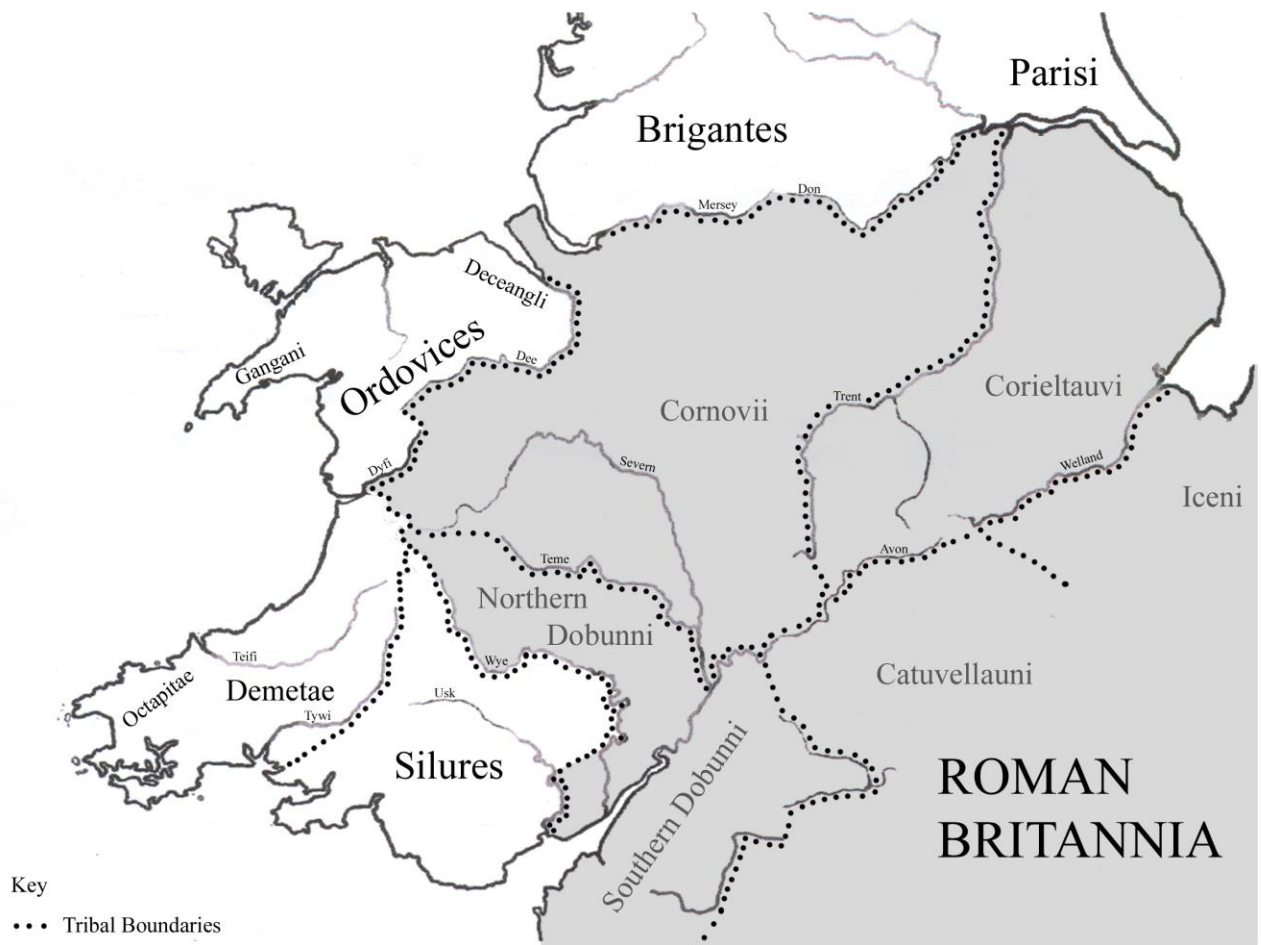
⁶⁸ Musson C.R, Smith A.G. & Girling M., 'Environmental evidence from the Breiddin hillfort' in *Antiquity*, 1977 vol. 51 pp.147-51. See in particular p.147

⁶⁹ O'Neil B.H. St. J, 'Excavations at Ffridd Faldwyn Camp, Montgomery, 1937-9', in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1942, vol. 97 pp.1-57. See in particular p.20

⁷⁰ Op cit Wheeler R.E.M. 1925 p.290

⁷¹ Nash-Williams V.E., *The Roman frontier in Wales* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1954) p.7

Map 3. Territory under Roman control by 51 A.D.



Having drawn the Roman army beyond the Severn-Trent frontier but subsequently being driven to escape to the land of the Silures, Caratacus again found himself in danger of being encircled by the Romans. In 51 A.D. he found it necessary once more to escape, this time transferring his court and retinue to the lands of the Ordovices.⁷² There, shortly afterwards he fought his last battle against the Romans. In this context it is pertinent to consider the location of that encounter.

Over the years various authors have advanced a number of sites as the location of the battle. On the assumption that the lands of the Ordovices extended down into modern Montgomeryshire, numerous locations within mid-Wales have been suggested. On the basis of aerial reconnaissance conducted during earlier years, J.K.S. St Joseph considered

⁷² Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.64

the hill-fort at Cefn Carnedd in the upper Severn valley as one possible location.⁷³ By contrast Barry Jones tentatively suggested Craig Rhiwarth and Llanymynech Mountain as possible sites.⁷⁴ According to this analysis, the lands of the Ordovices did not extend into mid-Wales and as a consequence the above suggestions are not credible.

Given that the territory of the Ordovices was confined to the lands to the north and west of the river Dyfi and the river Dee, the last battle fought by Caratacus should be placed within that region. The site which accords most closely to that described by Tacitus is located on the lower reaches of the river Dee, just east of the modern town of Llangollen. This is a setting in which are found the deep river and the overhanging cliffs described by Tacitus.⁷⁵ In the upper Dee valley, *en route* to that site, is a hill-fort known as Caer Caradog (SN.968968), which Caratacus may have used as a resting place for his court and retinue as he traversed up the Dee valley.⁷⁶ Moreover, the battle is likely to have been fought within territory controlled from the hill fort known in modern times as Dinas Brân.⁷⁷

Consideration of the name Dinas Brân may cast some light on the names *Brannogenum* and *Mediolanium* which feature in Ptolemy's *Geographia*,⁷⁸ and on the location of the tribal boundaries implicit in his work. In considering the work of Ptolemy, there is a need to remind ourselves of the historical sources which were employed in its formulation.

For the area which is of interest to this analysis, it appears that the works which he drew upon were confined to the pre-Flavian period (i.e. pre 69 A.D.) and probably to the years before 65 A.D.⁷⁹ In that context, the battle fought against Caratacus in the vicinity of Dinas Brân would have loomed large in Roman consciousness. As a consequence, it is possible that the *Brannogenum* of Ptolemy's *Geographia* is the hillfort known as Dinas Brân located on the outskirts of the modern town of Llangollen. The *Mediolanium* referred to in that source should also be located within broadly the same region. Given the mounting evidence that an early auxiliary fort was located at the centre of the modern town of Rhuthun,⁸⁰ that may be regarded as the most likely location of Ptolemy's *Mediolanium*. Moreover, the distances from London to both locations correspond

⁷³ St Joseph J.K.S., 'Aerial Reconnaissance in Wales', *Antiquity* 35 (1961) 263-75. See in particular pp.270-1

⁷⁴ Jones G.D.B., 'Searching for Caradog', *Trivium* 25, 57-64, and in particular pp.60-1. See also op cit Frere S. 1994 p.64 & op cit Arnold C.J. 1990 p.58

⁷⁵ Op cit Grant M. (trns.) 1975 p.266-7 (bk. 12)

⁷⁶ Op cit Jones G.D.B. in *Trivium* 25, 57-64. See in particular, map p.60. The fort in question is in the vicinity of Llanfihangel-Glyn-Myfyr, Denbighshire.

⁷⁷ Forde-Johnston J., *Hillforts of the Iron Age in England and Wales* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 1976) pp.56 & 197

⁷⁸ Op cit Müller C., (ed.) Paris 1883-1901, Bk.2 Ch.3 par.11 & op cit Rivet A.L.F. & Smith C. 1982, pp.142. See also Sims-Williams P., 'Measuring Celticity from Wales to the Orient' in Hoz J. de, Luján E.R. & Sims-Williams P.(eds.) *New approaches to Celtic place-names in Ptolemy's Geography* (Ediciones Clásicas, Madrid 2005) pp.267-87. See in particular pp.283-4 **Mediolanium** & p.284 **Branogenium**

⁷⁹ Op cit Manning W.H., in van Waateringe W.G., van Beek B.L., Willems W.J.H., Wynia W.L. 1997 pp.33-40. See in particular pp.33-6

⁸⁰ Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) *Roman frontiers in Wales and the Marches* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth 2010) pp.303-4

reasonably well with Ptolemy's estimates.⁸¹ In keeping with Ptolemy's work, this analysis locates both *Brannogenium* and *Mediolanium* securely within the territory of the Ordovices.

Following their victory over Caratacus, it appears that the Romans established defensive positions against the Brigantes along a frontier which ran broadly along the rivers Don and Mersey.⁸² The subsequent consolidation of Roman control over much of the territory of the Cornovii and the northern Dobunni was however, probably delayed by Boudicca's rebellion of 60 A.D.⁸³ and the consequent need to stabilise the Imperial position within the lands to the south of the Severn-Trent line. Nevertheless, the Flavian dynasty secured power in 69 A.D. and in due course launched a new forward policy. Prior to that departure, the foundations for the consolidation of the Roman position within the lands of the Cornovii had already been laid.

In 48 A.D., as part of the initial conquest of the territory, an auxiliary fort appears to have been established at Wroxeter. About ten years later, prior to Boudicca's rebellion, a legionary fortress was established to the north of that initial fort.⁸⁴ For a period extending from about 57 to 79 A.D. that fortress seems to have had two main roles, namely consolidating the Roman position within the territory of the Cornovii and serving as an initial base for organising the conquest of the southern flank of the Ordovices. With regard to the latter role, its location was not ideal for it was too distant from the frontier with the Ordovices.

Given the expanse of territory which lay to the west, it is not surprising that in the initial phase of conquest and consolidation an auxiliary fort was built at Caersws, about 55 kilometres to the west on a site overlooked by Cefn Carnedd hillfort. The site of that initial Roman fort at Caersws is yet to be dated but the fact that it was sufficient to sustain the Roman position in the western territory of the Cornovii is eloquent testimony to the absence of any significant organised opposition within that vast area.⁸⁵ Subsequently, following the adoption of a forward policy by the Flavian dynasty, it appears that Caersws assumed a new significance. It was recognised as an appropriate location for a supply base and fall-back position for operations on the southern frontier of the Ordovices.

⁸¹ Op cit Rivet A.L.F. & Smith C. 1982, p.119. According to Ptolemy, *Brannogenium* was located 195 Roman miles from London, whilst *Mediolanium* was located 200 Roman miles from London.

⁸² Webster G., *Rome against Caratacus* (Routledge, London 2003) See in particular pp.92-5. Those defences appear to have been established during the governorship of Aulus Didus Gallus (52-7 A.D.) following the struggle between Cartimandua and her husband Venutius for control of the Brigantes. That struggle may have been triggered by Cartimandua's decision to hand Caratacus over to the Romans. See op. cit. Frere S. 1994 pp.66-8

⁸³ Op cit Frere S. 1994 pp.73-4

⁸⁴ Op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 pp.193-6

⁸⁵ Ibid pp.224-6. J.L. Davies prefers an early Flavian date for the construction of the fort, but that assumes that following their initial advance across the Severn-Trent line in 48 A.D., the Romans had not consolidated their position within the west for over twenty years. The rationale of the situation indicates that the initial fort at Caersws could have been constructed at any time from the late 40s A.D.

As a consequence, during the early 70s A.D. a new fort was constructed at Caersws, about 1 kilometre to the west of the earliest fortress.⁸⁶ It seems that Caersws provided the base from which the building of the auxiliary forts at Cefn Caer and Caer Gai could be organised. Both forts are dated at the latest to the early Flavian period and both are located a short distance beyond Cornovian territory, providing the Romans with a foothold within Ordovician land.⁸⁷ During the same period the Romans were engaged in developing their military facilities at Chester. Deva had been the site of two early forts, but now a new legionary fortress was built, providing them with a major capacity to attack along the coastal lowlands of north Wales. The three major fortifications of Deva, Caer Gai and Cefn Caer were thus located on the Dyfi-Dee frontier. The latter two forts prepared the ground for the conquest of the western territories of the Ordovices, their lands along the lower reaches of the river Dee seemingly having been conquered during the Roman campaign against Caratacus.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibid pp.224-9. Also Jones N.W., 'Caersws Roman fort and vicus, Montgomeryshire, Powys, 1984-92' in *The Montgomeryshire Collections*, 1993 vol.81 pp.15-96 & Jones N.W., 'Archaeological Investigations at Caersws Roman forts and vicus, 1993-2009' in *The Montgomeryshire Collections*, 2011 vol.99 pp.27-43

⁸⁷ See Hopewell D., *Roman fort environs* 2002/2003 (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor 2003) see in particular pp. 13-7 & 27-37. Also Hopewell D., 'Roman fort environs in North-West Wales' in *Britannia* 2005, vol.36 pp.225-69. Being located on a navigable section of the river Dyfi, Cefn Caer could be re-supplied by ship. With regard to the difficulty of dating both sites compare Jarrett M.G., *Early Roman campaigns in Wales* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff 1994) pp.25-6 and the text as revised by Peter Webster, i.e Webster P. 'Michael G. Jarrett, Early Roman campaigns in Wales' in Brewer R.J. (ed.) *The Second Augustan Legion and the Roman military machine* (National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff 2002) pp.45-66. See in particular pp.57-9

⁸⁸ According to this analysis, the fortifications at Llanfor belonged to that earlier military phase. See op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 pp.256-60 **Llanfor**

Map 4. The Romans and the conquest of the Ordovices



The strategic advantages of the locations chosen for Cefn Caer and Caer Gai should be observed. Had those forts been situated within the territory of the Cornovii, both would have been positioned to the south of the rivers which demarcated the tribal boundary. That would have granted the Ordovices continued use of the defensive potential of both rivers. By locating the forts in the territory of the Ordovices on sites to the north of those rivers, the Romans were denying their enemy the use of the rivers Dyfi and Dee as defensive barriers, whilst also conveying a message to the Ordovices that they did not fear them in the least. It is an aspect which may also cast some light on the location of the historical frontier between the Silures and the Dobunni.

In a context in which the Romans were attempting to contain the challenge posed by the Silures, a legionary fort was constructed to the east of the river Usk, seemingly within the territory of the Dobunni. When the conquest of the Silures became the Roman strategic objective, a new legionary base was constructed beyond the river Usk at Caerleon, thus enabling operations against the Silures to be initiated from within the tribe's own territory.⁸⁹ The river Usk thus probably constituted the boundary between the Silures and Dobunni south of Black Mountains. North of the Black Mountains Silurian territory probably extended to the river Wye.⁹⁰

With the Romans having secured effective control of Cornovian and Dobunnian territory, the territories of the Silures to the south and the Ordovices to the north were isolated. As a consequence, they could be subjected to carefully planned strategies of conquest at a time of the Romans' choosing. The precarious position of those tribes is underlined when it is recognised that both had significant lands over which they exercised overlordship and which they had in all probability at least partially demilitarised. The land of the Demetae and the Octapitae constituted the Achilles heel of the Silures whilst the territory of the Deceangli constituted that of the Ordovices.

The weakness of the Ordovician position within their north-eastern over-lordship appears to have been exploited by the Romans during the initial phase of their attack of 48 A.D., for Ostorius seemingly over-ran Deceanglian territory.⁹¹ That prepared the ground for Paulinus's attack on Anglesey in 60 A.D.⁹² In turn the weakness of Silurian power within their western overlordship was exploited as the Romans developed a western front by building forts at Carmarthen, Llandeilo and Llanymddyfri.⁹³ In that context the Romans were also able to advance from the territory of the Northern Dobunni. With the Roman navy controlling the Severn estuary, the Silures were surrounded. The ultimate defeat of both the Silures and the Ordovices was largely inevitable.

Following the disruption caused by the Boudicca's rebellion, the Silures ultimately succumbed to Roman power as a result of a campaign waged by Julius Frontinus as governor of Britannia between 74-8 A.D.⁹⁴ That left the Ordovices in an extremely exposed position and prepared to undertake desperate measures to avoid their inevitable fate. In that context they were able to exploit one key weakness in the long developed Roman strategy of conquest.

The Roman tactic of locating forts on small footholds within the territory of the tribe to be conquered was predicated on the assumption that the defences of such facilities would

⁸⁹ Op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 pp.187-92 **Usk** : pp.161-70 **Caerleon**

⁹⁰ Op cit Cunliffe B. 1991 pp.170-5 Ray Howell interpreted the Dobunnian coins found within the region in question as evidence of trade. However, that evidence, supported by the linguistic evidence highlighted by Rhys and Brynmor-Jones, provides a strong indication that Dobunnian territory extended to the river Usk. See op cit Howell R. 2006 pp.58-60 & op cit Rhys J & Brynmor-Jones D, 1900 pp. 21-2

⁹¹ Op cit Frere S. 1994 p.61

⁹² Ibid p.70

⁹³ Arnold C.J. & Davies J.L. *Roman and Early Medieval Wales* (Sutton, Stroud 2000). See fig 2.2C p.16

⁹⁴ Op cit Frere S. 1994 pp.70-77 & pp.81-7.

be sufficiently robust to withstand attack by the enemy. The work of Tacitus reveals one instance in which that assumption proved to be flawed. He refers to the Ordovices almost eliminating an auxiliary regiment which had been located within their territory.⁹⁵ Over the years there have been numerous attempts at locating those events, with the lowlands of the Severn valley, where the fort at Caersws had been built, being suggested as the likely scene.⁹⁶ As already noted, according to this analysis, the land of the Ordovices did not extend to Caersws and thus the battle could not have been fought in that vicinity. Rather, the events described by Tacitus need to be situated in the land to the north of the river Dyfi and the river Dee, with the fort at Cefn Caer being the most likely candidate. This interpretation is supported by archaeological evidence.

Archaeological investigations have revealed that the initial wooden fort constructed at Cefn Caer, was burnt. That led to the construction of a second fort on the site, but on a slightly different alignment to the first.⁹⁷ The broader setting of Cefn Caer is also fully in keeping with the description provided by Tacitus, with the garrison being situated on the lowlands with Agricola himself leading his forces into the hills to the north-west to fight and defeat a faction of the Ordovices. Agricola then proceeded north to Anglesey, securing a decisive victory over the Ordovices and drawing the Roman campaign of conquest within the territory of latter-day Wales to a close.

As a consequence of those events, the Ordovices and the Cornovii entered quite different phases of Roman military occupation. Having been decisively defeated in 78 A.D., the Ordovices, as a belligerent enemy, were subjected to an intensive phase of military occupation. By contrast, the lands of the Cornovii to the south were already being demilitarised. The contrasting experiences of the two tribes provide further evidence of the location of the boundary between them.

Given that the territory of the Cornovii had seemingly been demilitarised by the Catuvellauni prior to the Roman conquest, it is not surprising that there was a marked disparity in the density of the Roman fortifications established in the territory of the Ordovices as compared to the western region of Cornovian territory. If the early forts at Rhuthun and Llanfor are included in the analysis, the Romans established nine auxiliary forts within the hostile Ordovician lands, whilst within the Cornovian lands west of Wroxeter they constructed but three such forts, and one of those may well have focused on lead and iron smelting rather than on military affairs.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ogilvie R.M. & Richmond I., (eds.) *Cornelii Taciti, De Vita Agricolae* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1976) see par.18 & Mattingly H. (trs.) revised by Handford S.A. *Tacitus, the Agricola and the Germania* (Penguin, Harmondsworth 1976) see *The Agricola* par.18

⁹⁶ Op cit Jarrett M.G. & Mann J.C., in *Welsh History Review*, vol 4 1968 pp.161-71. See in particular pp.167-8. Jarrett and Mann imply that the relevant battle was fought in the Severn valley between Caersws and Newtown.

⁹⁷ Op cit Hopewell D. 2003. See in particular pp. 13-7 & 27-37.

⁹⁸ The auxiliary fort at Brompton/Pentrehyling may well have been established to pursue industrial objectives. See op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 p.205 **Brompton/Pentrehyling** & op cit Arnold C.J. & Davies J.L. 2000. See fig 2.2C p.16 &

If the forts at Llanfor and Rhuthun are regarded as having been constructed at an early date to consolidate control over the territory of the Deceangli and to drive the Ordovices from the lower Dee valley,⁹⁹ an even more revealing picture emerges. It then transpires that in order to complete the conquest of the Ordovician heartland, seven auxiliary forts were constructed within the relatively restricted territory of latter-day Caernarfonshire and Merionethshire.¹⁰⁰

The above analysis is supported by the changing role of the legionary fortresses at Wroxeter and Chester. In 78 A.D., with Agricola having defeated the Ordovices, there no longer existed a need for two legions to be deployed on that frontier. In the new context, one was sufficient. That led to a major reorganisation of Roman forces. The numismatic evidence suggests that in 87 A.D., Legion II Adiutrix was transferred from its base at Chester. By 92 A.D. it was located on the Danube and was participating in the Dacian wars of Emperor Domitian. In 87 A.D., with Chester having been vacated, Legion XX was then transferred from Viroconium to Deva.¹⁰¹ The manner in which the reorganisation was implemented also casts an interesting light on the role of Legion XX and the Wroxeter base in the conquest of the lands of the Ordovices.

The most straightforward manner in which re-deployment could have been effected would have been for Legion XX to be transferred to the Danube from Viroconium, whilst leaving Legion II Adiutrix at Deva. However, the Roman authorities valued the role being fulfilled by Legion XX in the lands of the Ordovices, to the extent that they were prepared to undertake two legionary movements in order to retain their services in western Britannia. As noted above, initially Legion II Adiutrix was transferred from Chester, before Legion XX was transferred from Wroxeter to Chester. This suggests that Legion XX and the Wroxeter base had not only fulfilled a crucial role in the conquest of the territory of the Ordovices but were also heavily involved in the subsequent consolidation of the Roman position in those newly conquered lands.

Having transferred Legion XX to Chester, the legionary base at Wroxeter was transformed. Given that it no longer had a role in conquering the Ordovices, its buildings were reordered to create more storage space and its western defences were dismantled. Afterwards the fortress had only a brief existence, for at some point between the years 90-100 A.D. it was demolished.¹⁰² After 78 A.D., in the lands of the Cornovii, the Roman military was already reducing what had always been a limited presence. In common with a number of the other tribes of Wales, the Cornovii were on course to be transferred to civilian control.

From the closing decades of the first century A.D., throughout Wales, the process of demilitarisation was already well under way. Moreover, the transfer of the tribes to

⁹⁹ Op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 pp.303-4 **Ruthin** & pp.256-60 **Llanfor**

¹⁰⁰ Jarrett sought to employ Roman fortifications as a means of identifying tribal territories. According to this analysis it is necessary firstly to identify tribal territories so as to then comprehend the rationale underpinning the construction of Roman fortifications.

¹⁰¹ Hobley A.S. 'The numismatic evidence for the post-Agricolan abandonment of the Roman frontier in northern Scotland' in *Britannia* vol.20 1989 pp.69-74. See in particular pp.71-2

¹⁰² Op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 pp.193-6 **Wroxeter**

civilian control was in most cases to proceed rapidly. Understanding the manner in which that transition occurred, and the manner in which Lloyd failed to grasp the fact that such a process had taken place, are both issues of great importance not only to Welsh history but also to our understanding of the development of the Roman province of Britannia.

From conquest to assimilation

In the first and second editions of his *A History of Wales*, Lloyd concluded that Celtic society survived the Roman conquest largely unimpaired,¹⁰³ but in coming to that conclusion, did Lloyd apply appropriate criteria to assess the issue?

Two of the criteria which he did harness, namely the Roman military presence in Wales and the absence of Roman towns in Wales, have already been considered at length in earlier articles.¹⁰⁴ As a consequence they need only to be briefly addressed in the current context. With regard to the implications of the Roman military presence in Wales, Lloyd stated:

The first point ... which has a bearing on the question of the relations of conquerors and conquered in Wales is the military purpose of the two standing camps of Isca and Dêva, with their network of dependent forts. ...

... (A) people whom it was necessary thus to overawe can hardly have been ordinary peaceable subjects of the Empire. That they enjoyed political independence it is, of course, absurd to imagine; they no doubt bore the burdens of Empire, paid tribute, worked mines, and furnished recruits for the auxiliary part of the army. But they so far held aloof from Roman civilisation as to be a possible source of danger to the province, and the very thorough way in which their country was covered with military stations, while it allowed no room for tribal leadership and tribal warfare, shows that they could not be left to themselves, to work out their own destiny, so strong was the old tribal feeling and so easy the return to the conditions which obtained before the conquest.¹⁰⁵

For Lloyd, the nature of the Roman military presence was interpreted as indicating that the native population had not been assimilated into Roman civil life. Modern archaeology has come to very different conclusions. In a recent work Burnham and Davies expressed the view that by the reign of Hadrian, Wales and the Marches had already ceased to be a frontier zone.

Throughout the 2nd and 3rd century the legionary fortresses at Caerleon and Chester ... had been retained long after the areas they were designed to watch were pacified. Certainly in Caerleon's case its retention after the Antonine period was in a tactical sense an anachronism, since it was remote from any serious

¹⁰³ Op cit Lloyd J. E 1911 vol 1, p. 89. The subsequent amendment to Lloyd's view, as presented in the third edition of his *A History of Wales*, did not significantly change his position. See op cit Lloyd J.E. 3rd ed. 1939 vol. 1 p. lv

¹⁰⁴ Williams E.W., 'J.E.Lloyd and the intellectual foundations of Welsh history' in the *National Library of Wales Journal* vol. 36 no.1 2014 pp. 1-44 See in particular pp.34-40 & op cit Williams E.W. in the *National Library of Wales Journal* vol. 36 no.2 2015 pp.1-68

¹⁰⁵ Op cit Lloyd J.E. 1911 vol 1, pp.82-3

threat, and is best explained by military inertia and by the fact that it represented a strategic reserve and a key piece in the balance of military power after the division of Britannia into two provinces...

Archaeological evidence from both fortresses testifies to ... [the] recurrent absences of personnel. Chester shows evidence of a severe reduction in the intensity of occupation from c. AD 120 onwards ... At Caerleon too there was a hiatus in rebuilding in stone until after c. AD 160, ... which must surely indicate the absence of much of the legion from its base until the withdrawal from Scotland had been completed.¹⁰⁶

The significance of the military presence at Isca and Dêva was very different to that envisaged by Lloyd. He also interpreted the absence of what he regarded as the expected features of Roman civil life as confirming his view of a militarised Wales.

The positive evidence supplied by the character of the Roman remains in Wales may be supplemented by the negative evidence afforded by what is not to be found there. ... (N)o Romano-British town of the type so common in England, no Silchester or Wroxeter or Bath, has yet been discovered in Wales strictly so called, though Monmouthshire furnishes an instance in Caerwent.¹⁰⁷

In coming to that conclusion Lloyd overlooked the existence of Carmarthen and *Civitas Venedotis* as *civitas* capitals located within Wales. The manner in which he located the boundaries of the 'Welsh' tribes also removed from consideration both Wroxeter and Cirencester as *civitas* capitals which related to Welsh territory.

Lloyd also regarded the dearth of Roman villas within Wales as offering support for his view.

It has now to be added that another feature of the orderly, peaceable south-east, namely, the "villa" or Roman country house, is also notable by its absence, save in the district nearest Caerleon. At the end of the eighteenth century the foundations of a building were unearthed at Llanfyrnach, Brecknockshire ... The discovery of a villa at Llantwit Major was also recorded in 1888. Elsewhere nothing has come to light to show that it was usual for wealthy civilians, unconnected with the army, to live at their ease in Wales as they did in the districts nearest Gaul. ... So far as the evidence goes, the Romans had only one interest in Wales beyond the military, namely, the mines which native labour made profitable to the imperial exchequer.¹⁰⁸

In identifying the existence of Roman villas as a key index of Romanisation, Lloyd was adopting a highly suspect approach. A far more important indication of Romanisation was to be found in the pattern of land ownership and management which existed in early

¹⁰⁶ Op cit Burnham B. & Davies J. L., (eds.) 2010 pp.58-9

¹⁰⁷ Op cit Lloyd J.E. 1911 vol 1, p.83

¹⁰⁸ Ibid p.83

Wales. In order to understand this, it is necessary to comprehend the consequences of being conquered by the Romans.

When the Romans completed the military conquest of Wales, they already had a long history of conquering and assimilating other peoples. Their approach to such issues had evolved since the founding of Rome in the 8th century B.C., with control of land being a key factor in the process of consolidating their military victories. As a consequence it is necessary to identify the key means which the Romans had employed to consolidate their control over and to assimilate the peoples whom they conquered. That constitutes a more appropriate basis for assessing whether there is evidence of Wales having been assimilated into Roman civil society. The aim will be to identify the dominant features of the Roman system of land ownership and management, with particular reference to the manner in which they integrated conquered territory. It is fully recognised that many aspects of that background are beyond the scope of this study and also continue to be the subject of intense academic debate.

It appears that one fundamental dimension to the politics of the ancient world was that conquered peoples lost ownership of their land. Moreover, defeated peoples were regarded as assets to be disposed of as the victor saw fit. In keeping with that approach, when Rome secured victory, it assumed ownership of part if not all of the land of its defeated enemy. Such land became the property of the Roman state and was known as *ager publicus populi Romani*.¹⁰⁹

The consequences of this approach can be gauged from the experience of the people of Veii who were defeated by the Romans in 396 B.C. All of their land was seemingly confiscated. Moreover, hostile sections of the population were sold into slavery but those loyal to Rome were spared that fate. Roman territory was then extended to absorb much of the territory of the vanquished, with two Roman colonies being established on portions of their land.¹¹⁰

Colonisation constituted a key Roman strategy, entailing the establishment of its own settlers as an organised group within part of a conquered territory. For Rome, the founding of a colony was an official act of state, entailing the creation of a self-governing community within which a settler would be granted a specific area of land to sustain himself and his family. During the period 313-218 B.C. such colonies are recorded as numbering either 4,000 or 6,000 settlers. As such they constituted a powerful bulwark to thwart rebellion against Rome.¹¹¹

Colonisation was but one aspect of Rome's approach to the consolidation of its position within a conquered territory: control of the public land constituted another. Prior to 396 B.C. the legal basis for the use of the *ager publicus* was little developed, but in due

¹⁰⁹ Roselaar S.T., *Public land in the Roman Republic. A social and economic history of Ager Publicus in Italy 396-89 B.C.* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010) p.25

¹¹⁰ Ibid pp.298-9

¹¹¹ Salmon E.T., *Roman colonization under the Republic* (Cornell University Press, New York 1970) pp.13-4 & p.38 & op cit Roselaar S.T. 2010 pp.29-31

course a sophisticated legal framework emerged. Whereas in the monarchical period some land seems to have been distributed to the poor, in the early Republic the wealthy stratum within Roman society appear to have monopolised the use of *ager publicus*.¹¹² As such they had a right to occupy and use the land but did not acquire outright ownership. In due course the absence of an adequate legal framework to that process created its own difficulties.

As agriculture became more capital intensive, greater security of tenure was required in order to encourage producers to invest. As a consequence, from the 3rd century B.C. the Roman state began to sell arable land located within the *ager publicus* to private investors.¹¹³

Another early strategy was to lease large parcels of the *ager publicus* for five years to the highest bidder, with the successful bidder then letting portions of the land to native farmers on the basis of the payment of an annual rent. Whilst the manner in which that system operated continues to be a matter of academic debate, it is apparent that the land remained in public ownership.¹¹⁴ That approach to letting the land provided the Roman state with a powerful means of securing the acquiescence of defeated peoples to Roman domination.

The existence of Roman colonies and the sale of *ager publicus* to Roman citizens provided direct bulwarks against rebellion whilst the vanquished were allowed to continue farming their native lands on the basis of short-term tenancies and the payment of an annual rent. Not only were the conquered natives forced to support the Roman state financially but, moreover, their tenancies were now a privilege which could be withdrawn should they defy Rome.¹¹⁵

Those constituted the primary instruments of domination down to the end of Republican Rome. With the establishment of the Principate another important dimension emerged in the form of the patrimony of the emperor, revenue from which was allocated to public ends. Initially it was controlled by the *procurator patrimonii*, but over time, as those assets became more extensive, it was regarded as crown property and became a major department of state known as the *res privata*. Conquered lands which contained important mineral resources could be regarded as state property or in some rare instances, property of the emperor. In both cases, it appears that the emperor would be closely involved in their administration.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid p.26

¹¹³ Ibid pp.119-24

¹¹⁴ Ibid pp. 128-33

¹¹⁵ Ibid p.37 See also Sinnigen W.G. & Boak A.E.R., *A history of Rome to A.D.565* (Collier Macmillan, London 1977) pp.365-6

¹¹⁶ Jones A.H.M., *The decline of the ancient world* (Longmans, London 1968) pp.154-5 & Jones A.H.M., *The Later Roman Empire 284-602* (Oklahoma, Norman 1962) 2 vols. See vol.1 pp.411-27 & vol. 2 pp.839 & Hirt M.H., *Imperial mines and quarries in the Roman world: organizational aspects 27 B.C. – A.D. 235* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010) See in particular pp.357-69

By the first century A.D., those constituted the fundamental features of the Roman approach to the consolidation of control over conquered territory. They were the primary instruments of domination which the conquering power could be expected to deploy as it sought to assimilate the newly conquered province of Britannia into its imperial system. The key issue concerns whether these policies can be identified as having once been implemented within Britannia and particularly within Wales.

Initially it should be observed that a major misconception exists at the heart of Lloyd's analysis. From early in his career he was of the view that the Romans had permitted the Welsh tribes to remain in the remoter parts of Wales provided that they did not impinge on the Romanised life beyond those areas. In 1886 he presented the following assessment of the life of the tribes of Wales.

Ni raid craffu yn fanwl iawn i weled mai bywyd y trefydd a'r prif-ffyrdd, bywyd y dyffrynoedd breision a'r gwastadeddau ffrwythlon, oedd y bywyd prysur, egniol, a ddarluniwyd genym: ac fod y mynyddoedd anial, y cymoedd neillduedig, y coedydd anhygyrch, yn drigle dosbarth gwahanol iawn o ddynion – llwythau cyntefig yr Ynys, heb golli eu harferion syml a gwladaidd, - yn talu teyrnged, efallai, i'w meistriaid Rhufeinaidd, ond yn cael eu gadael, gyda hyny, i fyw fel y gwelent hwy yn dda. ...¹¹⁷

There is no need to focus unduly carefully to see that the busy energetic life described by us, was the life of the towns and main-roads, the life of the broad valleys and the productive plains and that the desolate mountains, the secluded valleys, the inaccessible forests were the abode of a very different category of men – the primitive tribes of the Island, who had not lost their simple rural customs, - paying tribute, perhaps, to their Roman masters, but being left, with that, to live their lives as they saw fit ...

Such an outlook lay counter to the approach of the Romans towards ownership of land. For the Romans, ownership was predicated on the existence of boundaries. Moreover, land which had not been allocated to a specific owner could not belong to anyone other than he who had the power to allocate it. The need to measure land accurately, to allocate appropriately, and to fully record the allocation made, was fundamental to the Roman imperial outlook.¹¹⁸ It is thus highly questionable whether the kind of tribal hinterland that Lloyd envisaged as existing in the remoter areas of Wales could have existed. It is far more likely that at the conquest all land became *ager publicus populi Romani*. Accordingly, it would have become the property of the Roman state, before in due course being allocated to specific categories of ownership. The history of the Roman conquest of southern Britain seems to offer little evidence of an alternative approach entailing a significant accommodation of native interests.

In establishing its control, Rome had secured allies, the most visible of whom were Cogidubnus, whose centre of power was Chichester, and Prasutagus of the Iceni. Neither

¹¹⁷ Lloyd J E, 'Ffurfiad y genedl Gymreig', *Y Geninen* vol 4 1886 pp.264-70. See p. 265.

¹¹⁸ Dilke O.A.W., *The Roman land surveyors* (David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1971) pp.18 & 40-1

of those two alliances appears to have been of longer term significance.¹¹⁹ The territories controlled by both seem eventually to have been subjected to the wider reorganisation which the Romans implemented throughout Britannia.

That process, it should be noted, was pursued in what was to prove to be one of Rome's last great imperial adventures. Shortly after the consolidation of the province of Britannia under the leadership of Agricola, Emperor Hadrian (117-38 A.D.) recognised that Rome no longer had the resources to undertake such conquests.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, at that stage in its imperial development Rome had vast experience of establishing new administrative structures and reorganising the mineral, agricultural and human resources of conquered territories, knowing the pitfalls which needed to be avoided.

The main lines of the process of consolidating the conquest are apparent. In due course, Roman colonies were established at Colchester, Lincoln, Gloucester and York.¹²¹ Moreover, as the Empire developed, land regarded as being potentially mineral rich would have been designated as *metalla*, that is districts having distinct administrations which appear to have been directly linked into the imperial civil service at Rome. Such lands may also have been allocated to the emperor, in turn evolving into crown property and eventually being administered by the *res privata*.¹²² It can safely be assumed that very significant areas of upland Wales were allocated to this category of ownership. The Roman villa recently discovered at Abermagwr near Aberystwyth may have related to the administration of such an area or the exploitation of its mineral resources by a private lessee.¹²³ This conclusion is supported by the fact that no agricultural buildings have yet been found at Abermagwr, but two lead objects found at the site have on the basis of isotopic analysis been identified as having been made from galena sourced from the Frongoch lode 5.2 kilometres to the east.¹²⁴

The reorganisation of agriculture would have constituted a further aspect of that restructuring. In implementing reform, the Romans were proceeding from a context in which there already existed a mixed agriculture within Britain. That system was not

¹¹⁹ See Todd M., 'The Claudian conquest and its consequences' in Todd M. (ed.), *A companion to Roman Britain* (Blackwell, Oxford 2007) pp.42-59. See in particular pp.47-8. Given that the surviving inscription bearing his name is incomplete, the person known as Cogidubnus may in fact have been known as Togidubnus or Tigidubnus.

¹²⁰ Rostovtzeff M., *The social and economic history of the Roman Empire* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1957) 2 vols. See vol. 1, pp.362-6 & Salway P., *The Oxford illustrated history of Roman Britain* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1993). See p.135

¹²¹ Wachter J., *The towns of Roman Britain* (Book Club Associates, London 1976) See pp.104-77

¹²² Op cit Jones A.H.M., 1968 pp.154-5 & op cit Frere S. 1994. pp.200-1 & 277-8. See also op cit Sinnigen W.G. & Boak A.E.R. 1977. see p.327. Regarding the gold mines at Dolaucothi see op cit Hirt M.H. 2010 pp.357-8

¹²³ For an outline of the manner in which deposits of galena (lead ore) were exploited in the Roman era, see op cit Frere S. 1994 pp.276-8.

¹²⁴ Davies J.L. & Driver T.G., 'The first Roman villa in Ceredigion: a summary report on the discovery and excavation of a late Romano-British villa at Abermagwr near Aberystwyth, 2010-11', *Ceredigion* 2011 vol.16, no.3 pp.1-15. See in particular p.6 & Driver T.G. & Davies J.L., 'Abermagwr Romano-British villa, Ceredigion, mid Wales: Interim report on its discovery and excavation', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 2011, vol.160 pp.39-50. See in particular pp.43 & 46.

uniform in character, for whilst all areas practised cereal cultivation, in the drier and flatter south-east there existed a greater emphasis on the cultivation of crops as compared to the wetter and more mountainous west and north where there was a bias towards animal husbandry.¹²⁵

From the outset it seems that the Romans recognised the validity of those two agricultural systems in the environments concerned. Accordingly, the agriculture of Britannia was restructured in keeping with the merits of the existing systems, whilst applying new Roman surveying techniques, management and technology. Evidence of the systems which they established has survived in a number of written records as well as in the form of organisational structures and archaeological remains. The evidence which has survived in the Laws of Hywel will be considered initially.

According to tradition the laws in question were amended in the mid-tenth century, under the guidance of Hywel Dda, though the earliest extant versions date to a considerably later period.¹²⁶ It has also long been recognised that those laws reflect influences drawn from diverse sources. This was initially highlighted by J. Goronwy Edwards in the Hywel Dda Millenary Lecture delivered at the University College of North Wales, Bangor in May 1928.¹²⁷ In his recent volume, *Wales and the Britons 350-1064*, Thomas Charles-Edwards has sought to tabulate the major influences on the component parts of the Laws of Hywel.¹²⁸ In the present context the focus will be on those sections of the laws relating to land, with their possible origins being considered in due course.

In the Laws of Hywel, evidence is to be found of two distinct manorial systems which were regarded as current. *Llyfr Blegywryd* refers to them as *Maenor Wrthdir* (Upland Manor) and *Maenor Fro* (Lowland Manor). According to the law books concerned, both types of manors were viewed as existing over a wide area, rather than being specific to a particular locality.¹²⁹ Those manors were sophisticated agricultural units which were geared to different types of agricultural production, employing distinctive types of labour.

In the *Book of Cyfnerth* dating to about 1285,¹³⁰ the structure of the Lowland Manor is presented, this being geared to arable cultivation with the land being farmed on the basis of sharelands and bondvills.

1 Lowland Manor = 7 bond vills = 42 bondmen

¹²⁵ Op cite Cunliffe B., 1991 pp.371-404. In his 'de bello Gallico' Julius Caesar provides a fascinating insight into the state of agriculture within south-eastern Britain in the period 55-4 B.C. See Pontet R. de, (ed.) *C Iuli Caesaris, de bello Gallico* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1900-08) lib. iv cap 20-38 & Wiseman A. & P. (trns.) 1980. See bk.4 pars.20-38 & bk.5 pars.8-23.

¹²⁶ See e.g. Jenkins D. (ed.) *The Law of Hywel Dda* (Gomer, Llandysul 1990) Introduction pp.xxi-xxvi

¹²⁷ Edwards J.G., *Hywel Dda and the Welsh Lawbooks* (U.C.N.W. Bangor, Bangor 1929)

¹²⁸ Charles-Edwards T.M., *Wales and the Britons 350-1064* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013) pp.271-2

¹²⁹ Williams S.J. & Powell J.E. (eds.), *Llyfr Blegywryd* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1942) See p.71, lines 16-7, where they are referred to as Maenawr Wrthdir and Maenawr Fro. See also note pp.203-4. I am not adopting the organisational basis of the Upland Manor referred to in this source. See footnote 131 below.

¹³⁰ Wade-Evans A.W., (ed & trns) *Welsh Medieval Law* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1909) See p.xiii.

1 Bond Vill = 3 sharelands = 6 bondmen
1 Shareland = 2 bondmen.¹³¹

In *Llyfr Iorwerth*, that is the Venedotian Code, the earliest extant manuscript dating to the thirteenth century,¹³² an account is presented of the structure of the Upland Manor.

1 Upland Manor = 4 tref (noble houses), 256 tyddynod (crofts)
1 Tref = 64 crofts
1 Gafael (Holding) = 16 crofts
1 Rhandir (sharelands) = 4 crofts
1 croft = 4 erw¹³³

Whereas the Lowland Manors were composed of bondvills whose labour force was engaged in farming sharelands, the Upland Manors were worked by crofters who as tenants, were required to co-operate in ploughing sharelands. Ploughing called for co-operation between twelve tenants, of whom eight provided an ox each, one provided the wooden frame of the plough, another provided the iron work of the plough, and one fulfilled the role of ploughman whilst another called the oxen forward.¹³⁴

Despite the structural differences that existed between those two manors, they were geared to the same core task, namely the organisation of labour to cultivate sharelands through the use of heavy plough and oxen.

A number of aspects of these manorial systems need to be considered. Initially it should be observed that the detailed structure of both types of manors implies that very sophisticated surveying skills were needed for their establishment. As a consequence the initial issue to be addressed concerns the capacity of the Roman imperial system to found such systems.

It is evident is that the Roman land surveyors, the *agrimensores* were immensely skilled. They were capable of achieving a level of accuracy, which, following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, was not surpassed until the late 18th century.¹³⁵ Moreover, the Roman army itself had an important surveying capacity which was of great importance to the development of the surveying skills required within the Empire. Young men would be enrolled in the army as military surveyors and having gained experience in that role would in due course become civilian surveyors.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Ibid p.205 See V26 a6 & V26 a8. In addition to the above, another model is presented, this being composed of thirteen villas, but the nature of the vill is not specified. See V26 a1. This has echoes of *Llyfr Blegywryd* where it is claimed that the Upland Manor is composed of thirteen trefs. I view this as being a late innovation. See op cit Williams S.J. & Powell J.E. (eds.) 1942 p.71, lines 16-7.

¹³² William A. R. (ed.) *Llyfr Iorwerth* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1960) See pp. xviii-xxi.

¹³³ Ibid par 90 p.60

¹³⁴ See eg. Pierce T. Jones 'A note of ancient Welsh measurements of land' in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1943 pp.195-204. See in particular p.199 & Jenkins D. (ed.) *The Law of Hywel Dda* (Gomer, Llandysul 1990) pp198-9

¹³⁵ Op cit Dilke O.A.W. 1971 See p.15

¹³⁶ Ibid p.43

The standardised form of the marching camps and forts found throughout the province, as well as beyond its northern borders, provide ample evidence of the presence of military surveyors within the Roman army in Britannia.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that surveying the site of a fort would constitute a quite different challenge to the large scale surveying of land required to establish the kind of manors referred to above. There is little doubt that the Roman army had the capacity to implement such large-scale projects. Indeed there are grounds for believing that the development of the profession was intimately related to the expansion of the Empire under Julius Caesar, and that Caesar himself could be regarded as the profession's founder. In turn Augustus and his successors through to the reign of Claudius nurtured the development of that occupation which in due course came to be organised along lines having parallels with the medieval guilds.¹³⁸

Prior to the conquest of southern Britain, the Roman army had been engaged in surveying enormous tracts of land in north Africa.¹³⁹ There can be little doubt that the Imperial authorities had at their disposal the capacity to survey the whole of the province of Britannia. Such a task could have been accomplished by their military forces over a period of decades. The origins of the manorial systems outlined in the Laws of Hywel need to be considered with that background in mind. The process involved in establishing these manorial systems also needs to be located in its historical context.

Given that by 78 A.D. the tribes of Wales had all been conquered, following the military consolidation of victory, the lands of the vanquished would have been absorbed into the *ager publicus populi Romani*. The Roman army would then have organised a survey of those lands by the *agrimensores* located within their ranks, with agreement being reached as to the allocation of territory as either Upland Manors or Lowland Manors. Both the external and internal boundaries of the manors would then have been demarcated. There are a number of aspects to that process which betray its Roman origins.

The complex structure of both types of manors implies that sophisticated surveying techniques were called for in their establishment. That is particularly the case given that there would have been a requirement for the manorial units in question, whether they be Upland Manors or Lowland Manors, to be accurately replicated throughout the province. It is quite clear that prior to the modern era the capacity to fulfil such an undertaking had only existed within the Roman army.

¹³⁷ Ibid p.86 & op cit Burnham B. & Davies J.L., (eds.) 2010 and in particular ch.7 Gazetteer of sites. See also Smith W., Wayte W. & Marindin G.E. (ed.), *A dictionary of Greek and Roman antiquities* (John Murray, London 1914) See vol.1 pp.83-93 **Agrimensores**

¹³⁸ Op cit Dilke O.A.W. 1971 p.37 & pp.39-40

¹³⁹ In 146 B.C., with the Third Punic War having drawn to a close, the survivors of the siege of Carthage were sold into slavery and the city itself destroyed. As a consequence, Rome had vast lands at its disposal. In the late second century B.C., 15,000 square kilometres of that land was divided into holdings. Moreover, with the province of Africa Nova having been established in 46 B.C., in 29 A.D. a vast surveying project was initiated in southern Tunisia with the third legion Augusta being recorded as participating in that work. It is remarkable that the base line for one of those surveys extended to almost 200 kilometres. See ibid p.156

It also appears that the manors were established on the basis of Roman units of land measurement. With regard to the Lowland Manors, the unit of significance was the total area of arable land contained within the manorial boundaries, whilst for the Upland Manors the key measure was the land allocated to the individual crofter.

The *iugerum* constituted a commonly employed Roman unit for the measurement of land. The concept itself was drawn from the agricultural context in which the *iugum* 'yoke' was employed in ploughing. It was regarded as the area of land which could be ploughed in a day. The *iugerum* itself had an area corresponding to 0.623 of an acre or 0.312 of a hectare.¹⁴⁰ It was, however, too small a unit to be the basis for large-scale surveying. In consequence, Roman land surveying focused on a significantly larger unit which it then subdivided into smaller units and it was in that secondary role that the *iugerum* featured.

The larger unit had for long been the *centuria*. From the reign of Augustus (27 B.C. – 14 A.D.), the *centuria*, measuring 2,400 Roman feet or c.770 yards (705.1m), with the square enclosing an area of 200 *iugerum*, was the standard Roman measurement. It was a unit that corresponds broadly to 125 acres or 50 hectares. It was the standard unit to the extent that one leading modern author, O.A.W. Dilke, expressed the view that exceptions are practically non-existent.¹⁴¹ Were the Upland and Lowland Manors of medieval Wales of Roman origin then they could be expected to have been structured on the basis of the *centuria* and the *iugerum*. There is considerable evidence that this was indeed the case.

On the basis of her study of the charters of the Book of Llan Dâf, Wendy Davies concluded that the majority of Lowland Manors given to that church extended to a standard area of around 125 acres.¹⁴² That implies that on the basis of the Roman system of measurement, they extended to one *centuria*. As a consequence it can be tentatively concluded that the Lowland Manors were surveyed by the Romans with the objective of enclosing one *centuria* of arable land.

With regard to the Upland Manors, the crucial unit of land is the four *erw* holding. Initially the area of the *erw* and its possible relation to the Roman *iugerum* will be considered. It must be recognised that medieval Welsh measures of land have undergone many changes. That was particularly the case given that the process of ploughing allowed considerable flexibility for units of measurement to be adapted to new circumstances. Nevertheless, the Tudor and later records of North Wales refer to a croft known as *llog*. It was constituted of twenty strips of arable land known as *llathenni*, with a fourth part of the *llog* consisting of five *llathenni*. What is of particular interest is that the fourth part of the *llog* (i.e. the unit constituted of five *llathenni*) extended to 3037.5 square yards, whilst

¹⁴⁰ Op cit Dilke O.A.W. 1971 pp.83-4

¹⁴¹ Ibid pp.83-4

¹⁴² Davies W., *An early Welsh microcosm* (Royal Historical Society, London 1978) See p.39-40 Wendy Davies saw the units in question as being essentially the same as the *trefi* of the Laws of Hywel. However, in her analysis no attempt was made to establish a more specific comparison with the manors of the Laws of Hywel.

the *iugerum* extended to 3016 square yards.¹⁴³ The small disparity between the two can hardly be regarded as significant.

It thus appears that the croft known as the *llog* was originally surveyed so as to establish a holding having an area of 4 *iugerum*. It probably constituted the type of agricultural unit established within the Upland Manors under the Roman ascendancy. The evidence suggests that the unit in question subsequently came into view as the 4 *erw* croft of the Venedotian code.

There is thus compelling evidence that both the Lowland and Upland Manors of medieval Wales were structured on the basis of key Roman measures of land and that their origins lay deep in the Roman context. Moreover, the similarity in the area of arable land within a *tref* as compared to a Lowland Manor and the labour employed within both is of broader significance.

One of the consequences of that framework was that Imperial administrators could regard all the agricultural units established within Roman Britannia as having the same taxable value: the Lowland Manors having 200 *iugera* or 1 *centuria* of good arable land at their disposal and employing 42 slaves, could be regarded as the equivalent of the Upland Tref having 256 *iugera* of poorer quality land, cultivated through the labour of 64 tenants. It is likely that the headquarters of the Upland Manor would be established on more favourable ground than the Upland Tref, and would thus bear some of the characteristics of both the Lowland Manor and the Upland Tref. The existence of such a hybrid would not pose a difficulty for the Roman bureaucracy of Britannia, for its taxable value would be sufficiently close to the other types of establishments for it to be integrated into the one taxation system. That framework would have enabled Roman administrators to establish a system of taxation, whereby for certain taxes all the agricultural units within Britannia could be regarded as having the same taxable value.

It should also be observed that the Roman approach to the reorganisation of the agricultural system of Britannia was in keeping with their approach in some other regions. With regard to the establishment of the four *iugerum* holdings of the Upland Manors, in the early history of Rome it had been common practice for the *centuria* to be divided into 100 plots, each of which extended to two *iugera*. The two *iugera* plot was known as the *heredium* and as the name suggests, was a holding which could be inherited. Historically, however, the Romans had established small holdings of various sizes. When Picenum was conquered through war in 268 B.C., Roman colonists established in their territory each received 6 *iugera* of land. By contrast, in the context of the Second Punic War, colonists established in Campania each received 2 *iugera* of land.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it is the process whereby the Romans integrated North Africa into their empire that provides the most interesting parallel to their approach to the Romanisation

¹⁴³ Op cit Pierce T. Jones in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1943 pp.195-204. See in particular pp.196-7. Whether the *erw* is conceptually derived from the *iugerum* requires separate consideration.

¹⁴⁴ Op cit Roselaar S.T. 2010 pp.318 & 320-1

of Britannia. Following the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C., it was planned to establish a colony to be known as Junonia. It was to be constituted of 6,000 Roman settlers, each settler being allocated 200 *iugera* or 1 *centuria* of land. By contrast, in establishing small holdings in North Africa, the commonest subdivision of the *centuria* was into 50 plots of 4 *iugera* each.¹⁴⁵

Roman practice in northern Africa may thus have constituted a model for the assimilation of Britannia. The strategy pursued in North Africa of making available an exceptionally large allocation of one *centuria* of land appears to have been replicated in the Lowland Manors of Britannia. This, it seems, was intended to entice Roman settlers into a new and distant province. In turn, the creation of crofts extending to 4 *iugerum* to be made available to native tenants within the Upland Manors replicated the area of land most commonly allocated to the small holdings established in North Africa.

It should also be observed that in the last century B.C., there had been a widespread trend within Roman agriculture to move away from slave labour and to adopt an alternative system based on small tenancies. Between 83 B.C. and 14 A.D. it is believed that Roman leaders established up to 370,000 of these small holdings. The founding in Britannia of Upland Manors having crofts which extended to 4 *iugerum* would have been entirely in keeping with that broader imperial strategy.¹⁴⁶

The organisation of the manors is also indicative of their Roman origins. They were agricultural units which would have employed two distinct types of labour. The Upland Manors would have employed tenant farmers whilst the Lowland Manors would have employed slave labour. The accounts presented in the Laws of Hywel, provide an indication of the processes of change to which the manors had been subjected since their founding in the early years of Roman supremacy.

Originally the Upland Manors would, at least in theory,¹⁴⁷ have been leased to the highest bidder on the basis of five-year leases, with the individual crofts then being sub-let to tenants. Subsequently, that system was subjected to two major historical processes of reform before emerging as the system revealed in the Laws of Hywel.

The major difficulty entailed in managing the Upland Manors by letting them on the basis of five-year leases was that the leaseholder had no security of tenure and at the end of the five year term could be deposed by a bidder who was prepared to pay a higher rent. From early in the fourth century, the instability which that created was ameliorated as lands were increasingly leased in perpetuity on the basis of leases referred to as *emphyteuticarii* or *perpetuarii*.¹⁴⁸ In the third quarter of the fourth century a further reform was introduced through a new tenure referred to as *ius privatum salvo canone*, on the basis of which the leaseholder secured ownership of the land provided that an annual rent was

¹⁴⁵ Op cit Dilke O.A.W. 1971 pp.94, 156 & 182

¹⁴⁶ Cary M. & Scullard H.H., *A history of Rome down to the reign of Constantine* (Macmillan, London 1986) 3rd ed. See pp.299-300. See also op cit Sinnigen W.G. & Boak A.E.R. 1977 pp.365-7

¹⁴⁷ Whether this was actually the case is entirely another matter

¹⁴⁸ Op cit Jones A.H.M., 1962. See vol.2 pp.788-9

paid.¹⁴⁹ The payment of an annual rent implied that the owner did not enjoy freehold, for he still owed a financial obligation to the Imperial authorities. That relationship was subsequently reproduced in the relationship between the manorial 'owners' and the medieval kings of Wales.

In the Llan Dâf Charters there are indications that some lands were not owned outright by those who occupied them, for certain gifts to the Church by figures other than the king were executed with the approval of the monarch, whilst others were carried out without explicit royal consent.¹⁵⁰ According to this analysis that distinction was broadly in keeping with the tenurial obligations which would have stemmed from the establishment of the Upland Manors in the Roman context. Thus the transfer of lands within Upland Manors would have required explicit royal approval whilst different expectations existed in relation to the transfer of lands within the Lowland Manors.

The status of the crofters is also of interest, for originally they would have been tenants, who at the end of their contractual obligations would have been at liberty to seek alternative tenancies. Their situation changed during the reign of Diocletian (284-305), for it then became illegal for tenants to depart from the domicile where they had been registered at the census. In the Welsh context, that domicile is likely to have been the vill within which the tenant held his tenancy.¹⁵¹ As a consequence of the Diocletian reforms, the free tenant was reduced to the bond status which he is subsequently revealed as being subjected to in the Laws of Hywel.

When the Upland Manors and the Lowland Manors of the Laws of Hywel are viewed in their appropriate historical context, there is little difficulty in seeing them as reflecting in slightly modified forms, systems of land ownership and management established by the Romans soon after their conquest of southern Britain. A crucial problem with Lloyd's work is that he overlooked that aspect and proceeded to identify fundamentally inappropriate criteria to assess whether or not Wales had been Romanised.

In regarding the dearth of Roman villas within Wales as supporting his view that Wales had never been assimilated into the Roman civil system,¹⁵² Lloyd overlooked the fact that the manner in which Wales was romanised was unlikely to result in the building of many grand Roman villas. Given that initially those who managed the Upland Manors of Wales would have done so through competitive bids for five-yearly contracts, that context did not offer the successful bidder any incentive to make a substantial investment in his own abode. To the contrary, he would have limited that investment to the minimum, for at the end of the five-year lease, should he fail to secure renewal, he had to be prepared to

¹⁴⁹ Op cit Jones A.H.M. 1968 pp. 156-7

¹⁵⁰ Davies W., 'Land and power in medieval Wales' in *Past and Present*, vol. 81 1978 pp.3-23. See in particular pp.10-11 Also Davies W., *The Llandaff Charters* (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth 1979) For lands which secured royal approval see in particular charters 74 (5); A : 127a (15); B : 127b (16); B : 175 (57); F : 176a (58); F : 183b (67); F : 185 (69); F etc. For those lands which do not refer to royal approval as having been secured see 73b (4); A : 76b (8); A : 168 (48); E : 169a (49); E, etc. For text of charters see Evans D. G., (ed.) *The text of the Book of Llan Dâf* (Privately printed, Oxford 1893).

¹⁵¹ Op cit Jones A.H.M. 1962. See vol.1 pp.68-9

¹⁵² Op cit Lloyd J. E 1 911 vol.1, pp.83

abandon his residence. That system would have continued until the early fourth century when there then occurred a long transition to more permanent tenurial relationships.

This background may cast some light on the development of Whitton villa near Barry, excavated by Michael Jarrett during the 1960s. The site began as a late Iron Age farm focused on three round houses enclosed by a ditch and bank. Early in the second century A.D., using traditional techniques, a new hut was built on the site but with the building based on a rectangular rather than a square plan. A generation later Roman ideas were embraced with stone foundations being established for a rectangular building. Subsequently further rectangular buildings were added, all being highly functional and lacking in ostentation.¹⁵³ Given the nature of the Roman restructuring of agriculture, that was the kind of developmental process which could be expected. For those having a lease on an Upland Manor the building of a grand Roman-style villa would not have been a practical possibility.

A broadly similar situation would have existed with regard to the Lowland Manors. Given that those holdings were essentially small-scale ventures which were likely to have been purchased by Roman entrepreneurs having limited capital, at least initially their residences would have been modest. They would not have been in a position to build grand villas. Lloyd thus applied inappropriate criteria to assess whether or not Wales had been Romanised. Not only had he misinterpreted the consequences of the Roman conquest of Wales, but furthermore he had misinterpreted the origins of the manorial institutions which he acknowledged were established. The latter aspect is of particular importance and requires further consideration.

Lloyd viewed the manorial system revealed in the Welsh Laws as having specifically Celtic origins. That interpretation was achieved by largely dismissing the *maenol* as a historically significant and authentic unit of organisation.

The Venedotian code makes the “maenol,” containing four trefs, the unit which paid the king the free render of £1. ... But all the particulars it gives under this head have an air of unreality ...¹⁵⁴

As with his earlier treatment of Lilly Chitty’s work¹⁵⁵ and the discovery of the Caerwent inscription,¹⁵⁶ Lloyd provided no adequate explanation to justify his approach.¹⁵⁷ Despite

¹⁵³ Manning W.H. ‘Roman Wales: past, present and future’ in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 2015 vol. 164 pp.1-24. See pp.17-9. See also Jarrett M.G. & Wrathmell S., *Whitton. An Iron Age and Roman farmstead in South Glamorgan* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1981) See in particular pp.250-3.

¹⁵⁴ Op cit Lloyd J. E 1 911 vol. 1, fnt.78 pp.297-8

¹⁵⁵ Op cit Williams E.W. in the *National Library of Wales Journal* vol. 36 no.2 2015 pp. 17-24

¹⁵⁶ Op cit Williams E.W. in the *National Library of Wales Journal* vol. 36 no.1 2014 pp. 1-44 See in particular pp. 38-9

¹⁵⁷ Lloyd’s analysis in some ways did mirror the approach to the Anglo-Saxon hide adopted by F.W. Maitland. In an essay on the hide published in 1897, he argued:

As regards land measurement, we may be fairly certain that in the days before the Norman Conquest there was little real, though much nominal uniformity.

that, his outlook permitted him to disregard the detailed structure of the Upland Manor outlined in Llyfr Iorwerth. It also enabled him to focus on the *tref* rather than the *maenol* as one of the basic institutions of early Welsh civil society.

He viewed both the bond vills as well as the settlements which he identified as free vills as economic units whose structure reflected the social processes through which Welsh society had passed.¹⁵⁸ For Lloyd, the bond vill constituted the key communal unit within Welsh society.

... (T)he village community is to be found on Welsh soil, though only among the unfree cultivators. It is natural to regard this class, holding a servile position and having few privileges, as the descendants of a conquered race, and the system of tenure under which they worked is obviously ancient, telling of the long settlement on the land of the cultivating community. In view of what has been said in the early chapters of this history, one may therefore without undue boldness recognise in these aillts and taeogs the remnant of the Iberian people, the oldest tillers of the soil in Wales, reduced to servitude by wave after wave of Celtic conquest, by the might of the ancestors of the free tribesmen, whose institutions are now to be examined.¹⁵⁹

That analysis was grounded in Lloyd's pre-1939 Aryan racist outlook. He regarded the bond population of the Lowland Manors as Iberians who had been subjected to servitude by their Celtic conquerors, be they Goidelic or Brythonic. In turn he saw the crofters of the Upland Manors as representing the agricultural system of the conquering Celtic tribes.

Besides the true tref, or village community of servile tenants, there was another tref, termed the free tref, which seems to have acquired its name through being, like the other, a definite area within which there was joint responsibility for the render due to the king. ... But the free tref was not a hamlet or body of villagers; there is clear evidence that the households of the better class in Wales were not grouped together in villages, but were scattered here and there over the face of the country ... The free tref was constituted by marking off a number of these scattered holdings and associating them in responsibility for the payment of a fixed portion of the free render of the commote. Such a tref might well be occupied by a body of kinsmen, since kinfolk would naturally settle together; it would be separated from other trefs by well-marked barriers. But it would not be, like the taeogdref, a society of joint tillers of the soil, with interests closely intertwined, but merely a group of private owners, each pursuing his own way and holding his land separately.¹⁶⁰

Maitland F.W. *Domesday Book and beyond* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1897) See 'The hide' pp.416-596 and in particular p.428. Both Lloyd and Maitland overlooked the achievements of the Roman land surveyors.

¹⁵⁸ Op cit Lloyd J. E 1 911 vol. 1. p.283 & 297

¹⁵⁹ Ibid p.297

¹⁶⁰ Ibid pp.297-8

Having dismissed the *maenor* as a unit worthy of serious analysis, Lloyd had a free hand in interpreting the vills. In so doing, he established an entirely invalid dichotomy between a conquering Celtic elite who inhabited what he referred to as the free *tref*, as opposed to the Iberian underclass which inhabited the vills of the Lowland Manors.

This deeply flawed analysis was based on a fundamental misconception which emanated from his failure to distinguish between the manorial systems which had originated in the Roman context, as compared to the later *gwely* system of free men which had emerged in the late medieval period.

Whereas the Roman conquest had resulted in the establishment of both Upland Manors and Lowland Manors, in the context which emerged after the Norman penetration of Wales, a third agriculture system known as the *gwely* system had emerged. That could be interpreted as an individualistic system.

Attracted by the individualism of the *gwely* system, it is reasonably clear that Lloyd quite mistakenly interpreted the Upland Manors - established by the Romans - from the perspective of the *gwely* system which had emerged around 750 years after the end of formal Roman rule in Britannia. For Lloyd, one redeeming aspect was that it was only from the early 1940s, through the pioneering work of T. Jones Pierce that the founding of the *gwely* system was located in the post 1150 context.¹⁶¹

Bereft of Jones Pierce's insight, Lloyd analysis of the Upland Manors was hopelessly flawed. In essence he viewed the freemen of the late medieval *gwely* system, his 'households of the better class in Wales', as synonymous with the crofters of the Upland Manors, and as being Celtic conquerors who had oppressed the Iberian servile population of the Lowland Manors. According to this analysis, both the populations of the Upland and the Lowland Manors were subject to quite different oppression originally imposed upon them by their Roman conquerors.

Having misinterpreted the nature of the Upland and Lowland Manors, it appears that Lloyd also failed to correctly identify the origins of the Welsh concept used to identify those manors. He quite validly viewed the concept *maenol* as used in Gwynedd or the *maenor* of the other regions of Wales, as names derived from the Welsh concept *maen* meaning stone. He interpreted the laws as implying that the *maenol* was composed of five units, namely the *maenol* itself plus the four *trefi* referred to in the law texts, with the name *maenol* providing a means of differentiating between the stone-girt residence of the chief as compared to the more humble residence of the leading figures within each *tref*.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Smith J.B. (ed.) *Medieval Welsh Society, selected essays by T.Jones Pierce* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1972) See in particular 'The Gafael in Bangor Manuscript 1939' pp.195-228' (originally published in 1942 ; 'Medieval settlement in Anglesey' pp.251-87 (originally published in 1951) & 'Medieval Cardiganshire – a study in social origins' pp.309-27 (originally published in 1959) . See also Davies J. *Hanes Cymru* (Penguin Books, London 1992) p.89

¹⁶² Op cit Lloyd J.E. 1 911 vol. 1, ftnt. 140 p.313. See in particular pp.103 & 109

According to this analysis, there is a need to locate the interpretation within a Roman framework wherein boundaries of the *maenol* and the *trefi* were to a significant degree demarcated by boundary stones. A *maenol* or *maenor* would thus be an agricultural unit which had been surveyed by surveyors from the Roman army, with carefully located stones playing a role in locating boundaries. Contrary to Lloyd's interpretation, the manors of the Welsh Laws were not Celtic institutions but rather Roman institutions. As such there is every reason to believe that the manorial systems described in the Laws of Hywel were not specific to Wales but rather reflected agricultural systems established by the Romans throughout the greater part of the province of Britannia.¹⁶³ The source of the legal material which relates to the manors of the Laws of Hywel also needs to be considered.

Earlier, with regard to the development of the Roman state, it was noted that imperial assets which had been controlled by the *procurator patrimonii*, had eventually been transferred to the control of a major department of state known as the *res privata*. That department would have played a particularly important role within western Britannia, for it would have controlled the lands of the *ager publicus*, thus including the Upland Manors. In 318 that department was also granted the right to convene its own courts which had jurisdiction over its tenants on imperial lands, both *conductores* and *coloni*. It also had its own financial representative within Britannia in the form of the *rationalis rei privatae per Britannias*.¹⁶⁴

However we view the ending of formal links between Britannia and the Western Roman Empire, the *res privata* was so important to the functioning of Britannia and particularly its mountainous western regions, that some documentary evidence of its former role may have survived. The possibility should thus be noted that some aspects of the Laws of Hywel and particularly those aspects relating to the Law of the Land may have originated within the *res privata*. If so, they should be seen as offering a valid description of aspects of the manorial system established by the Romans in Wales. Whether that manorial system was confined to Wales is a further important issue.

The marked parallels between the Welsh manorial systems and those established within much of England are an aspect which has been recognised by a number of authors. Whilst it is not the intention here to trace the development of this theme,¹⁶⁵ a number of aspects will be considered.

¹⁶³ In 1972, Thomas Charles-Edwards rejected any suggestion that the Anglo-Saxon hide was of Roman origin, but advanced an hypothesis that it was of Germanic and Celtic origin, with the Irish aspect being of particular importance to his analysis. He recognised that his hypothesis could never be proved. See T.M.Charles-Edwards, 'Kinship, status and the origins of the hide' in *Past and Present*, no 56, 1972 pp. 3-33. See in particular pp.3-5

¹⁶⁴ Op cit Frere S. 1994. See pp.200-1 & op cit Jones A.H.M., 1962. See vol.1 p.486

¹⁶⁵ For an useful summary see Jones G.R.J. 'Multiple estates and early settlement' in Sawyer P.H. (ed.) *Medieval settlement – continuity and change* (Arnold, London 1976) pp.15-40. See in particular pp.24-6

Were the manors of the Laws of Hywel specific to Wales?

In 1890, in a study of Northumbrian practices, F.W.Maitland recognised the existence of parallels between the Welsh and the English context.¹⁶⁶ Subsequently in 1926, in a further article focused on Northumbria, the foundations laid by Maitland were elaborated by J. E. A. Jolliffe. He concluded that

... Northumbria shows so many parallels to Celtic custom that one is forced to suppose historical continuity. The whole system of the food-rents recalls the Welsh *gwestva*, and the harbouring of horse and hound, the puture of foresters and serjeants, the repair of the prince's *mansio*, are as characteristic of Wales as of West Derby or Copeland ... But apart from this general agreement, there are identities of usage and terminology in the pasture-dues which are almost conclusive.¹⁶⁷

Subsequently in 1933, in his *Pre-Feudal England*,¹⁶⁸ Jolliffe focused on the *lathes* of Kent and the structure of its manorial system. Early in his study he came to a remarkable conclusion.

Purely Teutonic as Kentish civilization seems to be, the manors of Kent are more like those of Wales than of Oxford and Berkshire, but the principle of their difference is hard to put into a phrase. Perhaps we may borrow the terms of the constitutional historian, and say that the Midland manor is unitary and that of the south-east federative.¹⁶⁹

Jolliffe accordingly harnessed the concept of federative manor to describe the structure of that manorial system. It should be observed that the contributions of Maitland and Jolliffe were available to Lloyd prior to the publication of his much amended third edition of *A History of Wales*.¹⁷⁰ If Lloyd was aware of those works in 1939, they do not appear to have had any impact on his depiction of Welsh history.

In a later era, and in contrast to Lloyd's dismissive approach to the manorial system of the Book of Iorwerth, G.R.J. Jones accepted the historical authenticity of the Upland Manor and saw parallels between it and the estates which Jolliffe had described in Kent. Nevertheless, rather than adopting Jolliffe's terminology, Jones identified both the Welsh

¹⁶⁶ See Maitland F.W. 'Northumbrian tenures', in the *English Historical Review*, vol.5 1890 pp.625-32. That same year Frederic Seebohm's *The English village community* (Longmans, Green, and Co, London 1890) was also published. In that volume Seebohm did scrutinise some evidence from Wales for parallels within the Anglo-Saxon context. See chapter VI pp.181-213. Vinogradoff built on the work of Seebohm, devoting the first two chapters of his study of the development of the manorial system of England to an analysis of its Celtic and Roman antecedents. See Vinogradoff P., *The growth of the manor* (Macmillan, London 1905) pp.3-114.

¹⁶⁷ Jolliffe J.E.A. 'Northumbrian institutions' in the *English Historical Review*, vol.41 1926 pp1-42. See in particular pp.40 & 41

¹⁶⁸ Jolliffe J.E.A. *Pre-Feudal England* (Oxford University Press, London 1933)

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid* p.3

¹⁷⁰ See op cit Lloyd J.E. 3rd ed. 1939

and English estates in question as federative manors, and through a study of the Malling estate in Sussex, sought to establish parallels between them.¹⁷¹

Whilst the work of the above authors did break new ground, they did not succeed in divorcing themselves sufficiently from the racially based analysis of their predecessors. Thus, the work of Jolliffe was heavily influenced by the Oxford school of Germanist historians, whilst that of G.R.J. Jones betrayed the influence of the Brythonic school of historians founded by Lloyd.¹⁷² Rather than focusing on a detailed critique of the work of both authors, the aim of the penultimate section of the article will be to focus on the core issue, namely the identification of aspects which betray the common origins of both the Welsh and English agricultural systems in the manors established by the Romans. Initially, the concepts employed to refer to those units will be considered, proceeding from the Welsh concept *tref*.

In the modern context, the word *tref* is translated into English as ‘town’, but historically it bore a quite different meaning. In the pre-Roman context the concept probably referred to a ‘house’ or ‘dwelling place’, but as a consequence of the Roman restructuring of agriculture it seems that the word became synonymous with the home of a noble family managing one of the units of which the Upland Manor was constituted. In due course that economic restructuring gave the concept a further meaning, for the noble house became associated with the agricultural workforce which worked the land and resided on it. That new collective meaning in turn acquired primacy, but the word also to some extent retained its earlier singular sense of a ‘house’ down to the modern era.¹⁷³ The importance of that earlier meaning is revealed when the concepts used in other languages to refer to the *tref* are considered.

In documents written in Latin, the Welsh language *tref* or *trefi* are referred to as *villa* or *villae*. In the Welsh and Latin versions of the Laws of Hywel these concepts are regarded as equivalents.¹⁷⁴ The focus in that context is on the *tref* as the residence of a noble family. Subsequently, in the early eighth century, when the Anglo-Saxon author Bede found it necessary to refer to the *tref*, he referred to it in Latin as *familiarum mensura* ‘portion of families’. Referring to an earlier context in which King Edwin had exercised overlordship over Gwynedd, he described the Island of Anglesey as having 960 *familiarum mensura*.¹⁷⁵ From distant Northumbria it appears that Bede had failed to distinguish between Anglesey and Gwynedd. Whilst the possibility that Anglesey had 960 *trefi* can be dismissed, a claim that Gwynedd had that number of *trefi* would be

¹⁷¹ Jones G.R.J. ‘Multiple estates and early settlement’ in Sawyer P.H. (ed.) *Medieval settlement – continuity and change* (Arnold, London 1976) pp.15-40. See in particular p.15 & pp.26-35

¹⁷² Ibid. See in particular p.18

¹⁷³ Lloyd was aware of the historical evolution of the concept and discussed the matter in the first volume of his *A History of Wales*. See Op cit Lloyd J.E. 1 911 vol. 1, p.295 & *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd 1999-2002) pp. 3572-3 *tref*

¹⁷⁴ Emanuel H.D. (ed.) *The Latin texts of the Welsh Laws* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1967) See ‘General index with a selective glossary’ pp.546-65 and specifically p.563 **vill, a (tref, villa)**

¹⁷⁵ Colgrave B. & Mynors R.A.B. (eds.) *Bede’s ecclesiastical history of the English people* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1969) See bk.2 ch.9 p.162. See also McLure J. & Collins R., (eds) *Bede. The ecclesiastical history of the English people* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999) See ‘Explanatory notes’ p. 379.

entirely plausible. What is of broader significance is that the concept used by Bede was entirely in keeping with the use of the Latin *villa* and the Welsh *tref*. Indeed, *familiarum mensura* can be viewed as an attempted translation of *tref*.

Bede was writing in a context in which the concept of the *hide* was yet to emerge. It did not feature in Anglo-Saxon documents until the mid-ninth century, and in Latin documents until after 1070, that is after the Norman conquest of England. Prior to that departure, it was not uncommon for a document to specify the number of agricultural units but to omit reference to the type of agricultural unit being referred to.¹⁷⁶ That, for instance, is the case with the poem *Beowulf*, where reference is made to the king granting Beowulf *seofan þūsendo*,¹⁷⁷ ‘seven thousand’ but with no reference being made to the units of land involved. Seamus Heaney in his translation of the poem assumed that the seven thousand referred to *hides*.¹⁷⁸ The practice of omitting the name of the unit of land under consideration suggests that the nature of that unit was sufficiently obvious that it did not need to be specified. When the word *hide* did emerge in the Anglo-Saxon language, in charters the word *hiwisc* meaning ‘household’ was used as its equivalent. Moreover, Bosworth and Toller were of the view that *hide* originally referred to ‘as much land as will support one family’,¹⁷⁹ an aspect which is entirely consistent with the original meaning of the Welsh concept *tref*. That background is of relevance to consideration of *The Tribal Hidage*.¹⁸⁰

It is believed by some scholars that the document was composed within the kingdom of Northumbria by Bishop Paulinus, a leading cleric in the Church of Canterbury. He served at the court of Northumbria from 625 to the death of King Edwin in 633, a period during which Edwin secured the rapid expansion of his territorial sway. The document consists of two parts. The first lists the kingdoms which were subordinate to Northumbria before the year 626; the second lists those kingdoms added to the overlordship of Northumbria, seemingly after Edwin’s victory over Wessex in 626. The earliest surviving copy of the document is dated to the middle of the eleventh century.¹⁸¹

The scope of the document in itself suggests that the information it contained was drawn from records belonging to the Roman Imperial era, for it appears to note the number of agricultural units within most of the kingdoms of post-Roman Britannia to the south of the Humber estuary. The number of *hides* within more than 30 Germanic kingdoms as well as in the Romano-British west of Britannia are listed. The only major territories

¹⁷⁶ Bosworth J. & Toller T.N. (eds.) *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1882) See p.535 **híd, e**. Latham R.E. *Revised Medieval Latin word-list* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004) p.226

¹⁷⁷ Wrenn C.L. (ed.) *Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment* (Harrap, London 1958) See line 2195 p.152.

¹⁷⁸ Heaney S., *Beowulf* (Faber, London 1999) See p.70

¹⁷⁹ Op cit Bosworth J. & Toller T.N. (eds.) 1882 p. 535 **híd, e**. See also Clark Hall J.R., *A concise Anglo-Saxon dictionary* (University of Toronto Press, London 2008) See p.181 **híd & p. hīwan**

¹⁸⁰ Dumville D., ‘The Tribal Hidage: an introduction to its texts and their history’ in Bassett S. (ed.), *The origins of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms* (Leicester University Press, London 1989) pp. 225-30

¹⁸¹ See ibid p.225 & Higham N.J., *The Kingdom of Northumbria AD 350-100* (Alan Sutton, Stroud 1993)

excluded are Northumbria itself together with the northern kingdoms over which it exercised overlordship.¹⁸²

The manner in which its author presented the taxable value of the lands of those regions is of particular interest. There is no indication that the agricultural systems of the Romano-British western regions were viewed as being in any way distinctive as compared to those which existed in the Anglo Saxon areas to the east. The surviving document thus referred to a territory known as *Pesterna* (*Westerna*) as having a taxable value of 7,000 *hides*.¹⁸³ The manner in which that *Westerna* related to the emerging kingdom of Mercia is difficult to assess, but it may have encompassed all the kingdoms of latter day Wales as well as the surviving Romano-British territories to the east.¹⁸⁴

The author of *The Tribal Hidage* appears to have regarded the whole of post-Roman Britannia as having been characterised by common agricultural systems from which similar dues could be raised. He saw no need to distinguish between Romano-British agricultural systems to the west as compared to Anglo-Saxon agricultural systems to the east. That conclusion is supported by further documentary evidence, including the laws of King Ine of Wessex.¹⁸⁵

Ine was king of Wessex from 688 to 726, but the survival of a copy of his laws was due solely to the fact that King Alfred appended those laws as a supplement to his own legislation.¹⁸⁶ The laws of Ine in so far as they relate to the agricultural system of early Wessex, appear to be largely consistent with the agricultural systems revealed in the Laws of Hywel.

They indicate that within late 7th century Wessex, the manorial system originally established by the Romans had been subjected to a considerable fragmentation of holdings. Thus in setting out the *wergild* of various categories of landowners, it was found necessary to cater for a diversity of ownership ranging from half a *hide* to five *hides*.¹⁸⁷ Accordingly, the laws catered for a context in which landowners could have

¹⁸² Ray and Bapty assert that 'there are in fact no grounds to believe that the 'Tribal Hidage' listing included any non-English peoples.' This view is misconceived as Elmet was included in the list and was clearly a Romano-British territory. According to this analysis *Westerna* was also a Romano-British territory. See Ray K. & Bapty I., *Offa's Dyke. Landscape and hegemony in eighth-century Britain* (Oxbow Books, Oxford 2016) See pp.264-5

¹⁸³ Op. cit. Dumville D., in Bassett S. (ed.) 1989 pp. 225-30. See in particular p.227. Whilst the number of hides attributed to the territory referred to as *Westerna* seems credible, that attributed to some of the other territories are problematic. In order to achieve the total of 244,100 hides, it is possible that the list entailed a massive double counting of hides, this being accomplished by attributing to leading Anglo-Saxon kingdoms the hidage achieved when they were at the pinnacle of their power but failing to correct that figure in the context of their subsequent decline. The difficulties of interpreting the document are underlined when it is recognised that there was probably a gap of over 400 years between the context in which *The Tribal Hidage* was originally composed and the date of the surviving document.

¹⁸⁴ For an useful discussion of the emergence of Mercia see op. cit. Ray K. & Bapty I. 2016 pp.99-119

¹⁸⁵ Whitelock D. (ed.), *English Historical Documents c.500-1042* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London 1955) See pp.364-372.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid p.372

¹⁸⁷ Ibid p.367 clauses 24.2 & 32

been in possession of estates ranging in size from half a *hide* to five *hides*, or if the alternative Welsh concepts were employed, ranging from half a *tref* to five *trefi*. The significance of an estate in Wessex extending to five *hides* needs to be highlighted, for in the terminology of the Book of Iorwerth, it would have constituted a *Maenol Gwrthdir*, that is an Upland Manor composed of the manorial headquarters and four subordinate *trefi*. The relevant estate in Anglo-Saxon Wessex would thus have had the same structure as that in Romano-British Gwynedd.

This interpretation is further supported by the nature of the taxation system within Ine's kingdom. One of the taxes referred to in his laws is the *gafolgelda*.¹⁸⁸ Understanding that concept has caused students of Anglo-Saxon laws some difficulty, yet when viewed from the perspective of the Laws of Hywel and the agricultural system established by the Romans, it is possible to cast a light on the rationale of both the laws of Ine and the evolution of the Laws of Hywel.

It appears that *gafol* is a corruption of the Welsh concept *gafael*. On the basis of the laws of Ine it is reasonably clear that the *gafael* in that instance was the 4 *erw* (4 *iugerum*?) holding described in the Book of Iorwerth. *Gafolgelda* thus referred to a tenant or bondman who paid rent on his land holding or *gafael*. That would be entirely consistent with the context that existed when those Upland Manors were established deep in the Roman era. However, in the 13th century Venedotian Code the *gafael* is defined as a unit containing 16 crofts or one quarter of the crofts within a *tref*.¹⁸⁹ That Venedotian concept should be regarded as a late innovation which does not contradict the interpretation of that same unit within the laws of Ine, presented above.

What seems clear from the above is that the Upland Manor described in the Book of Iorwerth was present in late 7th century and early 8th century Wessex, with at least one of the Welsh terms used to describe its component parts, that is the *gafael*, being sufficiently current to be adopted in a corrupted form into the legislative framework of King Ine.¹⁹⁰ It is also evident that the above concept survived within the legislative framework of other kingdoms within southern Britannia.

In his study of the Jutes of Kent and the south-east of Britannia, Jolliffe referred repeatedly to the *gafol* not only as a rent but also as a labour due.¹⁹¹ In relation to one of the great manors of the area he provided the following description.

At Minster in Thanet, a great manor with a substantial demesne, some of the sulungs [i.e. hides] pay their gafol in money, some in corn, but some by the

¹⁸⁸ Op cit Whitelock D. (ed.) 1955, p.365 clause 6.3 & footnotes 1 and 2

¹⁸⁹ Op cit William A. R. (ed.) 1960 par 90 p.60

¹⁹⁰ Drawing on Thorpe's edition of the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, Seebohm believed that the *gwestfa* of the Welsh laws was also present in Ine's Wessex, but under another name. See Thorpe B., (ed.) *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (H.M.S.O. London 1840) p.471 no. LXX, and op cit Seebohm F., 1890 p.212

¹⁹¹ Op cit Jolliffe J.E.A. 1933. See eg. pp. 9, 12, 32, 33, 34.

service of *gafolerth*, the ploughing, sowing, reaping, and carrying of 2 acres of St Austin's land ...¹⁹²

The rent payable on the *gafael* could thus be commuted to a labour due and in the above instance that commuted due was conceptualised as *gafolerth*. That seems to be a corruption of a Welsh concept, *gafael-werth*, 'the value of the *gafael*'.¹⁹³

Jolliffe's work also reveals other instances in which the structure of manors established by the Romans had survived, with the Welsh language concepts used to describe them being appropriated into the Anglo-Saxon language in a corrupted form. He thus refers to the virgates of the village of Alciston which had been the subject of a survey. That had revealed that the land was divided into 3 common fields

... equally divided in strips between the three great fields or *leynes* into which the village of Alciston falls ...¹⁹⁴

The pattern of three great fields divided into strips described above, conforms to the expected pattern of the Lowland Manor of the *Book of Cyfnerth*.¹⁹⁵ In Welsh, those fields would have been known as *rhandiroedd* (sharelands), but in the context of Anglo-Saxon Kent, that concept had seemingly been lost with another Welsh concept, *lleiniau* (ploughing strips) being harnessed in the corrupted form, *leynes*, to become the new Anglo-Saxon name for the *rhandiroedd* of the common fields of Alciston.

Jolliffe's analysis also provides an interesting instance where Romano-British agricultural practice appears to have survived into late medieval Kent. That survival took the form of the joint ploughing contract. He stated that

... the nomenclature of the hidation suggests a primitive association between the hamlet and the joint plough. The unit is the sulung [hide] and its quarter is the yoke, the jugum of two oxen. At least one ninth-century reference shows sulung and eight-ox plough going together, and the identity was often real at the end of the thirteenth century, though the great plough had sometimes given way to a lighter four-horse team.¹⁹⁶

In practice, it appears that Jolliffe was describing the system of joint ploughing described in the Laws of Hywel in relation to the cultivation of the Upland Manors referred to earlier. In origin, that system entailed a contract between 12 tenants to secure the cultivation of 12 *erwau* (12 *iugerum*?) of land with each participant fulfilling a role in the

¹⁹² Ibid p.35

¹⁹³ The Anglo-Saxon language contained a number of adjectives which were appended to *gafol* to produce concepts such as *gafol-heord*, that is the *gafol* flock or herd and *gafol-wydu*, that is *gafol wood*. See op cit Bosworth J. & Toller T.N. (eds.) 1882 pp.358-9

¹⁹⁴ Op cit Jolliffe J.E.A. 1933 p.11

¹⁹⁵ Op cit Wade-Evans A.W., (ed & trns) 1909 See p.205 See V26 a6 & V26 a8.

¹⁹⁶ Op cit Jolliffe J.E.A. 1933 p.20

process of cultivation.¹⁹⁷ Not being aware of that background, Jolliffe expressed his perplexity at the complexity of that system.

The relation of the joint plough to a system of partible tenure ... is a little difficult to visualise. If the tenements were really parcelled among as many tenants as the rentals say they were, not only would the ploughing be extraordinarily complicated, but the sharing of the team and its upkeep would be impossible. Yet the records are clear that the plough was a joint-stock enterprise. The fact is, I think, that we must abandon any attempt to interpret the evidence in the way in which it was convenient for the officials of the estates to set it down, and fall back on the belief that the realities of peasant life were far more primitive than the system of manorial accounts by which it was exploited or the common law by which it was explained...¹⁹⁸

Of course, the real source of the difficulty lay in the racial assumptions which constituted the basis for the interpretation of the evidence. The assumptions of the Germanist school of English historians and the Brythonic school of Welsh historians both denied their practitioners a means of comprehending the material. Not only did their racial assumptions exclude the possibility that the Welsh and the Anglo-Saxon agricultural systems had common origins in Roman agriculture, but it also excluded from consideration the possibility that the Welsh language had survived in south-eastern Britannia well into the Anglo-Saxon era. The evidence to support such a view extends beyond that presented above.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Op cit Jones Pierce T. in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* vol. 97 1943 pp. 195-204. See p. 199. See also op cit Jenkins D. (ed.) 1990 pp.198-202. There is also evidence that the system operated in the areas of northern Britannia, though Stenton mistakenly attributed it to Scandinavian origins. See Stenton F.M., *Anglo-Saxon England* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1955) pp.506-7 & Stevenson W.H. 'Yorkshire surveys and other eleventh-century documents in the Yorkshire Gospels' in the *English Historical Review* vol. 27 1912 pp. 1-25. With regard to the legal provision for joint-ploughing, Thomas Charles-Edwards saw parallels between the Laws of Hywel and early Irish law. Were that the case, it must be stressed that such a legal provision would have originated in the highly developed agriculture of Roman Britannia, rather than in Ireland. See op cit Charles-Edwards T.M. 2013 p.271

¹⁹⁸ Op cit Jolliffe J.E.A. 1933 p.21

¹⁹⁹ Jolliffe's study of *Pre-Feudal England* provides a number of examples. The manner in which an estate in Kent was identified is of particular interest.

... We first meet it in a charter of Ethelbert II of Kent, *villa regalis quae nominatur Wyth*, an important place in the independent kingdom. It is a *cyninges tun*, in the especial peace of the king, a centre of administration and the seat of a king's reeve.... In Domesday we find its giving its name to one of the six lathes, Wiuuart Lest, the lathe of the Wywara or men of Wye, an area of some 100 square miles ... With the Norman Conquest its decline begins. On the foundation of Battle the Conqueror granted it to the Abbot shorn of much of its ancient jurisdiction. The lathe over which it once presided was reconstructed, and dropped the name of Wye for that of Sherwinhope, while the ancient name, with the *villa regalis*, passed to the endowment of the memorial Abbey, as the *manerium de Wi* with diminished powers.

The question of whether the names Wyth, Wye and Wi were Welsh or ultimately of Welsh derivation requires further investigation. See *ibid* p.4. It is worthy of note that Paul Vinogradoff was of the view that Britannia remained strongly Celtic in speech through to the fifth and sixth centuries. See op cit Vinogradoff P. 1905 pp.39-42

In particular the manner in which the estates of Kent were known as lathes points to a possible derivation from the Welsh *llathen*, that being a strip of ploughland.²⁰⁰ Jolliffe also discusses a common field which was referred to as *dolae*. In modern Welsh *dolau* means ‘meadows’.²⁰¹

The broader issue is the extent to which the structure of both the Upland and the Lowland Manors of the Laws of Hywel were present throughout Anglo-Saxon eastern Britannia. Reference has already been made to their presence in Wessex and Kent. The view of F.M. Stenton in his *Anglo-Saxon England* is notable.

In the popular mind of the eleventh century the typical thegn was a man with a specific duty in the king’s household, who possessed a church and a kitchen, a bell-house, a fortified dwelling place, and an estate assessed at five hides of land.²⁰²

Stenton’s analysis placed the manor of five hides at the very heart of Anglo-Saxon society, and thus by implication located the Upland Manor of the Laws of Hywel as a key phenomenon within eastern Britannia. Keith Bailey in an article *The Hidation of Buckinghamshire* provided evidence in support of that view. On the basis of an analysis of the hundreds of Domesday Buckinghamshire he concluded that of the 216 estates listed, 54% were five hide units with a further 23.1% being within 10% of that five hide figure.²⁰³

With regard to the structure of the manors, there thus exists a broad range of evidence which supports the view that the agricultural systems of the Romano-British west and the Anglo-Saxon east were both of Roman origin. That evidence extends to the area of arable land allocated to individual manors.

Earlier, evidence was presented that the agricultural systems established within Britannia were so structured as to allow Imperial administrators to regard all units as having the same taxable value: the Lowland Manors having 200 *iugera* or 1 *centuria* of good arable land and employing 42 slaves, could be regarded as the equivalent of the Upland Tref having 256 *iugera* of poorer quality land, cultivated through the labour of 64 tenants, with the headquarters of the Upland Manor constituting a hybrid version of both. Such diversity as existed within the system was thus not sufficient to undermine the ability of the Roman bureaucracy of Britannia to regard all as being uniform in terms of their taxable capacity.

That conclusion was supported by the work of Wendy Davies, who, on the basis of her study of the Llan Dâf Charters, was of the view that the majority of Lowland Manors

²⁰⁰ Op cit Pierce T. Jones in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1943 pp.195-204. See in particular pp.196-7.

²⁰¹ Op cit Jolliffe J.E.A. 1933 p.13 & 43

²⁰² Op cit Stenton F.M. 1955 p.480

²⁰³ Bailey K., ‘The hidation of Buckinghamshire’, in the *Records of Buckinghamshire*, vol. 32, 1990 pp.1-34. See in particular pp.5-7

given to that church extended to a standard area of around 125 acres.²⁰⁴ On the basis of the Roman system of measurement, that was equivalent to one *centuria*. That analysis can now be extended to the Anglo-Saxon hide.

In 1897 F.W.Maitland's lengthy essay on *The Hide* was published.²⁰⁵ In that work he set out his view that the hide constituted an area of arable land extending to 120 acres,²⁰⁶ an area roughly equivalent to the Roman *centuria*. His analysis supports the view set out above that the hide was a concept which evolved in the Anglo-Saxon language to conceptualise what had previously been referred to in Welsh as the *tref* and in Latin as the *vill*, amongst other concepts.

It has to be acknowledged however, that in recent years the validity of Maitland's analysis, and indeed that of a number of other authors regarding the area of the hide has been challenged. Thus Keith Bailey in his article on *The hidation of Buckinghamshire* stated:

It is a commonplace that the hide in 1086 had a very variable extent on the ground. The old concept that it contained a long hundred (120 acres) of land cannot be sustained in practice. Buckinghamshire has 476,000 acres and 2123 hides, giving an average of 224 acres/hide (cf. Middlesex 204 ac/hide) and the more the data are disaggregated, the wider the variations from the theoretical norm become. ... (T)he hide originated as a measure of the total tax capacity of a tract of countryside, including its woodland, pasture and other appurtenances as well as the all-important arable land ...²⁰⁷

Yet Bailey's critique cannot readily be accepted, for his view that the hide contained woodland and pasture is without foundation. Maitland's argument set out over 100 years earlier, must be regarded as compelling.

In very old times when men thought of land as the subject-matter of grants and taxes they spoke only of arable land... Hence in our law Latin the word *terra* means arable land. To claim *unam acram terrae* when you mean an acre of meadow (*prati*) would have been a fatal error.²⁰⁸

Maitland's view is supported by the Laws of Hywel, for the basis on which both the Upland Manor and the Lowland Manors were defined was on the basis of their arable land, with woodland and rough pasture being excluded from consideration. It is unfortunate that Maitland did not delve further into those 'very old times' for his analysis began late, with the work of Bede.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ Op cit Davies W. 1978 p.39-40

²⁰⁵ Op cit Maitland F.W. 1897. See pp.416-596

²⁰⁶ Ibid. See in particular pp.416, 451, 501, 562-3 & 594

²⁰⁷ Op cit Bailey K. in the *Records of Buckinghamshire*, vol. 32, 1990 pp.1-34. See in particular p.5

²⁰⁸ Op cit Maitland F.W. 1897 See p.450 & footnote 1

²⁰⁹ Ibid. See p.417

On the basis of the above analysis, it appears that the manors of medieval Wales were not specific to the land west of Offa's Dyke but reflected a process of agricultural restructuring implemented by the Romans throughout the province of Britannia. This highlights the existence of a major flaw at the very heart of J.E. Lloyd's work. It indicates that the Roman conquest of Wales did not lead to a permanently militarised Wales as argued by Lloyd, but rather led to the thorough integration of Wales into a Britannia wide Roman civil system. In the concluding section to this article the process by which the tribes of western Britannia were integrated into the Roman civil system will be considered.

The integration of Wales into the Roman civil system

Lloyd's concept of a militarised Wales secured its most coherent expression in 1954 through the work of V.E. Nash-Williams.

The organization of the Welsh frontier, begun ... immediately after the completion of the military conquest of the country in 74-78, took upwards of thirty years to complete. ... It included the making of over 700 miles of strategic roads, the laying-out of two legionary fortresses with their adjuncts, and the construction of some twenty-four auxiliary forts, besides various lesser posts. The final decades of the 1st century were thus a period of intensive building activity in Wales, which reached its climax between 100 and 110, when most (though not all) of the various stations, hitherto relatively lightly equipped with earth-and-timber defences and buildings, were wholly or partly reconstructed in stone. ...²¹⁰

In the second century A.D., as the situation was stabilised, Nash-Williams regarded the Roman military presence as having been reduced, but saw the instability of the third century as reversing that process. Archaeology no longer accepts the validity of the picture presented by Lloyd and Nash-Williams. By now it is apparent that the account of the conquest presented by Lloyd and his followers overlooked a development which is of crucial importance to understanding Roman Britannia. They failed to recognise the major reorganisation of agriculture effected by the Romans.

Whilst it can be accepted that the Roman advance through southern Britain was followed by a process of building fortifications and roads, it is also clear that in the wake of the conquest there followed the Roman appropriation of the land of conquered tribes and the subsequent re-structuring of agriculture, with the tribal areas ultimately being transformed into *civitates*. The Roman reorganisation of agriculture involved the establishment of Upland and Lowland Manors throughout most of the province, with the former being retained within the ownership of the state whilst the latter were sold, most probably to investors from the core areas of the empire. The only areas excluded from that process are likely to have been those lands allocated to permanent imperial control due to their mineral bearing character.

For the imperial power the reorganisation of the agriculture of Britannia achieved two key objectives. The Roman bureaucracy secured what they would have regarded as a

²¹⁰ Op cit Nash-Williams V.E., 1954 p.140 Op cit Dilke O.A.W. 1971

taxably homogenous stratum of agricultural units which could be yoked to support the administration and development of the province. The existence of that layer of agricultural estates, whether they be referred to as *trefi*, *villas*, *familiar measure* or *hides*, is evident throughout England and Wales through to the late medieval period and beyond.

The reorganisation of agriculture also created a new landed nobility which could be recruited to run the Roman system of local government. That system was based on the council or *curia* of the *civitates* composed of *decurions* or councillors normally numbering a hundred, who were responsible for running its affairs. They were expected to reside within the *civitas* capital or within a mile of it, but it is difficult to determine whether that requirement was enforced.²¹¹

As with the conquest and the reorganisation of agriculture, the key agents organising that transition were the Roman military. Archaeological research in northern Gaul suggests that the Roman army played a key role in the establishment of the *civitas* capitals. Alain Vanderhoeven, in his study of the initial urbanisation in northern Gaul in the period shortly prior to the conquest of southern Britain, was of the view that

... the Roman army was the only institution with sufficient knowledge, manpower and authority to build the basic infrastructure of the towns: the rectangular street grid, the rampart-and-ditch system and possibly even the forum-complex.²¹²

The decision regarding the location of the *civitas* capital would have been made by the Roman authorities following the establishment of the main lines of communication, with both the road infrastructure and the location of the navigable waterways being taken into consideration. Within that framework, either the site of an earlier Roman military facility could be adopted or the work of preparing an entirely new site could be undertaken. Subsequently, with the preparatory work having been completed, the landed nobility would then establish new residences on the prepared site, thus rendering real the new *civitas* capital.²¹³ As noted above, there would be legal expectations that the leaders of the nobility would locate one of their residences either on the prepared site of the *civitas* capital or in its vicinity.

Following the completion of the conquest of Wales in 78 A.D., and having experienced the trauma of the appropriation of their lands and the re-modelling of their agricultural systems, by the middle of the second century A.D. most of the tribes of Wales had been transferred to self-governing status within the framework of *civitates*. The only exception

²¹¹ Salway P., *The Oxford illustrated history of Roman Britain* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1993) See p.393. In 2015, W.H. Manning in his presidential address to the Cambrian Archaeological Association referred to the Romans 'encourag[ing] the natives to adopt Roman customs and ideas, and to assume the responsibility of self-government'. It can be assumed that the Roman approach to such matters fully reflected the power relationship that existed between victor and vanquished. See op cit Manning W.H. in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 2015 vol 164 pp.1-24. See p.7

²¹² Vanderhoeven A., 'The earliest urbanisation in Northern Gaul: some implications of recent research in Tongres', in Roymans N. (ed.) *From the sword to the plough* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 1996) pp.189-245. See p.235

²¹³ Ibid pp.231-8

was the territory of the Ordovices and the associated land of the Deceangli over which they had exercised overlordship before the conquest.

It is probable that the earliest of the tribes of Wales to be transferred to self-government under the Roman civilian administration were the Dobunni and the Cornovii. It has been suggested that *Civitas Dobunnorum* was founded early in the 2nd century, with *Civitas Virconium Cornoviorum* following some years later. The visit of Hadrian to Britannia in 121-2 A.D. constitutes the most likely context in which that transition occurred. The forum was completed subsequently and was dedicated to the Emperor in 129-30 A.D. *Civitas Venta Silurum* appears to have been established early in the second century, to administer the land of the Silures and possibly a portion of the western lands of the Dobunni. During broadly the same period *Civitas Demetarum* was also established to administer the lands of the Demetae and Octapitae.²¹⁴

By the middle decades of the second century A.D., a little over a hundred years after the Roman invasion of southern Britain, most of the tribes of Wales had been integrated into the Roman civil system. The only exception was the territory formerly controlled by the Ordovices. There, military control was sustained throughout most of the period of Roman rule and evidence of the existence of a *civitas Venedotis* only emerges with the discovery of the famous Penmachno inscription 103 with its reference to Cantiori as a citizen of Venedos and a cousin of Maglos the magistrate.²¹⁵ The establishment of *Civitas Venedotis* was to be delayed until the closing decade of the fourth century if not the initial years of the fifth century when it appears to have been established abruptly and devoid of investment in a *civitas* capital laid out on classical lines.

It must be stressed, however, that in the Welsh context, the maintenance of military control over the population who resided in the lands of the Ordovices and Deceangli was the exception rather than the rule and that most of the territory of latter-day Wales was integrated into the Roman system of local self-government from early in the history of the province of Britannia. Moreover, the maintenance of military control over the Ordovices and Deceangli should not be regarded as bearing undue significance. Within those tribal areas, as elsewhere, military conquest would have been followed by the restructuring of the agricultural economy. As a consequence the military elite of the Ordovices would have been destroyed and the clan system of both the Ordovices and the Deceangli undermined as a new landed nobility was established. Given those foundations, at a time of their choosing, the Roman authorities would be in a position to secure the formation of *Civitas Venedotis* without undue difficulty.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Op cit Wachter J. 1976. See pp.32-5 & pp.358-74. See also Millett M., *The Romanization of Britain* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990) See table 4.4. pp.102-3

²¹⁵ Nash-Williams V.E., *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1950) See p.92 **Monument 103 Penmachno**

²¹⁶ Thomas Charles-Edwards viewed *Civitas Venedotis* as having been established through local initiative and without Roman governmental approval. That must be regarded as a highly implausible scenario. The establishment of a *civitas* would have required formal agreement with regard to boundaries and functions. Moreover, there would have been a need for a formal transfer of authority, so that its officials could fulfil specific responsibilities, including the collection of taxes to sustain the Roman administrative and military apparatus. According to this analysis, the establishment of *Civitas Venedotis* should be dated to the period

Map 5. The assimilation of western and central Britannia into Roman civil society by 150 A.D.



Who actually ran the *civitates* of western Britain is an entirely different matter. It has been argued that members of the native aristocracy would have dominated the affairs of *Civitas Venta Silurum* and *Civitas Moridunum Demetarum*,²¹⁷ but caution is called for in coming to such a conclusion. Given that there are likely to have been a considerable number of Lowland Manors within both of the above *civitates*, it is certainly possible that the *curia* of both would initially have been dominated by outsiders who took a generation or two to become integrated into native society. It is also conceivable that throughout the history of the province of Britannia as an imperial possession, the descendants of the old

prior to the ending of Imperial control over Britannia. See op cit Charles-Edwards T.M. 2013 pp.21, 176-81 & 221-2

²¹⁷ Op cit Manning W.H. in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 2015 vol 164 pp.1-24. See p.17

tribal aristocracy were reduced to a very marginal position within the *civitates*. The primary sources need to be subjected to very careful scrutiny before coming to a view on the matter. This is also an issue which may eventually cast considerable light on the character of the Roman presence in the more mountainous regions of Wales, dominated as they were by the Upland Manors.

The above constitutes a very different concept of Welsh history to that set out by Lloyd, for he regarded the transfer to self-government as having been confined to the Silures and to the immediate vicinity of Caerwent.²¹⁸ The great difficulty with Lloyd's work is that he had a very simplistic understanding of the implications of conquest for the tribes of Wales. In an essay submitted to the National Eisteddfod at Liverpool in 1884 he set out his concept of the consequences of the Roman conquest to the tribes of Wales in the following terms.

... Speaking generally, ... the Roman occupation brought little change for the Welsh tribesmen, except a narrow range and a compulsory peace: each year they brought their little dues of corn to the Roman officer at Segontium or Moridunium, and often they saw in the distance the flashing train of legionaries move along the great Sarn or military road, but they themselves went through the same monotonous existence, simple barbarians in the midst of imperial pomp and luxury.²¹⁹

In 1884, he regarded being under Roman military rule as having had very limited implications. He assumed that tribal life continued largely as before, except for the fact that certain dues in kind would be exacted by the Roman authorities. He had failed to grasp the enormity of the consequences which stemmed from being conquered by the Romans. For the native tribes, not only did the conquest entail the loss of ownership of tribal lands and control of mineral resources, but it also entailed a thorough social restructuring.

If it is accepted that the formation of tribes during the Iron Age entailed the establishment of military control over a previously clan based society, the Roman conquest entailed the destruction of that society. Following the conquest, the tribes were demilitarised and the clans fragmented as their members became either tenant farmers paying rent to the Roman authorities, or slaves working the Lowland Manors or serving the Roman military or Roman civil servants. The destruction of the old society was so complete that the native population never subsequently threatened the Roman ascendancy within Britannia. What threats emerged to Imperial rule were either a consequence of divisions within the Roman ruling elite, or the result of barbarian incursions from the north or from across the seas.

²¹⁸ Op cit Lloyd J.E. 1911 vol 1, p.80. In his volume '*Wales and the Britons 350-1064*' Thomas Charles-Edwards largely adopted Lloyd's analysis. Whilst acknowledging the existence of *Civitas Silurum* and *Civitas Demetae*, he regarded the rest of Wales as having remained a military zone, seemingly throughout the Roman Imperial period. See op cit Charles-Edwards T.M. 2013 pp.221-2

²¹⁹ Lloyd J E, 'History of Wales', in *Transactions of the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales*, Liverpool 1884, pp. 341-408. See in particular p. 370

Following the breakdown of formal links between the province of Britannia and Rome early in the fifth century, there is no evidence that native tribal society was able to reassert itself. It is apparent that Lloyd never grasped that reality. His understanding of those issues does not appear to have advanced beyond the views expressed in 1884. Accordingly, in his *A History of Wales*, first published in 1911, he stated

Roman civilisation ..., while it imported many new influences into the old Celtic society, did not break up its essential structure or sever its connection with the past. It left Wales richer in many respects, ... but the land remained a home of primitive ways and ideas, the dwelling-place of a people who, taken as a whole, had scarcely attained the level of culture of the Britons of the south-east at the time of the Roman conquest...²²⁰

Lloyd's view of the consequences of the Roman conquest for Wales was fundamentally flawed.²²¹ Whereas he claimed that the structure of the society survived the Roman conquest unimpaired, the evidence points to the opposite conclusion. Moreover, whilst it may have been valid to characterise pre-Roman Wales as the home of primitive ways, following the Roman re-organisation of agriculture, that was certainly not the case. To

²²⁰ Op cit Lloyd J E 1911 vol. 1, p. 89. Thomas Charles-Edwards's narrative regarding the material culture of post-Imperial Wales appears to have drawn heavily on Lloyd's flawed analysis quoted above. Moreover, Charles-Edwards claimed that by 450

...the British elite had deserted Roman-style country estates for hill forts that were modest by comparison with those of AD 40.

The difficulty with such a claim is that the Roman conquest and the reorganisation of agriculture had created two elites within Romano-British society. Whilst the new landed nobility had no formal military role, the role of defence was granted to a professional army. As a consequence, whilst it can be acknowledged that by 450, the military was making use of old hillforts for defensive purposes, that should not be regarded as evidence that the landed nobility had abandoned their country estates. To the contrary the landed nobility continued to reside in their country estates throughout the medieval period. See op cit Charles-Edwards T.M. 2013 p.221

²²¹ Lloyd's amended view of the consequences of the Roman conquest, was set out in the third edition of his *A History of Wales*, where he stated,

... (t)here was no such Romanisation of the native inhabitants as was witnessed on the Continent, and Wales, therefore emerges from the Roman occupation as an essentially Celtic country.

Ibid 3rd ed. vol.1 p.lv. That statement is largely devoid of content, for he did not specify what constituted 'an essentially Celtic country'. In assessing the impact of the Roman conquest on Wales, Lloyd seems to have drawn heavily on Paul Vinogradoff's, *The growth of the manor* (Macmillan, London 1905). When concluding his consideration of the topic, he cited that work in his footnotes. See op cit Lloyd J E 1911 vol 1, p. 89 fnt.129. As is evident from the sentence quoted below, the conclusions he set out in the third edition, quoted above, appears to entail some paraphrasing of Vinogradoff,.

It seems pretty clear that the conquest of Britain by the Romans did not produce the same thorough Romanisation of the people as was achieved by the conquest of Gaul or Spain.

Op cit Vinogradoff P. 1905 p.37. In practice, Lloyd's work should have been informing that of Vinogradoff, rather than *vice versa*.

the contrary, as a consequence of the conquest, a profoundly modern agriculture was established throughout the whole of Britannia. Having failed to recognise that reality, Lloyd could not grasp its consequences.

To the mass of the native population the benefits of the reorganisation of agriculture were at best marginal. A considerable proportion of the population were certainly reduced to slavery, whilst others became small tenant farmers, who as a consequence of Diocletian's reforms eventually became bondmen. The Roman reorganisation of agriculture also channelled a small economic surplus into the hands of the few. It appears that the reformed structure of agriculture focused the process of capital accumulation into the hands of a new landed nobility who constituted around 2% of the population. The Roman military forces and the provincial bureaucracy of the province of Britannia also largely drew their sustenance from taxes imposed on that agricultural system. Lloyd's work provides no hint of the enormity of those changes. His failure to recognise that such a profoundly important social restructuring had occurred early in the Roman period constitutes a major flaw at the very heart of the model of Welsh history which he established.

As a consequence of the misconceptions at the heart of his work, Lloyd also constructed a quite invalid focus to Welsh history. Having misinterpreted the implications of the Roman conquest, he also failed to adequately interpret the events of the post-Roman context, which he saw as entailing the emergence of a new Welsh identity. He thus presented a process of national formation as occurring in the fifth and sixth centuries through what must be regarded as his largely fictional depiction of 'The Brythonic conquest of Wales'.²²² In practice, a number of the fundamental departures which contributed to the crystallisation of a Welsh identity had occurred considerably earlier, through the social restructuring which followed the Roman conquest.

Lloyd's analytical failures have broader implications. His racially based analysis implied that pre-Roman Brythonic culture survived the Roman conquest to secure a political ascendancy in fifth and sixth century Wales. As a consequence, for Lloyd, the roots of modern Welsh culture lay in tribal or barbarian society. By contrast, the evidence presented above indicates that following the Roman conquest, Wales was thoroughly integrated into Roman civil society. That implies that the Welsh language culture forged within Britannia was founded on Classical foundations.

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²²² Lloyd devoted 14 pages to that largely fictional account. See op cit Lloyd J. E. 1911 vol 1, pp.110-23